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Amin Maalouf Lebanon - France

Amin Maalouf :

The author

Born in Beirut in 1949, Amin Maalouf has lived in France since 1976.

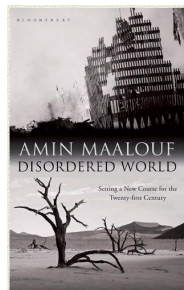
After studying sociology and economics, Maalouf joined the Lebanese daily *An-Nahar*, for which he travelled the world covering numerous events, from the fall of the Ethiopian monarchy to the last battle of Saigon. Forced to emigrate by the war in Lebanon, he settled in Paris, where he resumed journalism, and from where he started to travel again, from Mozambique to Iran and from Argentina to the Balkans. He became editor of the international edition of *An-Nahar*, then editor-in-chief of the weekly *Jeune Afrique*, before giving up all his posts to dedicate himself to literature.

His literary work, written in French, is today translated into more than 40 languages. It includes novels, essays and opera librettos. In 2007-2008, at the European Commission's request, Amin Maalouf chaired a think tank on multilingualism. A report was produced, titled « A Rewarding Challenge: how the multiplicity of languages could strengthen Europe ».

Maalouf has been awarded honorary doctorates by the Catholic University of Louvain (Belgium), the American University of Beirut (Lebanon), the University of Tarragona Rovira i Virgili (Spain) and the University of Evora (Portugal).

Zoom

Disordered World. Originally published as ***Le Dérèglement du monde***, 2009.



Examining tensions between the Arab and Western worlds, Maalouf sees something beyond a «clash of civilizations.» Both cultures have their own continuity, integrity, and morality. Yet in our times, both have become exhausted and debased. We fall short of ideological debate not only because we lack common ground, but because we are fast losing what ground we stood on. Maalouf looks at a century of confrontations between our cultures. Yet he turns to the

global challenges we face today - climate change, financial collapse, humanitarian disaster - with remarkable hope that they may yet unite us in a bid to save what is truly common to us all. Intelligent, impassioned yet measured, Maalouf envisions renewed cohesion in our currently disordered world.

Bibliography

Les Désorientés, Grasset, 2012

Disordered World. Originally published as ***Le Dérèglement du monde***, 2009.

Adriana Mater (libretto, music composed by Kaija Saariaho, first performed in 2006 at the Opéra Bastille, directed by Peter Sellars).

Origins: a Memoir. Originally published as ***Origines***, 2004.

Love from Afar (libretto, music composed by Kaija Saariaho, first performed at the 2000 Salzburg Festival, directed by Peter Sellars). Originally published as ***l'Amour de loin***, 2001.

Balthasar's Odyssey. Originally published as ***Le Périple de Baldassare***, 2000.

In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong (US edition), or ***On Identity*** (UK edition). Originally published as ***Les identités meurtrières***, 1998.

Ports of Call. Originally published as ***Les Echelles du Levant***, 1996.

The Rock of Tanios. Originally published as ***Le Rocher de Tanios***, 1993, winner of the Prix Goncourt.

The First Century after Beatrice. Originally published as ***Le Premier siècle après Béatrice***, 1992.

The Gardens of Light. Originally published as ***Les Jardins de lumière***, 1991.

Samarkand. Originally published as ***Samarcande***, 1988.

Leo Africanus (US edition) or ***Leo the African*** (UK edition). Originally published as ***Léon l'Africain***, 1986.

The Crusades through Arab Eyes. First English language edition in 1985. Originally published as ***Les Croisades vues par les Arabes***, 1983.

Press

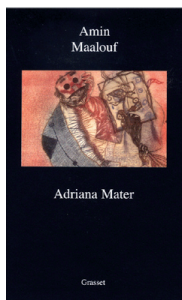
« *Disordered World* is full of insight, most particularly into the mind and preoccupations of the Arab world. »

Justin Cartwright, *The Guardian*

« With his consciously nurtured multiple identity, Maalouf is just the sort of interlocutor this period needs. He reaches deep into unmined seams of cultural history, scything elegantly through cliché and conventional models of received wisdom. »

David Gardner, *Financial Times*

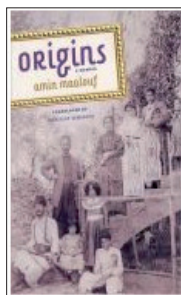
Adriana Mater (libretto, music composed by Kaija Saariaho, first performed in 2006 at the Opéra Bastille, directed by Peter Sellars).



The opera is set in the present day, in a crisis zone in an unnamed country. The story reflects on motherhood. Adriana, her son Yonas and her sister Rafka are caught in the midst of civil war. Years ago, Tsargo, a soldier from their village, raped the young Adriana, and Yonas was born despite Refka's efforts

to prevent her sister having the child. Adriana now anxiously watches Yonas as he grows into a man, and wonders whether he will grow up to be as violent as his father or gentler like his mother.

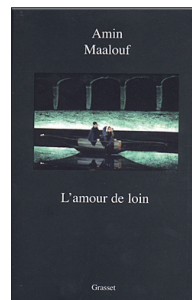
Origins: a Memoir. Originally published as **Origines**, 2004.



Origins, by the world-renowned writer Amin Maalouf, is a sprawling, hemisphere-spanning, intergenerational saga. Set during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth — in the mountains of Lebanon and in Havana, Cuba — *Origins* recounts the family history of

the generation of Maalouf's paternal grandfather, Boutros Maalouf. Maalouf sets out to discover the truth about why Boutros, a poet and educator in Lebanon, traveled across the globe to rescue his younger brother, Gabrayel, who had settled in Havana. What follows is the gripping excavation of a family's hidden past. Maalouf is an energetic and amiable narrator, illuminating the more obscure corners of late Ottoman nationalism, the psychology of Lebanese sectarianism, and the dynamics of family quarrels. He moves with great agility across time and space, and across genres of writing. But he never loses track of his story's central thread: his quest to lift the shadow of legend from his family's past. *Origins* is at once a gripping family chronicle and a timely consideration of Lebanese culture and politics.

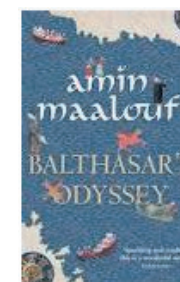
Love from Afar (libretto, music composed by Kaija Saariaho, first performed at the 2000 Salzburg Festival, directed by Peter Sellars). Originally published as **L'Amour de loin**, 2001.



The action is set during the 12th century in Aquitaine, Tripoli and at sea.

Jaufré Rudel, prince of Blaye, is weary of the life of pleasure led by the young people of his rank. He yearns for a different, distant love, but he is resigned to the idea that he will never find it. A group of his former companions tell him that the woman of whom he sings does not exist. However, a Pilgrim who has arrived from overseas asserts that there is such a woman, and that he has met her. Jaufré can no longer think of anything but her. Having returned to the East, the Pilgrim meets Clémence, Countess of Tripoli, and reveals to her that in the West there is a troubadour-prince who fetes her in his songs and calls her his 'love from afar'. At first she is offended, but then begins to dream of this strange and distant lover, and wonders if she deserves such devotion. The Pilgrim has returned to Blaye. He tells Jaufré that the lady now knows that he sings of her. At this news Jaufré resolves to visit her in person. Clémence, for her part, prefers that the relationship remain distant. Jaufré is impatient to find his 'love from afar'. He regrets having set off on impulse, and his anguish is such that he falls ill. He arrives there dying. When the ship docks, the Pilgrim goes ahead to warn Clémence that Jaufré is here but that he is on the point of death and is asking to see her. The troubadour-prince arrives at the citadel unconscious, carried on a stretcher. In the presence of the woman of whom he sang, he slowly revives. Thus the two 'lovers from afar' meet, and with tragedy approaching they throw caution to the wind. They declare their passion, embrace, and promise to love each other. When Jaufré dies in her arms, Clémence rebels against heaven; then, believing herself to blame for his death, she decides to take the veil.

Balthasar's Odyssey. Originally published as **Le Périple de Baldassare**, 2000.

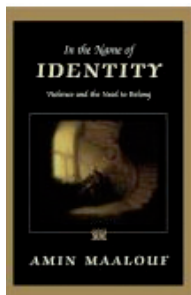


An ambitious, stunning new novel by Goncourt Prize-winner Amin Maalouf, set in the tumultuous, fateful Year of the Beast.

It is 1665, and all the signs and portents foretell that next year the Antichrist will appear and the world will come to an end. Antiquarian merchant

and sage, Balthasar sets out in search of a rare book that may bring salvation to a distraught world, a mysterious work entitled *The Hundredth Name*. In the course of his odyssey throughout the Mediterranean and beyond, Balthasar travels through countries in ruin, cities in flame, and stricken communities awaiting the Apocalypse. He encounters fear, falsehood, and disillusion, but he also discovers love at a time when he had given up all hope.

In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong (US edition), or ***On Identity*** (UK edition). Originally published as ***Les identités meurtrières***, 1998.



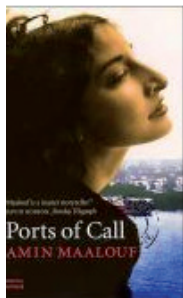
A thoughtful inquiry into our concept of identity and its impact on society. The author considers how we define ourselves, how identity is understood in the world's different cultures, and how recognizing identity is key to survival in the new millennium.

Identity--what makes each of us unique--has been a fundamental question of philosophers from Socrates to Freud. Identity is the crucible out of which we come: our background, our race, our gender, our tribal affiliations, our religion (or lack thereof), all go into making up who we are. All too often, however, the notion of identity--personal, religious, ethnic, or national--has given rise to heated passions and even massive crimes.

«I want to try and understand why so many people commit crimes in the name of identity,» writes Amin Maalouf. Moving across the world's history, faiths, and politics, he argues against an oversimplified and hostile concept of identity. Cogently and persuasively, he examines identity in the context of the modern world, where it can be viewed as both glory and poison. He demonstrates, too, the dangers of using identity as a protective--and therefore aggressive--mechanism, which frequently leads to the repression or extermination of minorities, heretics, or class enemies.

Maalouf contends that many of us would reject our inherited conceptions of identity, to which we cling through habit, if only we examined them more closely. The future of society depends on accepting all identities, while recognizing our uniqueness.

Ports of Call. Originally published as ***Les Echelles du Levant***, 1996.



Ossyane, a young Lebanese man and his Jewish wife Clara return to live in Haifa after World War II. Just as war breaks out in the newborn state of Israel, Ossyane is forced to go to Beirut. The border with Israel closes behind him and he becomes separated from his wife with tragic consequences.

The Rock of Tanios. Originally published as ***Le Rocher de Tanios***, 1993, winner of the Prix Goncourt.



Prix Goncourt 1993.

Tanios was a child of the mountains of Lebanon in the 1880s when the Egyptian Pashas were struggling against Ottoman domination and the British and French plotted with and against each other. Amin Maalouf's new novel, *The Rock of Tanios*, begins with a recollection of the rock on which Tanios was last seen sitting and weaves together the strands of the fascinating legend of his disappearance. Tanios was the illegitimate son of a powerful Sheik whose every action brought chaos into his village. When Tanios's adopted father caused the death of a powerful political rival, he and his son together fled their homeland. In hiding, they became entangled with international spies and politicians; Tanios soon took on the roll of intermediary between dueling European and Middle Eastern powers.

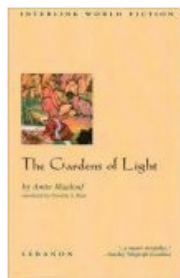
The First Century after Beatrice. Originally published as ***Le Premier siècle après Béatrice***, 1992.



What would happen if a drug could guarantee the birth of male children? *The First Century After Beatrice* chronicles the events following the development of just such a chemical. The female birth rate drops as the use of the drug spreads, at first clandestinely, from the turn of the 21st century.

Women are sold on the black market and men despair facing a future without them. Meanwhile, governments use the drug as a weapon for ethnic cleansing, threatening entire communities with annihilation. Societies crumble as populations tragically justify their xenophobia and take up arms. *The First Century After Beatrice* is, paradoxically, the lyrical memoir of a French entomologist and intellectual who leads the campaign to eradicate the drug. Interwoven is the story of his love for the two women with whom he shares his life: his companion and lover, Clarence, and their prized daughter, Beatrice.

The Gardens of Light. Originally published as **Les Jardins de lumière**, 1991.



Good Book Guide

Maalouf has a rare gift of bringing the past to life...[He] re-creates the life of this fascinating and little known mystic from his relatively humble birth on the banks of the river Tigris, through his rise to fame and his tragic fate.

Jennifer Sperry - ForeWord Magazine

The Gardens of Light, Amin Maalouf graces his readers with beauty and mysticism....Highly recommended for anyone who has an interest in Middle Eastern history, truth seeking, adventure or travel to far off places.

Morning Star

A beautiful chronicle of the past...Maalouf describes [Mani's life and times] with both beauty and erudition, teaching us a lot about history in the process.

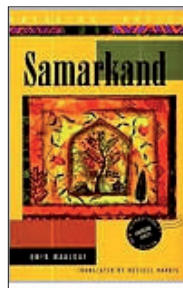
Times (London)

Maalouf is as eloquent as ever...[He] weaves tapestries of intrigue that illuminate a broader historical moment...Maalouf, in his engaging prose, goes a considerable way towards restoring Mani to us.

Times Literary Supplement

A compelling tale...the poignant story of a man born before his time...the character of Mani is carefully and warmly drawn.

Samarkand. Originally published as **Samarcande**, 1988.



Independent

Remarkable...Maalouf has written an extraordinary book.

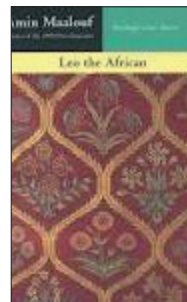
San Francisco Chronicle

...an engrossing work of fiction...[A] fine historical novel.

Library Journal

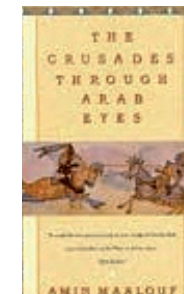
Edward Fitzgerald's Victorian-era translation of Omar Khayyam's Rubaiyat profoundly influenced the West's perception (or misperception) of Persia. Lebanese author Maalouf tries to set the record straight in this fictional history of Omar's personal manuscript copy of the famous quatrains. The first half of the book introduces three world-historical Persians: Omar himself, a brilliant poet, mathematician, and astronomer; the vizier Nizam al-Mulk, a philosophical despot whose political theories anticipate Machiavelli; and the fanatical cult leader Hassan, who commands an invincible army of assassins from the mountain fortress of Alamut. In the second half, a wealthy collector miraculously recovers the lost manuscript and books passage home on the Titanic in celebration.

Leo Africanus (US edition) or **Leo the African** (UK edition). Originally published as **Léon l'Africain**, 1986.



«I, Hasan the son of Muhammad the weigh-master, I, Jean-Leon de Medici, circumcised at the hand of a barber and baptized at the hand of a pope, I am now called the African, but I am not from Africa, nor from Europe, nor from Arabia. I am also called the Granadan, the Fassi, the Zayyati, but I come from no country, from no city, no tribe. I am the son of the road, my country is the caravan, my life the most unexpected of voyages.» Thus wrote Leo Africanus, in his fortieth year, in this imaginary autobiography of the famous geographer, adventurer, and scholar Hasan al-Wazzan, who was born in Granada in 1488. His family fled the Inquisition and took him to the city of Fez, in North Africa. Hasan became an itinerant merchant, and made many journeys to the East, journeys rich in adventure and observation. He was captured by a Sicilian pirate and taken back to Rome as a gift to Pope Leo X, who baptized him Johannes Leo. While in Rome, he wrote the first trilingual dictionary (Latin, Arabic and Hebrew), as well as his celebrated Description of Africa, for which he is still remembered as Leo Africanus.

The Crusades through Arab Eyes. First English language edition in 1985. Originally published as **Les Croisades vues par les Arabes**, 1983.



Library Journal

This welcome addition to the numerous volumes on the Crusades is a well-written and absorbing history by a Lebanese journalist for the general reader. It makes extensive use of contemporary Arab sources to examine the Crusade era from the Arab viewpoint. The

Arabs found the Franks duplicitous, brutal, and unrefined. However, in contrast to the Franks, few Arabs learned their adversary's language or showed interest in their culture, an observation Bernard Lewis treats more fully in his *Muslim Discovery of Europe*. Maalouf interprets the Crusades as a turning point in Arab-Muslim history. Parochialism in the Muslim Middle East and the current division between the West and the Middle East are dated to this prolonged period of hostile contact. Recommended for public and academic libraries.