

Staging the Iberian Moor in Thomas Colley Grattan's *Ben Nazir, The Saracen* (1827): Gaps, Incongruities and Failure in Discursive Orientalism

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DOI: <http://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v5i3.1378>

APA Citation: El idrissi, Z. (2023). Staging the Iberian Moor in Thomas Colley Grattan's *Ben Nazir, The Saracen* (1827): Gaps, Incongruities and Failure in Discursive Orientalism. *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies*, 5(3), 244–261. <https://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v5i3.1378>

Received:

30/07/2023

Accepted:

20/09/2023

Keywords:

Orientalism, Drama, Representation, the Iberian Moor, Discursive inconsistencies.

Abstract

Going beyond Edward Said's discursive coherence and internal consistency, this paper analyses Thomas Colley's Ben Nazir, The Saracen (1827) to illustrate the internal inconsistency, discursive incoherence, plurality, and complexity of Moorish-themed Orientalism. Unlike Edward Said's logic of monolithism and his notion of exteriority that he detailed mainly in his Orientalism, some critics, such as Lisa Lowe, Dennis Porter, Sara Mills, Peter Hulme, and Ali Behdad, to name but a few prominent critics, focus on the subtext, the hidden, and the non-said in order to transcend western hegemony, textual centrality, and fixed representation and stress the asymmetrical subversive practices that uncover discursive heterogeneities, contradictions, and slippages of authorial control. So, by exploring and adding to their productions, my reading of Ben Nazir would illustrate how the Spanish Moor can transform a site of productive power into a site of subversive knowledge and how discursive statements may be fractured by their own gaps, silences, and incongruities. In my analysis, I argue that Colley's intention to discursively denigrate the Moor while ennobling the Christian is subversively thwarted by aesthetic demands, considerably disturbed by counter-ideologies and histories, and persistently challenged by dramatic dialogism.

1. INTRODUCTION

During the eighth century, the Moors endeavoured to extend their dominion to the northern realms of Europe. Having already claimed sovereignty over the entire Iberian Peninsula and certain towns in southern France, their ambitions knew no bounds. At that time, Munuza (called in Arabic Othmane Ibn Naissa), a prominent Berber leader, held the position of governor in Catalonia, while Etudes ruled as duke over Aquitania, Gascony, and Guyenne. Etudes (called Odo in some accounts), who had been entangled in a long-standing conflict with the renowned French general, Charles Martel, in an attempt to protect his territories from the persistent invasions of the French adversary, sought an alliance with Munuza, the Moorish governor, and proposed the marriage of his daughter, Emerance, to solidify this bond. News of this alliance reached the Arab king of Spain, Abderramus, who responded swiftly by amassing his army, launching an attack on Munuza, and taking his Christian wife captive. Abderramus continued his advance into the Frankish kingdom until he encountered formidable resistance

from the unwavering French general, Charles Martel, halting any further progress (Florian, 1841, pp. 39-41).

Despite being written in the nineteenth century, Thomas Grattan's play *Ben Nazir, The Saracen* (1827) is situated in the historical context of the eighth-century Munuza-Etudes alliance and cleverly manipulates the events of this alliance for its storytelling purposes. The narrative commences with Etudes' fervent endeavour to persuade his daughter and the ecclesiastical institution of the political necessity for his daughter to wed Ben Nazir, the Moorish governor of Catalonia. Although Etudes has previously pledged his daughter's hand to Ben Nazir, he retracts his promise upon discovering King Charles' affection for his beloved daughter. Incensed by this sudden reversal, Ben Nazir deceives Etudes, leading him to believe that their political alliance remains intact and claiming that his Moorish soldiers are en route to Spain.

Convinced of the enduring alliance between Catalonia and Aquitania, Etudes and his daughter Emerance venture into Ben Nazir's tent, only to be ensnared in a cunning trap. To their horror, they learn that Ben Nazir's followers have seized control of their once-fortified castle in Aquitania. While Ben Nazir releases Etudes from captivity and weds Emerance, a clandestine visit from Charles, the King of France, results in his capture and imprisonment. Overwhelmed by her tragic fate, Emerance succumbs to despair and consumes a deadly poison, breathing her last breath. Upon discovering the lifeless body of the woman who held him bound to life, Ben Nazir, stricken with grief, plunges a dagger into his own heart, collapsing beside her lifeless shape.

The dramatic production vividly recounts some of the historical episodes concerning the Etudes-Munuza alliance. However, historically accurate accounts reveal that Charles Martel, the eminent figure, bore the title of a French general, not that of a king (Fouracre, 2000, pp.155-156) and that the Moorish-Christian alliance was shattered by the intervention of the Arab commander Abd al-Rahman ibn Abd Allah Al-Ghafiqi rather than the emotional bond between the two Christians, Charles and Emerance (Inane, 1997, pp. 85-89). Moreover, the play alters the original historical strife between Etudes and Charles, fashioning a harmonious bond founded on Christian cooperation. It becomes apparent, therefore, that the play's purpose is to rally Christian factions together, uniting them against the ominous Moorish threat. Thus, guided by an Orientalist ideology, the playwright advocates for a Christian unity that was absent in the actual historical account.

In the realm of Moorish-Spanish drama, there has commonly been a striving to efface the Moor's factual history, concurrently demeaning their ethical and martial valour, all while adorning the Christians with nobility and exulting in their ascendancy, conquests, and inherent virtue. For instance, in Thomas Dekker's *Lust's Dominion* (1599), Eleazar is depicted as a wicked villain, a lascivious Moor, and a dark demon whose external blackness mirrors his inherent malevolence. His expulsion from Iberia is seen as essential for the stability and harmony of Europe. In John Dryden's play *The Conquest of Granada* (1670-71), the deliberate distortion of historical facts turns the capitulation of Granada into a military victory for the Spanish forces. Concomitantly, the drama diminishes the Moors by depicting them as instruments of chaos driven by feelings of desire, sensuality, and hostility. In Precival Stockdale's *Ximenes* (1788), the triumph of the Spaniards is celebrated through their conquest of non-Christian lands and the conversion of the Moors, who are depicted as heretical, helpless, and degenerate. Basically, staging the Moor was never a mere artistic invention but a stratagem by which Europe creates its non-Christian other, or, as Nabil Matar suggests, a way of "psychological compensation and vicarious assurance"; that is to say, to compensate for

Europe's historical defeats and have control over the Moors both epistemologically and militarily (Matar, 1999, p.16).

In this article, I argue that though Grattan struggles to represent his Moor as a wicked villain in total accordance with conventional Moorish Orientalism and makes a lot of efforts to put an end to any possible bond between Ben Nazir and Emerance while unifying the Christians domestically, territorially, and spiritually, he fails abysmally in doing so. In his attempt to demean the Moors socially, militarily, and morally while promoting Christians' unity and immunity, Grattan becomes entangled in a web of contradictions that not only subvert the intended message of the play but also expose the flawed, malevolent, and penetrable nature of his Christian characters. Under the sway of aesthetics and Romantic ideology, Grattan inadvertently expresses ideas that were never his original intention, challenging the very foundations of Moorish Orientalism.

2. Dis-orienting Orientalism

2.1. Edward Said and the Discursivity of Orientalism

In his book *Orientalism*, Edward Said defines Orientalism as "a system of representation" by which the West textually (mis)represents, depicts, constructs, or even invents the Orient in a way that relies on "any such real thing as the Orient," but on imagination, literary creation, and linguistic distortion (Said, 1978, p. 21). Following Michel Foucault's understanding of discourse as a historical demonstration of power, Said considers Orientalist knowledge as basically discursive since it is intrinsically affected, guided, shaped, and managed by power politics, which manifests itself in the desire to control *the Orient*, manipulate otherness, and maintain Western superiority. For Said, the discursivity of Orientalism does not only mean knowledge being framed by authority but also authority being produced by knowledge, and this occurs "as a result of cultural hegemony at work," which indoctrinates Western culture as the supreme and the model to be celebrated, the idea from which Orientals themselves come, by soft means of persuasion, to internalise and subsequently believe in (1978, p. 7).

According to Said, power and knowledge in the orientalist discourse operate in a dialectic way, with the duo taking the form of a connection between knowledge of the Orient and western power; between the aesthetics of representation and politics of dominance; between stereotyping "the Other" and possessing political might; between textual (de)formations and desire for conquest. This means that Orientalism does not exist outside the frame of authority; authority tells the writer what to say and what not to say. Likewise, western power is acquired by knowing the Oriental; representing the Oriental is the process by which the West exerts its power over the Orient. Thus, knowing and dominating are two inseparable acts, or as Said puts it, "knowledge gives power, more power requires more knowledge, and so on in an increasingly profitable dialect of information and control" (1978, p. 36).

For Said, Orientalism is a system of dominance, containment, and control, not only representation. Orientalism is defined as "the desire to exercise power" over the Orient through stereotypes, subjective expertise, broad claims, and phoney academia. Orientalist knowledge is created in a way that facilitates Western ideological and military domination over the Orient. That is to say, the main goal of Orientalism is not to produce authentic or objective knowledge about the Orient, but rather to generate ideas that control the Orientals and their behaviours, curb their political resistance, aid the military advance towards the East, legitimise territorial expansionism, and make the Orient subservient to the Western world. It is a domination project in which ideology conceals itself under the guise of academia or literary creativity in order to "control, manipulate, even incorporate, what is manifestly a different (or alternative and novel)

world." Thus, orientalism functions as "a western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (1978, p.3)

Tracing knowledge-power relations, Said goes on even further to argue that Orientalism is intimately associated with "an explicitly colonial minded-imperialism," (1978, p.18) and that it is the vital method by which colonial powers justify, influence, and ensure their imperial interests. For him, Orientalism is literally the discursive practice through which French and English colonialisms could advance militarily towards the Orient. By propagating "*la mission civilisatrice*," highlighting western modernity, disparaging Oriental civilization and cultures, and demoralising Orientals, economic exploitation, territorial invasion, and cultural displacement have all been made possible. Orientalism, for Said, has been the backdrop that imperialists use to homogenise, depreciate, misrepresent, and degrade the Orient and its peoples for colonial purposes. Or, as Robert Young puts it, "Colonialism operated not only as a form of military rule, but also simultaneously as a discourse of domination" (Young, 2016, p. 383).

In reading Western representations of the Orient, Said uncovers a set of characteristics that basically function as defining features of Orientalism. He realises that the Orient has no genuine foundation in reality; it is always artificial, imagined, and fabricated. The Orient "is not an inert fact of nature. It is not mainly there just as the Occident is not just there either," (1978, p.4) but both "the Orient and the Occident are men-made" (1978, p.5). The Orient is "almost a European invention" (1978, p.1): it is a work of fiction rather than fact, an idea rather than material history. Orientalism is "an imagined geography" in which the Orient is a myth, a tale whose meaning does not derive its connotation from the reality of the Orient but from the mind of the Orientalists.

Another feature of Orientalism that Said finds monotonous is "the ontological and epistemological distinction" (1978, p. 2) between the Occident and the Orient, us and them. Such a binary opposition depicts the Oriental as the Other: the outsider whose difference is threatening western unity and therefore needs either containment or destruction. The Orient is also defined as a mysterious place whose function contrasts with European enlightenment. The Orient is not seen as a culture or a society that functions by itself, but it is projected as what the West is not. That is to say, Orientalism aims at stressing the way the Orient differs from the Occident so that if the Occident "is rational, developed, humane, superior," the Orient cannot be but "aberrant...underdeveloped, inferior"(1978, p. 300). Orientalism is "principally a way of defining and locating Europe's others" (Ashcroft and Pal Ahluwalia, 2001, p. 54).

Otherness, as Said suggests, is not just about exaggerating religious, cultural, and racial distinctions, but it is also about stereotyping the Orient and ruining its people's reputation. Oriental man is dehumanised as inferior, irrational, backward, narrow-minded, authoritarian, and lustful. The oriental woman is sensual, passionate, and subservient. The Orient is also rejected as a place of ailment, strife, dictatorial authority, exoticism, and anarchy. The Orient is one homogenous community whose social members always live, think, and behave in the same way. In this context, Said underlines four repetitive clichés in the politics of representation:

[The first] is the absolute and systematic difference between the West, which is rational, developed, humane, superior, and the Orient, which is aberrant. undeveloped, inferior. Another dogma is that abstractions about the Orient...are always preferable to direct evidence drawn from modern Oriental realities. A third dogma is that the Orient is eternal, uniform, and incapable of defining itself...A fourth dogma is that the Orient is at bottom something either to be feared (the Yellow Peril, the Mongol hordes, the brown dominions) or to be

controlled (by pacification, research and development, outright occupation whenever possible). (1978, pp. 300-1)

Thus, in Orientalism, pejorative adjectives, demeaning stigmas, and sweeping generalisations are imputed to the Orient whose self-development is considered an absolute impossibility.

Another characteristic Said describes as essential in Orientalist practice is "the ineradicable distinction between Western superiority and Oriental inferiority" (1978, p. 42). Said finds the notion of western superiority very repetitive in all of the Orientalists he has read, including Flaubert, Lane, and Massgnion. This notion is not only articulated through a thematic expression of European racial, religious, and cultural supremacy but also through the structure of the text, its inner voices, and its strategies. The Oriental is mostly muted, voiceless, and deprived of any significant power while the Occidental is always superior, articulate, and possessing all the means to power and dominance. In Orientalism, western superiority is an attitude, a position. Or as Said himself puts it, "Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible *positional* superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand" (1978, p. 7).

2.2. Beyond Edward Said's notions of Monolithism, Consistency and Exteriority

Though Said's *Orientalism* offers a genuine reading of Orientalism, it falls short of establishing any alternative beyond hegemonic Orientalism. Said has been chastised for viewing Orientalism as unified, compatible, central, consistent, and unfailingly hegemonic. For Said, the Orientalist's text expresses its hegemonic ideology smoothly, straightforwardly, and consistently without interruption or disruption, and "whatever change occurs in knowledge of the Orient is found almost exclusively in manifest Orientalism," whereas "the unanimity, stability, and durability of latent Orientalism are more or less constant" (1978, p. 106). This discursive coherence and consistency have been seen by many critics, such as Dennis Porter, Sara Mills, Peter Hulme, Ali Behdad, and Lisa Lowe, to name but a few, as Said's failure to unhide the incompatible and contradictory codes that circulate the Orientalist/colonial text and lie hidden in its subtexts.

In his article, "Orientalism and its Problems," Porter suggests that the critic should focus on the contradictions hiding in the Orientalist/colonial discourse and invites two Orientalist texts that are deeply in conflict but Said might see as consistently hegemonic: Marco Polo's *Travels* and T.E. Lawrence's *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. Exemplifying the heterogeneity, fragmentarity, and instability of Orientalism, Porter describes how the unfavourable stereotypical representation of the Oriental in Marco Polo's *Travels* is astutely counter-voiced by "an idealizing tendency," which presents the Mongol "as not only a place of order and tranquility, grandeur and splendor, but also of respect, of civilized values, religious tolerance and openness to commerce of all kinds with the outside world" (Porter, 1983, p. 184). So, for Porter, even while *The Travels* of Polo restates the mediaeval labels of "Oriental treachery, idolatry, opulence, and cruelty" (1983, p. 184), it remains deeply riven by positive epithets stemming from the burgeoning mercantile ideology.

In reading Lawrence's *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, Porter also argues that though the work is steeped in "the tradition of hegemonic Western discourse," the narration remains instable, complex and roughly spilt by "the complexity of the narrators' persona. His aspiration and self-doubt, his sense of estrangement from his own culture, the sympathy for and distance from the Arab culture" (1983, p. 157). Adopting Louis Althusser's notion of internal

distantiation (Althusser, 1971, pp. 221-23), Porter even goes so far as to suggest that Lawrence's preoccupation with the aesthetic content of his work drives him away from the colonial ideology he strives to maintain. He asserts that

Seven Pillars of Wisdom is a self-conscious work of literature in a positive sense. One is made aware of the excess of signifier over signified. Because Lawrence is obviously preoccupied by the weight and shape of the paragraph on the page as an order of words his attention is diverted from properly hegemonic questions (Porter, 1983, p.191).

Thus, aesthetic demands, according to Porter, could divert colonial authority's focus away from its fundamental concerns, resulting in the destabilisation of the hegemonic vision. So, if Orientalist monolithism is ruptured in *Travels* by ideology, it is shattered in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* by poetics, narrative structure, and form.

Similarly, Sara Mills criticises in her *Discourse of Difference* the notion of internal consistency that Said accords to the colonial text. She argues that the Orientalist text is not stable or continuous but rather discontinuous, incoherent, and disrupted from within. For her, the Orientalist text should be read in its entirety rather than in fragments, so as not to miss the statements that can bring the heterogeneity or contradictory energies of the text to the fore. On another level, there are some elements that the Orientalist text may contain that can weaken and emasculate the main colonial/Orientalist ideology of the text. Hence, statements of the Orientalist/colonial text should be read against each other to trace the text's instability:

Although we often read texts as having unitary effect (and in many ways the dominant readings of texts are unitary), it is possible to trace the instability of individual statements when read against other sections of the text. Each discursive position is undermined or called into question by other elements within the text, and while some elements may be dominant, there are sections of the text which temper a straightforward position being offered (Mills, 2001, p. 195)

Thus, Mills suggests that the Orientalist text should be addressed in its entirety since "the contradictions are only apparent at certain points in the texts" (2001, p. 195). For her, a large number of statements within the Orientalist text are irreconcilable and must be compared. And if this is done, the text's irregular and heterogeneous features will be asserted, and its authority will be subverted.

Peter Hulme, too, criticises Said in his *Colonial Encounters* for assuming that there is one colonial discourse. He draws on a psychoanalytic Marxist theory to make a text speak more than it knows. For Said, "the concern with authority does not entail analysis of what lies hidden in the Orientalist text but rather analysis of the text's surface, its exteriority, and what it describes" (Said, 1978, p. 20). Hulme finds Said's commitment to the notion of exteriority unsatisfactory, and this is why he shifts his focus from the surface of the text to the hidden meaning of the subtext. On this basis, Hulme concludes that there are several discourses within the one colonial text, but not all of them describe natives with pejorative words. So, instead of simply looking at the discourse of negativity that Said stresses, the critic should draw attention even to the discourse of positivity that might lie hidden in the text. To be more specific, Hulme examines Christopher Columbus's diaries, showing that the narrative voice is not totally negative but oscillates between the discourse of the civilised other and that of savagery (Hulme, 1986, p. 12).

The last critic I shall address in connection with the contradictory and ambivalent nature of Orientalism is Ali Behdad. Though Behdad continues the efforts of Marxist critics in revealing the cracks of Orientalism, he remains an important figure in colonial discourse analysis since he opens his discussion on the anxieties and failures of representation and consciously rehearses Oriental/Native agency.

Behdad makes two crucial points in his argument against Said. First, orientalist discourse is characterised by a principle of discontinuity or historical discontinuity (Behdad, 1994). That is, not all modern orientalist outputs are identical to those of earlier orientalists, but certain discursive practices are historically unconnected. Second, the orientalist discourse is a complex hegemonic network riddled with contradictions, counter-ideologies, anxieties, and inconsistencies. According to Behdad, this discontinuity finds its ultimate manifestation in the late travels of the mid- and late-nineteenth centuries, when Western travellers to the Orient began to write as tourists but not as travellers. Behdad speaks of how "a belated reading [of the Orient] is not an orthodox reiteration or a reapplication of a previous theory; rather, it is an inventionary articulation of new problematics" (1994, p. 3). He also perceives how it is ambivalent, instable, and inherently split by the "insatiable search for a counter experience in the Orient and the melancholic discovery of its impossibility"(1994., p.15). Simply put, late visitors desired an authentic Orient experience, but when they arrived, they discovered that such an experience was no longer feasible because the *pre-modern* Orient had already begun to dissolve, leaving them anxiously discontented.

Behdad's point is elucidated, for instance, by his reading of Flaubert's *Voyage en Orient*, in which the fragments, discontinuities, and fears of late Orientalism emerge plainly on the surface. Once in the Orient, Flaubert's intention to write an organized travelogue, as did his predecessors, turned into a fragmented note taking, owing primarily to the absence of the *authentic* Orient and the Oriental reality - the dry and unpredicted storms - that blurred his vision, leading thus to "a dispersed, heterogeneous orientalism that can only be articulated as a self-conscious, utterly perverse discourse of discontent(ment)" (1994, p.53) and to "a discursive constellation without a shape, and an ideological practice without a doctrine" (1994, p. 54). Flaubert's writing, description, and representational abilities also vanished in the face of the *unauthentic* Orient, which reduced his eloquence into silence and mere observation, resulting in his taken notes being in the form of diaries, the most private form of representation and the less adequate for publication (1994, p. 59).

Flaubert is not only muffled in the Orient, but he is also, as Behdad explains, uncertain, fearful, and anxious. Though he followed in the footsteps of his precursors in bonding the Orient with sexual fancy, his encounter with Kuchiouk-Hanem, the Egyptian courtesan, offers a good example of how his celebration of the colonial self and preconceived attitudes towards the Oriental woman transform into a confession of his fears and an affirmation of colonial oppression. According to Behdad, when Flaubert dreams of Judith and Holophorn together while sleeping with Kuchiouk-Hanem, he is essentially admitting his fear of castration and his role as an oppressor because Judith is a heroine figure who gets retribution on Holophorn by decapitating him. Furthermore, the fact that Flaubert recalls his Paris brothel evenings when sexually encountering the Orient indicates his position as a bourgeois consumer of sex and obliterates all the differences between French and Oriental sexuality that early Orientalists propagated. In this way, Flaubert's initial intention to reinforce colonial dominance transforms into a revelation of his own anxieties and fears, leading to the dissolution of stereotypical distinctions between the Orient and the Occident and tracing new avenues for a native sort of agency (1994, pp. 68-70).

So, in contrast to the belief in discursive consistency, stability, and coherence, there are abundant conflicts erupting from diverse origins amidst the Orientalist/colonial discourse. Porter elucidates that these paradoxes may find their roots in aesthetics or the very essence of ideology. Meanwhile, Sara Mills suggests that the text abounds with incongruities when comparing its various declarations. On the other hand, Hulme hints at the possibility of a discourse of positivity unexpectedly surfacing from the core of colonial discourse. Behdad, on the other hand, argues that the text endeavours to assert dominance yet unwittingly reveals the West's apprehensions, anxieties, and uncertainties while also acknowledging the emergence of local agency. With these ideas in mind, I try, in what follows, to discern and track the contradictions, discrepancies, and uncertainties inherent in the portrayal of the Moor in Thomas Colley Grattan's *Ben Nazir, the Saracen*, paying close attention to how Colley's intention to demote the Moor transforms into an open-ended realm of gaps and failures.

3. Orientalist Discourse on the Moor

3.1. The Muslim Moor is the “Most Atrocious Villain”

The play portrays Ben Nazir as a Moorish villain. All the European characters in the play see him as a Moorish villain with devilish deeds. Etude repeatedly describes him as “the invading infidel” (Grattan, 1827, p. 2) and the “most atrocious villain” (1827, p. 31). Although Emerance hesitates at first to judge Ben Nazir, she afterward comes to insult him as a “miscreant” and a “base coward” (1827, p. 33). Charles refers to him as a “ferocious tyrant” (1827, p. 52), and later, in a face-to-face conversation, Charles describes his honorable origin against the ‘inferior’ origin of Ben Nazir:

Such soil the plant may nourish,
But honour's stems rise from a nobler source,
And like some distant and wind-wafted seed
Unnoticed falling on earth's rottenness,
Burst high and bright from the offensive mass-
As I above thee, Moor, and thy swart slave.
(1827, p.73)

Through action, Ben Nazir epitomises most of the conventional Moorish stereotypes and those of the Saracens. A very negative image is constructed for him throughout the whole play. He gets married to Emerance by the power of treachery and deceives her father; he invites both of them to his tent, telling them that his army is on its way to attack Spain. But his army marches to Etude's castle, and once the castle is under his siege, Ben Nazir captures Emerance, whom he forcefully marries (1827, p. 27–31). He is a cruel tyrant who expresses how his anger “twill fall—burning and heavily” on Emerance and her father (1827, p. 55). Ben Nazir inhumanly interrupts the reunion of two sincere lovers, Emerance and Charles. Later in action, Ben Nazir's men capture Charles, Emerance's lover, and put him into prison, preventing him from seeing his lover (1827, p. 68–77). As a result, Emerance is left with a terrible sense of desolation, which would be her incentive to commit suicide in the final act. Thus, Ben Nazir personifies the very essence of ruin and devastation with which the European characters find themselves afflicted.

Noteworthy as well in the portrayal of Ben Nazir is his role as the antithetical figure to the Christian characters: Etudes, Emerance, and Charles. Ben Nazir is represented as the reverse image of Christians. He is presented as an evildoer, while his Christian counterparts are good and virtuous. Emerance is represented in the play as faithful, virtuous, and altruistic. She is faithful to her lover, Charles, for whom she sacrifices her life. She is a staunch Christian who makes a great concession to protect Christendom; she gets married to Ben Nazir to protect the Christian land from the Islamic conquest. Although she is haunted by the power of Charles' love, Emerance cannot tear her Christian moral bridle apart and plot against her husband, Ben Nazir. She honourably respects her bond of marriage with Ben Nazir, telling him, "I know my duty—I am yours. I know it—you shall find me dutiful" (1827, p. 41). Later, when Charles wants to plot Emerance's escape, Emerance responds, "He is my husband still. Let all the world reproach, revile him, and with reason, too; even in the extremest ill, I'll cling to him" (1827, p. 52).

Etude, the father of Emerance, and Charles, in their respective roles, embody the essence of Christian virtue. They symbolise freedom and epitomise European defiance against the cruelty of the Moors. When Emerance urges her father to commit suicide, he answers that he prefers to die "with honour" (1827, p. 34). Etudes courageously challenges Ben Nazir, saying, "let danger face me in its bloodiest form/ arms in my hand/ unshackled and unsullied / and I can burn it (1827, p. 34). Charles is portrayed as noble, honourable, and a symbol of freedom. Charles comes to snatch Emerance from her miserable fate, announcing, "from a ferocious tyrant, I'd release you" (1827, p. 52). Charles courageously confronts the tyranny of Ben Nazir when he resists fearlessly Ben Nazir by saying, "not fate nor fortune/would raise thee to my state, nor sink me down /to thine. Forbear this mimicry of greatness, /it suits thee not (1827, p. 76). He is also a faithful lover whose "senses are in lethargy of love" (1827, p. 52), and once he comes to know about his lover's marriage with Ben Nazir, he rushes to save her, promising her "I will not all desert thee" (1827, p. 52). Driven by profound affection, Charles relinquishes his regal stature and liberty as a noble sacrifice for love.

The play undeniably presents a striking juxtaposition between the Moorish figure and the Christian characters. Ben Nazir stands as an oppressive Moor whose very existence in Europe poses a dire threat to the cohesion of the Christian realm. He embodies the villainous infidel with his nefarious actions and invasions, leaving behind a wake of familial disintegration and emotional turmoil. In stark contrast, the Christian characters shine forth as paragons of virtue, righteousness, and compassion. Their moral integrity stands far above that of their Moorish adversary, who is steeped in deceit and self-interest. They bravely resist the malevolence of the Moorish invader, endeavouring to reclaim their love and restore the once harmonious unity shattered by Ben Nazir's destructive presence.

In fact, the contrast between the Moorish and Christian characters is a synecdoche of the contrast between Islam and Christianity. The play presents the conflict between characters as more likely a conflict of faith. The religious Muslim identity of Ben Nazir is repeatedly assured. The title of the play modifies Ben Nazir's role as the Saracen. The word "Saracen," which means a Muslim, is not devoid of negative connotations, as it is usually associated with destruction, danger, sin, and infidelity.¹ Throughout the play, Ben Nazir's Islamic identity is

¹ The saracens in English productions are stereotypical, and they have many negative features.

They are devils and, most of the time, sinful. For more details, see Anthony Gerard Barthemely

repeatedly reaffirmed; he is the Saracen, the infidel, and the Mohammedan. It seems that Ben Nazir's misdeeds are a translation of the immorality of his faith. In contrast, the Christian identity of Charles, Emerance, and Etudes is assured and rendered the source of their moral behaviour. Thus, the conflict depicted in the play transcends the mere opposition between European and Moorish characters, emerging instead as a moral struggle between an unrighteous faith, Islam, and a virtuous, veracious religion, Christianity.

Throughout history, the Muslim Moor stood as Christianity's most formidable and dreaded adversary, and his presence posed a formidable peril to Christendom. Edward Said eloquently remarks on this matter:

From the end of the seventh century until the battle of Lepanto in 1571, Islam in its Arab, Ottoman, or North African and Spanish form dominated or effectively threatened European Christianity. That Islam outstripped and outshone Rome cannot have been absent from the mind of any European past or present (Said, 1978, p. 74).

Islam posed a grave concern for the majority of Christians, leading many literary works crafted within Christian Europe to depict Islam as a looming threat to the moral fabric of Christendom. Accordingly, English drama has traditionally disparaged Islamic faith and culture. The Moor is frequently reminded of his Islamic heritage. In *Othello*, the Christian Othello is often portrayed as inferior due to his Islamic lineage. Similarly, in *Lust Dominion*, Eleazar is repeatedly confronted with his perceived inferior Islamic background, and his racial dissimilarity is frequently used as an indicator of religious disparity. Thus, the play appears to have adhered to the customary Orientalist discourse. Much like Othello and Eleazar, Ben Nazir is portrayed as steeped in immorality, deceit, and ruin, while the Christian identity of the white characters exudes virtue, honour, and religious veracity. As a result, the Muslim Moor, Ben Nazir, emerges as a menace to the moral, social, and religious equilibrium of the Christian territories.

3.2. A Possible Moorish-Christian Union and the Fear of Miscegenation

Equally significant, the play deals with the theme of miscegenation and mirrors the conventional attitude towards the union between the Moor and the white Christian girl. From the very beginning of the play, the idea of interracial marriage between Emerance and Ben Nazir plants in Etudes and Clotaire, the priest, racist and hostile attitudes towards the Moor and inflames their fear of racial contamination and dishonour. Take this dialogue from the first act of the play:

Etudes. good father, would your pious seal

Combat my fixed resolve: once more, I tell you,

My daughter weds the Saracen.

Clotaire. Then farwell every honour of thy house!

(1987), *Black Face Maligned Race: The Representation of Blacks in English Drama from Shakespeare to Southerne*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.

Valeur achievements- virtue's long inheritance-

Religion's holy pride –all , all farewell!

(1827, p.1)

The proposal of uniting Emerance in marriage with Ben Nazir to quell the Moorish threat has deeply disturbed the priest, Clotaire, who voices concern about the perils of interracial union. Clotaire reminds Emerance's father of the potential dishonour and shame that such a union between the Saracen and Emerance could cast upon Christianity. In conventional Orientalism, miscegenation is often associated with dishonour and disgracefulness. For instance, in William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, Portia views the prince of Morocco as an inferior and inadequate suitor. Portia would rather face death than become his wife. Similarly, in Shakespeare's *Othello*, the interracial union between Othello and Desdemona ignites fear of racial contamination and triggers hatred within the white community. Desdemona's father believes that such a marriage would only produce monstrous or deformed offspring. Thus, miscegenation is typically perceived as a pestilence, posing a threat to the preservation of the distinguished European race.

Likewise, in *Ben Nazir, The Saracen*, Christian characters are infuriated and feared by the union between Ben Nazir and Emerance whose father is only forced politically to have his daughter married to the Moor to "secure [his] kingdom by alliance" (1827, p.10). Clotaire tries to dissuade Etudes from having Emerance married to the Saracen, saying "thou would'st couple thy great name with his Plebian pride and infidel ambition" (1827, p.3). Emerance adamantly rejects the idea of marrying Ben Nazir and displays her astonishment and revulsion at the mere thought of being wedded to the Saracen. She considers the social entrance of the Saracen into Christian society as a "downfall of our fame" (1827, p.7). Emerance prefers "a thousand deaths" to "a moment alliance with such thoughts" (1827, p.20). She preferably urges her father to "perish with honour" rather than choose a denigrating alliance through a mescegenic union (1827, p.20).

One could argue that the playwright appears to unveil rather than reinforce the prejudiced attitudes of the white characters towards interracial marriage. However, this argument holds no validity as the entire play revolves around the rejection of the union between Ben Nazir and Emerance. In the play's conclusion, Emerance tragically takes her own life, thereby closing the door on the Moor's social integration into Christian society. By killing Emerance, the play denies the Saracen the opportunity to marry a Christian. Consequently, the dishonour, disgrace, and catastrophic consequences of the interracial marriage, which the Christian characters fear, either go unrealized or remain purely theoretical. Thus, not only do the white characters dismiss the notion of Moorish-Christian marriage, but the very narrative of the play itself repudiates miscegenation by presenting it as a failure and an unattainable imaginative concept.

What also assures the play's rejection of miscegenation is the absence of the Christian woman's fascination with the Moor. In Moorish-themed English plays, the exotic Moor bewitches the Christian girl whose father:

functions as a super-ego, a moral bridle, which represses and controls libidinous and rebellious Christian femininity. His very presence enacts white male terror of white female unruliness and discloses the fear that

without his intervention, the daughter would drift out of control, being as she is bewitched by the infidel Moor (Bekkaoui, 1998, p.181).

In English drama, it is a common theme to see white fathers intervening to warn their daughters against the dangers of miscegenation. However, in this particular play, the white female character, Emerance, strongly resists any romantic involvement with the Moor, Ben Nazir. She challenges her father's political alliance with Ben Nazir by rejecting the idea of miscegenation. The play does not require any external intervention from family or religious institutions because Emerance herself embodies the role of these institutions when she opposes any connection with the foreign Moor. As a result, the play eliminates any white female fascination with the exotic Moor and instead, focuses on Emerance's affection for King Charles. This deliberate removal of any allure towards the Moor ensures the playwright's complete rejection of the idea of a Moorish-Christian union.

Evidently, Grattan's play invalidates the interracial marriage between the Moor and the Christian woman. The play appears to have been written with the intention of deeming historically real marriages, like that between Minuza, a Moorish chief, and the daughter of the duke of Aquitaine, as unlawful or illegitimate. Historically, at the beginning of the eleventh century, Etudes, the duke of Aquitaine, had his daughter married to a Moorish chief for political reasons. Grattan's play renders the historical marriage between Minuza and Etude's daughter imaginatively unsuccessful and unacceptable. On the stage, Grattan reverses the historical interracial union between the Moor and the Christian female, refusing, as a result, any racial, religious, or territorial coexistence between the Moorish and Christian cultures. I believe here that Grattan's intention is to diminish the historical territorial expansion of the Moors, which still lingered in the imagination of the English during the nineteenth century. The play highlights the Moors inability to achieve religious and racial dominance over Europe, thus undermining their geographical conquest of the continent.

In summary, the play portrays the Moorish character as morally and religiously inferior when compared to the Christian counterparts. It sets Christianity against Islam, depicting the humane Christian in contrast to the villainous Muslim Moor. This Orientalist ideology aims to compensate for the historical military weakness experienced by the Christians during the Moorish territorial conquest of Europe. The play conveys that true power is not measured solely by force, but also by religion and morality, qualities that are perceived to be lacking in the Muslim infidel. For Grattan, the religious supremacy of the Christian characters overshadows any military might possessed by the Moor. Moreover, the play rejects the idea of social, racial, or political union between the Moor and the European. It ensures that the interracial union between Ben Nazir and the Christian woman remains impossible and unsuccessful, thwarting the Moor's ambitions of territorial conquest. In essence, the playwright suggests that although the Moor may succeed in conquering European lands geographically, he ultimately fails to penetrate the essence of the European-self, which remains religiously and racially impenetrable.

4. Discursive Incoherence in the Representation of the Moor

4.1. The Moor: The Atrocious Villain or the Tender Hero?

Having presented the conventional discourse on the Moor in the play, I shall now disorient this seeming coherent discourse by, first, deconstructing the narrative of the Christians' moral superiority and by marking the penetrability of the Christian society, which the playwright attempts to deny. This section will assume that although the playwright has made a strenuous effort to translate his hostile portrait of the Muslim Moor into an artistic

work, the process of dramatic translation is not devoid of contradictions, which may turn the playwright's project into a failure.

The play conveys the notion that the Christian characters embody virtue and goodness, while the Muslim Moor is depicted as a villain, an enemy, and an unbeliever. Such an idea is clearly undermined by the positive utterances of the Moor, which challenge the hostile portrayal. Etudes admits the invading infidel's worth: "Even now I need his services" (1827, p. 3). Emerance admits his heroic status, saying, "Is he not a hero?" (1827, p. 5). These attitudes sound like a challenge to the playwright's own beliefs and the views of the Christian characters, as they refute the claim of Ben Nazir's enmity and villainy.

The democratic essence of drama allows Ben Nazir the chance to challenge the claims made by the Christian characters, showcasing his distinguished character that has triumphed and attained fame. Ben Nazir refers to himself, saying, "There is within me that which mounts—a spirit of utmost daring. I have o'erstrode already / a thousand obstacles. Wrought me a name / imperishable for the world, and made/ its immorality more right with thee" (1827, p. 42). Later, when Charles contrasts his noble and virtuous race to that of the Moor, which is described as degenerate and vile, Ben Nazir comments, " so!/ thou art one of those proud plunderers of the land/ whom courtesy calls noble/ But on whom nature has failed to fix the greatness stamp"(1827, p. 72). And when Charles expresses that his nobleness is inherent and his superiority is based on ancestry and nature, Ben Nazir reacts:

from nature's dregs, O, Nature, thus
it is
thy swoll'n up spawn blaspheme thy fertile womb,
Degrading thee to dignify them.
Whence springs the trunk of the majestic oak?
When sprouts the young branch of the princely pine?
From nature's dregs, I answer thee, where thou
And thy far sought forgotten ancestary
May seek your roots.
(1827, p. 73)

Ben Nazir reminds the audience of his achievements and his public fame while rejecting the great honour and dignity of King Charles. Ben Nazir is also aware of his self-worth and his royal status, which the audience could get a feel of when he announces that he is entitled "King –caliph- sultan- emperor!" and that "all the monarch lives and glows within me" (1827, p. 75). Ben Nazir is vehemently insistent on his royal status, denying the claims and accusations of his lack of dignity and high rank. As a result, the audience would be left with the impression that the Moor is not beneath the Christian characters but rather holds a position of superiority, or at the very least, of equality. Hence, the narrative of the Moor's racial inferiority and villainous nature is consistently interrupted by the Moor himself, who vehemently challenges such notions.

More importantly, though the play tries substantially to emphasise the villainous nature of Ben Nazir, exemplifying his trickery and selfish inhumanity, there are on the stage many slippages that deny his wickedness and define his virtuous nature. Ben Nazir is not a villain by nature. To illustrate, in the very beginning, Ben Nazir has no tendency to marry Emerance by force or treachery. Etudes has already promised to have his daughter married to Ben Nazir. But the fact that Etudes deceives Ben Nazir by retracting his promise fuels Ben Nazir's anger and forces him to react. Even when Ben Nazir captures Etudes and Emerance, he entitles the act as vengeance:

Sweet vengeance, come at last!-oh let me hug thee!

Seize on these slaves. Throw wide the curtain now,

And show them a fair sight!

(1827, p. 31)

In fact, Ben Nazir is endowed with humanity. When he is offered the chance to punish Etudes, he refuses to stab him in order not to hurt Emerance. Ben Nazir pronounces, "Yet list thee, Emerance. I hate thy / father,/but cannot do thee harm. Once more I offer/ freedom to Etudes, to thy sister joy-/ (1827, p. 34). Though he seizes King Charles, he treats him so well and does not abstract him from his prestigious title, the king (1827, p. 77). In this way, Ben Nazir's actions stand in stark contrast to the deformed images the audience receives of Ben Nazir from the Christian characters and the play's overall story.

Significant is also the fact that Ben Nazir tenderly loves Emerance. Ben Nazir is a devoted lover who is able to free himself from racial or religious conflicts. He loves Emerance faithfully to the extent that he is in total readiness to offer her anything she dreams of, saying, "Ask what thou wilt of me—a realm—a world-/and it is thine. My all capacious soul/ swells big and mighty for thee. I am all/ greatness and energy and power"(1827, p. 45). Ben Nazir's faithfulness to his love is strikingly exemplified in the last scene when he stabs himself, "totters towards Emerance body, falls besides it and dies"(1827, p. 100). Ben Nazir is also an altruistic lover. In the final act, Ben Nazir relinquishes his love for Emerance's joy, telling Charles, "Spare me, o king! I came to give her to thee... /by heaven, it was my intent" (1827, p. 96). In this context, Ben Nazir is not a self-centered lover intent on marrying Emerance through coercion, but rather he altruistically chooses to relinquish his love upon realizing that Emerance cannot reciprocate his feelings.

It would also be of paramount importance to mention here that Ben Nazir is a tragic hero. In tragedy, the audience is often sympathetically identified with the tragic figures. In the play, Ben Nazir dies painfully in the end for Emerance. Such a painful death for Ben Nazir would leave the audience with a terrible sense of sorrow. Even when he is about to die, Ben Nazir speaks from the heart, expressing his noble feelings towards Emerance:

Oh Emerance! Emerance!

I worshipped thee alive – thy breathing form,

Was my divinity – thy deathless spirit

Is still the viewless impulse of my being

(1827, p. 99)

Since utopian love has frequently been revered and esteemed by humanity, these lines would undoubtedly persuade the audience of Ben Nazir's noble character, thus fostering a sympathetic stance towards him. In this regard, Ben Nazir is not portrayed as a villain, but rather as a tragic hero possessing genuine emotional nobility.

The play reveals a great eagerness to morally separate the Christian characters from the Moors. The play's story idealises morally the Christians and makes of them paragons of virtue and resistance. However, there are hints on the stage that may transform Christian values into vices. For instance, the instigator of deceit in the play is Etudes. Right from the play's outset, Etudes manipulates his daughter to advance politically and deceive Ben Nazir. Furthermore, Etudes is portrayed as a coward, lacking any chivalrous qualities. Throughout the two first acts, Emerance persistently tries to convince him to fight courageously and die honourably, but he usually rejects the idea, finding solutions in stratagems of war or political reliability. Consequently, the Christian characters do not possess moral superiority over the Muslim Moors.

It is quite noticeable, then, that there are many contradictions in the representation of the Moor. Ben Nazir meets all the features of the villain Moor. He is revengeful and inhumane, as well as morally, religiously, and racially inferior. However, the play also endows Ben Nazir with humanity, nobleness, and morality. In the play, two irreconcilable versions of the Moor are contesting: powerful and weak, superior and inferior, humane and inhumane, villain and hero. In the play, the reader can discern two different, even oppositional, characters of Ben Nazir. The first version is of a villain, and the second is of a hero. Why then is there this discrepancy in the representation of the Moor? One possible assumption is that the playwright aimed to depict his Moor as an inferior villain, aligning with the conventional representation of Moors, to undermine the historical might of the Moorish people, but the historical setting of the play, set in the eleventh century, significantly disrupted the playwright's intention and actually bolstered the Moor's position. In essence, even when the playwright tried to separate the Moor from his historical power, the backdrop of the Islamic victory in southern Europe exerted a profound influence on the playwright's creative vision. Consequently, the historical context effectively imposed itself on the literary text. For this, Bakkaoui states:

When the literary work is on al-Andalous, history moves in and disorients the author's vision and position and interrupts the assertion of western power so that even a zealous [playwright] fails miserably to assimilate or subjugate his Moorish protagonist (Bekkaoui, 1998, p. 23).

Another possible assumption in this context is that the playwright aimed to portray his Moor as a villain, but the influence of Romantic sentimentality pervaded the character of the Moor. In essence, the play was intended to conform to conventional ideals, but the impact of romantic literary standards intervened, diverting the text from its primary ideological core. As a consequence, Ben Nazir emerges as a complex character, portrayed as both cruel and tender—a depiction that oscillates between orientalist conventionality and Romantic sentimentality. Thus, one can deduce that the playwright deliberately seeks to portray Ben Nazir as a villain. Yet, inadvertently, he ends up dramatising the Moor's humanity, moral character, and strength. This incongruity in the depiction of the Moor can be attributed to the conflict between the play's intended Orientalist agenda on one side and the multifaceted theatrical nature, the romantic literary inclination of the play, and the historical triumph of Islam in Europe on the other.

4.2. Western Impenetrability or "a Dire Delusion"

Having deconstructed the discursive representation of the Moor, I shall now trace the instabilities in the discourse of western impenetrability that the play tries to ascertain. By representing the Christian soul as being immune against Islamic and Moorish influence, the overall play aims to belittle the effect of Moorish historical expansionism, an aim that is disfigured and disrupted by latent contradictions characterising the discourse of western immunity. Thus, the play's endeavour to assert western impenetrability becomes disfigured, and the illusion of a monolithic, impenetrable Christian identity starts to crumble under the weight of subtle contradictions, unveiling a deeper and more nuanced reality that resonates far beyond the confines of the stage.

Ben Nazir deliberately omits any notion of racial or religious Moorish influence on Christians, as it renders the marriage between Emerance and Ben Nazir abortive to fail the Moor's racial and social entrance into Christian society and illustrates how although the Moor has succeeded in expanding geographically, he fails to conquer the Christian beliefs and soul. But the irony lies in the Christians dependence on the Moorish impact and integration into their society. Etudes, in a poignant move, urges his daughter to wed Ben Nazir, realising the vital importance of gaining support from the Moorish Catalans to protect his territories from the looming conquest by the caliph Abdurramus. Through this alliance, Etudes discerns the strategic significance of the Moorish penetrability into the white race and their social integration into Christian society, recognising it as a crucial means of safeguarding their interests and preserving their existence. Etudes describes to Emerance how "I secure [my] kingdom with an alliance with Ben Nazir" (1827, p. 10). In this way, the social and racial entrance of the Moor into Christian society, which the play hinders, is ironically needed by the Christians to protect their territorial autonomy.

Furthermore, the play artfully dissociates the female Christian from her customary allure towards the Moor. Charles and Emerance find themselves united by an idyllic, utopian love purposefully designed to thwart any potential fascination that Emerance might harbour for Ben Nazir. What makes this theatrical opus truly extraordinary is that the female Christian, of her own accord, becomes profoundly convinced of the perceived disgrace accompanying her marital bond with the Moor. The narrative imbues Emerance with an intense animosity towards the Moor, strategically intended to preserve the notion of impenetrability within the European 'distinguished' race. However, the true irony unfolds when, towards the play's culmination, Emerance unveils her deep admiration for the Moor's character, aligning herself morally with him. In an unexpected twist, Emerance comes to realise that the perceived tyranny of Ben Nazir is nothing but a deceptive illusion, and his heart is actually filled with courage and nobility. She expressively discovers that his tyranny is a "dire delusion" and that his heart is "sanguine" and "too noble" (1827, p. 95). It appears that the playwright's initial intent was to safeguard Emerance from any emotional or moral enthrallment with the Moor, thus preventing any potential interracial unity. Yet, as the narrative unfolds, Emerance is compelled to express the noble qualities of the Moor, allowing him to embody the essence of a tragic hero in line with artistic conventions. This subtle revelation adds layers of complexity to the storyline and underscores the true contradictions inherent in Moorish Orientalism.

Another element that deserves attention while tracing the contradictions in the discourse of Western impenetrability is the fact that Ben Nazir's behaviour presents a counter-image to the bestial, lascivious Moor. In conventional Orientalism, the Moor is often associated with excessive bestial sexuality, but here he refuses to comply with the conventionally settled notion of lasciviousness. On stage, there is no single hint to Ben Nazir's sexual desire, libido, or physical union with his Christian wife, but only references to his incorporeal emotions and

feelings. In this intricate tapestry, the playwright's resolute determination is evident in his unwavering commitment to safeguarding the virtue of the female Christian form, at least superficially, from the allure of Moorish sexuality. The irony, however, lies in a cunning non-conventional concession made by the playwright: he ingeniously presents the Moor in a positive light, endowing him with emotional tenderness. Yet, this seemingly benevolent portrayal only serves to reinforce the conventional negative image of the Moor as racially inferior and incapable of conquering the European female body. Paradoxically, while this concession successfully shields the Christian body from what is perceived as Oriental contamination, it inadvertently allows the Moor to permeate the spiritual and moral realm of the Christian, subtly weaving himself into the very fabric of their being.

In essence, the playwright's aim is to portray the imperviousness of the Christian soul and racial identity. However, upon closer examination, a captivating paradox emerges as the narrative unfolds. Instead of reinforcing the facade of impenetrability, the play contradictorily stages the Christians' inherent need for Moorish penetrability, subtly revealing their longing for connection beyond their perceived barriers. Moreover, the Moor, surprisingly, proves to be successful in penetrating the Christian female not just emotionally but also morally, breaking down the presumed boundaries between their respective worlds. This unexpected twist challenges Orientalist conventions and uncovers the intricate uncertainties that lie within the text, transcending the already-made constraints of ideology and discursive practices.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this article has posited that despite Grattan's play being driven by a dedicated endeavour to portray the Moor through Orientalist's eyes, the need to present the Moor as the "other" on the stage falls gravely short. The Orientalist discourse that Grattan has striven to convey remains deeply unsettled due to its inherent contradictions and conflicts.

Basically, the play depicts the Moorish characters as morally and spiritually inferior when compared to their Christian counterparts. Grattan's perspective emphasises the religious dominance of the Christian characters, overshadowing any military prowess held by the Moors and dismissing the notion of a social, racial, or political alliance between the Moor and the Europeans, solidifying the impossibility and failure of the mixed-race union between Ben Nazir and the Christian woman. Ultimately, the playwright suggests that while the Moors might achieve geographical conquest over European lands, they ultimately fall short of delving into the essence of the European identity, which remains impervious to religious and racial influences, maintaining its core sanctity.

However, as we have moved from the surface meaning of the text to its underlying subtexts, we have discerned that the Moor is far more than the savage other as initially portrayed. Instead, the Moor emerges as a compassionate lover and a chivalrous leader, excelling in both military prowess and moral values. The dialogic form of drama, the artistic nature of tragedy, and the rise of Romantic ideology forced Grattan to deviate from his primary orientalist intent. This shift disrupted his original perspective, leading him to transform the Moor from a malevolent antagonist into a figure of heightened virtue and goodness. We have also found that Grattan's consistent effort to propagate the immunity of the Christian soul and identity fails as the play contradictorily stages the Moor's ability to penetrate the Christian female not just emotionally but also morally, breaking down the already established boundaries between Christendom and Islam.

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