

## University of Exeter

### Britain and the Muslim World: Historical Perspectives

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## Islam on the British Stage

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### Introduction

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw the most extraordinary production of dramatic art in England. Both as regards the value and the number of works produced, drama had the lion's share. Therefore, the theatre constituted the main artistic medium through which the community expressed itself. At the time, being the primary artistic form that both entertained and informed the public, theatrical presentations gave much importance to display of the figure of the completely alien Other as object of focus. Therefore, what is worth remarking herein is the number of dramas in which an alien Moorish Muslim figure took part, as well as the picture he is displayed into and the idea propagated about.

Surprisingly, numerous famous British playwrights treated the subject of race and religion and put a black alien Muslim figure on the stage. In fact, there were many representations whose main aim was to present the colored man whom it named pagan. Therefore, for dramatic, political and cultural ends, they constructed several portraits of him. But, apart from the general plague of mis-re-presentation, there lies a hidden fact that is much more interesting. The Moorish Muslim race's heavy presence in British drama reflects the historically rooted relation that strongly tied Britain to the Islamic world all throughout history; that it gave it enough space to be presented in one of its major didactic and entertaining means, drama.

Drama, in Britain, brought forth, at a surface level, questions of difference and racial and cultural reluctance. But, nevertheless, at the same time, there was a huge latent fact being displayed: Britons and Muslims were there making history together both in fact and fiction. The fact that Muslim Moors were given much importance as to constitute main protagonists of hundreds of plays shows the extent of close relations between the Britons and Muslims. Historically speaking, the Moorish Muslim race, from an artistic angle of vision, had been given a chance to enter the gate of history hand in hand with Britons in drama. Today, nobody can deny the prolific presence of Muslim Moors in one of the most important international

intellectual legacies, which is marvelous ancient British drama. This recorded historic presence, speaks today of tangible historical relations that tied Britain to the Islamic world and vice versa. Hence, its being there, on the stage, recorded forever, emerges as a fact that is worth more than gold for the Muslim Moorish race; because of the paramount importance of its meanings today.

Nowadays, lessons should be deduced from past encounters. Living a postcolonial era or living cultural decadence, Moorish Muslims have to celebrate past's glorious days and re-write the history of theirs and Britons. The British too, having done enough in the past through famous authors, such as Shakespeare, who did not only satisfy themselves with writing for and about a small local crew, but wrote for and about humanity, must help Moorish Muslims regain confidence in Britain as a land and a people of peace and human transactions. Britain should help Muslims re-produce, from their own point of view, the lost fraternal ties that brought together, for centuries, the two races.

## I- **British Drama: Re-presenting Islam.**

### 1- **The Stage, Britons and Muslims.**

There are plenty of Black Muslim men and women that take part in dramas produced by British playwrights. What is most common in all dramas about this very present figure is that they all present him the same way. First plays, such as Marlow's, Thomas Dekker's, Peele's and Shakespeare's handed down the tradition of representing Muslim others to coming generations of famous British playwrights such as Thomas Heywood, Thomas Southerne, Elkanah Settle and John Dryden.

Apart from the notorious image of the alien Muslim black man, which pictures him as being skin-colored, pagan, and lustful, that is in fact most common in any drama about the Other of Europe be it of a red race, yellow, Moorish or black as jet, there is another honorable image in which the latter figure looks, sometimes, of a more purified nature and nurture than the recipient race.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, the negative view is common in every artistic work of whatever

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<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed picture about the image of the East in Western writings, Edward Said's *Orientalism* may be of help. This is a quote from Said's book: The idea of representation is a theatrical one: the Orient is the stage on which the whole East is confined. On this stage will appear figures whose role it is to represent the larger whole from which they emanate (...) in the depths of this Oriental stage stands a prodigious cultural repertoire whose individual items evoke a fabulously rich world: the sphinx, Cleopatra, Eden, Troy, Sodom and Gomorrah, Astarte, Isis and Osiris, Sheba, Babylon, the Genii, the Magi, Nineveh, Prester John, Mahomet, and dozens more; settings, in some cases names only, half-imagined, half-known; monsters,

kind, and it is not much of a truth as much as it is a dramatic as well as, may be, a political necessity.

Besides, such negative view about the Moorish Muslim is highly challenged by the image of the same persona, in the same talked about field of drama and in some plays of same playwrights, as being an honest ally, a chaste friend, a powerful warrior and defender of the Christendom itself, a generous wealthy, a wise man, a straight person in both acts and words, a God-fearing believer, and a correctly religious slave of God who is to respect and engage with in different businesses with no fear of deceit and on equal footings.

Sixteenth and seventeenth century plays that are about Muslim Moors are many and peopled by the latter figures that seem to have been haunting the British stages during the alluded to period. And, in many occasions, Muslim Moors come out of plays as complete characters. This proves that there were not only tensioned relations that tied the two races as much as the factual relationship was one of understanding, economic and political exchanges of goods, diplomats, alliances against foes and pirates, cultural exchanges, meetings and invitations.

To substantiate some of these claims, I will give proofs from plays written by British playwrights. On the same matter, Nabil Matar raises the issue in one of his articles on “Sources for the Study of Euro-Maghrib Relations in the Early Modern Period,” he writes: “Let me begin with the words of the Moroccan ambassador as he was making ready to leave London in July 1682:

**We have Beene Towld that the Christians worship a god mad of wood or Stone wch they may throw into the fiarre e see Consumed e this we have believed; but I have this day with my Eyes I thank God ... seene the Contrary. I doe believe the English Nation the best people in Europ.<sup>2</sup>**

As explained, the British race has been much valued by the Moorish Muslims because of several reasons. Britain was a powerful nation that kept nice diplomatic relations with its Muslim counterparts, and all official envoys from the Muslim world were well received on the

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devils, heroes' terrors, pleasures, desires. The European imagination was nourished extensively from this repertoire: between the middle ages and the eighteenth century such major authors as Ariosto, Milton, Marlow, Tasso, Shakespeare, Cervantes (...) drew on the Orient's riches for their productions, in ways that sharpened the outlines of imagery, ideas, and figures populating it.

<sup>2</sup> Nabil Matar, “Sources for the Study of Euro-Maghrib Relations in the Early Modern Period”, Florida Institute of Technology, 2004. All rights reserved. Available for educational use in association with the Cornell University Moroccan Seminar, Spring 2004.

British soil. There were of course some historical facts that somehow try to shake such strong ties, but the reality is that they never do. Tensions were little and always kept at a lower level.

What pacified relations between Britain and the Islamic world more is that mutual benefit along the Mediterranean or the Atlantic in all fields was a top priority that always comes first. This is what Nabil Matar writes on this matter:

**From technology to medicine, from Jew to Christian to Muslim, exchange was taking place across the Mediterranean divide, and North Africans were learning from that exchange about the European *nasara* (Christians) and their innovations.<sup>3</sup>**

Learning from, exchanging ideas and skills with, and living with were main purposes that explained every contact between the referred to as *nasara* (Christians) and North African Muslims. Never concerned in trivial matters that may hinder life for sides, the *nasara* and Muslims fought tirelessly for a living so as to make the world a better place together, while each trying to give the best of his. Matar again clarifies that North African's

**descriptions of the Christians show how relations were not always oppositional - that while there were battles and kidnappings, captivity and humiliation, there was also diplomacy, amicability, cooperation and negotiation – that in the same manner there were different perspectives in European literature about early modern Islam and Muslims, so were there different views and emotions in Magharibi writings about early modern Europeans".<sup>4</sup>**

Relations between Britons and Muslims, as made clear in the quote, and before in the Moroccan ambassador's words, in spite of what we may call inconsistencies such as battles, kidnappings, captivity and humiliation, at another level that is much more important and official, diplomacy, amicability, cooperation and negotiation were going on uninterruptedly smooth.

As Bridgett Orr explains:

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.,

**Plays with exotic settings contributed to the refashioning of metropolitan selves by providing an implicit or explicit contrast with planters, Indians, Moors, Spaniards and Ottomans.<sup>5</sup>**

Providing an implicit or explicit contrast with others is the main looked for reality in this case. It means seeing and getting wary of the fact that there is other peoples who share the world with the seer. Others that are no less human, no less cultivated, no matter how, than the presenters who re-present their others. Planters, Indians, Spaniards and Ottomans were identified to the British society in different moods and shapes. Henceforth, the stage proves to be a cannot-do-without means of acculturation and knowledge proliferation. Its value lies not only in its being able to manufacture consent or opposition, but also in its being a vehicle of endless transmission of acculturation between different races and cultures. It infused cultures of others at the very time it diffused its.

Plays that have been staged at the time, (16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> C), had different goals. Undeniably, most of them informed audiences, implicitly instructed them, and from a more sensitive angle of vision, helped foster imperialistic tendencies in their time's politics. But separately from these most common and shared accusations towards British drama, sharing the stage with other races and cultures transcended all such supra-structured inconsistencies in re-presentations. What matters most, is what goes beyond time and challenges history. The fact that speaks loudly today out of British dramatic heritage is that the British and Moorish Muslims made history once, and the stage is the very witness of this unobtrusive reality that can go beyond history itself not only beyond today's slight misunderstandings.

## 2- **The Image of Moorish Muslims on the British Stage.**

### a- **Christopher Marlow: *Tamburlaine***

Christopher Marlow's famous *Tamburlaine* is a play all about the successful victories of a great Scythian warrior who conquers half of the world by breaking down some of the strongest empires and states such as the Turkish dynasty of Bajazeth, Persia, Soldana of Egypt, Arabia, kingdom of Argier, kingdom of Fez and kingdom of Morocco. There is heavy focus, in this

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<sup>5</sup> Bridgett Orr, *Empire on the English Stage 1660-1714* (Cambridge: Cambridge university press, 2001) 15.

play, on Tamburlaine's subduing of these territories, as well as a noticeable presence of the East through representative kings and emperors whom Tamburlaine challenges and wins.

A perfect scene in which Muslim Turks and Moors show together while debating war strategies to face with Tamburlaine's swift creeping over their dynasties is the following:

**Bajazeth:** Bassaoes and janizaries of my guard,

Attend upon the person of your lord,

The greatest potentate of Africa.

**Tamburlaine:** Techelles and the rest, prepare your swords;

I mean t'encounter with that bajazeth.

**Bajazeth:** Kings of Fez, Morocco, and Argier,

He calls me Bajazeth, whom you call Lord!

Note the presumption of this Scythian slave!

I tell thee, villain, those that lead my horse

Have to their names titles of dignity;

And dar'st thou bluntly call me Bajazeth?

**Tamburlaine:** and know thou, Turk, that those which lead my horse

Shall lead thee captive thorough Africa;

And dar'st thou bluntly call me Tamburlaine?

**Bajazeth:** By Mohamet my kinsman's sepulcher,

And by the Holy Alcoran I swear,

He shall be made a chaste and lustless eunuch,

...

**King of Fez:** What mean the mighty Turkish emperor,

To talk with one so base as Tamburlaine?

**King of Morocco:** Ye Moors and valiant men of Barbary,

How can ye suffer these indignities?

**King of Argier:** Leave words, and let them feel your lances' points,

Which glided through the bowels of the Greeks.

**Bajazeth:** Well said, my stout contributory kings!

Your threefold amy and my hugy host

Shall swallow up these base-born Persians.

(*Tamburlaine*, III, iii, 63-96)<sup>6</sup>

This magnificent presence of the Great East, Turks, Persians, Arabs and North Africans, mainly Fez, Morocco, Argier and Egypt, is astonishing. Imagine a British author, who probably never visited the East, comes out in the mid fifteenth century with such an open play about events and people whom most of the British either completely ignore or have only heard of in merchants', diplomats', captives' and pirates' mythic-like rumors.

The stage's ability to picture the unknown, the unnamable, the exotic, the too-far and the unbelievable is marvelous. It built real and imaginative highways between races and societies and helped overcome the centeredness and ego centrism of the Europeans. The stage imported and diffused humanism and human heritage through tying races and bringing them closer.

#### b- William Shakespeare: *Othello*

Shakespeare's *Othello* is mainly known as the Moor of Venice. His being adopted by the Venetian Christian society, converted and given the rank of General of the Army speaks of the possibility of co-existence of races. But what is more noticeable, is that though *Othello*'s complex stirs unsolvable polemics, the Moorish figure that forms the centre of the play, and also his chivalric roles in the recipient society, keep him as one representative of a race that is widely cited and known.

*Othello*'s person, throughout the whole play, unfolds as being a figure that is respectful, powerful and diligent. This is a part from the play that describes him best:

**Iago:** [Brabantio] prated,  
And spoke such scurvy and provoking terms against your honor  
That, with little godliness I have,  
I did full hard forbear him...  
**Othello:** let him do his spite;  
My services which I have done the signiory  
Shall out-tongue his complaints. 'Tis yet to know –  
Which, when I know that boasting is an honor,  
I shall promulgate – I fetch my life and being

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<sup>6</sup> Christopher Marlow, *Tamburlaine* ...



From men of royal siege; and my demerits  
May speak unbonneted to as proud a fortune  
As this that I have reached...  
(*Othello*: I, ii, 17-24)<sup>7</sup>

Othello, though black and alien both to the Venetian society that assimilated him and to the Londoners who are supposed to be the audience watching the first display of the drama about him, is given, by Shakespeare, the opportunity to defend himself as everybody does. Othello speaks of himself and defends his right to be before both Venetians and the London audience freely and with no prejudice. This explains the width of the British playwright's view and its readiness to accept the other and make it explainable to audiences.

c- **William Shakespeare: *The Tempest*.**

William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* is all about Caliban. This Caliban is supposed to be a native islander who lives lonely on an island where a wrecked Milanese ship crew is shored. A certain Prospero, a usurped Duke of Milan, and his daughter Miranda meet this island owner, Caliban. They, being powerful enough through magic and Western civilization, conquer him and turn him into a slave. But though enslaved, Caliban is given the floor to speak and express his agonies. In many occasions, Shakespeare speaks Caliban as follows:

**Caliban:** I must eat my dinner  
This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother,  
Which thou tak'st from me. When thou cam'st first,  
(*The Tempest*. I, ii, 332-45)<sup>8</sup>

**Caliban:** You taught me language; and my profit on't  
Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you  
For learning me your language!  
(*The Tempest*. I, ii, 365)

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<sup>7</sup> Shakespeare, William. *Othello*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957.

<sup>8</sup> Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest*. Ed., Frank Kermode. London and New York: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1973.

As one might notice, Caliban though re-presented, still can defend himself. He curses and accuses those who wrong him. He stands resistive in front of his conquerors, and clarifies his case before the audience. This must reveal, for sure, a will to understand others and a readiness to give them their rights as full humans, which again unveils the fact that there were not only tensions prevailing on Western/Eastern relations.

d- **Thomas Dekker: *Lust's Dominion, or the Lascivious Queen*.**

In this play, the Moroccan Muslim Moor, Eleazar, is presented as being one of the mightiest warriors that Spain ever had. Philip, King of Spain, commends him to his successor son as being a man that is “both wise and warlike,” he tells his son:

**King Philip:** I do commend him [Eleazar] to thee for a man  
Both wise and warlike...  
(I, iii, p: 60)<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, while in the Spanish court, Eleazar speaks and acts as being a member of the royal family. He sits on a sofa, listens to music, smokes cigars and makes love to the lusty Queen Mother who keeps chasing him for a kiss. As a dramatic persona, Eleazar is given the opportunity by Thomas Dekker, as a British playwright, to stand on the stage as a complete representative of a race. Here is a part of one of Eleazar's famous speeches in the play:

**Eleazar:** ...  
Although my flesh is tawny, in my veins  
Runs blood as red, and royal as the best  
And proud'st in Spain; there does old man:  
My father, who with empire lost his life,  
And left me captive to the Spanish tyrant,  
(*Lust's Dominion*: I, ii, p: 55-6)

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<sup>9</sup> Dekker, Thomas. *Lust's Dominion or the Lascivious Queen*. Ed. Khalid Bekkaoui. Casablanca: Imprimerie Najah al Jadida, 1999.

Eleazar is denied to no right on a stage that is completely Western. In spite of some recurrent references to him as being a Moor, this proves that there existed in reality some respect between the west and the Muslim East.

e- **Thomas Heywood: *The Fair Maid of the West***

In this play, Thomas Heywood represents a land of Muslims (Morocco) as being a rich country ruled by a mighty king and lived in by a chaste and courageous people. In a ship adventure some British men and a woman (Bess Bridges) found themselves in Barbary under mercy of a lustful, wealthy and mighty king. In general terms, the main implicit idea that the play conveys, and which serves us most in this context of racial confrontation, is that North Africa, a Muslim part of the world, constituted an important source for British traders, wealth chasers, adventurers, sea pirates and diplomats. While on their way to Barbary Bess meets a man who she recognizes as being of the same race and religion as she and asks him:

**Bess:** Whence are you, sir, and whither were you bound?

**Merchant:** I am a London, bound for Barbary.

(P: 61)<sup>10</sup> 500

Other dramatic moments in which the Muslim Moors are presented in full are widely scattered in the play. It can be said that the whole play is about picturing the mightiness, chastity, humanity and wisdom of the Muslim Moorish Other of Europe. Mullisheg, the Moroccan King who finally frees his British captives and celebrates their matrimonial gathering in his castle, is shown to be giving freedom to strangers in his country but adopting strict commerce laws for those who may conceal them:

**Mullisheg:** ... then give order that

That all such Christian merchants as have traffic

And freedom in our country, that conceal

The least part of our custom due to us,

Shall forfeit ship and goods.

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<sup>10</sup> The dramatic works of Thomas Heywood, Vol. I, London, 1850, J . Payne Collier, ESQ. with life of the poet and remarks on his writings.

(P: 56) 495

Such a much positive image of a Muslim country and a people on the British stage might have had great effect on the audiences as well as on the British home politics of the time. In fact, it seems that the image of a Muslim Moor was never completely negative as we may read in some other works in such field.

f- **Thomas Southerne: *Money the Mistress***

In this play, the prologue reveals much of what the whole play is about. It speaks of the playwright as being concerned in all races as being the subject of his plays. The French, the Spaniards, Moors, and unbelieving Jews all of them constitute equal races in which the English playwright is concerned. He chooses among them and weaves a story that is to be re-presented in theatres before audiences. This explains not only the width of the British playwright's view, but his will to bring together different races in contact on his stage as being all of them humans that are separated only through name, religious beliefs or color. The epilogue of the play was written by Mr. Welsted and spoken by Mr. Quin. A part of it reads as follows:

**Prologue**

*Written by Mr. WELSTED.*

*Spoken by Mr. QUIN.*

*From the dull beaten road resolv'd to stray  
This author, for the subject of his play,  
Does every Sect and every Nation chuse:  
French, Spaniards, Moors, and unbelieving Jews!<sup>11</sup>*

g- **Elkanah Settle: *The Empress of Morocco***

What is most attractive about this play, which is mainly written by a British playwright, is that the dramatis personae of the play are exceptionally all of them Moorish. As the title conveys, the play is about some monarchic trouble that takes place in Morocco. As a salient unusual fact in British drama, the play displays only Moorish figures and revolves around a problem that is

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<sup>11</sup> Thomas Southerne, *Money the Mistress* (London: 1726) 3.

miles away. Nevertheless, such play demonstrates the close relationship that tied Britons to North African Moorish Muslims. It also speaks of the importance of the North African social, political and economic life that concerned Britons and Europeans in general because of several economic and political reasons.

**Moorish Dramatist Persona of the play:**

**Mulay Labas**, *son to the emperor of Morocco*

**Muly Hamet**, *a prince of the royal blood, contracted to Mariamne, and general of the Emperor's Forces.*

**Criminalbaz**, *a courtier, and gallant to the Queen Mother.*

**Hametalbaz**, *his confident and Creature, Governor of a castle in Morocco.*

**Abdelcador**, *friend to Muly Hamet*

**Achmat**, *a eunuch.*

**Laula**, *Emperess of Morocco, and mother to Mulay Labas, and to Mariamne.*

**Mariamne**, *her daughter.*

**Morena**, *daughter to Taffalet.*

**Villains, Lords, messengers, priests, masquers and other attendants.**

## The Actors Names.

<i>Muly Labas</i> , Son to the Emperour of <i>Morocco</i> .	} Mr. <i>Harris</i> .
<i>Muly Hamet</i> , a Prince of the Royal Blood, Contracted to <i>Marianne</i> , and General of the Emperour's Forces.	} Mr. <i>Smith</i> .
<i>Crimalthaz</i> , a Courtier, and Gallant to the <i>Queen Mother</i> .	} Mr. <i>Batterton</i> .
<i>Hametalthaz</i> , his Confident and Crea- ture, Governour of a Castle in <i>Morocco</i> .	} Mr. <i>Medbourne</i> .
<i>Abdelcador</i> , Friend to <i>Muly Hamet</i> .	Mr. <i>Crosby</i> .
<i>Achmat</i> , an Eunuch.	
<i>Laula</i> , Empress of <i>Morocco</i> , and Mo- ther to <i>Muly Labas</i> , and to <i>Ma- riamme</i> .	} Mrs. <i>Batterton</i> .
<i>Marianne</i> , her Daughter.	Mrs. <i>Mary Lee</i> .
<i>Morena</i> , Daughter to <i>Taffalet</i> .	Mrs. <i>Johnson</i> .
Villains, Lords, Messengers, Priests, Masquers, and other Attendants.	

THE

# THE EMPERESS OF MOROCCO.

The First Act, Scene the First.

*Scene opens, Muly Labas appears bound in Chains,  
attended by Guards.*

*Muly L.* **C**ondemn'd to Fetters, tho' to Scepters born!  
'Tis in this Garb unhappy Princes mourn.  
Yet Fortune to great Courages is kind;  
'Tis he wants Liberty whose Soul's confin'd.  
My Thoughts out-fly that mighty Conqueror,  
Who having vanquish'd one World, wept for more:  
Fetter'd in Empires, he enlargement crav'd  
To the short walk of one poor Globe enslav'd,  
My Soul mounts higher, and Fates Pow'r disdain;  
And makes me Reign a Monarch in my Chains.  
But 'tis my Father has decreed my Fate;  
Yet still he shews his Greatness in his Hate.  
Thy Rage, brave Prince, mean Subjects does despise;  
None but thy Son shall be thy Sacrifice.

*Enter Morena bound.*

This dazzling Object my weak fight invades:  
Such Beauty would make Dungeons lose their shades.  
*Moren.* Remember, Sir, when first you were a Guest  
To *Taffalet's* Court, and to my Breast,  
That I, fond Woman, in a borrow'd shape,  
Was a Conspirator in my own Rape,  
When in a fatal Night, whose darkness did  
Both our Escapes, and my faint Blushes, hide:

**B**

With

### h- John Dryden: *Don Sebastian King of Portugal*<sup>12</sup>

This play again is most famous for its being pictured on a complete oriental scene. The acts of the play take place on a locale that is miles away from England. But still, the British playwright produced a play in which it does not only picture Muslim Moors being entangled in action with European fellows, he transported the Orient as a whole (geography, people, traditions, costumes...) to the British stage in London. The orient must have been of paramount importance if pictured so in sixteenth and seventeenth century British drama.

Act I, Scene I,

<sup>12</sup> John Dryden, *Don Sebastian King of Portugal* (London)

The scene at Alcazar, representing a market-place under the Castle.

Muley Zeydan, Benducar

(1)

Don Sebastian,  
King of Portugal.

A C T. I. S C E N E. I.

*The Scene at Alcazar, representing a Market-Place under the Castle.*

*Muley Zeydan, Benducar.*

*Mul. Zeyd.* **N**OW *Africa's* long Wars are at an end ;  
And our parch'd earth is drench'd in Chri-  
stian Blood,  
My conquering Brother will have slaves enow,  
To pay his cruel Vows for Victory.  
What here you of *Sebastian*, King of *Portugal* ?  
*Benducar.* He fell among a heap of slaughter'd Moors ;  
Though yet his mangled Carcase is not found.  
The Rival of our threatned Empire, *Mahomet*,  
Was hot pursued ; and in the general rout,  
Mistook a swelling Current for a Foord ;  
And in *Mucazer's* Flood was seen to rise ;  
Thrice was he seen ; at length his Courser plung'd,  
And threw him off ; the Waves whelm'd over him,  
And helpless in his heavy arms he drown'd.

Conclusion

Islam and Muslims had been the concern of many British playwrights. Many dramatic presentations re-presented Islam and Muslims, and had the will to expose such religion and people to criticism as well as to fame. As the British were not well aware of the reality of all the races that reside North Africa and the Orient, drama took the torch of enlightenment and both presented the realities of the Muslim peoples as well as criticized some of their ways of life and thoughts. In fact, the British drama helped propagate an image about Islam and Muslims all over Britain and Europe.

From another perspective, it does not matter if the image propagated about Moorish Muslims in British drama is negative or positive. First, because the negative and the positive are present in everybody's facts and in any peoples cultures. Second, because in British drama itself the image of a Muslim Moorish figure is partly positive and partly negative. As we saw in previous illustrations, the Muslim Moor is not always subordinated and subjected as some insist, in fact he emerges in different times as a man as complete as every other man of the recipient stage. Moreover, the Muslim Moor is given the opportunity in many occasions to defend himself before the audience and prove his humanity that in some cases, as said before, goes beyond the representing race.

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