

Beyond Reception Politics of Gibran's *The Earth Gods*: A Symptomatic Reading of Two Arabic Translations

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Abstract

Part of a larger study on the viability and relevance of symptomatic reading practice to the much broader scope of reception theory and translation criticism, this article investigates a range of discontinuities in two Arabic translations of Gibran's *The Earth Gods*, one by the Archimandrite Anthony Bashir and the other by Egypt's Minister of Culture Tharwat Okasha. Putting to work the methodological assumptions of Venuti's symptomatic reading, instances of religious correctness and (in)determinacy are examined within the framework of reception theory, specifically Fish's theory of interpretive communities, to explore how texts work upon individuals to create a community and how a community works upon a text to generate meaning. The analysis ends with a discussion of the temporality of the translators' interventions and the historicity of reception, with a particular focus on the paratextual reviews of the critical establishment as a situational interpretive community. The symptomatic reading offers pointers as to how the translators experimented with the metaphysical system of Gibran.

Keywords

Arabic translation, Gibran Khalil, indeterminacy, literary translation, symptomatic reading, reception