

## Portrayal of Muslims in Cervantes' *Don Quixote*: An Analytical Study of “Us” vs. “Them”

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### Abstract

This study examines Miguel de Cervantes' portrayal of Muslims in *Don Quixote* through Edward Said's Orientalism framework, focusing on the binary of “Us” (Christian Spaniards) versus “Them” (Arabs and Muslims). It explores how the novel reflects historical, political, and cultural tensions between East and West, and how Cervantes' perspective as a Christian author shaped his depiction of Muslims. Said's Orientalist framework is applied to selected narrative episodes, analyzing patterns of description, characterization, and symbolic opposition that construct the East–West divide. The findings show that Cervantes portrays Muslims with hostility, associating them with evil, disbelief, and magic, in contrast to the noble image of Don Quixote as a representative of “Us.” This negative characterization reflects both the religious and political conflicts of early modern Spain and Cervantes' personal experience of captivity in Algeria, which reinforced his antagonistic vision of Muslims. It underscores the need to re-examine such works through postcolonial and intercultural perspectives to reveal hidden biases and foster more balanced cultural narratives. *Don Quixote* emerges as both a global literary masterpiece and a historical document reflecting entrenched Orientalist attitudes. The novel mirrors the cultural and political divisions of its era as a medium for reinforcing “Us” versus “Them” constructs.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

*Don Quixote* by Cervantes is a novel about the protagonist whose original name is Alonso Quixano, a farm owner who has enough money to survive and have no other work to do at all. The hero of this novel, Alonso Quixano spends most of his first times of his entire life as in the novel reading books about chivalry and knights, especially medieval knights, those who ride horses, slaughter dragons, and kiss the hands of princesses. Then, he begins to dream of being a knight like them. One day, Alonso Quixano decided to become a knight like those famous and popular knights; trying to be exactly just like them. Quixano puts on armour and calls

himself Don Quixote. Don Quixote mounts his horse and starts to roam the villages and countryside in search of adventures and to save lives. Because dragons and giants were only existed in his mind, he begins to imagine windmills as enemies and giant monsters. Don Quixote took a companion named Sancho and they had begun their own adventures as they exactly planned. When people saw Don Quixote's madness, they wanted to cure him, and drew up plans to make him return to his farm. At the end of the story, Don Quixote realized that he was stupid and there was no point in doing all of that. It was too late; he contracted a severe fever and died in his bed. This novel was written between 1605 and 1615. The protagonist Don Quixote was known as 'The Clever Man Don Quixote of La Mancha who became a popular figure as he wished'. The author of this novel is Miguel de Cervantes. Miguel de Cervantes' novel was written in Spanish, and it is one of the greatest works of fiction and one of the oldest novels in history. It is a long prose story that focuses on action and character development. Miguel de Cervantes was born in 1547 in Spain and died in Madrid in 1616. Cervantes was a novelist and playwright. His famous novel Don Quixote has been translated into more than 62 languages.

Roberto Gonzalez (2015), in his book *Cervantes' Don Quixote*, describes the author and this work, saying "In my commentaries on Cervantes, however, I have endeavoured to offer original insights; new slants on his life and works and even daring fresh interpretations" (p. ix). What interpretations did Roberto Gonzalez want to present in his preface? Gonzalez, on the cover page of his book, which we have just mentioned above, however, asked, "Why does Cervantes claim to be transcribing the work of a Moorish historian instead of writing his own?" This question was written as it is, literally, on the cover page of his book. This question could lead us to be aware of a hidden Arabic image of the "other", and not the Spanish one as in the original text; 'a Moorish one', as he explained. Roberto Gonzalez believes that there is a Moorish smell on the whole work. Moorish's meaning in all dictionaries: [magaribi] مغاربي which is something African, something Arabic that is related to a Muslim's origin and background. This study aims to explore the Arabic Muslim figures or images, and symbols in Cervantes' Don Quixote. For all of that, so, the study needs to tackle such theory according to the horizon of "US" as Muslims and "THEM", the non-Muslims; the Spanish and vice versa.

## **2. Statement of the Problem:**

The relation between the west and east remains of controversial issues in reality or in literature due to the political patriarchy or the religious patriarchy. The clash between Islam and Christianity is reflected in literature since literature is the mirror of the whole society all over the globe. Cervantes' *Don Quixote* is one of the novels that reflect this kind of political as well as religious patriarchy in which the image of 'Us' and 'Them' can be seen clearly between

Muslims and Non-Muslims. The most important objective of this study lies in investigating the literary relations between the Arabic effect whether based on the Moorish origin or other effects when it comes to write on Cervantes' *Don Quixote*'s image/ images of Muslims in such other Arabic and/ or Islamic literature like this great novel. That would be found in the main character' behaviour via understanding the plot structure regarding the events of the novel and its characters and the surrounding atmosphere during Cervantes' time. That is to say, based on the historical facts, for instance, as stated by Roberto Gonzalez (2015), when he refers to the Moorish people. However, Edward Said (1993) recognized the foundation of "(Othering) ... with one another, but the field was epistemologically organized as a sort of hierarchy, with Europe and its Latin Christian literatures" (p. 52). The current study presents through the main question, whether *Don Quixote* as a novel and Don Quixote as a character contain any kind of Arabic or Islamic images or not, and if there are relations or relationship between Spanish and Islamic culture via the original book or its authorized translated versions.

### **3. Research Questions:**

1. How does Cervantes portray Muslims in his novel *Don Quixote*?
2. What is the relation between Muslims and Non-Muslims as presented by Cervantes in *Don Quixote*?
3. Is the portrayal of Muslims in *Don Quixote* positive or negative?
4. What are motives behind Cervantes' portrayal of Muslims in *Don Quixote*?

### **4. Objectives of the Study:**

1. Investigating Cervantes' portrayal of Muslims in *Don Quixote*.
2. Investigating the relation between Muslims and Non-Muslims as presented by Cervantes in *Don Quixote*.
3. Exploring if the portrayal of Muslims in *Don Quixote* is positive or negative.
4. Identifying reasons behind Cervantes' portrayal of Muslims in *Don Quixote*.

### **5. Significance of the Study:**

This study contributes to Cervantes studies by re-examining *Don Quixote* as a novel deeply shaped by the historical and cultural legacy of Muslim presence in Spain, particularly in Andalusia. By foregrounding the role of intercultural encounters and the figure of the Moorish narrator, the study offers a critical perspective that moves beyond traditional Eurocentric readings of the text. From a postcolonial perspective, the study explores how *Don Quixote*

negotiates cultural binaries such as “Us” and “Them,” revealing the processes through which identity, otherness, and historical memory are constructed in early modern European literature. This approach situates Cervantes’s work within broader discussions of power, representation, and cultural hybridity, thereby extending postcolonial inquiry to a pre-modern literary context. Moreover, the study contributes to contemporary discourses on Islam in European literature by analyzing early representations of Muslims and Islamic culture and tracing their implications for modern perceptions. By examining how Muslim figures are depicted in relation to Christian Spain, the study offers historically grounded insights that remain relevant to current debates on Islam, cultural coexistence, and intercultural dialogue in Europe.

## **6. Methodology of the Study:**

This study is based on a qualitative, analytical, and comparative approach. Kumar (2018) asserts that the qualitative approach has the potential to investigate things, and further, it allows the researchers to observe all of the events and characters and the characteristics in the particular phenomenon along with people's reactions to those occurrences as well. The results of this study are more thorough, as they can be made more effectively from the data collected in the study form along with Muslims’ images in Cervantes’ *Don Quixote*. For this reason, this study begins with a specific observation that assisted in the selection of a hypo-dissertation and the drawing of a conclusion from the study hereafter.

## **7. Theoretical Framework of the Study:**

Edward Said’s theory on Orientalism (1993) has been selected to be the theoretical framework to investigate, comprehend and analyse the image of othering in *Don Quixote* via the relation of “Us” vs “Them”. His theory shows the relations between different cultures and the power of imperialism as he explained it in his famous book *Culture and Imperialism*. Edward Said is a professor of comparative literature. Accordingly, he uses the relationships between the different types of literature among peoples or between one type of literature and different ones. In order to show these relationships, Said chose a theory in which he wanted to

prove the relationship of the imperial system to the forms of the written word, in general, and to one of its types, namely the novel in the first place. That is to demonstrate the fact that there is indeed a causal link between culture and imperialism. In his theory, he finds that it is not possible to imagine the flourishing of the novel, as we knew it in the ninth century in Europe, without the imperial of Arabs and the imperial system in its control over Spain, as was in fact previously clearly stated in the problem of this study.

To link Said's theory with this study as a framework:

- **Firstly**, his theory consists of the concept of “Binary opposition between the Orient and the Occident”. Throughout Orientalism, it is clear to show how the tension between the two spaces has persisted right through history. It is visible in Cervantes' novel. Zoraida, is depicted as a convert to Christianity in order to be like ‘Them’. There is a real historical background between the word of imperialism and the regime of Muslims in Spain. The long-lasting fight between both sides displays the binary opposition between the Muslim Orient as “Them” and the Christian Occident in *Don Quixote* as “Us”. That can emerge as Muslims were the real owners of Spain. Mainly, the images of Muslims' characters are presented to explain the European “Us” against the Muslims' ‘Them’. The novel picks up its main character Don Quixote as the only savior, an honest, dignified, proud, and idealistic who wants to save the world to show the Spanish “Us” in its clarity. This is what this study in the first-place tackles. Don Quixote has a vast field for presenting the imperial heritage in a way that Muslims, in the author's point of view, as was pictured and sketched by Miguel de Cervantes himself in a way that there are totally different characters, the “Them” who are weak, and there is the “Us” who are the most powerful characters. The Cervantes' “Us” is the only one who can save the world, which is his hero, Don Quixote of the Mancha of Spain. In contrast, Egyptian Arabs are thieves, as Cervantes puts that metaphorical image and simile on “them” frankly and straightforwardly in Don Quixote:

... like an Egyptian, whose language and many others he could speak as well as if

they were his mother-tongue. Sancho saw him and knew him; and scarce had he seen and taken notice of him, when he cried out aloud, 'Ah! thief. (p. 287)

From the above extract only, the study can calculate the “Them” pronouns as follows: “whose, many others, he, they, his, him, him, he, him, and he” to be aware of the thief who is so similar to those Egyptians’ thieves. It is a direct simile which becomes a reductive cliché on the Egyptians.

- **Secondly**, the concept of “Orientalism and Power” in Said’s theory is more obvious to share between power and the word in a specific country assuming that the comprehensive Europe as he went through, and as he wanted to show the readers the type of regime or its form. In the novel, rendering Muslims’ symbols, the text goes: “... the gold of Arabia, whose brightness did obscure that of the sun” (p. 121). Arabian land for the Occident was the golden land meaning the land of gold that should be discovered by the orientals for the sake of rejoicing the unlimited power. Another example from the text states: “... those that do sift the purest and rare gold of Arabia Felix ... the Arabs, inconstant in their dwellings.” (p. 138). For Cervantes, Arabs own treasures of gold and because they are “inconstant in their dwellings”, they cannot use their natural minerals properly.
- **Thirdly**, according to Said’s theory, the concept of the representation of “them” was clearly observed. Orientalism is affiliated with the representation of the Self or the Occident. The “Other” or Orient in which the Self is privileged and has the main role. For Said, this geographical line made between the Occident and the Orient is arbitrary. Therefore, an explicit example from the novel is the negative image that the Spanish author’s presentation of the Moriscos, who left Islam and converted into Christianity; to be a Christian like the Europeans is acceptable. The protagonist has always the upper hand, while those Arab characters were just secondary ones and do devil things; just like those Arabs whom he thought were doing devilish deeds. Cervantes presented the Arab-Islamic character with an unreceptive vision; they were characterized as devils, disbelievers, and magicians

compared to the Spanish who are strong and honest characters as “Us”, they should follow the rules. The beautiful Muslim lady Zoraida is the apparent and typical example of that. By all means, she was forced to be converted to Christianity and was even forced to change her real name to Maria as well. Here is the story of Zoraida and her father the Hajji Murad of Algeria, when he feels despair to lose his lovely daughter as for Gonzalez (2015), in the main source of *Don Quixote*:

Hajji Murad is the most dramatic and well-rounded secondary character of Part I. His despair at losing his daughter and his plea that he will accept her back on her own terms are full of pathos and tragic depth; in this I agree with Moron Arroyo and underline the fact that Hajji Murad is a very critical character. (p. 148)

This quote emphasizes the emotional complexity and significance of Hajji Murad as a secondary character in Part I. It highlights his dramatic presence. Hajji Murad stands out among secondary characters due to his emotional depth. In the tragic pathos, his grief over losing his daughter and willingness to accept her back on her terms reflects vulnerability and humanity. And in the critical role, the speaker aligns with Moron Arroyo's view, reinforcing Hajji Murad's importance beyond a typical supporting role to show that kind of suffering.

## **8. LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Freud (1940)**, in his original book, *An outline of Psycho-analysis*, tackles the Psychoanalysis as a theory that deals with the interactions between the id, ego, and superego, which have an impact on human behaviour. In this sense, Freud believes that mental illnesses are caused by the unconscious mind. According to him, repressed desires and inclinations such as sexual orientation and aggression are the root causes of mental and neurotic disorders. Furthermore, the societal domain, according to Freud, is a primary cause of psychiatric problems. In light of this, disparities in relationships can be considered as one of the fundamental reasons of individual psychosis. Unmet needs in humans and a repressive environment can contribute to the development of neuroses. The term "neurotic" (a person with



neurosis) is widely used to describe someone who has grief or anxiety, as well as depression, dearth of feelings, low self-confidence, or mental uncertainty.

**Edward Said (1993)**, in *Culture and Imperialism*, provides a detailed analysis of the relationship between empire and the development of European literature. He argues that literary works played a central role in supporting imperial ideologies by reinforcing political and economic domination and by representing colonized peoples as culturally and politically inferior. According to Said, imperial powers encouraged particular literary forms that aligned with their worldview, especially the novel, which emerged and flourished alongside imperial expansion. He emphasizes that the rise of the European novel cannot be separated from imperial history, including earlier Arab rule in Spain. Said further suggests that the novel became a key medium through which imperial heritage was presented as natural, civilized, and largely free of overt violence, while local cultures of the colonized were marginalized or devalued. Through this analysis, Said demonstrates how literature functioned as an influential instrument in shaping and sustaining imperial authority.

**Walter Mignolo (2007)**, in his article *De-Linking: Don Quixote, Globalization and the Colonies* asks many questions about the origin of the novel stating that: Why should one de-link instead of offering a new interpretation of *Don Quixote* that attempts to correct previous interpretations? Why not remain within the same logical and political game; that is, why not remain within the bubble of the *Truman Show* instead of moving away, de-linking as Waman Puma and Borges did. Cervantes himself offers the entry point to this need and possibility (although he himself fell short of his own intuition) by attributing the narrative of Don Quixote to Cide Hamete Benengeli. Walter in his article, clearly stated: thus, the original narrative was in Arabic, not in Spanish. The Spanish version published in 1605 is supposed to be a translation of the original narrative in Arabic. But things get more complicated. At the beginning of the second part, the discussion of the first part between the graduate from Salamanca, Don Quixote, and Sancho Panza about the translation into Spanish of the original in Arabic is no longer part



of the original narrative. It looks like a narrative by the translator, since the reader does not know to what extent the translator and Cide Hamete Benengeli worked together or knew each other. Foucault's speculation on resemblances, similitude, and signs is disrupted by the entry of an alien character—the Arabic language. There is, of course, a philosophical tradition in Arabic built on the translation of Greek philosophy. However, that tradition does not lead directly to Cervantes, Bacon, and Descartes. It leads to Ibn Sina (Avicenna), (Central Asia), al-Ghazali (Iran and Iraq), and Ibn Rushd (Averroes) (Andalusia and Morocco).

**Robert Bayliss (2007)**, in his article *What Don Quixote Means (Today)* argues that ... “Paradoxically, the yield of the novel's narrative complexity and hyperactivity is an absence, a lack of authorial adjudication in Cervantes's text, or a refusal on the author's part to prescribe how his work is to be read. If we are to believe the narrator's friend and interlocutor in the prologue to Part I, the author's goal is to “destroy the authority and influence that books of chivalry enjoy in the world and among the general public”. And then he suggested “Don Quixote would therefore be a character originally employed as a negative example; a cautionary figure meant to “set the reader straight”. If we were to believe this, his future employment as an idealistic and heroic figure would seem to fly in the face of logic. But we learn soon enough not to trust the words of this narrator's friend, nor the words of the prologue's narrator himself, nor those of any other narrator involved in the perspectival slew of discursive levels for which the novel is so famous; critics have written of principal narrators, intra- and extra-diegetic narrators, editors, and super narrators, to name a few of the many terms that have appeared in Quixote criticism. The latter term is coined by James Parr in his book-length study of this problem, but by no means does it solve the riddle: “Cervantes's text is slippery. He shifts masks on us without warning.” The most prominent of these narrators, translators, and historians, Cide Hamete Beningeli, is of course the least reliable of all, especially since (as Cervantes warns us) he is a Moor and therefore, by nature a liar.

**Jacques Lezra's (2012)** study examines the representation of Arabs and Moorish heritage in *Don Quixote* through the lens of discipline and literary authority. Lezra highlights what he calls a “compensatory over-representation” of the Moorish presence, symbolized by the *arco de herradura* (horseshoe arch), which frames the library door and evokes Spain's African, Muslim, and *mudéjar* past. He argues that this architectural image resists fixed interpretation, noting that no visual, literary, or historical discipline allows a definitive pre- or postcolonial reading of its symbolic function. Lezra's study focuses on the concept of Otherness and explores the parallel processes of disciplining Don Quixote and disciplining literary studies themselves. He draws connections between literary training, power, and knowledge, showing how representations of Moorish Muslims and Christians are shaped through pedagogical and institutional frameworks. Lezra also addresses discipleship and literary pedagogy as key mechanisms through which scholars are trained to interpret “other” cultures. He ultimately concludes that *Don Quixote* occupies a central position in what he terms the “metropolitan melancholia of decolonization,” making his study a thought-provoking contribution to debates on literature, discipline, and power.

**Hermes (2014)**, assumes that ... “as we will see with Mariam- Zoraida of “The Captive’s Tale,” it is unquestionably Morgante’s conversion that saves him from the presumably inherent barbarity and vanity attributed to his entire race. “He spoke highly of the giant Morgante,” Cervantes writes, “because although he belonged to the race of giants, all of them haughty and lacking in courtesy, he alone was amiable and well- behaved”. This statement is interesting in several important respects, not the least because it makes it nearly axiomatic that for a Moor, as we will see in more detail with “The Captive’s Tale,” conversion to Christianity is the sine qua non for adherence to normalcy. In other words, the Moors are both morally and physically abnormal. Here, at any rate, it seems clear that a Moor’s physical monstrosity is in tandem with his presumed religious deviance and moral atrocity. But who is the single most venerated knight for Don Quixote and what made him so? The answer is straightforward: Reinaldos de

Montalban. “But more than any of the others,” we are told, “He admired Reinaldos de Montalban, above all when he saw him emerge from his castle and rob anyone he met, and when he crossed the sea and stole the idol of Mohammed made all of gold, as recounted in his history”, that Cervantes is referring to a legend he did not invent and to a romance he did not write is self-evident. However, one may question the reasons behind his perpetuation of the medieval absurd myth of “the idol Mahomet” when he [Cervantes] stood out “with an- above average understanding of the Islamic world if compared to other pre-modern European writers” as described by Hegyi. John Rodenbeck puts it, “no other major European writer has had as close or as thorough an acquaintance with Islam as Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra”. Horace Jefery Hodges, in return, notices that “Cervantes was intimately acquainted with the Islamic world”.

**Gonzalez (2015)** presented his own indication as per the content of his book entitled *Cervantes' Don Quixote*, saying: “Cervantes scholars will soon discover that I often summarize and even quote verbatim some of my earlier work on the Quixote and The Exemplary Novels, particularly from my *Love and Law in Cervantes* but also from my Cervantes' Don Quixote: A Casebook. I could not do otherwise; my teaching and scholarship are intimately intertwined, feeding off one another. Besides, I feel that in glossing my own work I am not just repeating it but refining it. I have used John Rutherford's translation in the Penguin Classics edition with some resignation. It is good enough and it is prefaced by my introduction, which I naturally prefer to those of others. There is no exceptional translation of the Quixote. My favourite is Tobias Smollett's because he was a writer, not a former or current literature professor. But Smollett's somewhat archaic tone may put off some contemporary readers. Much is lost in the translations, anyway; first and foremost, the contrasts between the speech of Sancho and other lower-class characters and that of Don Quixote. Cervantes is a virtuoso of dialectal forms. In any case, I am not a reader of translations, except when there is no alternative, as with the Greek classics.

## 9. Analysis:

### 9.1 Cervantes' Portrayal of Muslims in *Don Quixote*

The analysis of Cervantes' portrayal of Muslims in *Don Quixote* is done through analysing the Muslim characters as depicted by Cervantes. The first Muslim character under analysis is Ali al-Fayash, the Muslim ruler of the island of Serendib. Cervantes portrayed him as the devil. Cervantes in *Don Quixote* argued: "And it seems none other but that the very devil himself did call to his memory histories accommodated to his successes; for in that instant, wholly forgetting Valdovinos, he remembered the Moor Abindarrae." (p. 44). Cervantes by the Moor means Ali and presents Ali Al-Fayash as a weak character when he was brought as a prisoner. Based on historical facts, Badawi (1998), in his translation of *Don Quixote*, argued that Cervantes presented the Arab-Islamic character with a hostile vision; it is characterized by the features of evil, disbelief, and magic. What clarifies these features is the artistic manifestation of the narrative in *Don Quixote*:

The labourer and Don Quixote stood hearing all that which was said, and then he perfectly understood the Disease of his neighbour, and therefore, he began to cry aloud: 'Open the doors to Lord Valdovinos and to the Lord Marquis of Mantua, who comes very sore wounded and hurt, and to the Lord Moor, Abindarraez, whom the valorous Roderick of Narvaez, Constable of Antequera, brings as prisoner! (p. 46)

This quotation was in the voice of Don Quixote, explaining to his groom Sancho the reason for the confrontation between Benzapollin, the king of the Carmantians, in the middle of Africa; he is Christian, and Ali al-Fayash, the ruler of the island of Serendib, who is Muslim; adding: "They are fighting because this Ali al-Fayash is an angry infidel man, who has fallen in love with Benzapollin's daughter, a beautiful girl of refined manners. She is a Christian, and her father does not want to marry her to an infidel king, unless he abandons the law of his prophet and embraces the law of his beloved." (p. 47). However, Al Manifi (2015) suggests that Arabs' heritage, hence, got that flourishing heritage and had to have an effective impact on the surrounding and connected countries, including Europe, through several ways, including:

(translation), where a wide-ranging campaign began to transfer the Arab heritage in various Greek and Latin languages. So, for both sides, Muslims and Christians, it is all about a religious heritage in Europe and Arabic world to use that impact as imperialism and power. It is all about religious existence (p. 5).

The second Muslim character to be analysed is the Moorish Arabic historian (Cide Hamete Benengeli). The text of Don Quixote by Cide Hamete Benegeli is in Arabic script and is called Arabic by those who cannot read it, but in fact it is Aljamiado; a Romance language spoken by the converted Arabs of Spain. Like the Ladino spoken by Spanish Jews in their North African exile, Aljamiado is a mixture of Castilian with Arabic expressions. Al Manifi (2015), added: "The trips that Europeans made to the capitals of the Arab countries also played a clear role in this influence"; meaning through Arabic culture and language.

Cide is a fictional Arab Muslim historian created by Miguel de Cervantes in *Don Quixote*, who is the real author of most of the work as mentioned by Cervantes. This is a skilful metafictional literary pirouette that seems to give more credibility to the text, making the reader believe that Don Quixote was a real person and the story is decades old. However, it is obvious to the reader that such a thing is impossible, and that the pretence of Cide Hamete's work is meant as a joke.

Badawi (1998), the translator of the text of the novel, quotes the French translator's comment on the words of his poem, saying: "It is strange that this exaggerated praise should be placed on the tongue of a Moroccan, and that he is a miserable witness to the slavery of thought in this savage age, giving a hint to Cide Hamete Benengeli, and a witness from among its people testified". Again, Badawi (1998) explains it furthermore, saying: "At the end of Chapter VIII, Cervantes states that the information from the archives ends in a particularly exciting cliffhanger, and in Chapter IX, he describes finding an Arabic manuscript called (The History of Don Quixote of La Mancha, written by Cide Hamete Benengeli, an Arab historian)." (p. 677).

Although, the study finds in the main translated version by Badawi (1998), page 55 in part two of *Don Quixote*, entitled: "Second Departure Which Our Good Knight, Don Quixote, Made from His House to Seek Adventures", the young scholar Carrasco informs Don Quixote that the story of his adventures is well-known, thanks to the publication of his history by Cide Hamete. Cide Hamete is of a Moorish origin. Therefore, the Moorish is the adjective which is, explicitly, applied to him.

Leaving no room for confusion or doubt, Cervantes says that Benengeli is "Arabian and Manchegan", in other words, a Spanish Muslim Arab-speaker, and not a North African or an Ottoman. However, in page number 71, Benengeli writes, "... I, though a Moor ... it can be none other than that the author was a Moor ...", meaning it is all about presenting others by reacting fictional narrator to talk about himself. The study concludes that, that was, yet, for purpose to hear a fictional Arabic narrator from Morocco; his name is Benengeli. Looking to many other Muslims characters as in the original text of the novel, Cervantes adds in *Don Quixote*:

I became captive in his power, and only remained sorrowful among so many joyful, and captive among so many freed; for that day fifteen thousand Christians, which came slaves and enchained in the Turkish galleys, recovered their desired liberty. I was carried to Constantinople, where the Great Turk, Selim, made my lord General of the Sea, by reason that he had so well performed his duty in the battle, having brought away, for a witness of his valour, the standard of the Order of Malta. I was the year ensuing of 1572 in Navarino, rowing in the Admiral of the Three Lanterns, and saw and noted there the opportunity that was lost, of taking all the Turkish navy within the haven; for all the Janizaries and other soldiers that were in it made full account that they should be set upon, even within the very port, and therefore, trussed up all their baggage, and made ready their shoes, to fly away presently to the land, being in no wise minded to expect the assault, our navy did strike such terror into them. (p. 386)

Here, in the previous text, the Islamic symbols have been, directly, depicted. According to the previous text and talking about the time and place during that period when Muslims rule Spain, the study looks at it via this order:

The year ensuing of 1572 in Navarino means during that particular time and before that era and even after, Arabs' Muslims controlled Spain. Similarly, talking about Islamic places and belongings, Cervantes used several Islamic symbols in the novel, according the previous text too.

“Constantinople”, currently, is the biggest city in Turkey namely “Istanbul”.

“Turkey” was the country of the powerful Muslims during 1527, Othman Empire.

“Turkish Galleys”, through those strong galleys, the Muslim Turks reached Spain.

“Malta”, was an island ruled by Turkish Muslims when Andalusia was under their control before and after 1527.

“The Turkish Navy”, the most powerful group through which Muslims conquered Spain, as per the text.

In general, and as per the text, the Turkish Muslim leader Selim: “the Great Turk, Selim”, as stated by Cervantes in the passage, was in a battle with those “fifteen thousand Christians, were enslaved and enchained in the Turkish galleys’ hands. According to real history, the above text shows the readers how strong and powerful the army of the navy of Turks were at that particular time.

## **9.2 Relation between Muslims and Non-Muslims as presented by Cervantes in *Don Quixote*:**

Cervantes quite often employs as an indirect reference to Benengeli, the expression *dice la historia*. This is clearly of Moorish origin, as Willis, for instance, has shown. Following the *isnad* technique or chain of transmitters, Cervantes uses it to substantiate his claim of the veracity of his *historia* as recounted by the Moorish historian. In fact, *dice la historia* as was written by Willis... at each occasion the flow of the Cervantine text is interrupted, opens Moorish historiographical works and other narratives, and is the equivalent of the Arabic *taqulu*



*alqisa, yaqulu al-tarikh, yarwi al-tarikh*, etc. (respectively, 'the story has it that...', 'history says', 'history recounts'). Hence qala... (says the narrator or historian) is no mere stereotype but rather an important traditional function concludes Willis, as stated by Grunebaum (2011). It is an Arabic and Islamic style of writing on Qur'an and Hadith brought to the novel by Cide the Arabic Moorish historian and narrator in *Don Quixote*. Moreover, based on the historical facts, stories of chivalry and love reached the West via Spain, Sicily, and elsewhere. That is the effect of Arabs' literature on the Spanish as well as the European literature.

In addition, the hideous fanaticism that Cervantes shows in everything related to the aspect of relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in Spain, it would have been better for him to defend these innocent people who were expelled from their homes, "Muslims", yes their homes despite the orders of Philip II, a foreigner in race, since he is from the Austrian Habsburgs, and the grandson of the madwoman Hannah, daughter of Isabella. He is an intruder, a foreign usurper of Spain, while those Muslims settled in Spain for more than eight centuries, even nine, and they remained until the issuance of this criminal decision ordering the expulsion of the remaining Muslims, which was issued by his successor, Philip III, his son, in the year 1609 AD. The Moriscos immigrated; they are the Christianized who remained in Spain<sup>(\*)</sup>. But Cervantes was led by the blindness of his people, (and this order was blind and more astray); meaning converting to Christianity was a must at that time, as explored by Badawi (1998). In fact, to comment on that, that is unfair relation between Muslims who belong to Spain and the non-Muslims who were in the same time the aborigines. Therefore, the relation between Muslims and Non-Muslims as presented by Cervantes in *Don Quixote* in a typically and clearly

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<sup>\*</sup> Muslims were suffering after the fall of Andalusia (Reconquista according to Spanish people). Muslims were forced to convert to Christianity or face exile. Those who converted to Christianity maintained Islamic rituals secretly. Catholic Monarchs established the Spanish Inquisition in 1478 which lasted for more than 300 years. Hundreds of thousands of Muslims had been tortured inside these inquisitions in order to leave Islam or leave Spain. Severe torture was practiced upon Muslims burning and slaughtering them. Many deadly torture machines were used such as the rack, the strappado, the garrucha, the breast ripper, the head crusher and so many. Such inquisitions were used for the ethnic cleansing of Muslims in Andalusia in spite of the bright history of Muslims there which remained till the present day. Cervantes was affected by the hostile atmosphere against Muslims. Therefore, he portrayed them in such a negative portrayal in his novel, *Don Quixote*.

way that gives the reader a clear indication about Arabs and Muslims who do not belong to Spain anymore as “Them”, and those who are the owners of the land as “Us”, the Spanish Christians’ Europeans. For that reason, Cervantes’ point of view of the self makes him blind when it comes to be “fair”, regarding the rights of return for Muslims and they have no right, at all, to stay in Spain any longer, not even to keep their own lands or properties nor their own religion even. Zoraida (Maria) is a typical example, however: “... who now means to name herself Maria.” (Don Quixote, 399). The change of the name Zoraida into a Christian name Maria indicates the desire of Cervantes to rob Zoraida off her Muslim identity and give her a Christian identity after being converted into Christianity. This is a good example of the conflict between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’. Zoraida is depicted sympathetically because of her conversion to Christianity and she helps a Spanish captive escape. This sympathetic portrayal of Zoraida reinforces the idea that the good Muslim is the one who assimilates into the Christian Spanish culture.

### **9.2.1 Image of the Moriscos:**

Presenting the Moriscos confirms what this study has concluded along while tackling the point of view of Atfa (2008), who states that:

you remember well, my dear, how the royal decree to expel the people of my nation spread panic among us... because I saw, and our sheikhs were of the same opinion, that these publications were not just false threats as many believed, but rather real laws that must be implemented at a specific time, and I was not ignorant of the secret measures and conspiracies that the people of my nation were plotting. Cervantes’ racism made him biased against Arabs and Muslims, and deviate from objectivity in presenting them in the novel, so he distorts their image whenever he has the opportunity to do so, and even goes further by describing the Moriscos as snakes, and on the tongue of Riccardo himself, addressing his neighbour Sancho as was directed by Atfa (2008) who writes that they reached a level of extremism that made the king take this strict position with

a kind of divine inspiration, not because we were all involved in the rebellion and disobedience, but some of us were truly and sincerely Christians, but the number of these latter was so small that they were not able to.

Muslims, for Cervantes, oppose the projects of others. Then it is a lack of intelligence to feed the snake in one's home and to keep enemies inside the country. In short, to him, Muslims were punished with exile as a just recompense. This punishment seemed pleasant and light to some, but to Muslims it seemed the harshest punishment. To look at it from another angle, in every place we are, we regret Spain. In it, 'Spain', we were born and it is our natural homeland. We do not find anywhere the place of reception that our misery requires.

Cervantes confirms the Spanish fanaticism against Arabs, Muslims and Christians alike, on the tongue of Recorte, as evidenced by the denial of everyone, including Christians originally born in Spain. Then, in presenting the image of Arab Muslims, Cervantes places them on the side of evil and disbelief, while he places the image of the Spanish Christians on the opposite side, the side of goodness and absolute faith: "You will see that Christians are more truthful in speech". Atfa, Arab Cultural Centre (2008). Despite the fact that Atfa has a negative attitude toward the author of *Don Quixote*, Atfa has, at the same time, another explanation believing that Cervantes presented beautiful images of the Moriscos in the novel. He states that by saying in my new translation, I want to answer my question, which is why did Cervantes choose to claim that the author of his book was Arab? And why this huge and beautiful presence of the Moriscos, the last remnants of the Arabs in Andalusia, which fell more than one hundred and fifteen years ago, and reveals to us the extent of the enormous longing among those who were forced to emigrate from Andalusia under the oppression of the blind and dirty fanatic inspection, and in some important scenes he depicts these Moriscos (doing the impossible to reach where they originated).

Meanwhile, Atfa (2008) explains the beautiful thing about Muslims is that they never stopped yearning for their country, from which no one has the right to expel them, and their strenuous

attempts to return to it by all means.

Books of history indicates that the history of the Andalusian Moriscos was not one of humiliation, submission, or weakness, but rather one of resistance and struggle that lasted for decades, steadfastly rejecting the decisions of a bitter enemy in the sixteenth century, who wanted to enslave them, humiliate them, and burn them, but fate willed that their revolutions not bear fruit and they were exiled outside their country.

The other character of the Moriscos in *Don Quixote*, Ricote, who is originally a Muslim. He was forcibly converted to Christianity and secretly continues to practice his Islamic activities; as Gonzalez (2015) explains:

Regarding the character of the Morisco in *Don Quixote*, the character's name is Ricote, who is a Morisco—a Muslim who was forcibly converted to Christianity after the Reconquista but secretly continues to practice Islamic traditions. His story is part of the second volume of *Don Quixote*, and it addresses themes of religious and cultural tension in Spain during the period after the Muslims were expelled. he understands the reasons of state behind it but laments that even those moriscos who have joined the mainstream of society, having even converted to Christianity, are paying for the actions of those who are seditious and with whom he does not agree. (Pp. 301-2)

In Chapter 40 of the second part of *Don Quixote*, Ricote comes back to Spain after being displaced to North Africa. He meets the narrator (and Don Quixote) and shares his story with them. He describes the hardships faced by the Moriscos after their forced conversion to Christianity and their eventual expulsion from Spain. Ricote depicts the pain of being forced to abandon his Islamic teachings and the subsequent secrecy in which he practiced it after coming back from Algeria, saying he was once a man of wealth and high standing in my town, and he was rich in land, cattle, and friends. But now, having been forced to leave his own country, h returns with only the hope of regaining his freedom; ... I have no choice but to keep my faith hidden, or else I shall suffer more punishment. I remain a Morisco in heart, though

not in appearance, for fear of further retribution, Badawi (1998). This explains Ricote's internal conflict, torn between his cultural and religious origin as a Muslim, and the external pressures of conformity. His story is also touching on the broader historical context of the expulsion and forced conversions of the Moriscos, a policy that led to their exile and subsequent lives in hiding themselves from others. The character of Ricote in *Don Quixote* serves to climax the cultural and religious struggles in post-Reconquista Spain. His story is not purely an isolated anecdote but an integral part of the larger needlepoint of the novel's analysis of Spanish society. Through Ricote, Cervantes delivers a human face to the Moriscos' suffering, offering a critique of intolerance while advocating for greater understanding of "others", according to real history.

### **9.2.2 Image of Arabs:**

Arabs were the main rulers of Andalusia from different parts of the Arab world ruled by several Islamic states. Cervantes describes them as: "The Arabs, inconstant in their dwellings; the Scythians, as cruel as white". (Don Quixote, 138). Badawi (1998), in his translation of the novel says the Arabs appear in the eighteenth chapter of the first section of the novel; owners of mobile tents, distributed between the Arabia Felix (Yemen), the Arab Deserta (Najd), and the Arabia Petraea (Hijaz), without any positive reference to their civilization which was characterized by the magnificence of construction and the spirit of tolerance, as if those who built the civilization in Andalusia, and spread light in Spain and its surroundings were neither Arabs nor Muslims; they are, according to Cervantes, deceitful magicians. In the seventeenth chapter of the first section, Don Quixote believes that the treasure of this girl's beauty is guarded by an enchanted Arab.

Badawi (1998), in addition to that, explains: "Sancho believes": "Those who ground their bones in the hotel - which Don Quixote thought, too, was a palace - were Arab magicians" ... "This is, answered Sancho, because more than four hundred Arabs had tanned my skin in such a way that yesterday's grinding with sticks and stakes seemed to him a sweet and delicate

pampering." (p. 428). Miguel de Cervantes' captivity story in Algeria requires the main cause to present Muslims in such a negative way in *Don Quixote* saying being one day walking in the exchange of Toledo, a certain boy by chance would have sold divers old quires and scrolls of books to a squire that walked up and down in that place, and I, being addicted to read such scrolls, though I found them torn in the streets, borne away by this my natural inclination, took one of the quires in my hand, and perceived it to be written in Arabic characters, and seeing that, although I knew the letters, yet could I not read the substance, I looked about to view whether I could find any Moor turned Spaniard thereabouts, that could read them. Nor was it very difficult to find there such an interpreter; for, if I had searched one of another better and more ancient language, that place would easily afford him. In fine, my good fortune presented one to me; to whom telling my desire, and setting the book in his hand, he opened it, and, having read a little therein, began to laugh.

This captivity portrays Arabs as cruel and treacherous. The tale reflects the tragedy of the 'Moor turned into Spaniards thereabout' like Zoraida and Ricote who returns to Spain after being exiled. The narrator of the above text found difficulty to understand the Arabic characters though he knew them. This difficulty indicates that he could not understand Arabs since he is affected by his captivity for five years in Algiers. The prominent factor in such relation between the 'Us' and 'Them' is religious. Christianity vs Islam is prevailing in the scene of captivity since it mirrors Cervantes own life as a Christian suffering within an Arab surrounding in Algiers. Cervantes' captivity in Algeria was, in fact, his bad experience as he suffers from what he faced in that captivity and that particular experience affected on him and make him present Muslims in such negative way: "... and to the Lord Moor, Abindarraez, whom the valorous Roderick of Narvaez, Constable of Antequera, brings as his prisoner..." (*Don Quixote*, 46).

### **9.2.3 Image of the Turkish Muslims:**

Badawi (1998) finds out that "the negative image presented by Cervantes of Turkish

Muslims in *Don Quixote* is not related to the religious dispute that existed - in his time - between the two sides of the religious dichotomy (Muslim - Christian) because his portrayal of the Moriscos was not fair despite the fact that they left Islam and converted to Christianity, but rather it goes back - in my opinion - to the period of his captivity in Algeria; where direct contact with the other (the Turk) prompted him to take revenge on this other (the jailer), so he hurled insults, accusations and bad qualities at him, and branded him as a pervert, if I may say so" (p. 151).

In page number 373 of the original text of *Don Quixote* as mentioned by a beautiful Christian girl with Moroccan parents, Badawi (1998) argues: "I immediately guessed that they meant Don Gregorio, and his beauty was extraordinary, and I was disturbed as I thought of the danger that threatens this young man, because the savage Turks are more infatuated with the beautiful young man than they are with the most beautiful girl in the world" (p. 160). So, the Turk Muslims are reflected so bad and negative; they are sexually and abnormal people. That is why this study assumes that, again, Miguel de Cervantes' captivity in Algeria by the Turks may affect his attitude toward the Turks.

#### **9.2.4 The Crafted Moorish Translator:**

Despite the fact that Cervantes' negative attitude toward Muslims and Arabs, in the same time, he, presents them as they were doing exactly horrible things during his era. Hence, based on real history, Muslims were crafted in translation. Let us read the following text from *Don Quixote* to be closer more and more to that factual image the crafted Moorish translator, when the Cervantes writes I departed after with the Moor to the cloister of the great church, and I requested him to turn me all the Arabic sheets that treated of Don Quixote into Spanish, without adding or taking away anything from them, and I would pay him what he listed for his pains. He demanded fifty pounds of raisins and three bushels of wheat, and promised to translate them speedily, well, and faithfully. But I, to hasten the matter more, lest I should lose such an unexpected and welcome treasure, brought him to my house, where he translated all the work



in less than a month and a half, even in the manner that it is here recounted.

The act of translation raises questions about the reality and authenticity of the text of Don Quixote. Moreover, it proves that Cervantes is biased and untruthful while depicting the Muslim images. By making a story of translation, Cervantes adds another layer of distance between the reader and the 'truth' of Don Quixote. In fact, as in historical books, Arab Muslims were crafted and experts in the field of translating other fields of science which helped them to build up a new civilization in the south of Europe which remained an icon of civilised people. This is a line of demarcation between 'Science' and 'Ignorance'; between 'Muslim Civilisation' and 'Anticivilisation' of the 'them vs us' as presented in *Don Quixote*. Due to such a huge difference and several reasons, Cervantes was bias against Muslim existence in Spain during his time.

### **9.3 Converts to Christianity like Zoraida, daughter of Hajji Murad of Algeria:**

Trying to present how Muslim ladies were popular along with their families' situation, Cervantes in his novel *Don Quixote*, explains:

And as beauty hath evermore the prerogative and grace to reconcile men's minds and attract their wills to it, so all of them forthwith dedicated their desires to serve, and make much of the lovely Moor. Don Fernando demanded of the Captive how she was called, and he answered that her name was Lela Zoraida; and as soon as she heard him, and understood what they had demanded, she suddenly answered with anguish, but yet with a very good grace, 'No, not Zoraida, but Maria,' giving them to understand that she was called Maria, and not Zoraida. (p. 373)

In Arabic, the original name is Zobaida, with /b/ or even with /r/ sound as in Algeria. However, the use of the Arabic name was in fact used for purpose; to show the omniscient narration of Cervantes. He is the know-it-all; the Arabs names and surnames' families. That is one thing. The other thing is that calling her Maria as to be Christian and not Muslim, and should be converted to Christianity, has another motif to help Maria convert to a different religion in

order to keep her life, as per the text of *Don Quixote*:

We presently entered in council with the runagate about the means we were to use to fetch away the Moor, and come all of us to Christian lands; and in the end we concluded to attend, for that time, the second advice of Zoraida (for so was she then called, who now means to name herself Maria), forasmuch as we clearly perceived that it was she, and none other, that could minister to us the means to remove all these difficulties. After we had rested on this resolution, the runagate bid us be of good courage, for he would engage his life, or set us at liberty. (p. 400)

Now, “Zobaida or Zoraida” is no longer a Muslim lady, rather, she becomes Christian and her new name is Maria instead of that Islamic name to give her a new identity. Her father as a secondary character as was mentioned by Gonzalez (2015), in his analysis on the text: "Hajji Murad is a very critical character in Part I and perhaps, as I said, even the most important and most dramatic secondary character in the whole novel, Parts I and II". (p. 148). The character of Zobaida helps create the best image according to Cervantes of Muslims that is the one who assimilates himself or herself to Christianity. This religious assimilation is one facet of the portrayal of Muslims in Cervantes' *Don Quixote*.

### **10. Conclusion:**

To sum up, Cervantes wrote *Don Quixote* after the Reconquista, during a period when Muslims were being expelled from Spain. This period was a critical period for Muslims in Andalusia and even in literature. Accordingly, Cervantes portrayed Muslims with a point of view of Christian author rather than a literary author focusing on barriers between the ‘Orient and the Occident’ as Edward Said argued in his theory; between the ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ as this study has found. The researchers went through the Muslim characters in the novel and presented their portrayal and behaviour as depicted by Cervantes. The Muslim characters include Moriscos, Arabs, Turks and Converts into Christianity. These characters include Ali al-Fayash (the Muslim ruler of the island of Serendib), Cide Hamete Benengeli (the fictional Arab Muslim

historian created by Cervantes), Selim (Turkish Muslim leader) and Zoraida (a female convert to Christianity). This woman is given a Christian name 'Maria' to give her a new identity instead of her Muslim identity. The study concludes that the portrayal of Muslims is negative with a hostile vision. They are characterized by evil, disbelief, and magic.

Muslims excelled in different fields of science that enabled them to establish a new civilization in the south of Europe which remained an icon of civilised people till the present day. This is a line of demarcation between 'Science' and 'Ignorance'; between 'Muslim Civilisation' and 'Anticivilisation' of the 'Them vs Us' as presented in Don Quixote. Due to such a huge difference and several reasons, Cervantes was full of bias against Muslim existence in Spain during his time.

The study consequently concludes that the relation between 'Us' vs 'Them' is typical to Edward Said's theory of 'Orientalism' presenting "Binary opposition between the Orient and the Occident" which is the gist of the study as a binary opposition between 'Us vs Them'. Arabs and Muslims ruled Spain for 9 to 10 centuries. Exceedingly, during Cervantes' time and during his imprisonment in Algeria, Muslims were still there ruling Spain. Psychologically, that captivity affected him to be biased in his novel. Cervantes had that kind of influence by Arabs' customs and traditions as he used so many Arabic symbols and images, respectively, from time to time in the text of his work. In addition, in terms of Cervantes' increasing hostility towards Arabs and Muslims presented negative images that contradicted to some extent the kindness and tolerance of his hero Don Quixote, which indicates a hostile position caused by the political conflicts prevailing in his time between Arabs' Muslims and the Christians' Spaniard. Moreover, Arabic literature and culture have their great impact on the Spanish ones. That is to say, it is because of the use of lots and lots of Islamic words in *Don Quixote* to present others' culture in terms of power between 'Us' and 'Them'. There was a real direct contact through the first Islamic conquests, which were the field of contact between the Arabs and the Romans, then the Crusades, in which Europe entered into direct contact with the land of the

Arabs and the Arab culture. Over and above that, the island of Sicily was conquered by Muslims in 827 and was the country of Muslims of Sicily for centuries. Equally, Andalusia which the Arabs also entered and established scientific cities, including Cordoba and Toledo, played a major role in the process of communication and contact between Arab and European cultures. La Mancha or as in English “the Mancha” was a part of Toledo city, the central city of Muslims in which Cervantes picks up his hero. For that reason, lots of Arabic and Islamic characters, symbols, figures and images were clearly stated in *Don Quixote*. For examples, but not limited to these symbols and images were respectively, separately and individually mentioned in the novel by using the Islamic places and names and “their” belongings as “them”, such as: Algeria, Morocco and Moorish characters, Alexandria of Egypt, Constantinople namely “Istanbul” and “Turkey, the great leader of the Muslims” Turkish Navy and many more portrayed as different forms of the ‘US’ or ‘THEM’. However, the portrayal of the ‘Us’ is positive compared to the portrayal of the ‘Them’ Cervantes’ Spanish hero is put in a positive position, nonetheless, as “Us”, this novel crosses the line between truth and fantasy, and mixes what the Spanish hero sees with what he wants to see, and that is one of the values of the novel that makes a person rise above his reality, transcending the material and the tangible without ignoring those insults to the Arab-Islamic civilization as “them”. Yet, that does not diminish its artistic and literary value as a global literary work.

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