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Arabic Traces in Masalha's Language in the Literary Translated Work the Cactus

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This article reports also on the phenomenon of Arab authors in Israel writing in Hebrew. "Writing in Hebrew" refers to literary works originally written in Hebrew or translated from Arabic to Hebrew. The article examines the status of the Hebrew for Israeli Arabs, the scale of the phenomenon of writing in Hebrew, the bilingual literary works of Arab authors in Israel, and Israeli society's acceptance of Arab authors writing in Hebrew.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Minorities living under the rule of a majority are influenced by such external forces as culture, customs, and language. Examples of such influence are found throughout history, for example in Spanish society which came under Muslim Arab rule for centuries. Spanish was strongly influenced by Arabic and hundreds of Arabic words entered Spanish. Similarly, in Arab countries during the Ottoman era, Turkish elements entered the Arabic language (Dana 2000:13). The same phenomenon is evident today in the Israeli Arab community, a minority community living alongside a Hebrew-speaking Jewish majority. The minority's proximity to the majority has resulted in clear influences in many areas, particularly language (many members of the Arab minority speak fluent Hebrew).

Languages frequently borrow words and phrases from one another. There are a number of reasons for this: to fill in lexical gaps in a language; direct or indirect intercultural contact; influence of the dominant language in a region for social reasons, trade or occupation relations, and so on (Basal 2004:33).

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Word borrowing is a sociolinguistic phenomenon reflecting the cultural characteristics of both the borrowing and the lending cultures. We therefore need to clarify the conditions in which words are borrowed from different languages, who the borrowers are, how they borrow, the words they borrow, and how long the borrowing language uses them. Higa (1979:278) maintains that although the borrowing process begins at the level of individuals², ultimately it is the society which determines what it wishes / does not wish to assimilate.

Linguists disagree over the resilience of linguistic systems to withstand the impact of foreign languages: some researchers maintain that there are inter-lingual influences on aspects of languages, including grammar. Others put less stress on the impact on grammar because they see it as an independent area which is almost impervious to foreign influences (Weinreich 1968: 29-30).

Words and phrases can be borrowed and used in speech or writing. Speech borrowing is characteristic of all inter-language contact and it is a clearly sociolinguistic phenomenon (Gluska 1999:110). A borrowed speech form enters directly into the spoken language of the borrower, becomes embedded in it, and often enters into the written language as well. In contrast to Jespersen's (1962:30) argument that the main words borrowed from speech are technical and pertain to a particular knowledge domain and industry. Gluska (1999:111) shows that many words are borrowed from culture, literature, and art³. The transfer of concepts and terms between languages often takes place during the process of translating works from one language to another, thus enriching the vocabulary of the borrowing language. An example of this was the contact between Arabic and Greek and Aramaic literature: Syrian translators translated scientific and philosophical works written in Greek and Syriac into Arabic, or from Greek via Syriac into Arabic, while incorporating a fairly large

² See de Saussure 2005:255.

³ See also Kaufman (1974:166), who examined the influence of Akkadian on Aramaic and found groups of words from the spheres of culture and religion in general, and Bloomfield (1976:465), who found words that are borrowed from religion, ethics, hunting, and sport. It seems, therefore that the needs of the society of speakers will dictates what is and is not borrowed, and that the groups of borrowed words will vary for each language.

¹ This article is based on the author's Ph.D. dissertation, written under the supervision of Dr. Tsvi Sadan (Tsuguya Sasaki). See Shakour 2010.

number of concepts and words from the original language in their translations. Similarly in the scientific Arabic literature of the Middle Ages we find abundant borrowings from contemporary scientific works.

Almost all Israeli Arabs have some Hebrew proficiency, and the language is taught in Arab schools. For Israel's Arab citizens, Hebrew is the key to the dominant Jewish majority and most of its social, financial, and educational resources. It is therefore essential for smoothing the daily lives of Israeli Arabs (Amara 2002:86-101). The fact that it is a basic necessity has raised its status in Arab society.

Contact between Hebrew-speaking Arabs and Jews occurs in many different contexts, for example governmental offices, work, and recreational settings, such as restaurants. As a result, Arabic has borrowed many Hebrew words and even entire sentences. Israeli Arabs routinely use words like *Beseder* 'okay', *'aruṣ* 'TV channel', *Mivṣa* 'sales discount', *Kanyon* 'shopping mall', *Maṣṣil* 'lifeguard', and many others.⁴

Still, not all Israeli Arabs speak Hebrew fluently, and fluency is not evenly distributed, depending rather on such factors as gender, age, locality, and frequency of contact with Jewish Israelis.⁵ Arab males speak Hebrew better than Arab females since they are in touch with Jewish society more than Arab females, especially through work and in contact with government bureaucracies, and younger Arabs also speak better Hebrew than their elders (Amara 2002:87). Young Arabs nowadays are more exposed to Hebrew because they use leisure and entertainment facilities in Jewish cities and read Hebrew publications, especially the press. This contact greatly improves their Hebrew fluency and increases adoption of Hebrew words and phrases in Arabic (Amara 2002:87). As for locality, the closer an Arab person lives to Jewish centers, the more strongly he or she will be influenced by Hebrew. For example, Arabs living in the Negev and the "Triangle" speak more Hebrew than Galilee Arabs. Also, in mixed cities and neighborhoods Arabs and Jews share the same public services, which leads to routine contact between Arab

and Jewish citizens, something which has improved Israeli Arabs' regard for Hebrew and elevated Hebrew's status. Another key factor responsible for the use of Hebrew among Israeli Arabs is that many work for Jewish businesses and most are employed by Hebrew-speaking Jews, encouraging them to study Hebrew. Hebrew is thus a significant factor in their lives, a lack of which makes it extremely difficult for them to achieve anything in Israeli society, and they would be unable to learn many of the things that demand fluent Hebrew. In the workplace, management and staff all speak Hebrew, customers speak Hebrew, tools and equipment have Hebrew names, and instructions for use are all in Hebrew. So, Arab employees have to know Hebrew to integrate at work and succeed Amara and Kabha (1996:60-62); Mar'i (2002-2003:133-136); Kohen (1968:670). Hebrew is also relatively easy for them because Arabic and Hebrew belong to the same linguistic family. Furthermore, the fact that Hebrew and Arabic have many lexical elements in common helps Israeli Arabs to learn Hebrew quickly, sometimes simply from being spoken to (Dana 2000:165-170).

Although Hebrew is the second most important language for Israeli Arabs, allowing communication with Israeli Jews in all areas of life, and although it acts as an agent of modernization, various sociolinguistic obstacles limit its convergence with Hebrew. Ben Rafa'el (1994:176) points out that:

... the dual identity (Palestinian and Israeli) is reflected in the linguistic repertoire of Palestinians in Israel. The tension between the two identities, the Israeli and the Palestinian, has restricted their approach to Hebrew, the language of the dominant Jewish culture. In other words, the Arabs employ a strategy of linguistic integration. On the one hand, they try to connect with the wider social network which is shaped by the majority culture by learning to speak Hebrew well. On the other hand they maintain their identity by retaining their mother tongue.

Snir (1990:248-253) gives a detailed analysis of efforts by Israel's majority culture to dominate the Israeli Arab minority following the establishment of the State of Israel, which the Palestinians call *Nakba(h)* 'Tragedy' and which was a traumatic event for Israeli Arabs. The Israeli establishment attempted to install a system of re-education and reculturalization aimed at distancing local Arabs from their Palestinian heritage and integrating them into the life of the state⁶ because nationalist inclinations within the Israeli Arab community were considered dangerous. Before he left Israel, the poet

⁴ Mar'i (2002-2003:143) and Dana (1983:47-49) discuss the linguistic merger *d-damḡi l-laḡawī* in spoken Arabic. This refers to the adoption of Hebrew words and sometimes full sentences in spoken Arabic—a known phenomenon among Israeli Arabs. An example is: *قُفْتُ* *Tavlat Liga* 'football league'. This phenomenon is known as *linguistic interference* and is found when a bilingual minority lives within a majority culture. The use of Arabic words in spoken and written Hebrew is integral to the linguistic repertoire of Arabs in Israel. This phenomenon is evident in all aspects of life. It is not artificial and has given rise to a new language in Israel, recently studied in a comprehensive work by Mar'i, 2013.

⁵ Amara (1986:3) points out that Arabic has also borrowed from English. The fact that science and technology developed in English explains why Arabic, like so many languages, borrows much of its science and technology terms from English. Israel's close relationship with the USA has also led to Israelis borrowing from English, which is subsequently absorbed into the Arabic spoken by Israeli Arabs.

⁶ The main argument advanced by policy shapers of the Hebrew studies curriculum was that Hebrew not only contributes to the financial development of the minority, it also encourages integration with the majority and reduces gaps between Israel's Arab and Jewish communities (Spolsky & Shohamy 1999:108).

Mahmoud Darwish asserted that the premise of the Israeli establishment and public was that every Arab was both suspect and guilty.

The strategy of the Israeli establishment for achieving this goal was harsh and produced a strong negative reaction from the Arab community. For example, Michael Assaf, a Jewish Israeli Middle East expert, a key figure in the Arabist arm of the Israeli establishment in the 1950's, and the editor-in-chief of establishment journals such as the weekly *Ḥaqīqat l-'amr*, daily *l-yawm*, and the Arabic journal of the teachers union *Ṣadā t-tarbiya(h)*, suggested that more hours of Hebrew study should be added to Arab elementary schools at the expense of Arabic. As a result of Michael Assaf became persona non grata in the Arab community (especially among the communists) and is often described as a disseminator of hatred, incitement, and bias against the Arab minority and as someone with a hostile attitude toward Arabs inside and outside Israel.

The majority culture's efforts to achieve symmetry between the political hegemony and cultural hegemony and to assimilate the minority culture has goaded the minority into an intense national cultural activity that cannot compare to that of any other Palestinian community. This cultural debate is taking place under a somewhat equivocal reciprocity: the Arab-Palestinian minority was the majority before Israel's establishment and can still maintain that it is the majority if the balance of Middle East power is considered. On the other hand, not only is the current Jewish majority a minority in a region which is entirely Arab, but its collective consciousness remains permeated with the memory of having been a minority during most of its history, both in the Land of Israel and in the Diaspora. No wonder, then, that it continues to fall back on the characteristic patterns of a minority struggling for existence, and uses these patterns to mask its personality.⁷

Another example where words and phrases were borrowed from other languages in the process of translation involved the Arabicized Hebrew of the Middle Ages. during the fourth decade of the seventh century, Muslim Arabs embarked on the conquest of the region from Persia in the east to Spain and North Africa in the west, spreading the Arabic language as they went. The local populations, including the Jews, adopted the language of the conquerors in various spheres of life (excluding liturgy, poetry, and *halacha*—Jewish religious law). Eventually Arabic even became the main language used for writing about subjects in which a Hebrew vocabulary was lacking (Maman 1991:106)⁸. As a result,

the Jews of Europe and Asia Minor were unable to enjoy the literary riches produced by their brethren in Hebraized Arabic, and so a movement of interpreters arose (Maman 1991:107)⁹. That movement was responsible for many Arab terms entering the Hebrew language.

Some eleven Arab novelists are currently writing in Hebrew in Israel, an apparently growing trend among Arab authors. The choice of these Arab authors to write in Hebrew is a conscious aesthetic choice, a reflection of their natural gift for writing, a mastery of Hebrew and a political choice. The eleven writers are: Salman Masalha¹⁰, Anton Shammas¹¹, Naim Araidi¹², Sayed Kashua¹³, Atallah Maṣṣūr¹⁴, Geris Tannous,

and 'agron intended for use in versification and his book of philosophy and theology *Kitāb l-'amānāt wa-l-'itqādāt*. Rabbi Yehuda Halevi (1075-1141) did the same in his book *Kitāb r-rad wa-d-dalīl fī d-dīn d-ḡalīl*, and Maimonides (1204-1135), in his philosophical work *dalālatu l-ḥā'irīn*.

⁹ For example, in 1040 the Karaite sage Tuvia Ben-Moshe arrived from Byzantium to Israel. The everyday language of the Karaites in Byzantium was Byzantine Greek, and therefore they could not read the writings of the important leaders of the Karaite movement in Israel, who wrote in Arabic. Ben Moshe was fluent in Arabic, and during his stay in Jerusalem he studied philosophy and theology at the Karaite yeshiva under Yūsif l-baṣīr 'Joseph Ben Abraham, Joseph the Seer' and translated his writings and those of Jeshua ben Judah into Hebrew.

¹⁰ Masalha was born on November 4, 1953 to a Druze family in Magar, a village in the Galilee in northern Israel. After graduating from high school he moved to Jerusalem, where he has been living since 1972. Masalha studied at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and holds a Ph.D. degree in Arabic literature. He wrote his thesis on the mythological elements of ancient Arabic poetry. He taught Arabic language and literature at the Hebrew University and served as co-editor of the Concordance of Early Arabic Poetry. One volume of the concordance titled *Six Early Arab Poets: New Edition and Concordance* was published in 1999.

Masalha is the author of eight volumes of poetry. Some of his Arabic and Hebrew poems have been performed to music and recorded by leading Israeli and Palestinian musicians, among them: Marwan Abado, Kamiliya Jubran, Micha Shitrit, Yair Dalal and others. In 2006, Masalha won the President's Prize for his collection of Hebrew poetry *In Place*.

¹¹ Anton Shammas was born in 1950 in the village of Fassuta in Galilee. He is still renowned for his translation of Emile Habibi's work from Arabic to Hebrew, for articles in the Israeli press, and especially for his first novel, *Arabesques* (1986), a very significant work of fiction written by an Israeli Arab. Not only was the original novel not written in Arabic, it was not even translated into Arabic even though its author is one of the foremost translators from Arabic to Hebrew (Margolin 1996:18). The name *Arabesques* embodies the essence of the book in both content and style. Content-wise, there are shifts in time and place, while the thread of memory forming the book's leitmotif winds through it like a curling, colorful *Arabesques* pattern. Stylistically, the work is frequently adorned with Arabic influences on the author's Hebrew.

¹² Naim Araidi, a Druze, was born in the Druze village of Magar, where he still lives with his family. He has a Ph.D. in Hebrew literature and the topic of his dissertation was the poetry of Uri Zvi Grinberg. Araidi is a leading poet and the recipient of several prizes. Many of his poems, which are partly in Arabic and partly in Hebrew, have been translated into different languages and appear in poetry anthologies throughout Europe. His first novel was *Fatal Immersion*.

¹³ Sayed Kashua was born in Tira. His father was a bank clerk, his mother a teacher. He was the second child in a family of four. At the age of 15 he enrolled in the boarding school Jerusalem High School

⁷ See Grosman (1992:19) & Kayyal (2006:15-16).

⁸ For example, Rabbi Saadia Gaon (882-942) lived and worked in Egypt, the Land of Israel, and Babylonia and wrote his important works on Hebrew linguistics in Arabic *Kutub l-luḡa(h)* on Hebrew grammar

Muhammad Ganayim, Osama Abu-Ghosh, Odeh Bisharat, Ayman Sikseck, and Salman Natur (Shakour 2013:1).

The corpus includes one novel translated from Arabic into Hebrew. I do not discuss Arabic Traces written in prose which was originally written in Hebrew because the author, Salman Masalha, does not write Hebrew prose.

II. THE BILINGUAL LITERARY ACTIVITY OF ISRAELI ARAB AUTHORS

Many of the most highly regarded authors in the world today write their fiction, prose, or poetry in a language that isn't their mother tongue. For a number of them, the second language has been bound up with personal experiences of exile or colonialism. Some use one language for private or emotional expression and another for public, formal presentation. Others reflect on how the cultural and aesthetic possibilities of a second language offer options they could never have experienced in their first language. Most struggle with maintaining a coherent sense of self. Taken together, these reflections shed new light on the creative process and the complex ways identities are forged in the contemporary, globalized world (Buchweitz, Mar'i & Fragman 2010:10).

An example of an author writing in a second language is Algerian novelist Assia Djebar, who set out specifically to write in French—the language of the French colonialists in Algeria. Djebar was impelled to write about the brutality of French Djebar, who set out specifically to write in French—the language of the French colonialism and document the uprising of the Algerian people who bravely fought against colonialists in Algeria. Djebar was impelled to write about the brutality of French colonialism and document the uprising of the Algerian people who bravely fought against the French enemy. She explains that when you write in the language of the other you make the other felt; the other becomes felt and seen (Djebar 2003:19-27.)

for Science and Arts, reputedly one of Israel's finest schools. On completing high school, he attended Hebrew University, studying philosophy and sociology. After graduation, he began writing for the newspaper *Kol Ha'ir* before becoming a television critic with his own personal column. His charming manner and insistence that he was not a "pet Arab" with a kind of synthetic Israeliness, and various statements he made, placed him and his editors in the "firing line" of Israeli patriotic nationalism, ironically drawing greater esteem for him from the journalistic world.

¹⁴ Mansour was born in Gush Halav, a village in Lower Galilee. He studied in Lebanon from 1946-1950. He made his way back to Israel in 1950 as an infiltrator and was only granted Israeli citizenship after ten years. On his return, he spent a year in Kibbutz *Sha'ar HaAmakim* where he began studying Hebrew. He worked as a youth instructor and then as a journalist for *HaOlam HaZeh* magazine between 1954 and 1958. From 1958 to 1991, he wrote for *Haaretz* newspaper. Mansour writes in Arabic, Hebrew, and English.

Snir (1997:141-153) provides an in-depth analysis of the question of Israeli Arab authors writing in Hebrew and the underlying reasons. He maintains that this phenomenon is linked to the wider narrative of majority-minority reciprocity and the impact of the balance of political power on the literary sphere. In terms of their background, bilingual Israeli Arab writers are part of the Israeli Arab minority culture that lives in Israel within the Israeli Jewish majority culture. Minority cultures generally adopt an oppositional stance toward the majority culture, and in the case of the Israeli Arabs, this was inflamed by the majority culture's attempt in the 1950's and up to 1965, to gain control of the minority culture.

We can only try to understand the complex mental and cultural state of those lonely authors against the background of the dialectics of this complicated political and cultural debate. Unlike most of the minority community, and certainly the educated among them, these writers were not satisfied with using Hebrew for the purposes of practical communication, but went even further to produce literature in Hebrew. Snir (1992:6) emphasizes that linguistic literary dualism is common in societies where a minority culture is crystallized alongside a majority culture as a consequence of political power relations. In Israel, however, the high status of Arabic in the cultural and religious tradition of the minority, which is predominantly Muslim, has tended to limit creativity in Hebrew to marginal groups only, in particular the Christians and Druze.¹⁵ Such writing only assumed importance in the Hebrew literary domain in the 1980's with the work of Naim Aradi, a Druze, and Anton Shammas, a Christian.¹⁶

III. OTHER ARAB AUTHORS TO ATTRACT MEDIA ATTENTION

Beside Sayed Kashua, who have written in Hebrew since 2000 and attracted media attention, several other Arab writers have caught the eye of the Israeli media. One of them is Sayed Kashua who received the Prime Minister's Prize for Hebrew Writers for his two novels *Dancing Arabs*¹⁷ (2004, Ben Shemen, Keter Publishing) and *Let It Be Morning*¹⁸ (2005, Lexicon of Modern Hebrew Literature, Jerusalem). These novels

¹⁵ Since Arabic is the mother tongue, the language of religion, language of the Qur'An, language of science and scientists, and the language of history (Mar'i 2002-2003:130).

¹⁶ See Shakour 2009.

¹⁷ The book describes Kashua's traumatic meeting with the Jewish street. *Dancing Arabs* was high on the best seller list for eleven weeks and sold many copies abroad. It was translated into Italian, German, French, Dutch, and English.

¹⁸ In *Let it be Morning*, Kashua portrays the experiences of a young family moving back to the village where the parents were born. Moving back to the village is described as a disaster, the end of all hopes and dreams. The narrator reveals this the moment he arrives in the village, and begins describing his village in very depressing terms.

were translated into several languages and garnered considerable praise. The most recent novel written in Hebrew by an Arab author¹⁹ is *In the Shade of the Jujube Tree— Pictures of my Neighborhood*, by Geris Tannous,²⁰ which was self-published in 2007, Nazareth.²¹ Another noteworthy Arab writer is Salman Natur,²² who published *Walking on the Wind – Conversations at Home*, which he wrote in Hebrew in 1992.

Araidí and Shammas' writing reflects the fact that they belong to two alienated cultures: Arab culture, where they were born and took their first steps in literature, and Hebrew culture, where at first they were thrown reluctantly, but which they came to prefer, for identifiable personal, aesthetic reasons. It is no wonder that their main work focuses on the demarcation between Hebrew and Arab literature. Both are acknowledged as remarkable translators. Their natural talents, sensitive intellects, articulateness, mastery of Hebrew, unique linguistic style, and modern techniques allow them to write fluidly in Hebrew, sometimes on a higher level than in their native language, Arabic.²³

¹⁹ The novel *Zetunya Streets* (2009, Tel Aviv, Am Oved Publishing) is not listed, as it was written in Arabic by Odeh Bisharat, and later translated by the author with the help of Moshe Ron, but is not the sole work of the author, Odeh Bisharat.

²⁰ Geris Tannous was born in 1937. His parents were farmers from Magar village. Since 1956 he has lived in Acre. A senior teacher, for 48 years he was involved in the teaching of Hebrew language and literature in Arab high schools. He graduated from Haifa University after studying Hebrew and Arabic language and literature. He writes poetry and prose in both languages and has authored three novels and two dictionaries in Arabic, and also two dictionaries focused on similarities and differences between Hebrew and Arabic – one Hebrew-Arabic and the other Arabic-Hebrew.

²¹ *In the Shade of the Jujube Tree* is written from the perspective of a child of farmers, whose life largely fluctuates between one prank and another and the punishments that result. Between stealing figs and catching thrushes and releasing them, the abundant episodes of violence in the book – kicks from a big brother or a whipping from a teacher, almost in every page of the book – still have a certain pastoral character.

²² Natur was born in 1949 in Daliyat al-Karmel. He studied philosophy at Haifa University and Hebrew University and is an author, journalist, playwright, and lecturer in Arab philosophy and culture. He is director of the Emil Toma Institute for Palestinian and Israeli Studies in Haifa and editor of the journal *Israeli Issues*, published in Ramallah. Natur has written 25 books, including novels, short stories, critical articles, and documentary literature about Palestinian memory. Natur translated from Hebrew to Arabic David Grosman's novel *Yellow Wind* and *Conversation on Science and Values* by Prof. Yeshayahu Leibowitz.

²³ Tannous claims that he expresses himself better in Hebrew than in Arabic: "My Hebrew is far more rich than my Arabic.... Hebrew has several synonyms for every word. I felt freer." For Tannous, writing in Hebrew is not just the product of long years of expertise and a love of the language. It is also ideological. Tannous explains: "It is not just that I like writing in both languages as your esteemed Jewish medieval writers did. I would also like to contribute ... to sweeten a bitter pill. Many have contributed to this argument, but not to reconciliation." When Tannous waves hello to his neighbor Ofra and she smiles back at him it is easy to become addicted to the feeling of coexistence that surrounds him. And Tannous adds: "See how we live here together, this is not just coexistence: it's living together."

Snir (1990:258) cites Hever (1989:193-196), who maintains that, while most local Arabic literature has remained outside the Hebrew literary canon, the past two decades have witnessed a slow process of penetration into the Hebrew canon, bringing it from the periphery of the minority culture into the majority culture's authoritative mainstream. The most important part of this process is the growing tradition of translation into Hebrew, topped by Arab authors' efforts to write in Hebrew, the majority language.²⁴ Hever characterizes this development as a dramatic moment in the cultural confrontation between the minority and the majority in which the dialectic of power relations has shifted. In order to realize the option of breaking into the canonic center, the minority has identified weaknesses in the majority culture and strikes at them in an attempt to force the majority's cultural apparatus to lend it legitimacy, gravity, and importance.

Snir (1997:142-143) also notes that, whereas in their natural Arab milieu Araidí and Shammas are conspicuous for their conscious aesthetic affinity with Hebrew culture, in Hebrew literary circles they stand out not only as newcomers and foreigners, but chiefly as representatives of a minority with access to the circle of the majority. Almost the only reason they are accepted in Hebrew literary circles is because they fit into the slot which the Israeli cultural system allocates for minorities (as it does also in the political system). They therefore find themselves working inside a culture which, to put it mildly, does not see the minority culture as its top priority. Still, as writers working on the fringes of Palestinian literature, while trying to penetrate the canonic center of the majority culture, they mostly address Jewish Israeli audiences and deal almost exclusively with the question of cultural identity. In addition, the penetration of such authors into Israeli culture is never planned and invariably involves single individuals with specific cultural preferences; it is only in retrospect that one can see the commonality between them. When we examine how Araidí and Shammas operate within Israeli culture, we see emerging two alternative models of the Palestinian minority representative active in Israeli culture.

²⁴ It is noteworthy that Arab authors such as Anton Shammas, Muhammad Ganayim, and Salman Natur, whose formal education was via the Israeli education system, are clearly faithful to the original Hebrew text, which can be seen from the mixture of Hebrew used in their translations and the various inconsistencies in linguistic style. This approach, positioning Hebrew culture as the hegemonic culture, served to further distance the translations from the Arab audiences who refused to accept Israel's hegemonic status. It is no wonder therefore that two leading exponents of the policy of translating Hebrew works into Arabic, Shammas and Ganayim, ceased producing translations. Apparently this silence followed the acrid political censure drawn by their work from Arab sources both in and outside Israel and the discomfort that accompanied their efforts to mediate between the two alienated cultures (Kayyal 2005:132; Shammas 1985:18-19).

IV. ISRAELI SOCIETY'S ACCEPTANCE OF ARAB AUTHORS WRITING IN HEBREW

Amir (1992:40) disagrees with Snir and others who have reservations about Arabs being accepted as "Hebrew" authors, and see the work of authors like Shammas and Araidí as out of the ordinary and impermanent.²⁵ Amir dismisses the "alarm" shown by Snir, Oren, and others over Shammas and Araidí's acceptance as bona fide Hebrew writers: Snir's view is that only Jews can write Hebrew literature. Yosef Oren²⁶ argues that Hebrew literature must have a "Jewish national" character; we surmise that this means that the only acceptable vision is a Zionist Jewish vision.²⁷

Amir (1992:39) quotes Oren to the effect that it is dangerous to allow the identity of Jewish literature, which less than fifty years ago was Jewish Zionist literature, to become indistinct: according to Oren the problem with writers like Shammas and Araidí is that they are part of an "inexorable process" of mutual assimilation between "Jewish writers and writers with other national backgrounds," which, if it persists, will divest Hebrew literature of its Jewish-national character. In support of his doom laden prophecy and grim reading of the current process, he cites the fact that "most Israeli Jewish authors" have already stopped writing about the problem of national cultural continuity and that writing which embraces values, ideals, issues, and "authentic Jewish experiences" has again come to be seen simply as "old-fashioned, redundant, ethnic literature".

According to Amir (1992:40), on the other hand, the fact that Arab authors write in Hebrew points clearly to the realization of the Canaanite vision. He maintains that it does not show Israel as a melting pot of nations but rather its evolution, over time and with the utmost simplicity, into a national, territorial, secular, democratic society. He goes on to argue that all nations and languages, all national cultures, all cultures of groups with some amount of territorial and linguistic uniqueness, irrespective of religion and race, and with almost no differences associated with ideology, are open to some extent to accepting the "other". The world of nations, especially in the modern world, is no place for a "nation that dwells alone," and in the end no

cultures will reject "others" for reasons of religion, race, gender, or ideology.

Amir argues that the present generation is seeing a far-reaching process in which values are being revised and renewed – a process that is due to the acceptance of foreigners into the literary, artistic, musical, and intellectual circles of cultures such as those of Britain and France, which once had a monolithic national and linguistic uniqueness, and of course the United States. In the same way, Muslim Arab culture, whose value and achievements were admired by many, at least prior to the Ottoman Empire, only became what it was thanks to the strengths and skills of the cultures it occupied, oppressed, and digested. Without all these Aramaic, Persian, Greek, and Coptic speakers, the various ethnic groups and sects of the Iranian Zoroastrians and Eastern Christians from India to Ethiopia, as well as Jews and so-called barbarian cultures with their ancient traditions and various cultural appurtenances, there would be no written historic or cultural evidence of the camel riders who appeared from out of the Arabian Peninsula in the seventh century under the banner of Islam.

Shammas and Araidí came through an Israeli education system that tried to teach Arabs to identify with the country's goals, even though the country's national ideology made them second-class citizens. Shammas (1986:212) recalls the humiliation of having to display the occupier's symbols. For example, on the school principal's orders, one of his teachers fashioned a giant Star of David from six wooden beams to impress the Jewish school inspector who came to assess the pupils' achievements after their first year in an Israeli state school. Snir (1992:7) maintains that Shammas and Araidí's work is driven by their sense of mission and by a profound belief that they can influence Israeli society. Back in the 1970's, Shammas talked about his younger colleagues who were "breaking through" the wall, beating the Hebrew language barrier, and trying to break into new spheres. The younger generation has the benefits of both worlds: its fluency in Hebrew puts it in touch with new experiences through both Hebrew literature and world literature translated into Hebrew; its knowledge of Arabic, on the other hand, puts it in touch with the newest achievements in modern Arabic literature. Kashua (2002:1) also talks about a new generation which has crossed the language barrier and is trying to make its way in other areas of life:

It is hard for Arabs to write in Hebrew. The problem is not the language but speaking to the Israeli reading public as an equal. Arab writers who write in Hebrew are very aware that they are addressing an Israeli audience. Moreover, it is quite rare to find Arabs who are experts in Israeli culture and know the right language to communicate with Jewish readers. I sincerely hope Israeli Palestinian citizens are not

²⁵ Poet Mahmoud Darwish (2004:2-3) considers the question of Palestinians writing in Hebrew a "fashion" and thinks it may be an attempt at cultural assimilation within Hebrew culture or perhaps even a revolt against the Israelis using their own language.

²⁶ Yosef Oren is a veteran Israeli researcher, essayist, literary critic, and lecturer in contemporary Hebrew literature.

²⁷ Amir argues that this implies that there is no place among us for non-Jews (especially those born in the country and raised in the Arabic language and culture). Not even the offerings and love of "loving step-sons," as Snir affectionately calls them, will be accepted.

going to be extinct soon, and [if they remain] I am sure there will be a lot of good writers. I believe that repression gives rise to creation or at least the need to be creative. The problem is that Arab society tends to push its successful offspring into the free professions, and doesn't see art and literature as important yet. This happens in minorities, which concentrate on professions that can help it survive. I believe the second or third generation of the Palestinian enlightenment in Israel will be creative and it will occupy the Israeli cultural platforms. If we continue to co-exist I feel sure we will play a similar role to the American blacks. As for me, I still dream of being the Arab Bill Cosby.

As authors who write in both languages, Araidi and Shammās have each more than once been seen as a steppenwolf, a lone wolf of the steppes, suffering a similar hell to those in whom two cultures and two belief systems intersect.²⁸ For example, since his earliest days as a writer, Shammās has felt that the path he pursues hides an important statement about his Arab-Palestinian identity. He explains that, although through lack of choice he decided to treat Hebrew as a stepmother-tongue, he feels that deep down it "is a form of cultural trespass for which I might be punished." Because of their identity crises and emotional schisms it is easy to understand their desire to act as a kind of bridge between cultures. This desire is merely latent in the case of the sophisticated Shammās, though there are allusions to it in, say, *Arabesques*, where Shammās shows us his childhood village; Araidi, on the other hand, misses no opportunity to stress that he represents a crossroads between two cultures. We see this emphasis not only bluntly in his collection of poetry *I Return to the Village* (1986), but also in his dual critical and research preoccupation with both Arabic and Hebrew literature.

According to Somekh (1993:41-42) Shammās can handle extremely difficult translation tasks:

Shammās has attempted the impossible translation task of translating Ḥabibi's rather complex works, especially the difficult and complex novel *سرايا بنت الغول* *Sarayā, the Ogre's Daughter*. This is a difficult work because Emile Ḥabibi is not the easiest author to translate since he does not use fusha, the standard modern literary language of our time, but instead writes in a very idiosyncratic style not found to this degree in many Arabic authors.

V. USE OF ARABIC WORDS AND PHRASES IN HEBREW TEXTS

Israeli Jewish society appears to perceive Arab culture as inferior and less modern compared to its own

culture than cultures such as Russian and Western European culture, which they see as more sophisticated. Arab writers who translate literary works from Arabic into Hebrew have this issue in mind as they try to show the value of the neighboring Arab culture. These translators have always believed that it is extremely important for Arab culture—the culture of the "nearby-stranger"—to be seen in a positive light, more often than not for political and compassionate reasons as opposed to the purely aesthetic goal of making translations of belles lettres in Arabic available for others' esthetic delectation²⁹. One can therefore regard the use of Arabic words in Hebrew works by Arab authors as a deliberate attempt to bridge what these authors see as an intercultural division separating the target culture from their own.

As a component of human civilization, literature is an important vehicle for conveying concepts and terms with and without the presence of physical contact between cultures. It also provides an important channel through which languages can influence one another, especially when works in one language are translated into another, and when nations and individuals share cultural encounters (Basal 2004:34). The Arab writers not only regard themselves as writers of Hebrew literature or translators of Arabic literature into Hebrew, but also as emissaries, intermediaries, and mediators between Arab and Hebrew culture, as well as possible contributors to resolving the Israeli Arab conflict. So, their strategy of including words in Arabic in their Hebrew literary texts is a conscious choice. Geris Tannous, whose work is credible picture of Arabic culture³⁰. It is obvious that the Arab authors could easily have found an alternative to the Arabic words they use since their Hebrew is fluent and in some cases their Hebrew writing is more developed than their Arabic³¹. But these authors have a reason for using Arabic in their Hebrew writing, namely that they wish to present an authentic view of Arab society and make the characters' speech seem real³².

Horvits (1998:57-59) describes the phenomenon of using Arabic words and phrases in Hebrew writing as *עִבְרִיזָצְיָה* [Ivritization], noting that other literary works also use words from their heroes' native tongue to create authentic seeming characters. When a writer chooses to use *עִבְרִיזָצְיָה* in various linguistic contexts, it is no random choice but rather a deliberate act with both a meaning and a goal, like any other

²⁹ See Kochavi, 1992: 270-271.

³⁰ A personal meeting (January 15, 2012).

³¹ For example, Tannous has stated that his capacity to express himself in Hebrew is richer and more developed than his ability to express himself in Arabic. He adds that "in Hebrew I was able to find several synonyms for each word, I felt freer."

³² On Authentic Language and Authentic Reported Speech in Hebrew and Yiddish, see Iben Zohar and Shmeruk, 1981: 82-87; see also Margolin 2003:53-60.

²⁸ Hesse 1971:26.

unique language usages. According to Schwarzwald (1994:39-41), the use of עֵבְרִיּוּת in certain linguistic contexts indicates, among other things, that the author regards non-Hebrew linguistic expressions not simply as an artistic component which can help to create an authentic literary linguistic experience in the discourse and conversation of Israeli Jews, they also express the social and ethnic essence of eastern Jews. Hofman (1970:5-14) stresses that the various functional divisions of עֵבְרִיּוּת and their linguistic elements not only convey the atmosphere of the story and underscore its reliability

[ḥamūla(h)]

1. אחרי הצהרים עזבו את ביתם הקטן בשדרות אלסעאדה והלכו לבית החמולה (משפחה) (הצבר:28).

'In the afternoon, they left their small house on Alsa'ade Street and went to the family's house'.

Original: وَفِي الْعَصْرِ عَادُوا مَنْزِلَهُمَا الصَّغِيرَ فِي حَادَةِ السَّعَادَةِ وَتَوَجَّهَ لِذَاَرِ الْعِيْلَةِ (الصَّبَار:31).

[wa-fi l'aşri ġādarū manzilahumā ş-şaġīra fī ġādati s-sa'ādati watawaġahā lidāri l-ṭīlati].

[fallāḥ]

2. אביך היה פלאח (איכר) כל חייו (הצבר:33).

'Your father was a farmer all his life' (The Cactus:33).

Original: كَانَ وَالِدُكَ مُزَارِعًا طَيِّلَةً عُمُرِهِ (الصَّبَار:35).

[kana wāliduka muzāri'an ṭīlata 'umrihi].

[ka'kim]

3. ... ומוכר הביצים כעכים (עוגיות) מכריז על סחורותיו שאין קונה להם (הצבר:39).

'... And the seller of eggs and bagels calls out his wares that nobody buys' (The Cactus:39).

Original: وَتَبَاعُ الْكَعْكُ وَالْبَيْضُ يُنَادِي عَلَى بَضَاعَتِهِ أَلَيْ لَا تُكُونُ رَاجِحَةً فِي الْغَالِبِ (الصَّبَار:43).

[wa-bā'i'u l-ka'ki wa-lbayḍi yunādī 'alā biḍā'atihi l-latī lā takūnu rā'iġatan fī l-ġālibi].

[inšall(h)]

4. ומה שלום אביך, יא שחאדה, שאל עאדל בעדינות. בסדר, אנשאלה (אם ירצה האל) (הצבר:76).

'And how is your father, Shḥade, Adel asked gently. Alright, if Allah wills (The Cactus:76).

Original: وَمَا أَخْبَارُ الْوَالِدِ يَا شَحَادَةَ لَعَلَّهُ يَحْتَرِ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ؟ (الخبر الحاي:79).

[wa-mā 'axbāru l-wāliḍi yā šḥādi(h) la'allahu bi-xayrin 'inšall(h)].

[yā ḡamā'a(h)]

5. אני לא מרגל יא ג'מאעה (הצבר:106).

'I'm not a spy, guys' (The Cactus:106).

Original: أَنَا لَسْتُ جَاسُوسًا يَا جَمَاعَةَ (الصَّبَار:107).

[ʾanā lastu ġāsūsan yā ḡamā'a(h)].

[tfaḍḍalū]

6. תפדלו (בבקשה), אמרה האישה (הצבר:68).

'Please, said the woman' (The Cactus:68).

Original: قَالَتْ الْمَرْأَةُ تَفَضَّلُوا (الصَّبَار:107).

[qālat l-mar'atu tfaḍḍalū].

[yā rabb]

7. תציל אותנו, יא רב, (אלוהים) מהמצב הזה (הצבר:84).

'Save us, O Lord from this situation' (The Cactus:84).

Original: تُبِّ عَالَيْنَا يَا رَبِّ مِنْ هَذِهِ الْحَالِ (الصَّبَار:87).

[tubb 'alaynā yā rabb min hāḍīhi l-ḥāl].

[marḥaba(h)]

8. אף אחד לא אמר לי מרחבא (שלום) (הצבר:).

'No one said Hello to me' (The Cactus:110).

Original: لَمْ يَقُلْ لِي وَاحِدٌ مِنْكُمْ مَرْحَبَةً (الصَّبَار:111).

[lam yaqul lī waḥīdun minkum marḥaba(h)].

[‘ahlan wa-sahlan]

'Welcome. Where is Adel?' (The Cactus:37).

[‘ahlan wa-sahlan. wa-‘ayna ‘ādil].

[walla(h)]

'Really, a polite boy from a good family!' (The Cactus:131).

[lā walla(h) mu‘addab ‘ibin ‘akābir]

9. אהלן וסהלן. איפה עאדל? (הצבר:37)

Original: أهلاً وسهلاً. وأين عادل؟ (الصبار:40).

10. ואללה (באמת), מנומס בן טובים! (הצבר:131)

Original: لا والله مؤدب ابن أكابر (الصبار:132).

VI. LOAN TRANSLATION

Loan translation involves creating a new lexical value (lexeme) in the borrowing language which has the same lexical meaning of the constituents of the original form in the lending language. Nir (1978:32) defines loan translation as a new form (word or phrase) which imitates the equivalent form in the foreign language. Maman (1991:106-115), who dealt with Arabized Hebrew and types of Arabacism, describes loan translation as the creation of a completely new Hebrew word or phrase using the pattern of a word or phrase in another language. To hone his definition, Maman differentiates between loan translation and borrowed meaning between Hebrew and Arabic. Regarding borrowed meaning, the word or phrase already exists in Hebrew and acquires an additional meaning. However, in loan translation the word or phrase enters Hebrew for the first time through Arabic.³³

When Hebrew was first revived as a language, it lacked vocabulary for expressing everyday matters and Hebrew culture. Words and phrases thus needed to be borrowed from various sources, chiefly Yiddish and spoken Arabic. Yiddish contributed to the expressions of contempt and insult, wit and humor, cuisine, and other areas of life for which language is needed. Spoken Arabic enhanced the language of play and the language of Israel's younger generation social interactions (which had no language for social exchange). Arabic also contributed to Hebrew's system of invectives, greetings, exclamations, socializing, language of sex, terms for oriental cuisine, and so on. It can at times be fairly complex to ascertain the historical source of loan translations Bar-Adon (1967:252-254).

a) *Loan translation of idioms and proverbs*

Proverbs allow us to express wisdom succinctly and clearly in just a few words; they can be created at any time, anywhere. The history of Arab proverbs goes back to beginnings of Islam, and in the same way that Arabic poetry was influenced by the desert lifestyle, so

proverbs were, with their melodious rhythm, comparisons, and internal rhyming schemes. Islam produced sayings with a moral and religious character, and other proverbs came into the language through local influences. Both types of sayings contributed to the ancient treasury of proverbs without excluding it. The Arabs nurtured their proverbial literature which they collected in special books, especially under the Umayyads, who were renowned for their Arab nationalist inclinations (Dana 2006:6).

According to Dana (2006:29), the main purpose of a proverb is to convey a didactic message. Indeed, almost all Arab proverbs contain words of advice, commands, or indicate preferences (of the type "this is better than that"). The didactic goal may sometimes be hidden, but it is almost always present on some level.

The idioms and proverbs identified in Masalha's Hebrew political discourse seem to indicate that he relates to these forms in two ways: first, as linguistic material which faithfully reflects the source culture; second, as national-cultural elements reflecting the uniqueness of the nation that uses them and that nation's ethnic and historical characteristics.

Unlike loan translation, which can be naturally interspersed within the literary text, the use of translated idioms and proverbs is a relatively overt way of introducing a speaker's culture to the target culture³⁴. Here are some examples:

³⁴ Some of the idioms will possibly be familiar to Jewish readers of Middle East origin. Guri (1994:13) notes that idioms with national-cultural elements reflect the unique character of the nation speaking the language as well as its historical and ethnic characteristics, etc. According to Guri, a literal translation may suffer from a lack of semantic transparency and will not be comprehensible to the reader, thus making it invalid.

³³ Regarding Loan translation in the Hebrew writing of Israeli Arab authors see Shakour (2010:45-76); (2014:83-94).

[Hayyad ha'ḥaṭ lo moḥet kappayim]

11. ... והיד האחת לא תמחה כפיים (הצבר:21).

'... And one hand does not join in the applause' (The Cactus:21).

Original: ... واليد الواحدة لا تصفق (الصبار:24).

[wa-l-yadu l-waḥidatu lā tuṣffiku]

The proverb היד האחת לא תמחה כפיים is borrowed from the colloquial Arabic proverb إيد واحدة ما تصفق. Its meaning is 'One hand does not join in the applause'.

[hayyad šebamayim lo kmo hayyad šeba'eš]

12. الإيد اللي في المي مش مثل الإيد اللي في النار (הצבר:73).

'I said to him that the hand in the water is not like the hand in the fire' (The Cactus:73).

Original: قُلْتُ لَهُ الإيد اللي في المية مش مثل الإيد اللي في النار (الصبار:76).

[qultu lahu l-lā l-ḥayyad l-mayyi(h) miš miṭl l-lā l-ḥayyad l-nār].

The proverb היד שבמים לא כמו היד שבאש is borrowed from the colloquial Arabic proverb الإيد اللي في المية مش مثل الإيد اللي في النار. Its meaning is 'The hand in the water is not like the hand in the fire'.

[hezzaher mera'atu šel 'adam še'ašita 'immo ḥesed]

13. היזהר מרעתו של אדם שעשית עמו חסד (הצבר:74).

'Beware of the evil of someone you do kindness for' (The Cactus:74).

Original: اتق شر من أحسنت إليه (الصبار:76).

[t-taqi šarra man 'aḥsanta 'ilayhi]

The proverb היזהר מרעתו של אדם שעשית עמו חסד is borrowed from the colloquial Arabic proverb اتق شر من أحسنت إليه. Its meaning is 'Beware of the evil of someone you do kindness for'.

['oznehem 'ašoyot ṭiṭ obašek]

14. אוזניהם עשויות טיט ובצק (הצבר:152).

'Their ears are made of clay and dough' (The Cactus:152).

Original: آذَانُهُمْ مِنْ طِينٍ وَمِنْ عَجِينٍ (الصبار:154).

[ʔaḏānuhum min ṭīn wa-min 'aġīn].

The proverb זָאן מִן טֵינ וזָאן מִן עֲגִינ is borrowed from the colloquial Arabic proverb آذان من طين واذان من عجينة. Its meaning is 'they ignore what they hear'.

[hayad hareka lo ne'veket 'im hadeke]

15. היד הריקה לא נאבקת עם הדקר, אדון אוסאמה (הצבר:61).

'The empty hand does not fight the sword, Mr. Osama' (The Cactus:61).

Original: اليد لا تباطح مخزأ أستاذ أسامة (الصبار:65).

[l-yad lā tbāṭiḥ maxraz].

The proverb היד הריקה לא נאבקת עם הדקר is borrowed from the colloquial Arabic proverb اليد لا تباطح مخزأ. Its meaning is 'The empty hand does not fight the sword'.

VII. SUMMARY

Lexical influences in general, and the use of Arabic words in particular in the translated work *The Cactus*, are not random acts. They are deliberately chosen with the aim of presenting authentic characters and creating reliable pictures of the culture depicted, since in describing reality the author needs to be authentic, and authenticity means being natural, honest, transparent and not fake or artificial when presenting characters. Masalha sees the use of Arabic words as a linguistic tool for conveying cultural objects, since language is an intercultural mediator, not just a tool for communication.

His fluency in Hebrew and his high degree of expressiveness in Hebrew makes Masalha's style of writing very fluid and fluent, and it would be no challenge for him to express the entire text in Hebrew rather than introducing Arabic words / phrases. This indicates that by using Arabic Masalha makes a conscious aesthetic decision to capture the characters' reality and speech using this linguistic technique.

No doubt the words and phrases in the translated work *The Cactus* reflect Masalha's view of Arabic as a linguistic material that can faithfully capture Arab culture and also contains national-cultural elements that illustrate the special qualities of the nation which speaks this language and its unique historical and

ethnicity qualities. For many of the writers, these words provide snapshots of Arab culture and faithfully portray a true sense of its character. Good example of this is the word *fallāḥ* (since in Arab society working the land and devotion to the soil are supreme cultural values).

Masalha views loan translations of idioms and proverbs specially from colloquial Arabic as linguistic material that accurately reflects his culture of origin and conveys didactic educational messages. He also perceives the idiom as material which contains national-cultural elements that reflect the uniqueness of the nation that speaks the language and the ethnic and historical qualities of that nation. In some cases, loan translations and translating idioms feels foreign to the Hebrew reader because the composition of the words in the loan translation is not always obvious and gives rise to a special meaning which the reader does not always know.

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