A Postcolonial Reading of two Arabic Novels Translated into English: Abdel Rahman Al-Sharqawi’s *Egyptian Earth* and Jabra Ibrahim Jabra’s *The Ship*

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Abstract
The paper examines the politics and strategies of decolonization in Abdel Rahman Al-Sharqawi’s *Egyptian Earth* (1954) and Jabra Ibrahim Jabra’s *The Ship* (1973). In *Egyptian Earth*, the village’s struggle against unpopular government which is aligned with the former British colonizers of Egypt provides the dramatic backbone of the action. The peasants’ developed sense of nationalism manifests itself in their attachment to the land as a part of the decolonizational process at work in the novel. Obsession with land is presented as an overarching theme in *The Ship*, especially in the life of Wadi Assaf one of the central characters in the novel. Assaf, I would argue, is cast as a Palestinian Ulysses whose homecoming sentiment is the main driving force in his life. On a particular occasion in the novel Assaf, identifying himself with Ulysses, says: “There has to be a return.” The mode of representation used by Jabra in this novel is realism, but through the Homeric parallel mythical realism, in the terminology of Declan Kiberd, combines with realism in the presentation of action, thus giving the Palestinians’ struggle against the Israeli occupation of their land a universal epical dimension. From a decolonizational perspective, intertextuality seems to enable Assaf to hold on to his poetic homecoming sentiment in the face of the bleakness of the prosaic world of reality in which he is barred from returning home as a result of the Jews’ occupation of the country.

*Keywords*: decolonization, land, postcolonial, politics, strategy