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## Tariq Ali's Shadows of the Pomegranate Tree: A Khaldunian Study

### Abstract:

*Tariq Ali's Shadows of the Pomegranate Tree is the postmodern retelling of what happened to the Muslim civilization in Spain and how the Muslims fell from their grandeur in a cyclic mode of rising and fall. Due to the lack of social solidarity (Asabiyyah) and weak civilization (Umran), the Nasrid Empire in Granada became weak and was overrun by the stronger Christian civilization. Ibn Khaldun's Cyclic Theory of the rise and fall of civilizations from his Muqaddimah is applied as a major theoretical perspective and two of his key concepts, Asabiyyah and Umran are also discussed with reference to Ali's work. Ali's metafiction combines politics as well as the poetics of the postmodern culture and shows the relevance of Khaldunian ideas to the current metamorphosis in the Muslim World. The study deconstructs the Eurocentric notions of Muslim history and finds the trajectory of cultural conflicts of Christian-Muslim civilizations.*

### Key Words:

Ibn Khaldun, Cyclic Theory, Civilizations, Asabiyyah

### Introduction

Tariq Ali's metafictional tales in *Islam Quintet* retell the stories of the rise and fall of different Muslim civilizations from the twelfth century to the present times. This study explores the politics of historical and cultural consciousness in the first novel of the *Quintet* in relation to Ibn Khaldun's well known cyclic theory of the rise and fall of civilizations. The miserable events in the history of Christian Muslim polemics after the fall of the Nasrid Dynasty in Granada are dealt with two key concepts of Ibn Khaldun: Asabiyyah (social solidarity) and Umran (civilization). Using the postmodern strategies of historiographic metafiction ([Hutcheon, 1988](#)), Ali has presented alternative historiography of Muslim Spain in order to subvert the Eurocentric notions about it and the clash between Islam and Christendom. Being a New Left political activist, Ali has always been a strong critic of the western hegemonic policies, especially of America in various countries of the Muslim world. The troublesome times of the past in Granada, as narrated in *Shadows of the Pomegranate Tree* (1992), definitely connect the old world with the current state of affairs in the Middle East. What is going on in the Muslim world now, is actually an outcome of historical events of centuries.

Ali's postmodern historiography is definitely a 'counterfactual' history (Fergusen, 2011) as it undermines the distinction between reality and fiction. In *Shadows of the Pomegranate Tree* (1992), Ali challenges the traditional Eurocentric approach towards Christian culture and history as a tolerant, rich and the most advanced civilization of the world.

The novel presents many counter-arguments to draw attention to the fall of Muslims in Spain and the rise of the Christian Inquisitors shortly after the Re-conquest of Granada in 1492. The Eurocentric discourse, according to [Turner \(2002\)](#), defines the decadence of Muslim empires as preordained and the fall of Muslims in the West is seen only as a teleological formation of history. On the other hand, Ali reveals that the decline is cyclic, gradual and emergent rather than primordial. Using Ibn Khaldun's words from *Muqaddimah*, Ali (1992) through his mouthpiece, al-Zindiq also suggests that there could be no victory in the camp of the

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believers without a strong sense of social solidarity ([Ali, 1992, p. 85](#)). He believes that due to the lack of this social and religious solidarity (Asabiyyah) among the followers of Islam, the Nasrid Dynasty in Spain collapsed. Although Ibn Khaldun's Cyclical Theory has already been applied to the study of some Muslim as well as western empires in the field of history, yet this work attempts to do so in literature and finds relevance in the philosophies of the yesteryears by modifying them to the usage of the postmodern world. After all, our today is a reflection of our yesterday.

## Literature Review

Ibn Khaldun's Cyclic Theory or the concept of a cyclical history is not new, and the idea that the ways and laws of history are not governed in a teleological or linear manner by the spirit of an individual or a group belongs to ancient Greece. [Hughes \(2011\)](#) points out that Aristotle is the first Greek philosopher who believed in the concept of a non-linear theory of history and his cyclic view of history also rested on the idea that there was nothing stable and permanent in any social or political system and power always circulated among regimes. Similarly, [Nelson \(1980\)](#) found the traces of a non-linear conjecture of history in many parts of *The Dialogues of Plato*. Later on, many other philosophers, academicians, and thinkers showed their firm belief on this cyclic concept of history and added their own ideas in it. However, Ibn Khaldun's Cyclic Theory of the rise and fall of civilizations holds the most prominent and critical position among all other concepts. [Onder and Ulasan \(2018\)](#) have discussed some other cyclical theories about the rise and fall of civilizations like The Dynastic Cycle Theory of Sima Qian (145-87 B.C.), Giambattista Vico's Cyclic Theory of History (1999), The Civilization Theory of Oswald Spengler (1926) and Arnold Toynbee's famous Complex Theory of Civilizations (1934). All these thinkers, like Ibn Khaldun, have discussed the rise and fall of different civilizations according to their own experiences and times.

Becker and Barnes (1938) first time evaluated the influence of Khaldunian ideas on European thinkers in the fields of history and sociology in *Social Thought from Lore to Science* (1938) and both marked Ibn Khaldun's theory of the rise and fall of civilizations as an example of 'inter-civilizational encounter in sociology'. [Lacoste \(1984\)](#) and [Alatas \(2014\)](#) too perceived his works as universal and took Khaldunian ideas as a solution to current issues of the modern civilizations. Consequently, the Cyclic Theory of Ibn Khaldun and his concepts of *Asabiyyah* (solidarity) and *Umran* (civilization) should be studied in order to resolve the current issues of Muslim communities. There are so many internal and external challenges which are faced by the Muslim world in the postmodern age and the current decline of many Muslim countries is clearly the outcome of the colonial period in which they were divided into different states and governed in the 'drama of the nation-state'.

According to [Creswell \(2010\)](#), Tariq Ali presented the cosmopolitan periods of Muslim history when they were at the peak of their culture and showed an anti-Eurocentric approach on the one hand and the Muslim follies on the other. [Cilano \(2016\)](#) believes that the metafiction of Tariq Ali highlights the issues of culture, sexuality and good living manners in the advanced Islamic civilizations of the past and adds that *Shadows of the Pomegranate Tree* (1992) can be read as a sad story of the complete destruction of the liberal and interreligious culture of the Moorish Spain by the pitiless conquistadors such as Hernan Cortes. According to King (2001) *Shadows of the Pomegranate Tree* (1992) begins seven years after the Roman Catholic Reconquest of Granada, a key moment in Arab and Jewish history, and concludes two decades later with the same Spaniards poised to plunder Mexico symbolically, the fall of two empires and the growth of another. While the Christians had promised the Spanish Moors the religious, cultural, and linguistic tolerance, this was also the time of the Inquisition and Islamic culture was being systematically destroyed as libraries were burnt and people were forced to convert their religion. [Wikander \(2013\)](#) also pointed out that there were the cultural and religious clashes between two large communities in the Spanish peninsula in the late fifteenth century which resulted in the fall of the Islamic civilization which was culturally an advanced civilization than the Christians who were not only backward but also religiously fanatic in their approach under the leadership of Ximenes de

Cisneros. According to [Waterman \(2016\)](#), what happened to the Muslim civilization was actually a matter of *realpolitik* as it had replaced all previous power-sharing arrangements based on a social contract or *Convivencia* (the cultural coexistence of Christians, Muslims and Jews in Medieval Spain).

However, the roots of Ali's textual response lie in the present world in which these two communities live now. [Cilano \(2016\)](#) in *Highlighting the sceptical strain: An interview with Tariq Ali* discusses the importance of the anti-imperialist critique and its wider role in academic discourse in order to highlight the issues of the interplay between fiction and history. [Ali's \(1992\)](#) introductory 'Explanatory Note' has also made indirect references to its application to the present. The implications are that Arab leaders should stop quarrelling among themselves; they must unite behind a single authority, or one ruler must have the single-mindedness, virtue, cunning, strength, and patience to bring about unification or strong *Asabiyyah* (solidarity). [Hattori \(2006\)](#) also stresses that in *Shadows of the Pomegranate Tree* Ali's political wish is to segregate the nexus of the state and mosque and the role of Muslim clergy in the interpretation of the religious texts that is the collective property of Islamic culture as a whole (Hattori 2015, p. 313). [Malik \(2014\)](#) comments that apparently, the *Quintet* seems to display that the Catholic Inquisitors are responsible for the fall of the most exciting Muslim civilization in Granada. However, the metafictional technique of self-reflexivity provides alternative historiography of the text which manifests that Muslims themselves brought their downfall as they were in the last stage of their civilization (*Umrān*) with weak solidarity and luxurious lifestyle. [Hutcheon \(1988\)](#) also suggests that the postmodern historiographic text is always having gaps and never conveys a single, fixed and stable meaning or ideology. [Abedpour \(2018\)](#) also shares similar views with [Malik \(2014\)](#) that in spite of Christian brutality and intolerance, the state in which Moors have found themselves, is partly due to their own divisions, civil wars, and general lack of concern for the common people. Some characters in the novel have also declared their decline as a divine punishment. In a family discussion, an old man said to Zuhayr al-Fahl that the kingdom of Islam would survive in al-Andalus but we [Muslims] 'underestimated our own capacity for self-destruction' and quarrelled and killed each other and proved incapable of getting the required solidarity (*Asabiyyah*) against the Christians and finally lost our kingdom (Ali 1992, p. 36).

The postmodern historical fiction has a strong and never ending love towards the cyclic view of history and there is a long list of postmodern fiction dealing with the stories of the ancient civilizations like David Gemmel's Troy Series (2005-6): *Lord of the Silver Bow* and *Troy: Shield of Thunder*, and the metafiction of Australian fiction writer Colleen McCullough *Troy: Fall of Kings* (2007) and *Masters of Rome* (1990-2007), reveal the crumbling days of the early Greek and Roman empires; the *Conqueror* series (2007-11), based on the rise and fall of the Mongol emperors Genghis, Ogedai and Kublai Khan by the British fiction writer Conn Iggulden; Tim Severin's Viking Series (2005): *Odinn's Child*, *Sworn Brother* and *King's Man*; Michelle Moran's Nefertiti (2007) and Wilbur Smith's *Warlock* (2007) and *The Quest* (2007) deal with the ancient Egyptian civilization; Anita Amirrezvani's *The Blood of Flowers* (2007) and Kaveh Farrokhi's *Shadows in the Desert* (2007) recall the fall of Persian civilizations; Anchee Min's *Empress Orchid* (2003) and Steve Berry's *The Emperor's Tomb* (2006) retell the stories of the rise of Qing dynasty in China. Therefore, Ibn Khaldun's Cyclic Theory of the rise and fall of civilizations has a great scope in the postmodern historical literature, and the application of his ideas can still highlight the value of this great Arab historiographer of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

## Theoretical Framework

The present research explores the politics of historical and cultural consciousness in Ali's *Shadows of the Pomegranate Tree* (1992) and applies the concepts of the renowned Medieval Arab historiographer Ibn Khaldun on the postmodern historiographic metafiction. It is a qualitative cum analytical study in which Khaldunian notions on the rise and fall of the civilizations hold the most prominent and founding position with two of his key concepts of *Asabiyyah* (solidarity) and *Umrān* (civilization). The comprehensive understanding of such a text heavily anchors on the historical and cultural context. Therefore Belsey (2005) writes in *Research Methods for English Studies*, that the method of textual analysis is most useful and

applicable in the research of cultural studies and history or in all those texts which seek to understand the message of culture and history in their subject matter. History, according to Ibn [Khaldun \(1969\)](#), works in a cyclical manner and all sovereign powers or states exist like the living organisms. They have come to existence in a natural way, and then they grow and get stronger with the passage of time until they lose their powers and are overcome by other powerful regimes or states. Moreover, every dynasty or civilization is undeveloped and uncivilized in the beginning and acquires the due strength and maturity with the passage of time. This power and stability of civilization depend on two key elements; the stronger *Asabiyyah* (group solidarity or social cohesion) and a well defined *Umran* (spirit of the group or culture) than other communities. Therefore, the theoretical framework which seems most appropriate and coincides with the problematic history of the rise and fall of the Muslim empires in *Islam Quintet* is the Khaldunian theory of the rise and fall of civilizations.

Ibn Khaldun (1969) considers social cohesion or solidarity (*Asabiyyah*) as a natural ability of human beings and every individual in the society naturally protects his kin or blood relatives from danger and humiliation. It is disgraceful for an individual in every social group if he is incapable of providing protection to his dear ones or fellows when they are so treated (Rosenthal, Vol. 1, p. 263). Ibn Khaldun believes that the rise and fall of dynasties or civilizations depend on the strength and weakness of this sense of solidarity or *Asabiyyah*. The fall of one civilization due to weak solidarity and the rise of another one with a stronger sense of *Asabiyyah* happen in a cyclic way, giving birth to new human societies and decline of the old ones. Historians name this process, the Khaldunian Cycle.

The second constituent element of Ibn Khaldun's Cyclic Theory is *Umran* which is a polysemous concept and may be defined as the spirit of a social group or its culture or civilization. When people start living together, it becomes vital for them to come close and build a social structure with a sense of cooperation with each other. Hence the process of *Umran* occurs, and at the same time, the idea of leadership emerges in the society. With the power of this leadership, a strong state is established in which a strong *Umran* (civilization) can flourish and develop (Rosenthal, Vol. 1, p. 125). Ibn Khaldun discusses two types of *Umran* (civilizations); *Badawa* (desert or uncivilized culture) and *Hadara* (urban or civilized culture) (Rosenthal, p. 785). According to [Onder \(2018\)](#), Ibn Khaldun calls people living a simple or Bedouin culture as *Badawa* and with the passage of time, it converts into civilized culture. Ibn [Khaldun \(1969\)](#) also points out the life span of every sovereign state or civilization, which is about 120-years equal to three or four generations (Rosenthal, Vol. 1, p. 370-373). The reason for the end of this life-span of civilizations is the gradual weakening or loss of both *Asabiyyah* (solidarity) and *Umran* (civilization). The first generation establishes the fundamental principles and values of civilization and the second generation just imitates the first one and follows the previous traditions and culture set by the former rulers. However, the people in the third generations fail to remember or keep the traditions and values of their ancestors and pave the way for the last ones to cause the decline of the state.

Although Ibn Khaldun's ideas and theories of history and sociology were mostly based on his personal observations and study of various 14th-century Muslim civilizations, yet the scope and future of his theory of the rise and fall of civilizations were highlighted in the true sense of the term by many postmodern researchers such as Yves [Lacoste \(1984\)](#), Mahmud Muhtar [Pasha \(1997\)](#), Mike Okonji [Nduka \(1998\)](#), M. Akif [Kayapinar \(2008\)](#), Syed Farid [Alatas \(2014\)](#) and Umer [Chapra \(2015\)](#). They all believe that this theory has its 'future', especially in the postmodern context. Using the postmodern metafictional strategies, Ali has taken full liberty to use all postmodern literary devices in order to select, explain, judge and interpret various factual details of Islamic history.

Linda Hutcheon in *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (1988) has defined the term historiographic metafiction as 'those well-known and popular novels' which are highly self-reflexive and yet paradoxically deal with historical events and personages. Such fiction is typically a postmodern art form in which the writers use intertextuality, parody and historical re-conceptualization. (Hutcheon 1988, Introduction) The authors of such historical writings are permitted the artistic license in order to freely present their subject matter and historical facts. Hutcheon also perceives such type of historical fiction as a tool to

rewrite history, which is no longer monolithic and objective (Hutcheon 1988, p. 36). [Doctorow \(1983\)](#) also says that history is a kind of fiction, and fiction is a kind of speculative history (p. 25). [Jameson \(1984\)](#) believes that both history and the novel are facing the crisis of representation (p. 180). Hutcheon (1988) quotes Hayden White when he says that there are specific ideological implications in every representation of the past. There are many common characteristics between history and postmodern fiction like the subjectivity, intertextuality, reference, parody and ideology. However, [Hutcheon \(1988\)](#) believes that it is the narrative style that can encompass all these features. History is a semiotic transmission, according to Hutcheon (1988) and it is always a reflection of those who record it.

## Analysis and Discussion

In his first metafictional tale of *Islam Quintet*, Tariq Ali highlights the history of cultural clash between the two major religious communities of the world and depicts the rise of the Christians in Europe and the fall of Muslims in Spain. *Shadows of the Pomegranate Tree* (1992), narrates the metafictional saga of a Moorish family of Hassan al-Hudayl who, according to Ali (1992), 'left Dimashk in 237 AH—932 AD—and reached the Western outposts of Islam in the same year.' They settled near Granada and built a mansion three years later in *Medina al-Zahara* near Cordoba. Before coming to the Maghreb, they were the descendants of the Bedouin warriors, who certainly traded and haggled with caravans every day of their lives, and finally 'lost the urge to travel and become so attached to the land that a member of the family deciding otherwise was treated as a heretic.' (Ali 1992, p. 97)

Zuhayr, the grandson of Abdullah ibn Farid, did not agree with this and believed that even in the desert their forefathers had contempt for the town-dwellers. It was the first stage of their *Umrān* (civilization), according to the Khaldunian model, when they were the Bedouins or nomadic people of Damascus and had a strong sense of *Aṣabiyyah* (solidarity). Ibn Khaldun (1969) also believes that the Bedouin life is simple, and it only requires the basic needs and hence, the Bedouins are not associated with pleasure, extravagance and luxuries beyond what is essential. (Rosenthal, Vol. 1, p. 250) He remembered his Ama telling him 'how only parasites lived in towns.' (Ali 1992, p. 98) However, Al-Zindiq laughed and answered to one of the nephews of Ibn Khaldun, al-Fahl that 'towns have political importance which villages such as your lack. What do you produce? Silks. What do they produce? Power. Ibn Khaldun once wrote ...' (Ali 1992, p. 98)

Granada, the hub of Spanish cultural power, remained a celebrated place in the imagination of writers, musicians and artists since the Medieval Age. It was the last stronghold of independent Muslim rule in Europe, which came to an end on 2 January 1492. When Sultan Abu Abdullah, the one the Castilians called Boabdil, was looking for the last time on his lost kingdom and handed over its keys to King Ferdinand and Isabella, the Queen of Castile. When he reached Padul, the farthest place from where Granada could still be seen, he turned towards his former dynasty, sighed heavily and burst into tears. At that time, his mother, the Lady Ayesha (Axia), remarked that 'one may well weep like a woman, for what one could not defend like a man.' (Ali 1992, p. 36) Mocking a weeping Sultan in a parodist manner is quite an easy task in the postmodern historiographic metafiction as the incident of the Last Sigh has often been used to blame Boabdil because rulers or heroes of such a high stature are not supposed to cry. However, Elizabeth Drayson in her book *The Moor's Last Stand: How Seven Centuries of Muslim Rule in Spain Came to an End* (2017) believed that this incident was merely an invention or a fabricated denouement to a preconceived tale of humiliation. Elizabeth [Drayson \(2017\)](#) explained that the fall of Granada was of such a huge scale . . . that a mythical story was needed to explain it and the honour of the Moorish Sultan had been manipulated by the chroniclers in order to get their preferred goals.

Humiliation is often inversely proportional to grandeur as Ibn Khaldun (1969) believes that the higher a dynasty reaches, the greater is its fall. Boabdil, the last Sultan of the Nasrid Dynasty, was the endpoint of a great Muslim empire that lasted 700 years in Europe. Here, following the Khaldunian model, Tariq Ali presents his famous thesis of 'terminal times' in the history of Islam. As Umar, the father of Zuhayr and Hind also reflected



on this terminal character of the time which seemed ‘terminal for both the family of Banu Hudayl and for Islam in al-Andalus.’ (Ali 1992, p. 19) It was surely a terminal time in the history of Europe when an advanced Muslim civilization fell, and the Christian Inquisitors rose in the Iberian Peninsula.

### Loss of *Asabiyyah* and the Nasrid Dynasty

The Nasrid dynasty, once based on the strong feelings of *Asabiyyah*, was emerged in the early 13th century which later on developed into the most sophisticated sedentary culture in Europe. However, in the last stage of their sedentary culture or *Umrān*, the Nasrid clan became a cruel, feuding family and lost the true spirit of their filial loyalty and *Asabiyyah*. They had frequent violent encounters among their ranks over the line of succession, and Sultans came and went in their dynasty at a dizzying pace. Elizabeth Drayson (2017), also shared one of Boabdil’s earliest memories watching his father attacked his grandfather with a knife. The absence of true Islamic values and sympathetic culture that had once characterized Moorish Spain resulted in the fall of the Nasrid Empire which was further endangered by the marriage of Ferdinand of Aragon to Isabella of Castille in 1469. Due to this happy occasion, the two kingdoms of the Inquisitors were united, and a powerful nation with a strong *Asabiyyah* emerged. Ferdinand, on the model of the Machiavellian prince, concealed his ruthless ambition of destroying Muslims in Granada and Isabella also bent on her husband’s will that had the blessing of Pope Julius II.

However, when the Christians finally captured the city of Granada in the last decade of the fifteenth century, it became the real burning crucible for the Muslim faith throughout Spain. The novel unwraps in a metafictional way the cruel act of Archbishop Ximenes de Cisernos, who after the fall of the Moors in Granada orders the burning of all the books possessed by the Muslims in their public libraries as well as in the private collections. These books are actually the reflection of the greatest Islamic culture and best civilization (*Umrān*) in Europe. It is the most painful strike to the dying solidarity of the Moorish people who are quite vulnerable:

“Some onlookers were sorrowful, others tempestuous, eyes flashing, faces full of anger and defiance. Others still... wore vacant expressions. One of them, an old man, kept repeating the only sentence he could utter in the face of the calamity ‘we are being drowned in a sea of helplessness” (Ali 1992, p. 3).

The text unpacks the macro-politics of the clash of two main civilizations in the Spanish peninsula through the microcosm of al-Hudayl family and eventually proves the Khaldunian notions of the rise and fall of civilizations. It is a metafiction about the rise of Christians in Spain in the twelfth century and the beginning of the Renaissance in Europe after the downfall of the Muslim Dynasty in Granada. The elite family of al-Hudayl, which started as a Bedouin civilization, was ended in an advanced sedentary culture in the form of Alhambra. However, at the last stage of their sedentary culture, they became disintegrated and relaxed due to their luxurious lifestyle and wealth and eventually turned down by the loss of *Asabiyyah* (solidarity) and weak *Umrān* (civilization) among their ranks. They set a noble example of civilized culture in Europe, which was par excellence from the Christian notions of living at that time. Ali deconstructed the Eurocentric notions of superiority in cleanliness, dress, music, art, cuisine and culture and believed that it was the books of Granada that had paved the way for the Renaissance in modern Spain and Europe. The seeds of modern European culture were sown and germinated in the sedentary fields of Alhambra.

Muslims and Christians spent many generations in Granada and developed in communal synchronization known as *convivencia*, a term that describes the peaceful co-existence among three Abrahamic communities: Catholic Christians, Arab Muslims and Jews. (Tariq Ali also appreciated the idea of *convivencia* in his interview with Talat Ahmad in November 2006) However, this social harmony has a long history and, in order to realize it within the framework of Khaldunian concepts of *Asabiyyah* and the different stages of *Umrān*, we must look back to the year 711 A.D, when Roderick the Visigoth became the king of Spain in 710. According to the historian Andrew Wheatcroft (2005), Spain was geographically close to Africa, which made it open to attack by the rising Bedouin Muslim tribes of North Africa who first came there as traders. Moreover, the legitimacy to rule the country by the newly crowned king, Roderick was also a question mark because he was not a direct

descendent of the royal family and was appointed to the throne by only a few members of the nobility who were against the previous regime of Witiza.

Taking advantage of this weak leadership and social solidarity (Asabiyyah), Musa ibn Nusayr, the Arab governor of Ifrikiya (the new northern Africa), attacked Spain with a strong army in 711 under the command of Tarik Bin Ziyad, who defeated King Roderick in a battle near the river Guadalete and the Visigothic kingdom ended with it. According to Richard [Hitchcock \(2014\)](#), the conquest of Spain in 711 and the rise of Muslims in Europe gradually resulted in the establishment of a rising and superb society of al-Andalus in the south. However, it was also the beginning of an invariable tension and clash between the native Christians and the ruling Muslim community, and both tried their best for territorial domination, economic hegemony and religious power. With the course of seven odd centuries, the Bedouin warriors gradually used to the sedentary culture, and due to their luxurious lifestyle and weak social solidarity, the political and military power steadily shifted in favour of the Christians, and when the city of Granada fell in 1492, the circumstances for Muslims living in Spain became worse in the history.

### **The fall of Muslims in Granada**

Before the fateful day of 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1492, there was an agreement signed on November 25, 1491, between the sultan of Granada and Ferdinand and Isabella known as the Capitulation of Granada. It was made to end the Granada War which had started in 1482. According to Richard [Hitchcock \(2014\)](#), there were more than sixty articles which guaranteed many rights to the Muslim population of Granada including religious tolerance, preservation of Muslim laws, families and properties, religious places and fair treatment in private and public offices. It also exempted the Muslims from all taxation for a few years and ordered to release all Muslim prisoners of war captivated during the siege of Granada. ([Hitchcock 2014, p. 187](#))

Initially, the Christian conquerors generously implemented the terms of the treaty and worked with the Muslim community under a joint municipal council. Hernando de Talavera, the archbishop of Granada, always preferred his 'Catholic reasoning' and avoided any harsh policy of 'punishments and lashes'. Hitchcock (2014) narrates that when Ferdinand and Isabella came to visit Granada in 1499, a large crowd greeted them, including Muslims. However, according to Hitchcock (2014), things became worse for Moriscos in Spain after the arrival of the archbishop of Toledo, Francisco Jimenez de Cisneros. Soon after his appointment, he started implementing his evil plans for the Moors and ordered them either to convert or to leave the place or 'one might say that when he entered the fray, the cauldron was simmering; he caused it to boil over.' (Hitchcock 2014, p. 190) He put all the noblemen of the Moors to prison where they were forced to convert with extremely harsh treatment. He became so successful in his bitter efforts that he informed Pope Alexander VI in a letter on December 1499 that he had succeeded in converting almost three thousand Muslims in a single day. (Hitchcock 2014, p. 191) He did not stop his malpractices, even the Catholic council warned him not to breach the agreement of Granada.

Enhancing the scheme of evangelization of Granada with iron hands, the most shocking event, remembered so vividly even today, which contributed to the breakdown of all cultural and historical relationships between the Muslims and Christians was carried out at the old silk market below the Bab al-Ramla (Ali 1992, p. 2). Cisneros ordered the Christian soldiers to enter in all the public and private libraries of the city in order to confiscate 'everything written in Arabic' (Ali 1992, p. 2). It was such a memorable event in the history of Muslim Spain that even Tariq Ali started his novel with the dramatic scene of burning all the books publically except three hundred Arabic manuals of medicine and astronomy which were ordered to place in the new library in Alcala. Hence, much of the knowledge which had 'travelled from the peninsula of al-Andalus as well as Sicily to the rest of Europe paved the way for the Renaissance.' (Ali 1992, p. 2) Ali believed in the cyclic process of the rise and fall of civilizations as Bab al-Ramla was the same place where once Moorish knights used to 'ride and joust to catch the eye of their ladies.' (Ali 1992, p. 3)

## The Rise of Christians and the Renaissance in Europe

Islamic culture was primarily a book culture, and Ali lamented that these 'decorated volumes' were evidence to the great knowledge and superiority of the arts of the Spanish Muslims which could never be surpassed by the standards of the monasteries of Christendom. (Ali 1992, p. 3) It was such 'a splendid pile' that many of those compositions had long been 'the envy of scholars throughout Europe' (Ali 1992, p. 3). It is against this background of political and cultural developments that Cisneros' life and career are deconstructed and unfolded in the text. It was the beginning of the Renaissance in Spain, and Cisneros became its true prelate. As a statesman and a religious leader of the Christian community, he excelled as an organizer of the Inquisitors and combined the social solidarity of various Catholic groups. As a power broker, he weathered many political storms and rose as a man for the times. Ibn Khaldun (1969) also explains the importance of *Asabiyyah* (solidarity) to leadership: Leadership exists only through superiority, and superiority only through group feeling. (Khaldun 1969, p. 101) Joseph [Perez \(2005\)](#) also describes Cisneros as one of the key figures marking the transition of Spain from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. Cisneros' impressive career began as a true courtier of Queen Isabella and then rose successively to the Archbishop of Toledo and Primate of Spain, Inquisitor General, and Cardinal.

The fear of the Muslims in the hands of the Christians is expressed clearly in *Shadows of the Pomegranate Tree*, which paves the way to analyze the notion of the power circulation. Ximenes de Cisneros, who circulates the power in Granada by burning the Arabic books, is a key factor to destroy the clan of Banu al-Hudayl. Cisneros' manifestation of fireworks circulates the fright in the minds of Muslims. After witnessing the book-burning scene, many natives have lost their faith in living. As a result, few people have decided to embrace the foreign religion to save their life, but they are following their native religion secretly. This novel pictures the plight of the Muslims, who have acted to save themselves and their family, and it is clear through the character of Zahra. Hind's conversation with her great aunt Zahra depicts, how an ordinary person is a part of the power circulation as, 'I never knew that you had become a Christian, Great Aunt, 'Nor did I' replied Zahra, making Yazid scream with laughter. 'Did you make it all up to get out of there? Did you? Zahra nodded...' (Ali 1992, p. 53)

Every character in the novel experiences the fear, and thus they have taken part to maintain the existing power structures. Umar, one of the leaders of Banu Hudayl in Granada is shattered by the cruel action of Cisneros, and it is reflected in his family too. His wife, Zubayda, also worries a lot for her peoples' future life. The existence of the Muslims in Granada becomes a huge question in everyone's mind. The brutal action done by Christians affects all sectors of people in society. Due to that, demonstration of power is in circulation in the form of rules to the public. The mindset of men and women in Granada reveals the strength of power circulation. Following the words of Ibn Hasd, cobbler, Zubayda agonizes a lot for her people, and it is expressed as the cobbler was only expressing what the whole village felt. There was a great feeling of uncertainty....There were a thousand and one stories circulating throughout Gharnata of what had happened after the reconquest of Qurtuba and Ishbiliya. Each refugee had arrived with tales of terror and random bestiality. (Ali, 1992, pp. 46-47)

Thus, the fear of inquisition is circulated through every character in this novel effectively. In short, the fall of Muslim Dynasty in Andalusia and the rise of the Catholic Christians after the fall of Granada in 1499 is the first major turning point in the history of Christian Muslim relations in Europe. Due to the weaker *Asabiyyah* (social solidarity) among various *taifas* or scattered Muslim kingdoms in Spain, the Muslim dynasty of the Nasrid ruler Boabdil in Granada was about to collapse, and it was easily taken over by the strong social order and discipline among the Catholic ranks under the supervision of the Archbishop Ximenes de Cisneros with the political support of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. Ximenes de Cisneros' cruel policies of forced conversion and expulsion of the Muslims from Spain resulted at the beginning of the historico-cultural clash between two major civilizations of the world which is still prevailed in the form of Professor Phillip



Huntington's thesis of the clash of civilizations and what is happening in the Middle East, and some other countries of the Muslim world is a reflection of the shadow of the past events.

## **Conclusion**

European Christian culture remained intolerant towards its others, especially for Muslims as a binary opposite religion and civilization and whenever the Christians gained their upper hand on Muslims, they never tolerated their existence and exerted their full force to subdue them. The textual analysis reveals that the Christian response after *Reconquista* has actually generated a history of hate and intolerance between the two major civilizations of the world, which is still prevailed in various parts of the modern world. The forced conversion and expulsion of the Muslims and Jews in Spain finished the multi-cultural identity of Europe and converted it into a monolithic entity, and the fall of one civilization resulted in the rise of the other.

*Shadows of the Pomegranate Tree* successfully elaborates that there are many reasons for the fall of Muslims in Spain mainly the weak *Asabiyyah* (solidarity) and poor *Umrān*, fragmentation of power, liberal and secular elite, luxury and sedentary culture and strong Christian opponents. Ali also believes that the fall of Granada is inevitable because it seems impossible for an Islamic oasis to exist in a Christian desert. Ali presents his thesis of the 'Terminal Times' in the history of Christian Muslim relations which corresponds to the Khaldunian cyclic notions of history and rejects the Eurocentric idea of collective fate or deterministic view of Muslim history. Ali also traces the trajectory of modern European civilization and the rise of the Catholic kingdom of Spain and Discovery of New World and links it with the Islamic civilization in Andalusia. The memory of al-Andalusia is still haunted in the collective consciousness of both the Christian and Muslim communities and its shadow can be seen in the contemporary events in the Middle East, and the Muslim World as Ali himself predicts how one tragedy leads to another and how over the ashes of one event lurks the shadow of another (p. 5). Out of the lurking shadows of the pomegranate trees in Granada, Ali pronounces his final verdict that there is a dire need for another *Convivencia* or religious harmony between two big civilizations in the contemporary era for keeping the global peace and prosperity.

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