**Leadership Statement**

I have always strived to live my life to its fullest potential. Coming from a low socioeconomic background and a first-generation university graduate, my family encouraged me to choose a profession that would provide financial security, such as medicine, law, or engineering. This was a challenging decision. However, I decided to pursue an intellectually and spiritually rewarding career, though I chose scholar life while researching children's literature. Through children's literature, it is possible to invest in the future to shape a more tolerant generation with critical values towards contemporary injustices. Because of this, both my research project and my social activity in recent years are aimed at investing in the literature of that future generation, but also in an attempt to understand the field in which it operates socially, economically, and above all - politically in Israel/Palestine.

Arabic children's literature in Israel needs to be in better condition. It needs to meet the expected quality standards of content, language, and illustration. This gap called for immediate action and remedy. I am a co-founder of the Hkaya Incubator. This initiative locates, encourages, and nurtures young and promising Palestinian authors, accompanying them through the entire publishing process (i.e., writing, proofing, production, and marketing). We host an annual international conference in the incubator with experts from Israel and the Arab World. In addition, we provide writing and book illustration workshops; this year, we also opened a review writing workshop for children's literature and cinema. All the articles and reviews on the Hkaya website are submitted in Arabic. We also provide Arabic translations of essential papers worldwide in children's culture research. These translated articles have become vital in many courses at dozens of universities and colleges.

Along with my great interest and engagement in children's literature, questions of translation between languages and the political context involved in them never stop occupying me. After many experiences in translating and editing children's literature in the last two years, I joined Maktoob's circle of translators, where we are creating a real translation revolution. Maktoob is the only project in Israel\Palestine dedicated to translating Arabic literature into Hebrew. By implementing mutual sovereignty in translation, Maktoob seeks to combat the segregation of Jews and Palestinians and dismantle the colonial power structure between the two languages. Instead of using one translator (usually Jewish), we assign two translators to work together on each text, one of whom is always Palestinian.

The Fox Fellowship will significantly contribute to my analysis of its universal and international setting, being a meeting place for students and researchers with different cultural and academic backgrounds. Moreover, the Fellowship will broaden my horizons in a first-class educational institution.

**Short Bio**

Loaay Wattad is a Ph.D. candidate at Tel-Aviv University’s Sociology and Anthropology department and School of Cultural Studies at Tel Aviv University Department. His current research focuses on the sociology of Palestinian and Israeli children's literature, the sociology of translation, and the politics of language. For his doctoral dissertation, Wattad aims to create a primary archival database of Palestinian children's literature and compare the various children's books published in different conflict zones in the Palestinian context. Before his doctoral studies, Wattad received his Masters's degree from Tel Aviv University with high honors. In his thesis, Wattad analyzed fairytales as political tales and specialized in the Palestinian adaptations of Little Red Riding Hood in Palestinian society as such, while showing how it serves as a platform for subversive political discourse.

Wattad worked as a teaching assistant in the Sociology and Anthropology department and taught the course "Historical and Intellectual Origins of Social Sciences" to Sociology and Anthropology students at TAU. He organized reading groups on "Gender and Feminism in the Arab world" in the School of Cultural Studies at TAU. In addition, Wattad is the editor-in-chief of the Arabic e-journal – Hkaya for studies of children and youth culture.