

Translating the Enemy – Attitudes and Technicalities
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The following are some issues I have encountered or dealt with as a translator of Modern Arabic literature into Hebrew:

- Author's/translator's/publisher's/reader's ambivalence towards translation of Arabic Literature into Hebrew.
- Do Arab writers want the enemy to read them in translation and understand their world better, or do they perceive granting rights as surrender to rejected normalization?
- Translating Arabic literature into Hebrew – is it translating the enemy, the neighbor, or maybe the kin?
- Do you choose to translate works related or unrelated to the conflict?
- How do you deal (emotionally) with the translation of what depicts *you* negatively.
- What 'color/flavor' of the target language do you choose to transmit the literature of the enemy/neighbor/kin? A neutral 'color/flavor' or one that preserves the strangeness (as well as the similarities?)
- Israelis (or others) are not too interested in reading Arabic literature in translation because:
 - of lack of curiosity
 - of lack of exposure
 - Arabic literature is not perceived as viable, interesting literature
 - Choosing to read translated literature (which Israeli readers do much of) has an escapism element to it. Literature coming from the enemy does not fit this need.
- Why do I translate? Why should Israelis (or others) read Arabic literature in translation?
 - to learn how the enemy/neighbor/other is beyond stereotypes (fiction may provide more complex, layered and varied portrayals than media)
 - to learn how *we* are seen from the other side.
 - to learn about life on the other side with no relation to us.
 - for sheer literary enjoyment.
 - to find the universal and common (psychological, social, feminist etc.)

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- Perhaps also, to find yourself (if you are an Israeli of Middle Eastern origin, you may find shared background, history, values, etc. and gain a better and deeper understanding of your Jewish ethnic group, your family, yourself.

- Who publishes more Arabic literature in Hebrew translation? The commercially or the humanitarian, politically driven publishers? Who initiate translations? Academia, publishers, translators?

- Publishing Arabic literature in Hebrew translation rarely covers cost.

- Poorly paid, translator has to be committed enough to translate almost voluntarily.

- When you translate the enemy, your sources of information may be limited.