

The Iranian ‘Other’ in Saad Al-Qorash’s *El Maestro*: A Study Based on Bakhtin’s Theory of the Self and the Other”

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

Saad al-Qorash, the prominent Egyptian novelist, has gathered four characters from different cultures who portray their own culture in the novel *El Maestro*. The Iranian other has a special appearance in this novel, which can be criticized through Bakhtin’s theory of the self and the other. Moreover, considering the relationship between comparative literature and culture, this article intends to examine the Iranian other in *El Maestro*’s novel based on his theory and Bakhtin’s other.

2. Aim

The purpose of this research is to deal with the Iranian other in *El Maestro*’s novel based on his own theory and Mikhail Bakhtin’s other, in addition to introducing *El Maestro*’s novel, using a descriptive-analytical method. Considering that no independent research has been done about *El Maestro*’s novel in Iran, this essay seeks to analyze the Iranian other in *El Maestro*’s novel based on his own theory and Bakhtin’s other.

3. Theoretical framework and Methodology

In this section, the framework of Bakhtin’s self and other theory and the research method will be examined. Culture is a constructive element that covers wide areas. Theorists have done countless cultural studies. Mikhail Bakhtin is considered

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one of the most prominent cultural theorists, whose reputation is mostly centered around two concepts: the concept of dialogue and carnival. According to Bakhtin, structuralists paid special attention to monologues, which made the reader passive. Bakhtin developed his widely used and powerful theory based on Dostoyevsky's novels. From the examination of Bakhtin's theory of dialogue, it was found that the self is formed in relation to the other.

4 .Discussion

The title of the novel's main character, El Maestro, refers to the conductor of a symphony orchestra, symbolizing how the story's characters have chosen Mustafa to orchestrate the rhythm of their conversations. Due to the fact that Mustafa has a cane in his hand and uses it to regulate the conversation of his companions on the boat, he has a close resemblance to the conductor of the orchestra. The title of this novel is the story of four male characters (Anil Handi, Tso Tibetan, Nawaf Arab and Mustafa Masri) with different cultures in a boat who meet each other in a short period of time. On the other hand, there is another main character in the novel who completes the dialogue of the characters. She is Laura, Mustafa's American wife, who is introduced to the reader through the flow of Mustafa's mind. El Maestro's novel requires the study of reliable scientific and historical sources in order to understand the dialogue of the characters. The main message of this novel is getting to know different cultures and accepting others. Another Iranian discourse in Elmaestro's novel consists of several sections, each of which has different topics and can be reviewed with its own theory and Bakhtin's theory. The other as an outsider: in Laura's conversation with Mustafa in the novel El Maestro, Mustafa first declares his lack of knowledge of the Persian language; In an obvious slip, he uses Iranian instead of Persian. According to the background of the relationship between Iran and Egypt, Laura expects that Mustafa has knowledge of Persian culture and language and considers the other as an insider according to Bakhtin's theory; But contrary to Laura's expectation, Mustafa considers the other Iranian as a stranger. Need for the other: considering Bakhtin's theory of the self and the other, it was realized that the Iranian, as himself, gave importance to the other in this episode; because the Arabic language was the familiar language at that time. Lack of self-reactivity towards the other: In this discourse, the view of the Iranian other is seen in a prejudiced and belligerent position. According to Bakhtin's own theory and another, Ms. Gharbi was an activist; But her Arab counterpart has shown helplessness in the form of a questioning denial of lack of action in the discussion of the place, the Persian Gulf. Self-infatuation with the other: According to the general atmosphere of Laura and Mustafa's constant conversation in El Maestro's novel, Mustafa reacts with narcissism about the Iranian other, which is consistent with Bakhtin's self and other, and the mentioned example is the reason for this claim. Being influenced by the other: In this section, the Iranian other is generally treated with a positive view that Laura was influenced by the stories of One Thousand and One Nights and Shahrazad the storyteller. Another existence as a vital matter:

Ibn Sina's law was vital for Mustafa, who was a lawyer. Although it has led to his wrong assumption, the existence of another and its importance is realized. More than another: Laura as a western woman from her point of view, based on her information, informs Mustafa about the other Iranian, which is Bakhtin's view on another matter. One of the fruitful results of paying attention to the other is the expansion of one's own and the other's perspective on a subject. Another understanding: In this section, another Iranian understanding, that of Asadi Toosi, was implicitly mentioned; As in Bakhtin's theory of the self and the other, the other has been artistically addressed. Forming yourself in another way: One of the ways to shape yourself is to look at other positive points, which in this case has a vital role for yourself. Another role in Sufism: According to Bakhtin's theory of the self and the other, Sufism causes a deep understanding of oneself with respect to existence; Just as Iranian Sufism led to Armstrong's correct understanding of Islamic Sufism. The character's view of the Iranian other: the author describes the story from the characters' point of view and this is reminiscent of Bakhtin's theory, which assigns an independent voice to the characters and the author has no influence on the process of the story.

5 .Findings and conclusion

The novel *El Maestro* by the Egyptian novelist, Saad Al-Qorash, has provided a suitable platform for cultural criticism studies, especially Iranian culture. He brought the opposing and agreeing thoughts of the characters of the story with special delicacy without interfering his personal opinion, which is one of the most prominent foundations of Bakhtin's theory. There is a close relationship between the theory of imagery in the field of comparative literature and Bakhtin's theory, which is in line with the purpose of comparative literature that tries to connect different cultures. Bakhtin also emphasizes attention to the other. Another Iranian discourse in *El Maestro's* novel based on Bakhtin's own theory and the other are: the other as non-self, the need for the other, lack of self-activity towards the other, Self-narcissism against the other, being affected by the other, the existence of the other as a vital matter, extra-vision against the other, understanding the other and giving form to oneself in another way, another role in Sufism and finally, the character's look at the other. The characters of *El Maestro's* novel, especially Laura, have a positive opinion about the Iranian culture in some cases although sometimes they do not present a fair opinion. Also, we see conflict in the Persian Gulf discourse due to prejudice. In all discourses, the presence of others is seen, which is the basis of Bakhtin's theory. In all discourses, the presence of others is seen, which is the basis of Bakhtin's theory.

Keywords: another Iranian, *El Maestro's* novel, theory of self and other, Mikhail Bakhtin, imagery, Comparative literature.

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