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Self-Insertion as Discursive and Core-Identity of Gibran's Al Mustafa

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Abstract---This paper studies the core identity of Al Mustafa (the chosen) in Gibran's book *The Prophet* (1923) as an individual property by investigating its discursive features as revealed in the words and deeds of the participants in the discourse. The study deals with how Gibran refers to the protagonist and how this portrayal reflects on the identity of the writer. It examines how the prophet refers to himself, his worries and needs, how the interlocutors address him in the discourse, and finally how the telling of the ongoing actions leads to the perception of Al-Mustafa as a prophetic figure. The results show that the source of the power of such a discursive identity is neither nature, nor certain established institutions, but the people of Orphalese themselves (the participants in the discourse), plus those readers of Gibran's book who discern a prophetic figure in his words. The process through which these power works is that of "recognition", in that rational individuals recognize Al-Mustafa as a Prophet in the discourse. Such recognition is realized as an active "self-achievement" arising as a deserved property of how the prophet's words and deeds are recognized by his followers.

Keywords---Al-Mustafa, core-identity, discursive-identity, Gibran, identity, the chosen.

Introduction

The concept of identity in this paper refers to how the prophet (Al-Mustafa) is recognized in the discourse by others as being a certain kind of person based on his acts and interactions in the given context. The focus here is on core identity as an individual property (Martin & White, 2003), as more an individual property than group identity. Simply, the identity of the prophet is not based upon his allegiance to, or participation in, the practices of a distinctive affinity group. When approached from the discursive perspective, being a Prophet is an individual trait, a matter of one's individuality. However, the source of this trait – the "power" that determines it – is reflected by the discourse of other people as well as by his

achievement. The study deals with the core identity of Gibran's *The Prophet* as an individual property by investigating its discursive features as revealed in the words and deeds of the participants in the discourse. Then the discussion moves to define what is meant by discursive identity. The description deals with how Gibran refers to the protagonist and how this portrayal reflects on the identity of the writer. This is followed by examining how the prophet refers to himself, his worries and needs, and how the interlocutors address him in the discourse. Finally, the section describes how the telling of the ongoing actions leads to the perception of Al-Mustafa as a prophetic figure. The results are then summarised in the conclusion (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1993; Kumpulainen & Rajala, 2017).

The researcher has analyzed the identity of the prophet by exploring: (i) what kind of a prophetic figure is spelled out in the text; and (ii) how far this figure stands out as a mere ascription, or an active self-achievement arising as an emergent property of how the prophet's words and deeds get recognized by actors or both. This requires the examination of two key textual elements in relation to his figure: the words and deeds of the Prophet himself, as well as those of other characters in contact with him. The latter category includes the author Gibran, and all the other active participants in the narrative, which is divided into 28 discrete subtexts. Since the original text of *The Prophet* is written in English by Gibran, the researcher will focus on the original text only. The text is a volume of twenty-eight prose poems with different titles (Kostyrya & Yanchenko, 2021; Zohdi, 2017; Suryasa, 2019).

Text format and unit of analysis

The text of *The Prophet* falls into 28 chapters or subtexts (henceforth: T), with the following subtitle topics:

T1: *The Coming of the Ship*; T2: *Love*; T3: *Marriage*; T4: *Children*; T5: *Giving*; T6: *Eating and Drinking*; T7: *Work*; T8: *Joy and Sorrow*; T9: *Houses*; T10: *Clothes*; T11: *Buying and Selling*; T12: *Crime and Punishment*; T13: *Laws*; T14: *Freedom*; T15: *Reason and Passion*; T16: *Pain*; T17: *Self Knowledge*; T18: *Teaching*; T19: *Friendship*; T20: *Talking*; T21: *Time*; T22: *Good and Evil*; T23: *Prayer*; T24: *Pleasure*; T25: *Beauty*; T26: *Religion*; T27: *Death*; T28: *The Farewell* (Gibran, 1923).

Chapters are composed of a variable number of verse lines, ranging from a maximum of a hundred and fifty (T28), to a minimum of ten (T19). For easy reference, each verse line has been given a successive cardinal number. Thus, a citation having the notation: (T1:L1) means: Text No. 1; verse-line No1.

The author's references to *The Prophet*

Gibran's identity in his book *The Prophet* is predicted to contain more positive attitudes. This has been found to be a common positive behavior and positive ideology (Martin, 2004), that increase and support cooperation with readers (Cicourel, 1973). These "cooperative intergroup policies" are considered to be "self-disclosure and helping across original group lines" (Dovidio et al., 1997; Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004; Dovidio et al., 2005, 2008; Nier et al., 2001; Cicourel, 1973).

In Fairclough's (2003), terms, identity can be seen as both "construed" and the potential for "construction". To critically analyze Gibran's *The Prophet*, it is important to display how Gibran refers to the main protagonist in the text and how Gibran relates the identity to religion. Gibran refers to the main protagonist Al-Mustafa using prophetic names and nominalization.

Prophetic names

Gibran uses four names when introducing the Prophet. Besides his choice of The Prophet as the title of the whole text, Gibran also refers to his main protagonist as Al-Mustafa, the chosen, and the beloved (T1: Line 1). The meanings of these four names are listed below, using Short Oxford English Dictionary (SOED) where applicable:

- The Prophet: a person who speaks for God or a god; a divinely inspired teacher or interpreter of the will of God or a god (SOED, 2002).
- Al-Mustafa: this is the transliterated form of the Arabic male proper name (المصطفى), which means: "The One chosen (by God)". When introduced with the definite article (al = the), it is one of the names that Muslims specifically use in reference to the Prophet Muhammad. Derived from the transitive verb (يُصْطَفَى : yaṣṭafī: cull and choose), it denotes the act of God's preferred selection of a certain individual for the delivery of Divine messages. One verse of the Glorious Quran reads:

اللَّهُ يَصْطَفِي مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا وَمِنَ النَّاسِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ. (سورة الحج ، الآية 75)

Allah chooses from the angels messengers and (also) from humans. Indeed, God is all-hearer and seer. (Al-Haj Sura, Verse 75)

The presupposition here is that God's choice of his messengers is based upon hearing the words and seeing the good deeds of the chosen ones.

- The chosen: taken by preference, selected, picked out; specifically, the elect of God, in a theological sense.
- The beloved: (the one) dearly loved.

One relevant observation is that Gibran provides his English readers with the Arabic name of The Prophet (Al-Mustafa) plus its translation into English (*the chosen*). Such inter-lingual crossing of proper names is significant in that it denotes the intentional trans-cultural fusion of identities. Equally important is the juxtapositioning of divine choice to that of love (*the beloved*). The prophet stands out not only as a divinely chosen figure but also as one loved by his followers (Scholer et al., 2014; Maselena et al., 2021). Mutual love, of course, is a universal requirement, preached by all religions. Still important is the fact that although Al-Mustafa's followers recognize him as *Prophet of God* (T1: L59), Al-Mustafa himself never claims that he is the deliverer of the Word of God. On the contrary, he considers himself no more than the mouthpiece of the souls of his followers:

People of Orphalese, of what can I speak save of that which is even now moving your souls?
(Gibran, 1923, T1: L67)

In another context, he even declares that he came to the people of Orphalese to benefit from their wisdom:

Wise men have come to you to give you of their wisdom. I came to take of your wisdom. (ibid, T26: L54)

Relational reference

Relational reference refers to how Gibran describes the Prophet's relationship with the others. In one verse-line, The Prophet is also described as a figure who is "sought" and "believed in" by a certain dweller (Almitra, the seeress) in the city of Orphalese from the very day of his arrival there:

And he looked upon her with exceeding tenderness, for it was she who had first sought and believed in him when he had been but a day in their city.
(ibid, T1:L57)

The subject's performance of the act of seeking and believing in him denotes the existence of a personal and social urge to listen to his teaching, even though Almitra is a highly revered figure as the seeress.

Self-reference

When Al-Mustafa refers to himself, it is often the case that he connects himself with animate and inanimate elements of his surroundings. Thus, the mariners of the ship - which is scheduled to take him back home - are called sons of my ancient mother (T1:L18), and the sea is invoked as his sleepless mother (T1:L22). He also describes himself as a seafarer among seafarers (T1:L21); a boundless drop of water coming to a boundless ocean (T1:L25); mist gathering into dew (T28: Ls 20-25); and a mountain lake mirroring the summits, slopes, and flocks of the thoughts and desires of the people of Orphalese (T28: Ls29-30).

His empathy and close contact with the people of Orphalese is described by Al-Mustafa as being basically spiritual and remotely fulfilled:

*In the stillness of the night I have walked in your streets, and my spirit has entered your houses,
And your heart-beats were in my heart, and your breath was upon my face,
and I knew you all.
Ay, I knew your joy and your pain, and in your sleep your dreams were my dreams.* (Gibran, 1923, T28: 26-28)

Al-Mustafa also unites himself with the people of Orphalese through his use of the first-person plural pronoun "we" in collective reference to all as being *wanderers*, and *travelers* scattered by winds like *the seeds of the tenacious plant*:

We wanderers, ever seeking the lonelier way, begin no day where we have ended another day; and no sunrise finds us where sunset left us.

Even while the earth sleeps we travel. We are the seeds of the tenacious plant, and it is in our ripeness and our fullness of heart that we are given to the wind and are scattered. (ibid, T28: Ls 12-14)

In contrast with such a collective use, and throughout the whole of the text of *The Prophet*, Al-Mustafa never refers to himself in the first person plural noun "we". In many verse-lines, Al-Mustafa promises that, though he is leaving for his birthplace, he has every intention of coming back one day to the people of Orphalese.

*I go with the wind, people of Orphalese, but not down into emptiness; And if this day is not a fulfillment of your needs and my love, then let it be a promise till another day.
Know, therefore, that from the greater silence I shall return. (ibid, T28: Ls 20-23)*

Indeed, his mutual understanding with the people of Orphalese is declared by Al-Mustafa to be sought even after his death.

*And though death may hide me, and the greater silence enfold me, yet again will I seek your understanding.
And not in vain will I seek. (ibid, T28: Ls 17-18)*

Al-Mustafa's reunion with the people of Orphalese is deemed possible through rebirth:

*Forget not that I shall come back to you.
A little while, and my longing shall gather dust and foam for another body.
A little while, a moment of rest upon the wind, and another woman shall bear me. (ibid, T28: Ls 144-146)*

In reference to his role as a prophet, he asserts that the thoughts of the people of Orphalese are the real source of his words and that both are waves coming from the memory of ancient times:

*I only speak to you in words of that which you yourselves know in thought.
And what is word knowledge but a shadow of wordless knowledge?
Your thoughts and my words are waves from a sealed memory that keeps records of our yesterdays,
And of the ancient days when the earth knew not us nor herself,
And of nights when earth was upwrought with confusion, (Gibran, 1923, T28: Ls 54-58)*

He even tells his followers that what he has found in them is that which is greater than wisdom (T 28: 61), minimizing his achievement as a prophet while maximizing their generosity:

*Less than a promise have I given, and yet more generous have you been to me.
You have given me deeper thirsting after life.
And in this lies my honour and my reward,*

*That whenever I come to the fountain to drink I find the living water itself
thirsty;
And it drinks me while I drink it. (ibid, T28: Ls 70-75)*

Al-Mustafa describes himself as a shy person, living alone in high places, presumably for the purpose of meditation in solitude: *a seeker of silence am I* (T1: 35). He would also not make himself a burden on the hospitality of others, though everyone would be more than happy to care for his visits and to accommodate him.

*Others have come to you to whom for golden promises made unto your faith
you have given but riches and power and glory.
Less than a promise have I given, and yet more generous have you been to
me.
You have given me deeper thirsting after life.
Surely there is no greater gift to a man than that which turns all his aims into
 parching lips and all life into a fountain. (ibid, T28: 69-72)*

In order to explain his habit of keeping himself aloof, he expounds to the people of Orphalese that his taking to solitude is not without a good, unselfish cause: to attain greater belief and knowledge of them.

*But were their solitude deeper they would have known that I sought but the
secret of your joy and your pain,
And I hunted only your larger selves that walk the sky.
But the hunter was also the hunted: For many of my arrows left my bow only
to seek my own breast.
And the flier was also the creeper;
For when my wings were spread in the sun their shadow upon the earth was
a turtle.
And I the believer was also the doubter;
For often have I put my finger in my own wound that I might have the greater
belief in you and the greater knowledge of you. (Gibran, 1923, T28: 99-105)*

Then, he clarifies to his followers the cause of any vagueness that they might have encountered in his speeches: to make room for their eventual deeper and better understanding of all things:

*Vague and nebulous is the beginning of all things, but not their end, And I fain
would have you remember me as a beginning. (T28:112-113)
Yet you shall not deplore having known blindness, nor regret having been
deaf. For in that day you shall know the hidden purposes in all things, And
you shall bless darkness as you would bless light. (ibid, T28: Ls126-128)*

Finally, eternal hope is implanted in the followers of his comeback in reasserting to them his resurrection whenever in need:

*What was given us here we shall keep,
And if it suffices not, then again must we come together and together stretch
our hands unto the giver.
Forget not that I shall come back to you. A little while, and my longing shall
gather dust and foam for another body.*

A little while, a moment of rest upon the wind, and another woman shall bear me. (ibid, T28: Ls 142-146)

The description above provides textual evidence of the significant fact that Al-Mustafa never refers to himself as a 'prophet' or some 'holy' person in his speeches. Nor does he claim that he is a 'wise' or a 'socially distinguished' man. On the contrary, his self-reference asserts three important things: (i) that he is indebted to the people of Orphalese for his words; (ii) that he is tied in both physical and spiritual unity with the people of Orphalese, though he is a shy person living in solitude; and (iii) that the continuity of such a union rests on the resurrection.

Interlocutors' reference to the Prophet

Although Al-Mustafa never publicly refers to himself as a prophet, nor even considers himself one, there is no doubt that the people of Orphalese believe in and openly declare his prophethood. Thus, Almitra addresses him as: *Prophet of God, in quest for the uttermost* (T1:59). She also believes that his speech is blessed:

*And Almitra the seeress said,
Blessed be this day and this place and your spirit that has spoken. (T28:2-3)*
Other followers address him as **master** when they seek his answers to their questions:
*Then a lawyer said,
But what of our Laws, master? (T13:1-2)*
*An astronomer said,
Master, what of Time? (Gibran, 1923, T21:Ls 1-2)*

When the ship comes to take Al-Mustafa back home, the elders of the city entreat him to stay with them and not to go. They openly put forward their reasons for asking him to stay in Orphalese:

they need his presence because they do not want to lose him as a source of hope, vision, and knowledge. They address him saying that he is considered neither a stranger nor a guest. As a young man, he has become just like their own son, who is dearly beloved by all, and who they do not want to miss.

No stranger are you among us, nor a guest, but our son and our dearly beloved. (ibid, T1:45)

Similarly, the priests and priestess declare that they did not fully realise the great depth of their love for him until the immanent hour of their separation from him.

*And the priests and the priestesses said unto him:
Let not the waves of the sea separate us now, and the years you have spent in our midst become a memory.
You have walked among us a spirit, and your shadow has been a light upon our faces.
Much have we loved you. But speechless was our love, and with veils has it been veiled.
Yet now it cries aloud unto you, and would stand revealed before you.*

And ever has it been that love knows not its own depth until the hour of separation. (ibid, T1:47-52).

The above terms of reference show that the people of Orphalese both revere and love Al-Mustafa. They also believe in him as a source of inspiration, hope, and high aspirations. Significantly, they consider him as a beloved son who belongs to them and with whom they do not want to part.

The Prophet's worries and needs

When Al-Mustafa sees his ship coming to fetch him back to his birthplace, a feeling of exhilaration sweeps over him: at last, and after twelve long years of waiting, his hope of returning home has come true (T1: 1-3). However, as soon as this initial moment of joy passes, a feeling of sadness takes

over since he finds himself in no position to be able to go back home in peace without feeling sorrow for leaving the people and the land that he loves and to which he has become strongly attached.

But he descended the hill, a sadness came upon him, and he thought in his heart: How shall I go in peace and without sorrow?

Nay, not without a wound in the spirit shall I leave this city.

Long were the days of pain I have spent within its walls, and long were the nights of aloneness; and who can depart from his pain and his aloneness without regret? (Gibran, 1923, T1:Ls 5-7)

Two conflicting needs overcome him: he cannot tarry longer and must embark, and at the same time, there are too many spiritual bonds that tie him to the terrain and its people to the effect that he cannot withdraw from them without feeling a burden and an ache (T1: 7). To stay is to freeze and crystallize and be bound in a mould, to leave is to *regret*. The ideal way out of this dilemma would be to take with him all that is in Orphalese, but such wishful thinking is simply impossible.

Too many fragments of the spirit have I scattered in these streets, and too many are the children of my longing that walk naked among these hills, and I cannot withdraw from them without a burden and an ache.

It is not a garment I cast off this day, but a skin that I tear with my own hands. Nor is it a thought I leave behind me, but a heart made sweet with hunger and with thirst.

Yet I cannot tarry longer.

The sea that calls all things unto her calls me, and I must embark.

For to stay, though the hours burn in the night, is to freeze and crystallize and be bound in a mould.

Fain would I take with me all that is here. But how shall I? (ibid, T1:8-13)

Then, as Al-Mustafa walks toward the city, he sees men and women leaving their fields and work to call to him to stay. He feels sorry for them, and earnestly wishes that he could somehow compensate for their loss of the fruits of their work:

And what shall I give unto him who has left his plough in midfurrow, or to him who has stopped the wheel of his winepress? (T1:31)

The above feelings and needs above show Al-Mustafa as a sharing and caring person whose worries and needs are strongly attached to those of the people of Orphalese. He has just one need: to go back to his birthplace for reunion with his people. Such a legitimate need is by no means selfish, nor does it encumber upon the best interests of anyone else.

The on-going action

Among the speech acts performed by the participants and described in the narrative of *The Prophet*, the following to reveal some aspects of the make-up of Al-Mustafa's identity:

Waiting patiently in Orphalese for 12 years for the coming of his ship without loss of hope is an indicator that Al-Mustafa is a PROBLEM-SOLVER. During this long stay he never ingratiates himself upon the native people, nor makes use of their hospitality, but lives in solitude in some high place (T1:1). However, keeping aloof does not prevent him, as an ALTRUIST, from positively communicating with the people of Orphalese, winning their love, respect and trust to the effect that he becomes just like one of their sons.

*Much have we loved you. But speechless was our love, and with veils has it been veiled.
Yet now it cries aloud unto you, and would stand revealed before you.
And ever has it been that love knows not its own depth until the hour of separation. (Gibran, 1923, T1: Ls, 50-52)*

When he sees the ship, joy sweeps over him, his soul *cries* to the crew for his dreams have come true. Then, he *prays* in silence with closed eyes. This act of thanking God in prayer is reflective of Gibran's understanding of MYSTICISM.

*Then the gates of his heart were flung open, and his joy flew far over the sea.
And he closed his eyes and prayed in the silences of his soul.
But he descended the hill, a sadness came upon him, and he thought in his heart: How shall I go in peace and without sorrow?
Nay, not without a wound in the spirit shall I leave this city.
Long were the days of pain I have spent within its walls, and long were the nights of aloneness; and who can depart from his pain and his aloneness without regret?
Too many fragments of the spirit have I scattered in these streets, and too many are the children of my longing that walk naked among these hills, and I cannot withdraw from them without a burden and an ache. (Gibran, 1923, T1: Ls 3-16)*

As the news of the coming of the ship spread among the people of Orphalese, men and women leave their fields and vineyards, hastening towards the city gates, calling his name, shouting from field to field, telling one another of the coming of the ship.

And then shall I come to you, a boundless drop to a boundless ocean.

*And as he walked he saw from afar men and women leaving their fields and their vineyards and hastening towards the city gates.
And he heard their voices calling his name, and shouting from the field to field telling one another of the coming of the ship. (ibid, T1: Ls, 25-27)*

When they *meet* him in the city, they *cry out* to him as with *one voice* and *entreat* him *not to leave* them because they *love* and *need* him (T1: 41-52). Seeing such a remarkable public show of love and attachment, Al-Mustafa is emotionally moved.

*He weeps.
But he answered them not. He only bent his head; and those who stood near saw his tears falling upon his breast. (T1: 54)*

Proceeding together to the open square in front of the temple, Almitra arrives. She hails him, and concurs with his need to go home after his long wait for the return of his ship. Then asks him to speak to them, and give them of his truth so that they can pass his words as a TEACHER from one generation to another. Significantly, she asks him to disclose them to themselves. This means that she believes Al-Mustafa is capable of revealing the truth about the people of Orphalese more than their knowledge of themselves.

More significantly, Almitra asks him to tell them all that has been shown to him of that which is between birth and death. This presupposes that she believes Al-Mustafa is God-inspired or a PROPHETIC FIGURE, and that what is revealed to him is not revealed to others. In other words, he knows what others do not know.

*Yet this we ask ere you leave us, that you speak to us and give us of your truth.
And we will give it unto our children, and they unto their children, and it shall not perish.
In your aloneness you have watched with our days, and in your wakefulness you have listened to the weeping and the laughter of our sleep.
Now therefore disclose us to ourselves, and tell us all that has been shown you of that which is between birth and death. (Gibran, 1923, T1: Ls, 62-65)*

In a HUMBLE response, Al-Mustafa denies that he is an all-knowing person by asserting that all that he can speak of is already moving in their souls.

*And he answered,
People of Orphalese, of what can I speak save of that which is even now moving your souls? (ibid, T1: Ls. 66-67)*

When the question-answer act comes to an end, Almitra *blesses* the time, place, and Al-Mustafa's spirit that has spoken. Her reference to *spirit* here is indicative of her high-esteem of his DIVINE-LIKE revelation.

*And now it was evening.
And Almitra the seeress said:
Blessed be this day and this place and your spirit that has spoken. (ibid, T 28: Ls, 1-3)*

It is revealing that Al-Mustafa's answer to her blessings takes the form of an inquiry. He asks her whether he actually was the one who spoke, and whether he was not also a listener to his speeches. Pairing the act of LECTURING with the act of LISTENING within himself renders him both the producer and receiver of his speech. One explanation for such a paradox is that his 26 preceding lectures were actually spiritually inspired; that is, he was merely acting as the mouthpiece of some superhuman voice.

*And he answered,
Was it I who spoke?
Was I not also a listener?* (ibid, T28: Ls, 4-5)

When the lecturing event comes to a close, and Al-Mustafa *descends* the steps of the Temple, all the gathering people care to *followed* him: they are his followers.

Then he descended the steps of the Temple and all the people followed him. (T28: 7)

The essence of Al-Mustafa's PROPHETHOOD and IMMORTALITY is that of informal spirituality, that is, free unity with the elements of nature and human beings, caring and sharing, love, altruism, belief in humanity and spirit resurrection.

*Forget not that I shall come back to you.
A little while, and my longing shall gather dust and foam for another body.
A little while, a moment of rest upon the wind, and another woman shall bear me.
Farewell to you and the youth I have spent with you.
It was but yesterday we met in a dream.
You have sung to me in my aloneness, and I of your longings have built a tower in the sky.* (Gibran, 1923, T28: Ls, 144-149)

Finally, as the ship sails out, the people's act of farewell takes the form of a *trumpet-like collective great cry*, an act indicative of loss and sadness.

*So saying he made a signal to the seamen, and straightaway they weighed anchor and cast the ship loose from its moorings, and they moved eastward.
And a cry came from the people as from a single heart, and it rose the dusk and was carried out over the sea like a great trumpeting.* (ibid, T28: Ls, 155-156)

Only Almitra remains silent; she does not cry. This is because she remembers his promise to come back to them as a newly born child. The description above provides textual evidence to the following identifications. Al-Mustafa is unanimously recognized by the people of Orphalese. It is only because these people treat, talk about, and interact with Al-Mustafa as a prophetic person that he is one (Haniford, 2010; Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Wilson, 2019).

Al-Mustafa himself is a humble, altruistic, self-sustaining young man who never identifies himself as a prophet, and who is both loved and sought by the people of Orphalese with whom he maintains very strong spiritual unity despite his

solitude. Significantly, he asserts that the people of Orphalese themselves are the real source of his words and never distinguishes himself from them.

The source of the power of such a discursive identity is not nature (Al-Mustafa is not the son of a prophet), nor certain established institutions (there are no specific religious institutions, ceremonies, rituals, a certain God worship nor cult related to him), but the people of Orphalese themselves, plus those readers of Gibran's book who may see a prophet figure in his words. The process through which this power works is that of "recognition", that is, the fact that rational individuals recognize Al-Mustafa as a Prophet in the discourse. Such recognition is realized as an active "self-achievement" arising as an emergent property of the ways in which the prophet's words and deeds get recognized by his followers (cf. [Gee, 2000, 2013](#)).

Conclusion

The text depicts Al-Mustafa (the prophet) as a humble, altruistic, self-sustaining young man who is loved and whose presence is sought by the people of Orphalese with whom he maintains very strong spiritual unity despite his aloofness. However, he asserts that the people of Orphalese themselves are the real source of his words, and never distinguishes himself from them. Accordingly, to him, the source of the power of such a discursive identity is not nature, nor certain established institutions, but the people of Orphalese themselves, plus those readers of Gibran's book who discern a prophetic figure in his words. The process through which these power works is that of "recognition", in that rational individuals recognize Al-Mustafa as a Prophet in the discourse. Such recognition is realized as an active "self-achievement" arising as a deserved property of how the prophet's words and deeds are recognized by his followers. The analysis of this paper indicates that the main protagonist in *The Prophet* is the voice of the author. Many writers use self-insertion or shadowing as a literary device in which the protagonist is the echo of the writer. Such narrators take the active observed speaker role in the narrative; they answer questions raised by other characters. This technique is one of the important plot devices in *The Prophet* ([Sui & Humphreys, 2015](#); [Whitfield-Gabrieli et al., 2011](#)).

The Prophet speaks these ideals through the main protagonist, Al-Mustafa, an advocator of peace, who in reality is the voice of the author. The tone assumed by this protagonist is a quiet one, and he seems almost unwilling to be brought into the spotlight. However, he does not go unnoticed, and he is recognized by the people in the text (and hence, readers) as a godlike figure and a font of wisdom who, in his unassuming manner, gives views, teaches, and advises to people who flock to him and thirst for the inspiring words he spouts. The humility of the protagonist and his willingness to talk to anyone who comes to him is consistent with the philosophy of the text, which goes against in-group versus out-group segregation and us/them division ([Zillman & Cantor, 1977](#); [Aziz, 2020](#); [Othman, 2019](#)).

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