

باب الأبحاث باللغة الأجنبية:

1. Discourse Varieties and Power Relations in Maalouf's *Leo the African*



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Abstract

This research paper studies the discourse varieties present in Amin Maalouf's *Leo the African* in order to shed light on the power relations that exist among the characters of the novel. The power relations are manifested through particular discourses such as social, political, religious, and gender discourse. The research also examines these discourse varieties by analysing particular questions asked by the male characters. Males ask questions in order to serve a particular purpose such as influencing and controlling other people, exerting power, and revealing social status. The analysis of the various discourses reveals that there is a dominating patriarchal society in *Leo the African* whose social members, especially males, use language in order to control other social members other males and females. The analysis of the various discourses reveals the existence of an imbalanced society whose power social relationships among its members are unjust, unequal, and male-biased. The researcher utilizes Fairclough's (1995) Three Dimensional Framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as well as his definition of discourse as a social practice, in order to analyse the various discourses in *Leo the African*.

Key terms: Critical Discourse Analysis, discourse varieties, power, social relationships, patriarchy

ملخص البحث

يقدم هذا البحث تحليلاً للتتوعات الخطابية في رواية ليو الإفريقي للكاتب اللبناني امين معلوف من اجل اللقاء الضوء على العلاقات السلطوية المتمثلة في التتوعات الخطابية مثل الخطاب الاجتماعي و الخطاب السياسي و الخطاب الجندي.

و يحلل هذا البحث ايضاً الأسئلة التي تطرحها الشخصيات في الرواية و بخاصة الذكور. اما الهدف من هذا التحليل فهو تبيان التمييز الجندي و عدم المساوات في العلاقة بين الجنسين و التسلط الذكوري في مجتمع هذه الرواية.

إن هذا التبيان يتم من خلال تحليل أنماط معينة في اللغة التي يستخدمها الذكور في اسئلتهم التي يطرحونها على الإناث.

و عليه، فإن العلاقات في المجتمع الغرناطي في رواية ليو الإفريقي تشوبها السلطوية الذكورية - ليس فقط بين افراد المجتمع الغرناطي ولكن أيضاً في العلاقات بين افراد الأسرة الواحدة.

ان تحليل الأنواع الخطابية في رواية امين معلوف يشير الى وجود سلطوية في المجتمع الغرناطي الذكوري المتسلط و خاصة في العلاقات الاجتماعييه بين الجنسين بحيث يتم قمع المرأة و عدم السماح لها بالتعبير عن رأيها في عدة موضوعات تخصها مثل الزواج.

و يعتمد الباحث في التحليل، الأسلوب النوعي التحليلي من خلال استعمال الإطار النظري الثلاثي الأبعاد في تحليل الخطاب النقدي لعالم الاسنية Norman Fairclough .

المفاتيح: الخطاب النقدي، التتوعات الخطابية، السلطوية، العلاقات الاجتماعية غير العادلة، المجتمع الذكوري،

Introduction and Background

Analysing the various discourses present in the novel means looking ideologically at gender differences, hierarchies, and power asymmetries which are constructed through language. These are traced in how men and women communicate interpersonally, and in how they are represented through language.

Leo the African is a historical novel written in French by the Lebanese writer Amin Maalouf in 1986. It is based on the life-story of Hasan Ibn Mohammad Al-Wazzan, the sixteenth century traveler and writer who also came to be known as Leo the African. Leo Africanus and John Leo are also the names of Hasan Al-Wazzan. Leo is considered a historically complex personality. He is a Muslim who was born in Granada and spent his childhood in Morocco. He is a global traveler who spoke Latin, Arabic, Turkish, Italian slang, Castilian, Berber, and Hebrew. He converted to Christianity under Pope Leo X (Giovanni de Medici), but reconverted to Islam after forty years of traveling.

The novel depicts various historical episodes that put Leo in the company

of many important historical personas of that time. The novel is divided into four books. Each book is arranged chronologically according to 'year' in order to describe notable turning points in Leo's life. Moreover, each year is a cross road named after a specific city that had a major impact on Leo's life. Hence, in the novel there is the book of Granada, Fez, Cairo, and the book of Rome.

This paper aims to study the discourse varieties in *Leo the African*. The focus is specifically on how men ask questions and why they ask them. This is done through analysing the various discourses of the novel such as gender discourse, religious discourse, and institutional discourse (marriage discourse), as well as political discourse. The purpose is to identify and reveal gender bias patterns that exist in the novel in order to shed light on their importance in shaping the character's personality and viewpoints. The importance also lies in the patterns being clues that convey through language use, the patriarchal unjust social behavior which is normalized, accepted, and rewarded by society. This leads to the presentation of the following hypothesis: The novel includes in its foliage a variety of discourses that embed social imbalance as well as abusive power relations. These lurk under the questions asked by the male characters in *Leo the African*. The analysis of the discursive patterns reveals a male-oriented gender discourse that denotes domination and power. These questions are goal-oriented. They serve the purpose of manifesting the male power over the female characters so as to represent the females as submissive social members.

Literature Review

In conducting a search for information concerning this section of the article, the researcher came across many sources that discuss the prolific character of Leo, his scholarly achievements and contribution to the Islamic as well as the Western world (Lewis, 1982; Roman, 1990). The researcher also came across sources discussing Maalouf's views on identity and displacement (Al Hamed, 2017; Alhaj Mohammad, 2015). However, the researcher had hard times finding a linguistic, stylistic, or a discursal study conducted on *Leo the African*. Accordingly, this article complements other studies conducted on *Leo the African*, in hope that it would be a major contribution to the analysis of this novel according Critical Discourse Analysis. This literature review presents what has been written about *Leo the African*, in terms of the novel's genre, the character of Leo and some aspects of his life as well as Maalouf's writing style.

Brians (1999) sums up the novel and explains that El Hasan Ibn Mu-

hammad Al-Wazzan-El-Zayyati was born in the Moorish city of Granada in 1485, but was expelled along with his parents and thousands of other Muslims by Ferdinand and Isabella in 1492. Hasan then settled in Morocco where he studied in Fez and as a teenager, he accompanied his uncle on diplomatic missions throughout North Africa and Ghana. Hasan was captured by Christian pirates and was presented as an exceptionally learned slave to Pope Leo X. Then the Pope freed Leo from captivity, baptized him under the name "Johannes Leo de Medici," and assigned him the mission to write in Italian, a detailed survey of Africa. Such a survey according to Brians (1999), provided most of what Europeans knew and will know about the continent for the next several centuries. The novel ends with Hasan returning back to Morocco because his exile was over and he was free to go back home. In Morocco, Hasan gives up his life of journeying and decides to write his memoirs.

Andrea (2001) analyzes the implications of Leo's multifaceted identity. She argues that his identity bridges "...the dichotomy between Islam and Europe. Hence, his position is not simply one of those 'outsiders having a special role to play inside Europe'" (p.16). She believes that Leo uses his conversion as a functional literary strategy in his work in order to blur the lines between the Islamic and the European cultures. Moreover, Leo's ability to identify with diverse groups of people gives weight to his credibility as a narrator in *Leo the African*. Accordingly, Leo is not a cultural "outsider," but is rather "...an authority on multiple different groups of people" (p.16). To add more credibility to Leo, Andrea (2001) emphasizes his fluid identity when she argues that it allows him to have a "strategically ambivalent position on both sides of the subsequent orientalist divide between Islam and Europe" (p.17). As a result, Leo's "ambivalent" identity allows multiple groups of readers to identify and connect with Maalouf's literary work.

Masonen (2001) presents detailed and in depth information about Leo's life, geographic experiences, and scholarly knowledge as well as his works. She believes that Leo was "...unanimously respected as the most authoritative source for political and human geography of the Barbary Coast and Sudanic Africa" (p.167). After giving a detailed sketch of Leo's travels, Masonen (2001) evidentially posits that "Leo eventually returned to Morocco...his home country...where his relatives are still living..." (p.179). She concludes her lengthy account of Leo's geographical experiences by noting the importance of Leo as a scholar, where she believes that "Leo's... contribution of Islamic learning to Western civilization...offered new hitherto

unknown knowledge to Western scholars..." (Masonen 2001, p.187). Furthermore, she considers that Leo's own experiences, life voyages as well as observations comprised the basis of his knowledge. As such, he is a reliable historical source "...from the point of view of modern historiography" (Masonen 2001, p.188). Leo is an exemplar of how men can become an intellectual bridge that welds the two coasts of the Mediterranean. Being an exemplar scholar, Leo's life as well as his scholarly and geographic experiences "...prove that the religious, ethnic, and cultural borders between the Islamic and the Christian worlds were not insuperable..." (Masonen 2001, p. 190). Hence, Masonen (2001) stresses that Leo's authenticity resides in the notion that although he composed his works in Europe, he intellectually belonged to the Arab world.

Jahanara Kabir (2008) views *Leo the African* as a text which restores the internal connection among the Mediterranean cultures and identities. She believes that Maalouf's novel celebrates the subjective repossession of "...a medieval utopia retrieved as an alternative to the linear march of history" (p. 382). Accordingly, she positions Maalouf as a mediator of an international medieval culture who has retrieved it and preserved it in *Leo the African*.

Bahri and Sautman (2009, p. 175) consider that Maalouf's novel is a record of the Arab/Muslim historiographies. As such, these historiographies act as an interconnected link which joins the early-modern Mediterranean and the present day Mediterranean. Through these historiographies thus, *Leo the African* redeems the existence of the late medieval as well as the early Renaissance world "...as one of constant displacement of shifting places of belonging and identity, and intersecting political agendas and cross-cultural knowledge." (p. 189).

Doshi (2013) presents a critical reading of *Leo the African*, where he sheds light on the intertwining relationship between the genre of fiction writing and the broad notion of the Mediterranean identity harbored in the novel. Moreover, since Leo is the protagonist of the novel who himself writes it, the novel becomes a model in the genre of fiction writing, i.e. "...a 'Mediterranean mode'...that preserves the notion of Mediterranean connectivity." (Doshi 2013, p. 73). As such, Maalouf's *Leo the African* envisages real "...possibilities for reflexive critique" (Doshi 2013, p. 74) which enables Maalouf to portray a Mediterranean space with its shared cultural practices that highlight the social connectivity in the Mediterranean region.

Amin Maalouf was interviewed on the 28th of April in 2019 by the journalist Josephine Hobeika for L'Orient Le Jour which is a renowned Lebanese

journal published in French. The interview text was then translated into English and published on the online site of the journal's English edition. In the interview, Maalouf talks about many notions such as his childhood, his family, and expresses his view on the political situation of the Mediterranean in general, and Lebanon's political situation in particular, as well as his idea on the issue of identity and immigration. Accordingly, the researcher of this present paper draws a similarity between Amin Maalouf and Leo through certain aspects as follows. First, Maalouf says: "I grew up in the shadow of my father who was a journalist" (Maalouf qtd. in Hobeika 2020, p. 1). Similarly, Leo grew in his father's shadow to become a traveler himself and a ledger, not only of the finances and transactions of Granada but also a record keeper of the history that was unfolding before him at that time. Second, Maalouf says: "I have been observing the world ever since my childhood..." (Maalouf qtd. in Hobeika 2020, p. 1). In line with Maalouf's saying, Leo also grew up observing the events around him in Granada and the various places he travelled to. As such, Leo becomes a key witness to important events as Maalouf is.

Vasileios (2020), believes that Amin Maalouf narrates the story of Leo in an imaginary autobiography. However, *Leo the African* records the life of a real historical person who through his eyes, vivid epics of the Mediterranean and the Renaissance era emerge. To read the novel "...is like having been seated like a sultan...listening to al-Wazzan tell you the story himself." (p. 53). Thus, because the novel thrives in lively sceneries, it becomes Maalouf's "...key to a fantastic world, away from the relentlessly real, though surrealistic, world of today's Lebanon." (Vasileios 2020, p. 54).

To conclude this literature review, there is nothing more powerful and expressive than Maalouf's own words: "I only refer to the observations of important events I have been a direct witness to. When I talk about myself, it is mostly a pretext to talk about the world around me. In my book, the storytelling of intimate and personal history is at the service of global history." (Maalouf qtd. in Hobeika 2020, p. 2).

Theoretical Framework:

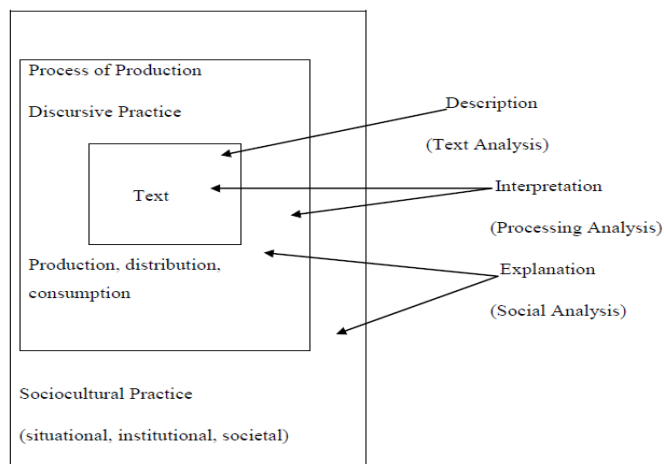
'Discourse' is a term that is used in a variety of ways in Linguistics and other social sciences. In one usage, discourse is very much associated with the work of Michel Foucault (1977). This use regards discourse "...as a social construction of reality, a form of knowledge" (Fairclough 1995, p. 18) which determines what is known, said, and done (by interlocutors) in a particular historical context. Another use of the term resides in 'discourse'

being seen as a “social action and interaction, people interacting together in real social situations” (Fairclough 1995, p.19). According to Fairclough (1995), discourse is a term that implies the role: “...of speaking and writing in the exercise, reproduction, and negotiation of power relations...” (p.14).

This research will analyze the various discourses in *Leo the African* for the purpose of exposing elements of power manipulation and social injustice. Thus, when a language is studied in terms of its relation to power and examined in terms of its effect on society, the analysis then moves from discourse analysis to critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995). Accordingly, this research utilizes Fairclough’s (1995) Three Dimensional Framework of CDA as well as his definition of discourse as a social practice.

Fairclough’s framework is the basis of this research because it is an instrument that helps the researcher to analyse the various discourses present in Maalouf’s novel in order to reveal instances of power and domination among members of society. Furthermore, the framework consists of three levels, namely the text level, the discursive practice level, and the socio-cultural level, wherein all of the three levels are governed by a dialectical relationship (Fairclough 1995, p. 97).

Fairclough (1995), considers that analyzing discourse is an amalgamation of three types of critique: (1) the actual text (which he describes as ‘discourse-as-text’) (2) producing, distributing, transforming and consuming the texts (which he describes as ‘discourse-as-discursive practice’) and (3) the larger social context which may have influenced the creation of the text (which he describes as ‘discourse-as-social practice’), which takes into consideration the underlying socio-cultural and power structures in society. **Figure 1** represents Fairclough’s (1995) Three Dimensional Framework of CDA.



Dimensions of Discourse Analysis

Dimensions of Discourse

Figure 1(Fairclough, 1995; p. 98)

The data of this paper are composed of eclectic quotations of various discourses that include questions asked by the male characters in the novel. Accordingly, particular quotations of interpersonal communicative aspects are analysed. Moreover, the chosen quotations also include conversations among the male characters themselves, as well as dialogues among the male and the female characters. Since this research uses Fairclough's (1995) Three Dimensional Framework of CDA, the method of analysis adopted by this research is thus qualitative. The following analysis is conducted according to level 1 and level 2 of Fairclough's framework, whereas the interpretation and explanation section of this research is an application of Fairclough's third level.

Analysis of Discourse Varieties and Power Relations

Speakers differ from each other in terms of age and social class or ethnic group, and therefore they may differ in speech patterns. Men are granted confidence and societal support by the patriarchal system and as a result, they gained power over women who became submissive and couldn't match men in society. Specific quotations are selected from several interpersonal communications through the various discourses in the novel and are analysed in order to exhibit imbalanced power relations.

Political Discourse

The questions posed by the male characters reveal important notions of social and domination, institutional discrimination, and abuse of power

through political discourse.

Men use questions for a specific goal. This results from their utmost motivation to succeed. In this quotation, the setting is a secret meeting that took place before the fall of Granada, where Hasan's uncle is engaging in the discussion of the siege, with society's most notable men:

"Those who wanted war...How can we stop this, except by resistance, mobilization, and jihad? Each time we have fought with a will, we have managed to check the advance of the Castilians, but after our victories, traitors appear among us...seek only to conciliate the enemy of God, pay him tribute, and open the gates of our cities to him. Has Boabdil himself not promised one day to hand over Granada to Ferdinand?" (Leo, pp.24-25)

In this excerpt, the goal of men is to reveal how Granada had successfully been able to protect itself from the Castilians and how it had lost its power under Boabdil's leadership. Their protection of the city is manifested by the use of the verbs that denote power such as 'resistance', 'mobilization' and 'jihad'. These verbs are inserted into the question about how to protect the city against war. They function as 'problem-solving' to the issue being discussed in the question itself. In addition, the function of the question is not only rhetorical, but is also one which serves to portray the resilience of the male characters. The negation pattern used through the lexical items 'except' and 'not', asserts the following premise: Boabdil will hand over the city to Ferdinand. Pragmatically, two interpretations are at play. The first is that Boabdil promised not to surrender, but because of his greed, he will surrender the city. The second interpretation entails the notion that Boabdil has indeed promised to hand over the city to Ferdinand on a silver plate.

In his dialogue with Boabdil, Al Mulih asks the following question in an attempt to indicate that his upcoming conversation is sensitive and assure that he is on Boabdil's side. He says: "My Lord, will you guarantee me immunity from punishment, aman, if I say to you fully and frankly what I think at this moment?" (Leo, p.45). In this quotation, the use of the lexical choices such as 'guarantee', 'aman', and 'frankly' put Al Mulih in a submissive position to Boabdil. The importance of these lexical choices is that they are collocations related to the context of 'safety'. Al Mulih then, directly addresses the men present in the room and tells them: "I could give Ferdinand's envoys a thousand excuses for delaying the peace treaty. But would this really be in the interests of the Muslims?" (Leo, p.48) in an attempt to make them avert from delaying their surrender and accept the fact that the Castilians will soon invade Granada. Al Mulih's political discourse is evasive and manipulative

in the sense that he tries to paint a dismal image in the addressees' mind of what would happen if they delay their surrender.

In addition to his use of the French language to originally write his novel, and although it was translated into English, Amin Maalouf includes in *Leo the African* some words and expressions that are Arabic but written in English alphabets such as: "... 'Kama takunu yuwalla alaikum.'..." (Leo, p.20). The use of Arabic is essential in two aspects. First, through it, Maalouf instills and asserts his Arabic identity and by extension, gives more credibility to Leo's identity and narrative voice. Second, using this expression is of peculiarity because it is an attested saying by Imam Ali (Peace Be upon Him). Its usage reveals Maalouf's knowledge of Islam and portrays the political situation of the Arabs (particularly in Granada) at that time. The political situation in the novel is exhibited through the treachery of Boabdil and his regalia, which is the result of gluttony and search for more power. Boabdil is a politician who does not mind surrendering the city to Ferdinand, provided that such an action keeps Boabdil in power. Thus, Boabdil's craving for control has blinded his conscience into surrendering Granada to Ferdinand on a silver plate.

Social Discourse

In the patriarchal society of *Leo the African*, men play important roles in shaping and sometimes dictating the behaviour of the people in the society. In the novel there is Hasan, the doctor (a physician), and Astaghfirullah who resemble common figures of our days. Hassan is the typical Arab young man who is torn between desire and duty. He is lost between Hiba and Fatima. Astaghfirullah is the Sheikh of our days who is very dedicated to his cause so that no conversation is fully carried to the end. The doctor is the man who has forsaken religion because it opposes what he believes in, as a physician. In addition, religious fanaticism in general, leads to closure and destruction. In the novel, it broke the Arab forces instead of uniting them. Furthermore, the most prominent religious figure in the novel is Astaghfirullah, and his character is revealed in his conflict with the doctor, a physician who symbolically represents Science.

Society is also mirrored in *Leo the African* through women and their attitude, how a mother should behave, and how people look upon a widow, in addition to Witchcraft and Superstition. A conspicuous feature of the novel is its insistence on superstition. Superstition strongly remains in the background of this gripping narrative from the beginning to the end, as though it were an essential companion of the people's fear of death, invasion, famine, and torture. In other words, fear and superstition seem to be very indivisible, and

both inevitably usher in, through innocuous beliefs: “But man is so vulnerable towards fate, that he can’t afford but attach himself to things enveloped with mystery” (Leo, p. 37). Therefore, the fear of losing priority prompted Salma to seek the Jewish midwife’s ‘supernatural aid’ whose magical elixir will bring Salma’s husband down on bent knees. Furthermore, women used to hide amulets and talismans in the children’s clothes to protect them from misfortune. Also, fortune hunters sought the aid of magicians to ‘undo’ whatever ‘spell’ was protecting the treasures which they were excavating. Thus, superstition is an ingrained element in the Granadan mentality and an essential component of its society. As a result, superstition is something that contributed to the eventual internal collapse of the city. As such, the Granadan society is a society where superstition is positioned as a representative of the human weakness, in order to counterbalance the moral strength of some characters such as Sheikh Astaghfirullah.

Sheikh Astaghfirullah shows a deep sense of patriotic spirit in his opposition to the Minister’s decree to surrender the city to Ferdinand. This is revealed in the Sheikh’s social discourse which has political ends. The Sheikh’s strong reaction is worth close observation for its startling realism:

“We have lit this country for eight centuries with our knowledge, but the Sun is about to eclipse...everything is darkening, and you Granada, know that your flame will be burning for the last time before it is extinguished, but let no man count on me to relight it, because my descendants will spit on my remembrance until the day of judgment” (Leo, p.56).

In this quotation, there is the use of antagonistic lexical choices such as ‘lit’, ‘flame’, ‘burning’, and ‘relight’ as opposed to ‘eclipse’, ‘darkening’, and ‘extinguished’. Such a usage is important because it reveals the notion that knowledge is the light that effaces the darkness of ignorance. This notion also stresses the idea that Granada had always been the beacon of scholarship in the region. However, if Granada is to fall captive, the ‘Sun’ of the country will be extinguished forever in the abyss of ignorance. Through the usage of the above antagonistic lexical choices, the Sheikh’s words include an indirect calling upon the citizens of Granada to fight the invasion and prevent their city from falling in captivity.

Gender Discourse and Institutional Discourse (Marriage)

In an encounter between Zarwali and Mohammad Al-Wazzan, Zarwali wanted the hand of Mohammad’s daughter in marriage by saying: “...to seal our agreement...what is better than a blood alliance? Don’t you have a daughter to marry?” (Leo, p.133). This question is of essence as it sheds

light on the institution of marriage and the nature of marriage itself. Marriage is usually a bond manifested as a result of love on the part of the partners. It occurs after the consent of the bride's parents and those of the groom. However, the questions addressed to Mohammad Al-Wazzan are an indirect demand for marriage. Pragmatically, it is a testimony that marriage has become a business means and something to seal a deal. Marriage has turned into a material commodity wherein the success of any upcoming business depends on marriage and blood alliance. As such, marriage is an 'agreement' and an arrangement. Zarwali's words are a manifestation of the discriminatory gender discourse in a patriarchal society. That is, the two questions reveal that the daughter herself has no opinion in what is to befall her. Hence, through such a discriminatory gender discourse, the male-oriented society has changed the female into a commodity and something that comes with the whole 'business package'. This makes her submissive to the patriarchal social roles and the male-dominated marriage institution. Accordingly, such an institution is rendered fake and unstable because its essence is personal interest.

In his conversation with Haroun, Hasan discusses two topics. The first is his own sister's marriage to Zarwali, and the second is the confrontation Hasan had with his own father about seeing him in a tavern; the result of which made Hasan himself feel consumed by guilt for bringing up such a topic with Haroun. The confrontation with the father made Hasan seriously think about giving up the fight against his sister's marriage, so Haroun says:

"You were wrong to say that to him. But he is at fault as well, and more so than you, because he is handing over his daughter to a murderer. Are you going to let him commit a crime against your sister to make up for your own offence?" (Leo, p.140)

Haroun tries to make Hasan feel guilty by manipulating him to think that it will be Hasan's own fault if his own sister marries Zarwali. The sense of guilt is intensified by the use of certain adjectival, verbal, and nominal lexical choices such as 'fault', 'murderer', 'commit', 'crime', and 'offence'. Marriage, as portrayed in the novel, is a kind of 'handing over' of the daughter as if she is a package or something materialistic to be dealt with on daily basis. Haroun's words in the quotation describe what some people think of an arranged marriage. As Haroun says, it is a crime committed by the father against his own daughter. Haroun even goes further to condemn Hasan, thus making him the criminal in order to intensify Hasan's sense of guilt. The expression '...make up for your own offence' exhibits the unjust gender

relation between Hasan and his sister. It is as if Hasan is using his sister as a shield to protect himself from his father's reprimanding and let her face all the drastic consequences.

Furthermore, men use questions to show assertiveness, power, and social status in order to stand up for their own rights. This makes men 'seem' self-assured and confrontational to anyone opposing them. Such assertiveness makes it easier for men to reach their goal, whether to exert power or show a status of high caliber. In the conversation taking place between Warda and her brother Hasan, he asks her several questions regarding her husband and children. This is revealed in the following series of questions directed to Warda, while she was thinking of her family whom she lost contact with:

"It could be imagined that such thoughts were running through her head when her brother shook her impatiently, 'Are these children yours?'... 'So only the girl is yours?'... 'Will you take her with you or leave her to them?'" (Leo, p. 66)

The first question Hasan asks, embeds much negativity and distrust. Asking whether the children, who are with Warda, are really hers, is as if Hasan is doubting Warda's faithfulness. Also, the second question reveals that Hasan is making sure that Warda has only one girl. However, his tone changes to a serious one when he asks her whether she will take her daughter or leave her behind. It is worth mentioning that Warda lost contact with her family after she was taken as a slave by the Muslims. The importance of the third question lies in the following notion. As a slave, Warda has no opinion in anything. However, in her encounter with her brother, he gives her the opportunity to speak up her mind and make a choice.

In the following encounter, Hasan is somehow being on the opposite end of the spectrum, siding with the female against the biased male discourse. However, his manipulation still preserves the idea of men being strong, steadfast, and firm social members who are decisive. His questions to his mother are as follows:

"I was fuming with rage, 'Don't you think it's scandalous that a little girl of thirteen should be given away to an old merchant as a goodwill gesture to seal a business arrangement?' I turned towards my mother aggressively, 'Do you also think that this man has the right to filch the money of the Muslims, to take a hundred women instead of four, to hold the Law of God in such contempt?'" (Leo, p.135)

There is the use of specific adjectives in order to magnify the portrayal of

such a marriage as a misdeed: it is ‘scandalous’. The use of the adjective ‘scandalous’ is semantically significant. It conveys that the marriage of Hasan’s sister besmears the family’s honour and reputation. Moreover, a comparison is made between Hasan’s sister and Zarwali through peculiar attributes. The sister is ‘little’ in comparison to Zarwali, who is ‘old’. Zarwali has ‘...a hundred women instead of four...’ which reveals his bending of God’s Law (in Islam a man is allowed to marry four women). Such an expression reveals the patriarchal abuse of religious laws to suit the male’s needs and interests. Furthermore, the ‘girl’ is to be ‘given...as a goodwill gesture...’ in order for a business arrangement to be finalized. Her marriage is an arrangement that goes with the deal and suits Zarwali. In addition, the use of collocations related to the register of business such as ‘merchant’, ‘seal’, ‘business’, ‘arrangement’, and ‘money’, is of essence. The use of these collocations fortifies the framing of the marriage concept as to how a male-oriented society looks at it. Also, Hasan hints at the notion that this marriage is illegal. The use of the verb ‘filch’ means the illegal possession of money; and since there is a business deal going on, the marriage of Hasan’s sister is deemed illegal as well. Accordingly, it is illegal for Zarwali to marry Hasan’s thirteen-year-old sister because she is underage, is still a child, and she is not a commodity. The use of attributes by Hasan such as ‘fuming’ and ‘aggressively’ makes no room for the mother to respond. In this respect, the words ‘fuming’ and ‘aggressively’ deny the mother her response and as such, these words are gender biased.

However, Hasan’s ‘fuming’ rage, ‘aggressive’ behaviour, as well as his discourse, totally change when he initiates the conversation with his father regarding the same issue. In the following encounter with the father, the power shifts from Hasan being in control to his father being in control. As such, Hasan’s position changes so as he becomes under the grip of his father. This not only reveals male dominance, but it also conveys patriarchal as well as parental authority. The power of the father figure is at its best in the following lines as follows:

“‘I want to say something to you which may displease you.’ He was in the middle of eating, as was his custom every morning, his bowl of wheat gruel, sitting on a leather cushion in a corner of the yard. ‘Have you done something stupid?’” (Leo, p.138)

The father’s uttering of the word ‘displease’ denotes a serious tone and reveals the severity of what is to come. Although the father’s question is rhetorical and does not demand an answer, it is one that implies irony, reprimand

mand, and threat. The irony is implied in the use of the attributive lexical item 'stupid' which means that the father is not proud of his own son; that his son is not 'a man'. The reprimand is for what Hasan is doing (i.e. preventing his sister's marriage). Moreover, the father's threat communicates the following message: you should not err or else you will be held accountable. Accordingly, and since he is under his father's cloak, Hasan knows very well what is to befall him if he derails or attempts to defy the patriarchal rules: he will be denied as a son and will also be dispossessed. The question posed by the father denotes that he knows what his son has done. It is something 'stupid' by the standards of such a dominating, male-oriented society. Accordingly and by extension, Hasan is not 'a man' in his father's opinion.

Religious Discourse

Religion plays an important role in *Leo the African*. Throughout the novel one can see that religion has controlled people's lives. Religion has affected their beliefs, attitudes, traditions and actions. In the novel, Maalouf also reveals his detailed knowledge of some religious practices in the Granadan society. This is exhibited in the religious discourse present in some encounters among particular characters.

Men use questions for manifesting their social control and domination. This results from their belief that they have the power to shape any situation and gear it in their best interest. Such a social control is seen through the religious discourse. In his talk about following the teachings of the Most High, Sheikh Astaghfirullah asks whether there are men who would defy the religious teachings of the Prophet. "Who dares to pretend that he is closer to the Truth than the Prophet and his companions?" (*Leo*, p.38) is a question uttered by the Sheikh in his attempt to make people realize that their Islamic practice is nothing in comparison to how it was originally practiced during the time of the Prophet. The Sheikh also pinpoints that those who followed what the physician says would have swayed severely. The Sheikh uses his social position as a man of religion to bring as many people as possible under his cloak.

Moreover, in Al Mulih's speech with Boabdil and the city notables, Al Mulih addresses the lord of the kingdom by directly asking whether the two sultans have replied to Boabdil's demand: "You, Lord of this kingdom, have written to the Sultan of Cairo, and to the Ottoman sultan; have they replied to you?" (*Leo*, p. 45). Here, Al Mulih's message is direct and his question requires a straight answer. The straightforwardness of the question reveals the gravity and seriousness of the situation, where an instant solution is needed.

Moreover, the use of the pronoun ‘you’ twice in the question, implies a play on Boabdil’s ego as a ruler and a man of political status. Such a question is manipulative especially since it is uttered in public and the answer would shape Boabdil’s image in front of the notables. Furthermore, in an incident in Fez, Sheikh Astaghfirullah gives a speech at a funeral and says:

“If God had offered me death as a gift, if He had called me to Him instead of letting me live through the agony of my city, would He have been cruel towards me? If God had spared me to see with my own eyes Granada falling into captivity and the believers into dishonour, would He have been cruel towards me?...Am I the only one present to think that death is worth more than dishonour? Am I the only one to cry out, ‘Oh God, if I have failed in my duty towards the Community of the Believers, crush me with Your powerful hand, sweep me away from the surface of the earth like some baleful vermin. Oh God, judge me even today, for my conscience is too heavy to bear’. You have entrusted me with the fairest of Your cities. You have put in my hands the life and honour of the Muslims; will You not summon me to render my accounts?” (Leo, p.103)

Because of the religious character of Sheikh Astaghfirullah, these questions are asked as a reaction to the incidents befalling the city, in an attempt to create a shock in the mind of the people who are present. The use of the –if clause is essential because the Sheikh’s aim is to remind the people of the sorrows of the past, link their fate to God, and encourage them to keep following the Islamic teachings. As such, the Sheikh stresses the idea of ‘dishonour’ by playing on the theme of shame. Moreover, the use of capital letters in ‘Your’ and ‘You’ is for the purpose of making the people bear their responsibility towards defending their city as they would defend their honour. These lines are an indirect address to men to protect the city from falling, in order for them not to be dishonoured by shame. Accordingly, the fall is a shame and a dishonorable act. The rhetorical questions posed by the Sheikh are molded in a religious framework. Such a religious discourse serves as a powerful political tool to motivate the audience, at the funeral, to revolt against the Castilians’ advance, block the attack, and defend the city.

Interpretation and Explanation

The analysis of the various discourses present in *Leo the African* reveals many aspects that are engulfed in the novel. These aspects include imbalanced power relations, gender bias, manipulation, and social rules that are governed by a patriarchal society. All of the aspects intertwine to shape the social interaction among the characters. Moreover, the social interaction

is exhibited in the interpersonal communication between the male and the female characters. Such a communication embed gender bias and unjust relationships. The unequal gender and power relationships are exemplified in the questions posed by the male characters in the various encounters among the male characters themselves, as well as among the male and the female characters. The questions were analysed according to levels 1 and 2 of Fairclough's (1995) Three Dimensional Framework of CDA. What follows in this section includes the interpretation and explanation of the various discourses analysed in the previous section of the research. This present section is an application of the third level of Fairclough's framework, which he labels 'discourse as a social practice'.

Leo the African harbours political discourse which reveals important notions about the political situation during the time period of the novel. At that time, the Arab states were falling one by one into the hands of Ferdinand. The last state to be standing was Granada. Its political situation was on turmoil and many of its leaders, especially Boabdil, were becoming more and more corrupt. Boabdil is a politician who understands power as something that always keeps him in a high position. Thus, he does not view power as doing something patriotic in order to protect one's country. On the contrary, Boabdil is ready to give up on Granada and surrender it to Ferdinand at any cost. Accordingly, Granada has fallen because of treachery and because it had lost its defensive fighting spirit. The political leaders and men of the court were corrupt and had no interest in fighting the invaders.

Moreover, the political discourse in the novel is not only tied to the political situation that was unfolding, but it is also chained to the social and the religious discourse as well. The rulers who govern Granada did not come from outside the city. The notables of the court are also citizens of Granada. Hence, the ruling regalia symbolize, to a great extent, a great portion of Granada's inhabitants. Accordingly, what goes on in the political realm of the city indirectly reflects the social realm in one way or another.

The social discourse portrays the social rules that govern the social members of Granada. Granada's society is chained by superstition, witchcraft and patriarchal regulations. The Granadan society is a society where males look at marriage as something transient. As such, women are not given the right to speak and daughters are not permitted to have an opinion in marriage. Furthermore, marriage as an institution is subjected to the patriarchal rules such as bigotry. When Hasan marries a slave, his own wife is obliged to live with her in the same house. So, Hasan's wife is submissive to the

patriarchal rules and accordingly, she accepts bigotry wholeheartedly.

In the Granadan male-oriented society, the family as an institution is ruled by the father figure who dominates everything; a clear example is Hasan's father. The father's dominating attitude is transferred to the son or the brother in the family. An example of the dominating attitude of the son is Hasan's attitude which is expressed when he speaks with his mother about his sister's marriage. Accordingly, the mother is not given the chance to voice her opinion of her daughter's marriage. Therefore, the males in the Granadan society control the females, whereas the females do nothing to stand up for their own right and fight the submissive social rules. However, the females are granted a portion of 'symbolic' domination through a specific cultural behaviour which is witchcraft.

Witchcraft and superstition are tied to religious beliefs and these beliefs are in turn directly connected to the religious discourse. Furthermore, the religious discourse also assumes a political stance. Sheikh Astaghfirullah uses religious saying in order to motivate Granada's citizens to defend Granada and keep the invaders out of its gates. The Sheikh also reminds Granada's citizens of the Islamic teachings. He wants to make sure that the citizens are back on the right religious track by following the Islamic teachings in detail. The Sheikh's opposing character is the doctor who stands as a constant reminder of the idea that science does not go hand in hand with religion. Moreover, in the society of Granada, religious laws are bent in order to suit personal interests. This is revealed when Zarwali is not content with the hundred women which he has, but he also wants to marry Hasan's under-aged sister as well.

Conclusion

To conclude with, language acts a means to convey gender patterns of communication and cultural norms. Insights to gender power relations are presented through the analysis of the discourse of the questions asked by the male characters in *Leo the African* via their interpersonal communication among other characters in the novel. Thus through language, literature has the power to reveal social reality and how the members of a particular social community interact. Hence, the discursive language in literature can exhibit the power relations among the characters in the novel as well as how each gender sees the world and the events unfolding in society.

In conclusion, Maalouf presents through *Leo the African*, a detailed portrayal of the Granadan culture, the social rules of the period, and the political situation at that time. Maalouf's zoom technique in depicting the exact social and cul-

tural practices of that time, enables the readers to identify with the characters and connect with the novel in all its aspects. Accordingly, Maalouf's writing style enables him to link the past to the present. As a result, the readers are able to draw a parallel between the socio-cultural practices and some of the political aspects of that period, and our present day social, cultural, and political aspects. Hence, reading Maalouf's novel makes the readers feel that nothing has changed. Almost all of the aspects that are portrayed in the novel are still alive till our present day. And this is the craftsmanship of Amin Maalouf, which gives *Leo the African* its universality.

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