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| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Forms and Acts of Resistance in Amin Maalouf's *Leo the African*

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| ABSTRACT
This article, which is entitled 'Forms and Acts of Resistance in Amin Maalouf's *Leo the African',* is about the problematic power and resistance in a novel which is set in Islamic Spain. The idea behind this paper is that power relations, albeit lopsided, are not absolute in this novel but fluid. Not to mention that it is not unilateral as commonly thought of but--multilateral. Indeed, the setting of this Moorish novel is informed by religious and cultural tensions and the Spanish Inquisition in the Crescent and Christendom relation of power. It talks about an era prior to the epistemic and physical aggression on Moorish culture in 1492 and the failure of the Moor-Spaniard *capitulación* and *convivencia*. But since power and resistance figure immensely in this text, the analysis problematizes that relationship following the approach of the Foucauldian post-modern, positive conception of power. The object of analysis is treated as fiction, and the underlying methods are content analysis. The thesis concludes that power is fractured from within by other discourses. Besides, the problem of power and resistance is part of what is called centripetal and centrifugal dynamics: Power oscillates between two contending blocs and is, therefore, never static; these are a potion, a cocktail mix.

| KEYWORDS

Power, forms, resistance, content analysis, Amin Maalouf, *Al Andalus*, *Leo the African*.

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Notion of Power and Resistance

This article tries to understand Amin Maalouf's novel *Leo the African* in terms of power relations. Its ideation is somewhat derived from Hayward Clarissa Rile's study, which makes it almost incumbent on those interested in the topic of power to study the "power relations that warrant criticism, which are those defined by practices and institutions that severely restrict participants' social capacities to participate in their making and re-making" (Hayward 4). In this regard, I like to quote Michel Foucault as a starting point when he says with regard to the concept of power: "In the camp of the left, one often hears people saying that power is that which abstracts, which negates the body, represses, suppresses, and so forth" (Rabinow 66).

However, my central construct in my theoretical investigation is the question of power/resistance and the presumable fluidity that always govern such a relationship when we talk about dominant institutions, the relationship between actors imbedded in the web/chain of power and resistance. I also presume that power cannot be wielded singlehandedly by people or groups just because they form acts of 'episodic or sovereign' domination or coercion, as Foucault calls it. Rather this paper works with the Foucauldian assumption that power is dispersed and pervasive. We can even venture to call it another denominator, which is metapower due to its fluxibility and shiftiness (*Foucault: Power Is Everywhere, Understanding Power for Social Change, powercube.net, IDS at Sussex University)*.

Before I delve into this topic, however, I ask pressing questions in the introduction, which are: is power real? Is it true that the understanding of power nowadays has shifted, that it is no longer as it used to be? Can we talk about a crisis of power? And is there a more just definition of power? Moreover, is it always negative? And does it have a pernicious effect on the Moorih subject/character in the novel *Leo the African*?

For Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci, power is negative since political states achieve dominance over their populace through "cultural hegemony." In his view, culture and power intersect, producing as a result what he calls *cultural hegemony*, which is the "unquestioned rule of an idea, a person or an entity. It is when one ideology--or way of interpreting reality--dominates all others." Thus, the state, through cultural hegemony, maintains its rule with what he calls the *consent* of society (Fusaro et al. l., 11).

For Foucault, social discipline and conformity are the foundation of power. That is to say; power is a "major source of social discipline and conformity." Specifically, Foucault shifts critical attention out of the 'sovereign' and 'episodic' exercise of power that happens to be conventionally/traditionally 'centered' in feudal states who coerce their subjects to reveal a "new kind of discilinary power," which can be seen/grasped in the "administrative systems and social services that were created in eighteenth century Europe, such as prisons, schools and mental hospitals." Force or violence, therefore, was no longer needed because people learned how to discipline themselves and behave accordingly within these new administrative systems (*Foucault: Power Is Everywhere, Understanding Power for Social Change, powercube.net, IDS at Sussex University)*.

At this juncture, I would like to convey that power is a major/key factor in the study of Moorish literature. But instead of glorifying it or deifying it, I like to rely on the thesis that contends that we should not revive "coercion, regimes and obedience when we want to talk about power." Instead, power should overrule relying on brute force or on external means of coercion. And if by any chance it succumbed to so doing, it would mean that it has failed." Power, despite what everyone is saying about it, is not "everything that forces obedience on people." It is not sultanic power (*pouvoir*), and it is impossible to be narrowed down just as a means for him or to gain more control by it (D'Allonnes 19-20).

Throughout this article, I declare that it is impossible to possess power univocally without acts of resistance, be they formative or textual, or by an out-and-out critical, formative counter-discourse aimed at severing dominant forms of power like the Spanish Inquisition or the abusive use of power hereby referred to as *pouvoir*. Essentially, our analysis tries to go beyond the traditional, negative notion of power and is grounded within the Foucauldian post-modern, "positive" conception of power, meaning that power, despite being repressive as Edward Said claims in his book *Orientalism*, "often produces the very categories that it seeks to regulate" (Calderwood 20).

Foucault does not see power as an instrument of coercion used by dominant manipulators. Not at all. Instead, he theorizes that "power is everywhere." He states that it is "diffused and embodied in discourse, knowledge and regimes of truth." To Foucault, power is diffuse rather than concentrated. It is embodied and enacted rather than possessed, discursive" (*Foucault: Power Is Everywhere, Understanding Power for Social Change, powercube.net, IDS at Sussex University)*.

Foucault believes that the concept of power should not be thought of as "wholly negative, narrow, skeletal," as it is widely thought of. Instead, he sees that "if power were anything but repressive if it never did anything but say no, do you really think one should be brought to obey it?" Then Foucault goes on to elucidate that "what makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it enduces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse" Moreover, it "needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than a negative instance whose function is repression" (Rabinow 61).

From the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries forward, Foucault demonstrates that there was a "veritable" technological peak in the making and/or productivity of power. Specifically, the monarchies of this classical period sustained and maintained big state "apparatuses," like the army, the police, and fiscal administration. What was also established in this period is a novel "economy" of power, that is to say, "procedures which allowed the effects of power to circulate in a manner at once continuous, uninterrupted, adapted, and 'individualized' throughout the entire social body" (61).

Technically, however, these novel state apparatuses, Foucault eluminates, "are both much more efficient and much less wasteful." They are also less costly economically, less risky in results, and less open to loopholes and resistances, unlike the previously employed techniques of forced tolerances "from recognized privileges to endemic criminality" and costly ostentation (spectacular and discontinuous interventions of power, the most violent of which was the "exemplary … punishment") (61).

New technology for the exercise of power has subsequently also emerged from the classical period. Foucault believes that what he finds striking in "these new technologies of power introduced since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is their concrete and precise character, their grasp of a multiple and differentiated reality" (61).

Power functioned via "signs," which are characterised by due loyalty to lords, rituals, and ceremonies. It also functioned through "levies," which take the form of taxes, pillage, humting and/or war. However, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, "a form of power comes into being that begins to exercise itself through social production and social service," which means that productive service was demanded to be met by individuals in "their concrete lives" (61).

Consequently, "a real and effective 'incorporation' of power was necessary, in the sense that power had to be able to gain access to the bodies of individuals, to their acts, attitudes, and modes of everyday behavior. Hence the significance of methods like school discipline, which succeeded in making children's bodies the object of highly complex systems of manipulation and conditioning." However, these novel techniques of power needed to deal with the phenomenon of the population at the same time, meaning it had to "undertake the administration, control, and direction of the accumulation of men (the economic system that promotes the accumulation of capital and the system of power that ordains the accumulation of men are, from the seventeenth century on are, correlated and inseparable phenomena). Ergo, the problem of demography, public health, hygiene, housing conditions, longevity and fertility emerges (66-67).

Moreover, we should not forget to mention resistance as a key factor in this shain of relations. So, in relation to disciplinary power, Michel Foucault talks about resistance in this fashion. It happens where power relationships are at their most "rigid and intense." Resistance aligns with the idea of power as productive. According to Foucault, repression produces its own resistance (Mc Nay 39).

Foucault asserts that "there are no relations of power without resistances; the latter are all the more real and effective because they are formed right at the point where relations of power are exercised" (Foucault 142). In the same vein, Ortner understands power as `being "double-edged, operating from above as domination and from below as resistance" (139).

According to Sergiu Balan's interpretation of post-modernist Foucault, "usually, power is understood as the capacity of an agent to impose his will over the will of the powerless, or the ability to force them to do things they do not wish to do. In this sense, power is understood as possession, as something owned by those in power. But in Foucault's post-modern opinion, power is not something that can be owned, but rather something that acts and manifests itself in a certain way; it is more a strategy than a possession."

Furthermore, Foucault sees that "power must be analyzed as something which circulates, or as something which only functions in the form of a chain … power is employed and exercised through a netlike organization …[in which] Individuals are the vehicle of power, not its points of application" (98). Not to mention that "individuals or persons or subjects are always embedded in webs of relations, whether of affection and solidarity or of power and rivalry, or of some mixture of the two." (Ortner 151).

Moreover, Foucault states that power is "coextensive with resistance; productive, producing positive effects; ubiquitous, being found in every kind of relationship, as a condition of the possibility of any kind of relationship" (Kelly 38). Besides, the pursuit of cultural projects and exerting one's agency often involves, for some, the compulsory subordination of others. Nevertheless, those selfsame others are "never fully drained of the agency. [They] have both powers and projects of their own, and resistance is always a possibility" (Ortner 153).

When it comes to power and resistance, surrender is also a very surreptitious and useful strategy, as we are going to see later on in this article. Indeed, it is the most subtle and deceptive means to the will-to-power. That is why we attach the adjective surreptitious to it. Green explains this theory by adding that "when weak, surrender is better than to fight for honor's sake." That is to say; surrender is tantamount to power since it allows the weekend a time to recover as well as a time to irritate and torment the conqueror. "By turning the other cheek [one] infuriate and unsettle him" (163).

My rationale is to think of power in terms not of oppression as it is historically thought of by Machiavelli, Hobbes and their contemporaries but as a form of knowledge that circulates within the social body; that can be viewed moreover as a construct that challenges the dominant structures of truth, power or knowledge. For me, resistance to power does not happen directly as in wars or clashes, but all levels of ideas and the Moorish culture of learning and the cultural forms and acts heretofore are taken for granted.

In addition, I intend to rely on thematic analysis as support to explore the possibilities of power anxieties and answer the central question, namely, how is power contested in this Moorish novel?

In essence, the relation of power, as Foucault asserts, is not negative as it is usually thought of, and as I will try to demystify textually, formally and thematically in the foregoing article. Based on the relationship of oppression and transgression that govern such dialectic and unstable concepts as power, my findings show that the individual agency resists such dominant forms of power, where institutions, like the Inquisition in my context of the study, tried to extinguish the culture of tolerance and learning of the other altogether in its exercise of cultural hegemony because it understands its power of ideas and its power of cultural forms.

2. Amulets and Charms as Forms of Resistance in Amin Maalouf's Novel *Leo the African*

Amulets are thought to protect against dangerous times or critical periods, like the brittle early years of a nursing baby, or against ravenous animals in olden times. "one particular charm, called "wolfstone," was even supposed to tame wild animals if placed upon their heads" (Maalouf 30). So, it is virtually impossible to possess 'naturalistic' power univocally by someone without this kind of textual resistance, namely mysterious-made charms against evil powers or the hard, cruel element.

However, they are frowned upon by men who think that they are anti-religious. For this reason, they wish their wives especially to stop making them because it is said that God only has the power to protect children or property from evil. But in the case of the narrator, Hassan al wazzan, he has never been able to part from the "piece of the jet which Sarah sold to Salma on the eve of [his] first birthday, which has cabbalistic signs traced upon it which [he] has never been able to decipher" (30). This can be referred to as an 'indirect' resistance on the part of the main character, Hassan. Hassan recounts that he

> Do not believe that this amulet really has magical powers, but man is so vulnerable in the face of Destiny that he cannot help himself being attracted to objects which are shrouded in mystery. Will God, who has created me so weak, one day reprove me for my weakness? (30).

Moreover, charms are attached to the clothes of the infant baby, Hassan, to "defeat the evil eye." "I was the prettiest and most fussed over child in the whole of al-Baisin, and your grandmother--may God forgive her--had sewn two identical charms onto my clothes, one on the outside, and the other hidden, to defeat the evil eye" (11). Here, resistance to religious power by the grandmother of Hassan is striking, since the narrator himself gently rebukes her, saying "may God forgive her," which clearly entails that this kind of recalcitrant practice is considered anti-religious, and leads its practitioner to perdition and punishment.

To explain why amulets are worn feverishly for thousands of years and to get a closer insight into the workings of power consistencies regarding these practices within the text, it is helpful to refer to it as having power connotations that are laden with the notion of power/resistance when it particularly comes to patriarchal power vis-à-vis women. Here, the traditional, negative notion of power is thwarted by the acts of these women that concoct charms for protection even though they are prohibited religious-wise. Indeed, we see in this instance a Foucauldian post-modern conception of power in motion, which is translated into power and its anti-thesis, resistance.

Furthermore, power and the subordination of others here are not at the service of some projects, as has been said. Rather, resistance is at the service of women's culturally constituted intentions, desires and goals, which is the making of these amulets (Ortner 139).

Although pursuing cultural ends and projects entails internal relationships of power and struggle, women emerge defiant and obdurantly recalcitrant to religious mores. Ergo, power is not totally repressive as it is thought of in olden scholarship. The case of women hereby testifies to this point.

Besides, the worth mentioning aspect of resistance herein is the fact that it is being frowned upon by religious peoples of Granada due to its unreasonable aspects, which women at that time could easily heave to, recalsitrantly, of course. Here women are obdurantly resisting male power by this--act of resistance--concotion of charmful-made charms, and its circulation among women and infants or children is viral: "The pious considered these beliefs and practices contrary to religion, although their own children often carried amulets because such men rarely managed to persuade their wives or mothers to listen to reason" (Maalouf 29-30). Although irrational, the act of resistance here undermines patriarchal power and makes it rendered to thwarting.

Moreover, the agency of these women is recalcitrantly asserted by this act of resistance. They pursue cultural ends or projects of their own, which are opposed to the agency and power of their male counterparts, who think that it is wrong to make these concoctions. Indeed, this internal relationship of power is marked by its resistance aspect and the assertion of women's power instead.

Additionally, charms are thought to protect the bearer against harm or evil. So, they are not just aesthetic decorations or textual symbols. Indeed, ancient people, who lived in 'strange' and scary settings, wore amulets "to protect homes, families, and livestock" from wasting away (Webster). The Granadan people of our text, *Leo the African*, are no exception, and it happens that it is an act of resistance on the part of Granadan women since their patriarchal husbands disapproved of it religiously but failed to nip its consequences in the bud.

Moreover, the pursuit of cultural projects and exerting one's agency often involves, for some, the compulsory subordination of others. Nevertheless, those selfsame others are "never fully drained of the agency. [They] have both powers and projects of their own, and resistance is always a possibility (Ortner 153). For instance when Gaudy Sarah says to Salma that "a man should not come near either of his wives during the pregnancy for fear of damaging the foetus or causing a premature birth," it is hard to grasp by some patriarchal husbands and may lead to them being choleric and vexed in response. So when Gaudy Sarah relates this message, it "cause[s] my father to flare up like a dry stick and launch into a stream of barely intelligible invective in which the words 'rubish,' 'old witches,' 'she-devil' kept being repeated like the blows of a pestle in the hollow of a mortar" (Maalouf 8).

Nonetheless, the act of voicing one's own feminine opinions in relation to patriarchal power does not completely drain them of their feminine power or agency. Rather, by voicing it out clearly, they manage to put an end to conjugal relations during pregnancy. Thus, feminine power and savvy get the upper hand here and compel the patriarch's husband to abstain from conjugal relations.

As a kind of punishment, Muhammad strictly forbade her [Salma] to receive 'that poisonous sirah' in his house, hissing her name with the characteristic granada accent … He remained in an extremely bad temper for several days, but with equal measures of prudence and vexation kept away from both his wives' bedrooms until after their confinements (9).

3. Powerful Contentions and Witchcraft as Resistance in Maalouf's Novel *Leo the African*

In this instance, the power is unstable, for it has got no axis. Rather, it is shared between two contending entities or powers with constituted cultural ends and projects of their own, between the slave girl, Warda and the free, Salma. A slave, who is ironically free, and a wife, which is free but shackled by tradition and social mores, referred to as *al-hurra*.

> I was free, and she was a slave … so we were not evenly matched. She had all the wiles of seduction at her disposal; she could go out unveiled, sings, dance, pour wine, wink her eyes, and take off her clothes, while I could never, as a wife, abandon my reserve, still less show the slightest interest in your father's pleasures. He used to call me "my cousin"; he would refer respectfully to me as *al-hurra,* the free, or *al-arabiyya*, the Arab, and Warda herself showed me all the deference a servant girl owes to her mistress. But at night, she was the mistress (6).

To explain her condition textually, Gaudy Sarah of granada hint at the contingency of emancipation or freedom in these wise words: Without gazing upwards, she said, "For us, the women of Granada, freedom is a deceitful form of bondage, and slavery a subtle form of freedom" (6), which means that women of Granada relish a state of slavery in which they assert themselves, like slave girl Warda. Although it sounds ironic, it is thus that they can achieve their existence and pursue profusely cultural ends and projects, like garnering love, having babies of their own, or just being mistresses of the house.

The cultural project of a slave girl, Warda, prevails since she manages to get pregnant first due to extensive conjugal relations. Although this should make her empowered and elevated, she willfully conceals this good news from everybody, lest she would become the target of some evil doing on the part of the other contending power, Salma *al-hurra*. "Warda had become pregnant already, though she had become pregnant already, though she had taken care to conceal her condition for her own protection … it became a contest as to which of them would bear a son. Or, if both had sons, which would be the first to give birth" (7).

Indeed, we are seeing an instance where two agencies are battling, charged up by similar cultural projects, or ends, which are to summarily produce a male heir, with which to fortify their feet as 'first' lady of the house. These powers produce their own resistance, however, which is exemplified in the relation between Salma and Warda and the powerful third party, the patriarch's husband. Hence, witchcraft is a means by which to assert feminine power and to resist being undermined by beauty, seduction or wile.

To fasten her place as first lady of the house and garner the love of her patriarchal husband, Salma *al hurra* relies not on wile but on witchcraft. To achieve intimacy, she pours three drops of a greenish elixir into her husbands' cup. This advice, the jewess Gaudy Sarah gave her to the end of achieving an intimate state with her husband. So, the cultural desire and project of Salma *al-hurra* hinges on the concoction of this elixir and giving it to her husband forthwith to drink.

Indeed, witchcraft emerges as a form of resistance carried out by the act of Salma, which is geared towards the emancipation politics that Gaudy Sarah sold her by those three elixir drops. Gaudy Sarah **"**took out a tiny greenish stoppered bottle from her wicker basket," saying, **"**Tonight, you must pour three drops of this elixir into a glass of orgeat syrup and offer it to your cousin with your own hand. He will come to you like a butterfly towards the light. Do it again after three nights, and again after seven …" (7).

Thus, resistance as an 'act' has gained effect with these simple but strong three drops. As a result, Salma becomes pregnant, and the competition between her and Warda is now who is the first to give the patriarch's husband, Mohamed, his first-born heir son. "When Sarah came back a few weeks later, I was already having my morning sickness. That day [Salma] gave her all the money [she] had on [her], a great handful of square dirhams and maravedis, and [she] watched her dancing with joy" (7). Indeed, the act of resistance here and its positive outcome is celebrated gleefully by Gaudy Sarah. Rejoicing, she knows that she is the author of this charm-made resistance.

The act of giving birth to a son, henceforward called Hassan, finally makes Salma a*l-hurra* powerful and first lady of the house, whilst Warda is being relegated and made less powerfull henceforward. Although power was unstable between them at the outset, resistance to dominant beauty and seduction on the part of Salma gave fruition since she managed to produce, firstly, a male heir. Thus, power is undermined here by the resistance act of giving birth to a boy.

4. The Richly Displayed Stalls of the *Suq* as a Resistance Form and Surrender as a Resistance Act

To distract the envading Castilians, a resistance strategy in the shape of richly exhibited stalls and goods is deployed by the emir of Basta, Yahia, to put under the carpet the penury state of his city.

To prove their imminent assault wrong, based on intel supplied by war scouts, the Emir devises this kind of stratagem to protect his city and gain the upper hand and/or to level the uneven, existing relations of power in negotiating terms of surrender, because the Castillian war party is extremely powerful and daunting and surrender seems like the viable solution. Indeed, as goes the well-known hadith of the prophet Mohammed (PBUH): War is but a trick.

Although power is not really at the disposal of the emir, he ingeniously comes up with this resistance strategy to render the terms of surrender in his favor because he already envisages the outcomes of futile military resistance. Hence, power is consciously negotiated by him, with his own terms, and the knowledge of the emir, who conceives this strategy, can also be considered as power. So, power functions within a broader chain of interrelated powers, namely that of the emir against that of the powerful Christians. The small power here of the emir is able to fend for itself and is able to challenge the dominant one with an erudite/knowledgeable trick.

However, foodstuffs are in actuality dwindling due to the siege that was laid on Basta, with its inhabitants, by the Castillians. But this does not hinder the Emir, Yahia, from christallizing a spectacular kind of resistance. To carry out his stratagem/resistance, he intentionally ordered his servants to adorn the stalls of the *Suq* with all kinds of rich foodstuffs to send a message to the Castillians that, despite the siege, life and subsistence are at their prospering rate like ever before.

Nonetheless, "… everyone in Granada, and probably elsewhere, knew the truth and was laughing at the deception" (26). So, we see that this royal resistance is very effective since he renders power able to be undermined and revisited. Indeed, power is not so daunting here.

This is how deception and resistance are carried out by the emir of Basta. It is like what the prophet (PBUH) said: War is but a trick. So, the emir embodies that line of prophetic thought and war traditions to help defeat enemies; or, in this case, reach an "honourable settlement" with the Christians. So to carry out this resistance stratagem,

> Yahya had devised a form of deception; to collect together all the remaining provisions, to display them prominently in the stalls of the suq, and then invite a delegation of Christians to come and negotiate with him. Entering the city, Ferdinand's envoys were amazed to see a such wealth of all kinds of goods and hastened to report the fact to their king, recommending that he should not continue to try to starve out the inhabitants of Basta but instead propose an honourable settlement to the city's defenders (26).

Here we cannot think of power in terms of oppression solely, as it is historically thought of by Machiavelli and Hobbes and the like. Rather, it is a form of knowledge that spans the relations of power within official bodies. Here, the emerging dimension of the power of the emir challenges the dominant military power and its structures of domination. Indeed, resistance, as we reiterate, does not happen directly as in wars but at the level of clever ideas, like the machination/stratagem and/or trick of the ingenious

emir, and cultural forms like the stalls of the *suq*. Moreover, power here is as problematic as it is an "essentially contested concept" (Lukes 27).

Although the Christians seem to possess the upper hand because they are warring and sieging heavy attacks on the city of Basta, their power seems to miss that aspect which makes it more daunting and effective. Due to its negative aspect, based solely on brute force, domination and ability of form, it undermines itself because it lacks the power/knowledge aspect that the Basta emir has at his disposal. Power, here, is undermined and deceived effectively, to a mocking extent, to gain the upper hand, which makes it amenable to resistance if not to thwart altogether.

We can also say that the emir of Basta, through his resistance, takes the indirect route to power as a means to safeguard his own and his property/city. Indeed, as it has been noted by Robert Greene, it is incumbent on those who seek to grapple with power to disguise their cunning as the emir has done. To succeed in any power endeavour, moreover, one must be indirect and appear saintly while being instantaneously the "consumate manipulator" (Greene xxii). The emir and this war stratagem/trick is a case in point.

Indeed, the power moves of the emir of Basta are not overt but covert. For "It is much more sensible to appear fair and decent, cautious, congenial yet cunning; democratic yet devious; and most importantly, indirect, so as no one can trace your power moves" (xxii). Like Machiavelli, the emir used seduction, in the shape of the richly adorned stalls, and deception (putting under the carpet the penury state of the city) as subtle strategies towards the attainment of albeit shades of power and gaining the upper hand in his surrender negotiations.

Surrender itself is a resistance strategy deployed by the emir to keep his own and protect his property. Surrender is so important since it grants its wielder the ability to "sabotage" the foe indirectly. The possibility of freedom, moreover, is a viable contingency with this surrender tactic that could lead to vanishing the foe altogether when they themselves experienced weakness in years to come, as Greene attests (165).

If, on the other hand, the emir refused to surrender and took the dangerous action of armed resistance, he would easily have experienced a swift defeat at the hands of the powerful Christians. Indeed, his rationality and precociousness caution him against such a route of armed resistance and lead him towards diplomacy instead. The result was somewhat of a victory in terms of power relations and the existing structures of domination that turned into a settlement. Indeed,

> It is always our first instinct to react, to meet aggression with some other kind of aggression. But the next time someone pushes you, and you find yourself starting to react … do not resist or fight back, but yield, turn the other cheek, and bend. You will find that this often neutralizes their behaviour… By yielding, you, in fact, control the situation because your surrender is part of a larger plan to lull them into believing they have defeated you (167).

Moreover, we can say that the emir's act of resistance, which is surrender, is similar to that of caustic German writer Bertolt Brecht, who, to escape oppression in the United States, endeavours to "outfox the committee by appearing to surrender to it while subtly mocking it" exactly like the richly adorned stalls of the Suq that can be considered here as a latent mockery on the part of the emir.

Brecht was different from the other oppressed members, who directly challenged the committee's authority and refused to answer its questions. On the contrary, he answers questions politely and "deferre[s] to their authority" (56).

Thus, Brecht, like the emir of Basta, manages to escape the committee's anger and oppression because he yields to their authority. Thus, he stops himself from being persecuted further or even put on a blacklist. Brecht dexterously "kept the upper hand by appearing to yield to power while all the time running circles around the committee with vague responses, outright lies that went unchallenged because they were wrapped in enigmas and word games" (56). The lie which the emir tells is in the shape of the richly adorned stalls of the suq, with all kinds of fruit and provisions to put under the carpet the penury which gripped his city.

This surrender tactic deceives authority/power, making it feel assured and respected but enabling its wielder to resist in subtle ways by ridicule and word games: twisting the meaning of words to its wielder's advantage (166-167). And twisting the appearance of things to the advantage of the emir, namely, deceiving the Christians by beautifying the city and adorning it to hide the fact that the city is, in fact, damaged.

Indeed, power requires the ability to play with appearances, as the Emir of Basta does, which means learning how to deceive as well as to enthrall, like in a pageant or masquerade. Indeed, deception is a "developed art of civilization and the most potent weapon in the game of power" (xx).

It is not the worst thing in the world to give in to one's enemy. Sometimes one is just preventing the ax blow from falling on one's neck. The important thing in these situations is to live to fight another day like the emir of Basta does with his surrender tactic as resistance.

One should make sure, however, that the enemy has a high opinion of the other's usefulness, like the Emire of Basta, to keep their personal animosity towards the other to a minimum in order for this idea/concept to work.

The emir of Basta uses the surrender tactic to transform weakness into power. However, the surrender tactic is one of those tactics that are counter-intuitive to most people; that is to say, it does not come naturally to them.

But what if one does not protect one's own city? The alternative usually seems unthinkable. If one does not fight, the enemy will occupy the centers, burn the cities, hear the lamentations of the women, etc. In the novel *Leo the African*, Amin Maalouf writes: "…the master of the city could only think of how to avoid confrontation. He sent message after message to King Ferdinand, in which the only question was that of the date of the surrender of the city, the besieger talking in terms of weeks and the besieged in terms of months" (Maalouf 40).

However, there is an alternative in some specific situations. The case of the emir is an exemplary case in point. He does not fight because he knows his usefulness of himself to the foe, and by this surrender tactic, he strives to keep the animosity of the foe to a minimum to reach an entente and then equal the lopsided power relations in years to come.

If he chooses armed resistance, on the other hand, knowing that the foe is more powerful than he, he would have been swiftly defeated. So, the viable solution is not to meet power with power but with a tactic called surrender, to protect one's own, one's women and one's city relying on forms of resistance discussed before.

Now that the emir is defeated, he helps in this very defeat by participating in the project of ensuring the foe's victory and letting him live. In short, he offers to become a jannisary to the Christian foe.

The Christians accept the help of the emir, which is defeat without armed resistance, so a fight is avoided, and the path to victory is accelerated by the help of this emir. Of course, the foe can always take the emir's centers at his leisure some other time.

However, in the back of the emir's mind, this state of affairs is only temporary because any fluctuations in the fortunes of the new ruler/emir could bring about a reversal of positions; thus, the emir is waiting for his opportunity. Indeed,

> When you are weaker, never fight for honor's sake; choose surrender instead. Surrender gives you time to recover, time to torment and irritate your conqueror, and time to wait for his power to wane. Do not give him the satisfaction of fighting and defeating you--surrender first. By turning the other cheek, you infuriate and unsettle him. Make surrender a tool of power (Greene xii).

5. Conclusion

The objective of this article has been to prove that the relation of power is not negative in Amin Maalouf's novel *Leo the African*. Moreover, we have found that the relationship between power and resistance in Amin Maalouf's novel *Leo the African* is fluid, which means that power undermines itself in this novel and is not wielded singlehandedly. Thus, the Foucauldian concept of power, which we have opted for in the analysis of this novel, is not negative but positive. Besides, it has been noted that power is fractured from within and from without by witchcraft, powerful contentions between subjects, surrender and the stalls of the *suq* in Basta city, and also with Brechtian resistance. It is hoped that my study has made a significant contribution to the existing literature on said novel and on bridging the gap between the theory of Foucault and practice, which I have found aplenty in the text/novel. As far as limitations are concerned, unfortunately, I have not stressed the Islamic context of my study enough together with the notion of discourse and did not translate the Granadan cultural practices into a pertinent discourse. Further research can be done by applying the same notion of power/resistance in a novel entitled *Granada: A Novel* by Radwa Asour because little has been written in this area. In this novel, there is an interplay that exists between collective and individual history, fiction as a subversive act, space and the so many cultural forms and acts that need to be peruzed/laid bare in Ashour's novel *Granada*, such as the hamam, the act of transportation, make belief and writing as resistance. So, this article reached the conclusion that it is impossible to possess power univocally without acts and forms of resistance such as charms, amulets or witchcraft. Surrender can also be a strategic act of resistance deployed in difficult times by people who are under siege, for example, to lull the colonizers into assuming that they have won the battle, while in reality, the status quo of the Castilian victors can easily be altered in years to come. Moreover, Brechtian resistance is also an act of resistance which help its deployer to eschew falling into the negative exercise of power and

what it entails. The richly displayed stalls of the *suq* can also be considered as a form of resistance to power because it dupes the Castilian opponents into believing that the city they are trying to sack is still surviving the siege.

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