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The legacy of al-Andalus and its romanticized *convivencia* has proven versatile enough to accommodate recent reinterpretations by a wide variety of authors, including Amin Malouf (*Leo Africanus*, 1986), Antonio Gala (*La pasión turca*, 1993), Tariq Ali (*Shadows of the Pomegranate Tree*, 1993), Raḍwā ʿĀshūr (*Thulāthiyyat Gharnāṭa*, in English: *The Granada Trilogy*, 1994–8),2 Salman Rushdie (*The Moor’s Last Sigh*, 1995), and Diana Abu-Jaber (*Crescent*, 2003), among many others. Miguel Angel de Blunes observes that the reinterpretations are informed by present-day sensibilities more than historical fact.3 Modern authors typically build on the allegorical depiction of al-Andalus as an earthly paradise, epitomized by the beautiful gardens of al-Ḥamrāʾ (Alhambra) Palace, where people of various religions, ethnicities, and languages coexisted in harmony; hence, the loss of al-Andalus mirrors the loss of Eden, and the fall of Granada in 897/1494, with the subsequent expulsion of Jews and Muslims, is akin to the fall of Adam and Eve and their expulsion from paradise.

The allegorical depiction of al-Andalus can express Spain’s desire to assert national difference from the rest of Europe,4 as well as from the Orient, by stressing its unique Islamic heritage and civilization. This difference attains a more poignant value for modern Muslims who hold out the Andalusian *convivencia* as a model that epitomizes Islam’s tolerance and acceptance of diversity, refuting the current stereotypical depiction of Muslims in Western

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2 Raḍwā ʿĀshūr’s name also appears as Radwa Ashour, especially in English. I have opted to write it as it is pronounced in Arabic. The first part of the trilogy was published in 1994, the second in 1995, and the third in 1998.

3 Blunes, Introducción x.

4 Gilmour, Turkish delight 79.
media as hard-line fanatics. For Arab literati, the waning of al-Andalus and the expulsion of its citizens foreshadows the loss of Palestine and the exile of its people; while the gradual elimination of the party kingdoms in al-Andalus by the united Christian-Spanish front, which are reincarnated today in the powerful West and its local allies, is seen as an ominous precursor of the disintegration of the Arab world into puppet states engaged in petty quarrels with their neighbors.5

In this paper, I focus on two novels that depict the moment of loss, that is to say, the fall from grace that led to the expulsion of Muslims from Spain’s earthly paradise: *Thulāthiyat Gharnāṭa*, written by the Egyptian novelist Raḍwā ‘Āshūr (b. 1946) in Arabic and published in 1994–8; and *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, composed by the British-Indian writer Salman Rushdie (b. 1947) in English and published in 1995. Both novels grapple with the thorny issues of hybridity, cultural diversity, and ineffective heroes, themes that occur frequently in postcolonial literature. Moreover, although ‘Āshūr and Rushdie draw on works written by their literary predecessors, both authors break away from previous literary traditions. ‘Āshūr is the first Arab author to move the setting of her novel from the courts and palaces of the city, where the rulers and aristocracy reside, to the streets of Granada to examine the travails and responses of the ordinary people who bore the brunt of the tragic events that unfolded after the ruling elites surrendered the city to the Spaniards.6 Similarly, Rushdie is the first South Asian author to depart from the literary tradition established by his forerunners,7 which venerated the glorious legacy of al-Andalus, and

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5 Gana, Search 229.

6 The Andalusian topos is more deeply entrenched in Arabic literary tradition than in its South Asian counterpart. It goes back to the late nineteenth century when several Arab writers, such as ‘Alī b. Salīm al-Wardānī (1861–1915), Aḥmad Zakī (1867–1934), and Muṣṭafā Farrūkh visited Spain and published their accounts (see Granara, *Extensio animae* 50–1). The short stories, poetry collections, and novels written in Arabic are too numerous to survey in this brief note, but Granara provides an excellent overview in his article entitled “Extensio animae.” Al-Ju‘aydī examines the work of several Palestinian poets whose poems retell the fall of al-Andalus as an allegory for the loss of Palestine. Regarding novels, it should be noted that almost all the relevant novels in Arabic depict events that take place in palaces or royal courts.

7 The well-known Muslim poet and philosopher, Muḥammad Ḥāfiz, who was born in British India (1877–1938), wrote a collection of quatrains, *ghazals*, and poems inspired by his visit to Spain in 1933. It was entiled *Bāl-i Jibrīl* (*Gabriel’s Wing*) and was published in 1935, cf. Nourani, Garden. Unlike Ḥāfiz’s earlier works, which were written in Farsi, *Bāl-i Jibrīl* was written in Urdu. One of the most celebrated poems in the collection is the *Masjid-i Qurtuba* poem, in which Ḥāfiz describes his feelings when he visited the mosque of Cordoba, which reminded