

Same Language, Two Worlds: Analysis of Stereotypes among Citizens of Madrid and
Ecuadorian Immigrants in Madrid

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Introduction

In August, 2001, Juan Antonio first stepped into Madrid's Barajas airport after a long flight from Ecuador. Having since received his legal permits to work and reside in the country, he has become accustomed to life in Spain's capital city. He now feels a bond with this place that once meant little more to him than a spot on the world map. After living in Madrid for nearly a decade, he has now come to identify himself in multiple ways: his Ecuadorian heritage dominates his identity, yet his growing connection with Spanish culture has become a source of pride for him. For example, he now cheers for Spanish soccer teams as they compete on a national and international level. After Barcelona's victory in the 2009 Euro Cup soccer match, Juan Antonio wandered to one of Madrid's many plazas, that evening doubling as celebration grounds. He approached a group of Spanish men, cheering and waving his arms to commemorate the achievement among people with whom he had come to identify. Yet as they saw him coming, they instantly perceived him as an immigrant, as a foreigner. Their cheers and laughter quickly turned to angry expressions as they raised their voices, shouting things such as "Get out of Spain!" and "You're not one of us!"

While not all immigrants living in Madrid have experienced such overt, vocal displays of prejudice, racism or hatred, the feeling of belonging is often lacking for those that were not born "ethnically Spanish." The city bustles in its usual crowded fashion, with droves of people moving in all directions, performing their daily routines. Increasingly, people of different backgrounds inhabit Madrid and live in close proximity to one another. While the city does not generally have problems with violent uprisings stirred by racial tensions, there is an undeniable trend of separation between the

Spaniards native to Madrid, *madrileños*, and foreign immigrants. It is clear that immigrants are not welcomed to live in the same “world” as Spaniards. Concerning the Latin American immigrant and Spanish populations in Madrid, two separate worlds seem to exist within the same spatial confines of the city despite the fact that they speak the same language.

This project seeks to examine three main issues that shape the dynamic of Ecuadorian immigration – as representative of the larger Latin American immigration trends – in Madrid, Spain. These are: the concept of “Otherness;” the persistence of postcolonial attitudes in society and among *madrileños*; and the additional issues that Latin American female immigrants face in comparison to males. Although the data collected in the surveys deals specifically with Ecuadorians, the literature review and supporting materials also pull information about other Latin American migration trends in Spain for a number of reasons. Mainly, there is relatively little research available specifically about the Ecuadorian population’s migration to Spain. Because they are the largest Latin American group in both Spain and Madrid, however, I consider my data as more or less representative of larger Latin American trends regarding immigration to Spain. I have examined information about other groups with similar post-colonial and migration relationships with Spain, such as Peru, Bolivia, Argentina and Cuba, and found that migrants from these countries often have similar stories and motives of migration to the Ecuadorians.

In general, Madrid citizens tend to have negative attitudes towards the rapid growth of the Latin American immigrant population that has occurred mainly in the past decade. This was certainly evident in my surveys, which I examine below. Because of

this, I seek to explain the negativity in terms of the aforementioned processes: Otherness, postcolonial views, and gender issues. This project will show that these underlying factors explain the negative reactions better than the reasons that Spaniards themselves cite. For example, many claim – in my own surveys and in general – that the influx of immigration aggravates the already tough economic situation. This was especially noticeable in May and June 2009, when I conducted these surveys, during which Spain suffered along with the world from a severe economic downturn – “la crisis” [the crisis]. When many think of immigration, they tend to associate it with *illegal* immigration. The common general argument throughout much of Europe is that this mass body of (“illegal”) foreigners “displace low-skilled natives, depress wages, and neutralize market pressures that would otherwise result in a rising trend of wages” as well as draw benefits away from the host country (Djajić 99). Yet Slobodan Djajić argues that in reality, the only ones that do not benefit from an influx of illegal immigration are the illegal immigrants themselves, who help the economy to expand at the expense of their legal rights and their paychecks, almost always lower than any native unskilled worker (107).

Simultaneously, a demand for immigration has been created by the Spanish government. With the consolidation of democracy in Spain, and with its entry into the European Community (precursor to the European Union) in 1986, the “welfare state” began to flourish and the level of desirability of job positions rose among Spaniards (Cachón Rodríguez 114). In other words, both men and women sought upward mobility in their careers, rejecting certain other types of work. Thus, the demand for the immigration that is so disdained was in fact created by the citizens and their own preferences. The complaints are flawed. The underlying issues must lie elsewhere, rooted

more deeply in Spanish society than the simple, superficial economic and demographic fluctuations that *madrileños* – along with many people in all parts of the world – criticize when discussing immigration.

This thesis will be divided into three sections in order to demonstrate the existence of Otherness, gender issues and postcolonial attitudes, and the way in which they affect the relationships between these two groups of people who speak the same language, but who obviously still live in two separate worlds. The first section will comprise an overview of migration, and how the migratory networks between Spain and Latin America fit into this history of movement between places. This being established, I will provide an analysis of my own survey results, demonstrating the main trends and the existence of the three main processes discussed in this thesis that serve to separate the Spanish and Latin American populations in Madrid. The rest of this project will attempt to demonstrate the existence of the problem as it is represented in literary productions. I have chosen to focus on fictional literature, and, just as my surveys have given the perspectives of both the immigrant and the Spaniard, so do the books I have chosen. The first that I will examine is *Cosmofobia* (2007) by Lucía Etxebarria, a Spanish author who constructs her story from both the Spanish and the immigrant or Other's perspective. The second novel, *Una tarde con campanas* (2004), was written by Juan Carlos Méndez Guédez, a Venezuelan author who constructs a poignant commentary on the life of a Latin American immigrant in Spain through the eyes of a young boy. Both novels share a common theme: they aim to expose the societal problem of separation between *madrileños* and immigrants. The authors provide examples of all three underlying

processes that both illustrate the complexities of the situation and put into question their reasons for existence.

In short, this project seeks to shed light on Juan Antonio's situation as representative of that of Latin Americans in Madrid. The situation is complex, and involves processes that include historical memory and confrontation with change. The fact that these phenomena appear increasingly in popular culture is telling. The problems have become significant and apparent to people in both "worlds" as just that: problems. Circumstances might be improved for both Spaniards and Latin American immigrants in Madrid by bringing awareness to them. Therefore, I aim to present the existence of the separation of the two populations, as if they lived in two different worlds within the same city despite their common language and certain cultural attributes. I will demonstrate that the processes are natural yet unnecessary by showing how they are caused by simple misconceptions of the other group that are rarely tested to disprove them. It is my hope that, with increased knowledge and awareness, the separate worlds will begin to understand that they are not so fundamentally different, superior or inferior from the other.

Migration: Concepts, Processes, and the Spanish/Latin American Cases

The migratory process involves several parties during its many stages. Attitudes towards immigration can vary even within the same spheres of contact; one group can perceive another in radically different ways despite living in the same geographical area and even speaking the same language. Today, most people, in most countries of the world, now find immigration to be an everyday reality. The length of time that the phenomenon has been in play in a particular region, combined with general cultural attitudes of its citizens, affect the reactions of the native citizens towards the incoming peoples. Logically, the newer the presence of immigrants in a given society, the more native citizens of the area will react – normally in a negative fashion. One can think of migration as “the movement of a person or group of persons from one geographical unit to another across an administrative or political border, wishing to settle definitely or temporarily in a place other than their place of origin” (International Organization of Migration 8). “Displacement” is a term often used synonymously, yet this can have different connotations. For instance, Caren Kaplan links the term with disengagement or dislocation from national, regional and ethnic locations or identities, implying a more permanent separation from a homeland (101-102). Migration today is not – or, at least, is no longer – always a complete detachment from the home country. It is not always forced, and can practically never be completely predicted based on a single, universal pattern. There are various types of migration, from internal – movement within the same country from one administrative unit to another – to international, involving the crossing of one or several international borders. Although international migration seems to imply greater change than internal migration, this is not necessarily the case. For instance,

internal migration can involve long travel distances if within a large territory, and has the potential to bring quite different populations together, while international migration could translate to very short distances traveled and the mixing of similar groups of people.

Important to consider is the aforementioned fact that migration can be more complicated than a simple movement from one location to another. Between the place of origin or departure to the place of destination or arrival there can be – and often are – several places of transit in between. It is also important to note the difference in terminology used when discussing the different stages of the migration process. According to the International Organization of Migration, “international migration becomes immigration or emigration depending on how the place of destination or place of origin is considered” (9). In other words, an “emigrant” is a person who leaves his/her country with the intention to reside in another, while an “immigrant” is a person who enters a new country intending to reside in it. One person can be called both, for example, depending on whether the perspective is from that of the country of origin or that of the country of destination.

The reasons for migrating are varied, and have been explained by multiple sociological hypotheses. One of the best-known theories is that of “push/pull”, originating in neo-classical thought. In the 1960s, intellectuals such as Gustav Ranis and John Fei examined the phenomenon in economic terms, citing the “uneven geographical distribution of capital and labour” as creating disparities in wages and living standards, which created both a “supply push” from developing countries and a “demand pull” from the developed world (International Organization of Migration 13). Many additional factors are now named as “pushing” residents out of their home countries and “pulling”

them to other places. The International Organization of Migration lists primary push/pull factors as: economic development and its disparities, population trends, the existence of migratory networks, access to information, the ease of travel today, armed conflicts, environmental deterioration, and human rights violations (4). Sometimes, even the governments in the migrants' countries of origin actively export their unemployed workers in order to avoid "potential political and social unrest" (Kritz, Keely and Tomasi xxiv). There is for most migrants a balance of both push and pull factors that influence and shape the process of displacement. A significant concept is that of the migration/kinship network, composed of relatives and/or friends who have already migrated to a particular place from a host country and have communicated to people still in the home country the opportunities they find. This creates the phenomenon known as chain migration, which can be defined as "movement in which prospective migrants learn of opportunities, are provided with transportation, and have initial accommodation and employment arranged by means of primary social relationships with previous migrants" (Choldin 4-5). Because the networks accumulate over time, this contributes to increasing destination choices, and can move the process more efficiently by assisting migrants in the exchange of information, financial assistance, finding a job and other forms of aid.

It is important to distinguish between different types of migrants when discussing the factors influencing their decisions. In the case of voluntary migration, the displaced persons have moved from their places of origin for personal reasons, "without being compelled to do so" (International Organization of Migration 9). For example, a person could wish to move to another country to try to earn a higher salary, yet still be able to survive and live in the country of origin if need be. Forced migration is a different

situation altogether. This is the “non-voluntary movement of a person wishing to escape an armed conflict or situation of violence and/or the violation of his/her rights, or a natural or man-made disaster” (International Organization of Migration 9). Most of these migrants, who have significantly less choices in the process, fall into the classifications of “refugees.” This group can be defined in a number of ways, the most universal of which was developed at the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. According to this, a refugee is “a person who, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his/her nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, unwilling to avail himself/herself of the protection of that country” (International Organization of Migration 10). “Asylum seekers” are migrants who have crossed an international border but who have not yet received a decision on their claim for refugee status (International Organization of Migration 10).¹

The presence of so many such nuances within the international migratory process causes some intellectuals to argue that the push/pull theory is overly “simplistic” and “limited” in the global capitalist system that now encompasses international migrations.² Throughout the course of the twentieth century, several alternative theories have been proposed. For instance, the dependency theory, originating in the 1970s as influenced by neo-Marxist thought, emphasizes the fact that the movement from rural to urban areas as a worldwide trend is due to unequal relations between industrialized centers and the agricultural periphery. Intertwined with this is the “dual labor market theory,” which

¹ The legal process for granting “refugee” or “asylum seeker” status varies by country; some grant this status automatically, while others require an application process.

² See, for example, the arguments of Mary M. Kritz, Charles B. Keely and Silvano M. Tomasi, or Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Blanc-Szanton.

links immigration to meeting the structural needs of modern industrial economies, emphasizing the motives of the host country.

Recent alternative models involve to a greater extent the idea of constant movement between states, a perpetual flux of people that contrasts with the permanent breaks that migrants were supposed in earlier theories to have made with their homelands. One of these is the world systems theory, developed in the 1980s, which supposes that international migration is a consequence of globalization and market penetration, which have “created mobile labor that can move about in search of better opportunities” (International Organization of Migration 13). In developing countries, large populations have been uprooted due to the presence of “neo-colonial regimes, multinational corporations, and the growth of foreign direct investment”; because of the resulting concentration of wealth and power in certain parts of the world, migration acts as a “gigantic mechanism that regulates worldwide labour supply and demand and allows for interaction based on migration flows” (International Organization of Migration 14). This can partly explain the trend of movement between former colonies and their former colonial powers, for those in difficult situations often try to move towards opportunity. The most familiar places will be those that once colonized them, a fact which sheds light on migration networks between countries like England and India, France and Morocco, or the case study in this project, Spain and Ecuador.

Other intellectuals label the situations created by these trends as a system of “transnationalism,” in which migrants have overlapping memberships or ties to territorially separate political entities through the building of social fields between their

country of origin and their country of settlement.³ This theory argues for the interconnectedness of the factors of the migratory process, from decisions to migrate to the distances that separate migrants from their homelands. One can now move relatively freely between countries, and thus migration is no longer a permanent movement in the age of transnationalism. I mentioned above certain disruptions in the developing world, including that of large-scale agro-businesses, transnational export corporations and tourism. Additionally, the world has seen a general shift in the developed world from higher-paid, unionized work to low-paying jobs without benefits. This has logically left an occupational vacancy among the native population, as a “displaced, underemployed labor force” is created (Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton 26). Viewing migration in this way allows one to see the world as connected through the processes of globalization. These processes have created the current transnational reality.

Migration as an international phenomenon began especially during the Renaissance period initiated around the fifteenth century, the so-called “age of exploration” in which European explorers were the first to document their international travels. In many cases, people began to settle permanently on different continents, bringing their families and, often, enslaved people forced to migrate from their own homelands. This represents the beginning of what can be known as permanent settler migration, or immigration to a country in which one plans to remain indefinitely (Kritz, Keely and Tomasi xiv). Permanent settler migration was, in fact, the most normal form of migration worldwide until quite recently. In addition to intercontinental European movement, migrations increasingly originated from Europe towards an expanding network of colonies throughout the next few centuries. The slave trade, most notably

³ See Rainer Bauböck or Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Blanc-Szanton.

from Africa towards the “New World” colonies of the Western hemisphere, was initiated due to the European demand for labor in the colonies, even at the start driven by economic factors, and is a significant component in the history of migration.

Many Europeans also settled permanently outside their homelands. This was often due to social and political reasons such as religious persecution, as during the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to open disagreement with a political leader, or as punishment for crime. Additionally, famine wrecked agricultural societies such as Ireland, Southern Italy and parts of Spain, all but forcing its citizens to seek refuge in places like the United States and South America during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

As with many social and political processes, there was delay in creating legislation about immigration. The first recorded policy on immigration was the 1793 Alien Bill which established a formal immigration control in England (Kritz, Keely and Tomasi xiii). Most of Europe, however, did not have any formal regulations regarding immigration until well into the twentieth century. The lack of immigration in the majority of these places made it an unnecessary political matter. The aftermath of the Second World War, however, exposed the necessity for increased security based on the standardization of border policies and the regulation of movement between countries. One observes a decisive shift at this moment in states’ outlooks on borders and on the control of who may cross them. At the same time that people and state lines alike were reconfigured and mass movements became normal and accepted, leaders focused on protecting the “homeland” by watching migration more closely. The development of these policies increased as the post-war economic boom created a boom in immigration

to Europe. Spain was an exception to this rule because of its own internal turmoil due to the thirty-six-year-long dictatorial regime of Francisco Franco beginning during the same late 1930s-1940s time frame, which caused emigration from Spain mainly towards former South American colonies (Kritz, Keely and Tomasi xxiii). A more unified and universal policy was created with the development of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957, which became the European Union (EU) in 1993 with the Maastricht Treaty. The monitoring of fluxes of people in, out, and within European borders became standardized for all member countries. Spain did not join the EEC until 1986, when it conformed to these rules and regulations of the flow of peoples mandated for members.

Today, permanent settler migration has declined in most countries. Some immigration in the United States or Canada can still be considered that of people aiming to settle permanently in the host country, as was the dominant model prior to the 1970s. Yet in most parts of the world, including most all European countries, migration mostly falls into classifications such as temporary, refugee and illegal immigration (Kritz, Keely and Tomasi xiv). Migration really has become a transnational phenomenon, representing impermanence and flow rather than definitive movements of people and belongings. The various classifications by which a migrant can be grouped, although in reality distinct from each other, have become confused in the public mind. "Immigration" becomes popularly defined as the composite group of all foreigners residing in a given country. The associations in Europe, as in Spain, are of one type of immigrant only: "all foreigners are assumed to belong to one single group and are classified as 'migrants or foreigners' although they arrive from different countries, with various educational backgrounds,

religious and political affiliations, and (gendered) cultural traditions” (Jones and Kryzanowski 57). This often comes with the negative connotations of an “overforeignization,” a “social problem” in which native citizens may perceive a threat to their culture, their access to jobs and resources, and even their personal safety (Kritz, Keely and Tomasi xxiv, xxviii). While not all people in a given group react adversely to diversity, many have strong feelings about the subject. If confronted with something different from one’s everyday culture and routine, fear is an initial reaction for some. Thus, if this unknown – be it different appearances, religious practices, languages and/or cultures – is relatively new or particularly prevalent in a society, it is natural that members of this group might side against the influx.

These negative reactions can certainly be seen in Spain. I will explore both how these attitudes live on in some people, and how they have recently become juxtaposed with newer efforts, such as those of Lucía Etxebarria and Juan Carlos Méndez Guédez, to create awareness of the problems between the diverse groups that now populate the country. As already mentioned, the case of Spain is rather atypical compared to some European countries that experienced the aforementioned sharp increase in immigration after the Second World War. In fact, Spain’s prevalent patterns of movement were of emigration throughout the nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries. It was not until the late 1980s that immigrants finally outnumbered emigrants in Spain.

Because Spain was one of Europe’s great colonial powers during the Age of Exploration, one can consider that significant movement out of the country began during the late fifteenth century. In addition to Spanish soldiers, missionaries and settlers who established themselves in the Western hemisphere during the following few centuries,

there were those that were exiled, or forced to leave the country for a variety of reasons. Some of these people were the Jews, a population that was once significant but that is all but non-existent in present-day Spain. Muslims, Jews and Christians are supposed to have “coexisted” throughout the Middle Ages in Spain, though the degree to which this was peaceful is debatable. Yet during the fifteenth century, the power shifted towards a Christian-dominant rule and the persecutions of non-Christians began in 1492 (Contreras 40, 52). Jaime Contreras very accurately identifies this as the grounding in Spain of “classic forms of exclusion and rejection” of those that are different (40).

Since the initial colonization of the Western Hemisphere, there was continued movement between Spain and its network of colonies. Some of this was voluntary settler migration, but additionally, several groups after the Jews and the Muslims were actually expelled from the Iberian Peninsula. At the beginning of the 1700s, the *Austracistas*, or supporters of King Charles II during the war of Spanish Succession, were forced to emigrate upon the Bourbon takeover of power because of their political loyalties (León Sanz 75). The majority went to Italy, and a smaller yet significant population found itself displaced to Spanish imperial domain. The Jesuits, a Catholic order, were forced to leave because of their religious practices during the eighteenth century. Following the examples of Portugal and France, the Spanish crown expelled them out of fear that the self-pronunciation of their differences from the dominant religion were becoming too stark (Giménez López 113-114). Because they were considered a threat to religious uniformity, the Spanish crown expelled them on the grounds of their being “incompatible with the splendor of the monarchy and the nation” (Giménez López 115). Others, such as the

Afrancesados, or supporters of Joseph Bonaparte in the early 1800s, were also expelled, this time towards nearby France.

Emigration, thus, can be considered a dominant trend in Spanish history. Until the nineteenth century, it was isolated mostly to specific groups: the settlers or the missionaries who had gone to the colonies in order to seek a fortune or to fulfill a sort of spiritual calling, or those niches of society mentioned above, such as supporters of a political power or people of a certain religion, who were forced to leave the country. Yet Spain truly gained its reputation as a country of widespread emigration in the last few decades of the nineteenth century. There continued to be a number of political exiles throughout this period. The Republicans, those who wished for a republic instead of the monarchy in place, represented a small but steady group of emigrants from approximately 1875-1931. They went primarily to France, though others found refuge in Andorra, Algeria, Belgium, Holland, Argentina and Uruguay. In the former colonies – most notably in Argentina – those exiled created a new community founded on political beliefs. They formed political associations, groups of like-minded persuasions that were headed by Spanish intellectuals, such as José Martínez Ruiz and Gregorio Marañón, who had been persecuted in Spain for their ideas (Duarte 233, 235).

Another type of emigration that became significant around the late 1800s was that of Spanish citizens who left due to economic hardship as opposed to being required to leave because of religious or political ties. This was an economic migration. Throughout the nineteenth century and for a significant portion of the twentieth, Spain's economy was mainly based in agriculture. This is perhaps the most volatile economic sector, as it depends upon the weather and the availability of supplies. Spain was experiencing in the

years surrounding 1875 a “persistence of subsistence crises,” spells in which the mainly agricultural, subsistence economy failed to produce enough to support its people (Universidad Simón Bolívar 145). This made survival difficult, especially in regions such as Galicia, in which agriculture was most prevalent. In fact, eighty percent of the Spaniards who emigrated were from Galicia, representing the largest Galician emigrant movement in history to date (Boix and del Olmo 80). The rest came primarily from Asturias, Catalunya, the Basque Country, and other zones in which industrial production was prevalent, for an economic crisis affected this sector at the same time (Boix and del Olmo 80). Because of the strong historical, economic and cultural ties between the “Americas” and Spain that had evolved with colonialism, most Spaniards crossed the Atlantic Ocean and settled in these territories. In Argentina, for example, could be found the “largest Spanish colony in the world outside of the Iberian Peninsula,” then containing two-thirds of the Spanish population outside of the Iberian Peninsula (Boix and del Olmo 79, 111-112). In smaller numbers, Spaniards also settled in countries like Cuba, Mexico, Venezuela, Uruguay and Brazil (Cabezas Moro 172).

The events of 1898 surely affected the migration patterns between Spain and its colonies. In that year, Spain officially lost possession of Cuba and the Philippines, the last vestiges of its imperial domain. Indeed, between 1900 and 1914 Spain registered its highest numbers of emigrants (Boix and del Olmo 101). In losing its status as a dominant world power, Spain fell into a crisis both of identity and of economy. This worsened the already aggravated conditions, motivating more people to consider abandoning their homeland, for emigration provided, in this case as in countless others throughout history, an “escape valve” from a serious social and economic conflict (Cabezas Moro 155).

Many people also had familial ties abroad by that point, demonstrating that kinship networks are anything but new. Spaniards seemed to find acceptance and relative assimilation and invisibility in these former colonies (Cabezas Moro 161).

In the 1930s, tension in Spain worsened with the collapse of the Second Republic in 1936, and the ensuing civil war, from 1936-1939. It is this moment in Spanish history that the concept of “exile” appears on a large scale. Migration due to “exile,” as defined by Caren Kaplan, “implies coercion,” and “connotes the estrangement of the individual from an original community” (27). Those supporting the Republic continued to be forced out of Spain in this way, while at the same time emigration for economic reasons became more complicated. There was a type of stagnation in the overall emigration process as the general atmosphere in Spain worsened – instead of improving as promised – during *franquismo*, the dictatorial reign of Francisco Franco lasting from 1936 until his death in 1975. The period between 1946 and 1957 is considered the “most crucial moment for Spanish emigration to the Americas,” influenced not only by Spanish conditions but by international conditions as a result of World War II (Cabezas Moro 141-142). According to Lorenzo Cachón Rodríguez, the Second World War created huge population transfers in Europe; the postwar period both continued this inter-continental movement and “re-initiated” transoceanic emigration (69).

The trend again shifted after the mid-1950s to initiate a period that lasted until about the mid-1970s. Many Spaniards continued to settle in Latin America, yet during this span only twenty-five percent of the total emigration from Spain crossed the Atlantic Ocean. Instead, the moves were directed mainly to Central Europe, where seventy-four percent of Spanish emigrants, especially working men, were attracted by the industrial

work offered by expanding countries such as Germany (Cachón Rodríguez 104). Some moves were also influenced by political problems under the Franco regime, though this was less common. Spain had come to be regarded as “behind” the rest of Europe in economic and developmental terms, and Spaniards moved according to both push and pull factors: starvation and poverty in Spain placed pressure on them to leave, while the attractiveness of a growing industrial sector with more abundant job opportunities in central and northern European countries drew Spanish citizens toward the middle of the continent. This situated Spain into the European context once again, lessening its isolation and preparing it for a future in an integrated European community.

The trend did not truly reverse to define Spain as an immigrant-receiving country until after the 1980s (Cabezas Moro 141). Democracy came officially with the creation of the Constitution in 1978. Since then, Spain has maintained this democracy and has become increasingly affluent, inclining its economy towards the service sector instead of the agricultural and industrial production that dominated until the 1980s. Between 1978 and 1983, the country was proclaimed a collection of “Autonomous Communities,” decentralizing government power to grant influence to regions such as Catalunya and the Basque Country.⁴ As mentioned, Spain opened itself significantly to the realm of international relations upon entering the EEC in 1986. The new standards provided by this membership led to the consolidation of a welfare state, and consequently has established a higher overall educational level for the active working population – and with it, a rapid increase in Spaniards’ social expectations (Cachón Rodríguez 111).

⁴ In 1978, Spain officially recognized four Autonomous Communities: Catalunya, the Basque Country, Galicia and Andalucía. Today, there are seventeen: Andalucía, Aragón, Asturias, Balearic Islands, Basque Country, Canary Islands, Cantabria, Castilla-La Mancha, Castilla y León, Catalunya, Extremadura, Galicia, La Rioja, Madrid, Murcia, Navarra, and the Valencian Community.

Because of this, vacancies have indeed opened in those jobs that the native population now rejects: those considered “hard, demanding, dangerous, socially undervalued and poorly paid”, most frequently in the realms of domestic service, the hotel and catering industry, health and social services, agricultural, construction, and small and/or other business ventures (Solé 32).⁵ These activities vary by gender and are characterized in Spain today in that they are mostly fulfilled by a foreign labor force. The native population rejects them as socially unacceptable for itself.

The first significant influx of foreign immigration to Spain coincided with their 1985-1986 incorporation into the EEC, and since then Madrid has been one of the most popular immigrant destinations. At this time, the city’s foreign population was mainly from Morocco and, to a lesser extent, Algeria and other Northern African countries. While the most populous immigrant group in Spain as well as Madrid continues to be from Morocco, totaling approximately 19 percent of the foreign population, different groups and trends of migration have arisen (Gil Araujo 200). Today one finds several Sub-Saharan countries represented in Spain in addition to Morocco. In Madrid, these immigrants most frequently come from Mali, Senegal, Nigeria, Guinea and Equatorial Guinea (www.munimadrid.es). Another trend, though on the decline between 2008 and 2009 in Madrid, is emigration from Bangladesh and Pakistan to Spain. As of January 2009, there were just over 3,500 people in Madrid from these two countries combined. The immigrant groups discussed thus far bring, in many cases, the Muslim faith to the predominantly Catholic Spanish society, a visual confrontation with what is different that gives Spaniards a basis for separation between immigrants and native citizens. Similar to the expulsion of the Jews in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and that of the Jesuits in

⁵ For more information, see also Sònia Parella Rubio

the eighteenth, the discrepancies between the dominant order of religion and those that are different seem to have been cause for uneasiness throughout Spanish history.

Most world regions are now represented among the foreign population in Madrid. Eastern Asia sends a large population of Chinese citizens – nearly 25,000 in Madrid at the beginning of 2009 – that have arrived especially in the past decade (www.munimadrid.es). Citizens of the European Union may enter Spain without needing a visa or even a passport; a national identification document suffices for them to enter. Of the original fifteen countries in the EU, Italy, France, Portugal, Germany and the United Kingdom contribute the largest numbers to Madrid's foreign population (www.munimadrid.es). Since the European Union has expanded to include much of Eastern Europe – bringing the total number of countries to twenty-seven – a more significant trend of immigration comes especially from Romania, Bulgaria, and Poland for a total of approximately 86,500 people at the beginning of 2009 (www.munimadrid.es). Outside of the European Union, Russia, Ukraine, and Moldavia also make notable contributions to the immigrant population in Madrid.

Regarding movements between Spain and its former colonies, the roles have reversed since the emigration of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Spanish emigrants once formed large communities in their country's former colonies; today, as is the case in many former imperial powers, Spain takes in considerable numbers of people from these territories. Nearly 8,000 people in Madrid come from the Philippines, over 5,000 of which are women (www.munimadrid.es). Especially interesting and prevalent, however, is the migration of Latin American citizens to Spain and, of special interest in this thesis, to Madrid. This is characterized by a wide variety of nationalities converging

in one space. Bolivia, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Peru, Paraguay, Chile, Honduras, Uruguay, Nicaragua and Cuba have all sent significant numbers of citizens to Madrid. The Ecuadorian community, however, stands with the largest numbers in Madrid. Not only is this the most populous immigrant group from Latin America, it is second only to Morocco out of all immigrant nationalities in Spain.

Due to a series of devastating political and economic events between the early 1990s and 2000, Ecuadorians began migrating in large numbers at the end of the decade: first, five presidents held office between 1996 and 2000; then, a devastating El Niño destroyed and disrupted life in 1997. At the same time, low petroleum prices followed by hyperinflation led to a banking crisis caused by corruption at the highest levels of society, prompting the government to freeze bank accounts. By 1999, the poverty level had reached 40% and the gross domestic product fell to the level of foreign debt at \$15.2 billion (Jokisch and Kyle 353). Desperate to improve the situation, the government decided that same year to switch the national currency from its former *sucre* to the United States dollar, only exacerbating the existing economic woes.

A mass exodus of thousands of people per month ensued from all regions in Ecuador, primarily to the United States and Spain. While much of the previous migration to Spain and to Europe as a whole was temporary, male labor migration, Ecuadorian immigration in Spain is composed of nearly equal proportions of men and women who come with the intention to work and save money. In 2001, 49.1 percent of the Ecuadorians in Spain were women, a statistic which reveals the feminized nature of the movement (Parella Rubio 150). So many Ecuadorians were initially attracted to Spain because it offered asylum to those fleeing the situation, and amnesty to those living

without proper documentation (Jokisch and Kyle 353). Ecuadorians rushed rapidly into the country: in 1998, there were fewer than 10,000 Ecuadorians living in Spain; by 2002, the number had reached 200,000; and only three years later, in 2005, Ecuadorians in Spain numbered 500,000 (Jokisch and Kyle 353). Ecuadorians are proportionately numerous in the Community of Madrid as well. Composed of between 95,000 and 100,000 people at the beginning of 2009, the immigrant population from Ecuador represents about 16.5 percent of the total foreign population in the municipality (www.munimadrid.es). The Ecuadorian population is therefore significant to both the Latin American and the overall immigrant populations in Madrid, and because of this, their experiences are revealing of the Latin American immigration experience in Madrid. In general, they exemplify the separation – despite a common language – from the Spanish population that many immigrants face. This project attempts to give them a voice and to make sense of the processes that create the separation of populations.

Project Design and Findings

This project was designed based, on the one hand, on the potential for a small surveyed group of *madrileños* to represent the general attitudes towards immigrants in their city, and on the other to show the viewpoints of Ecuadorians as the majority of Madrid's Latin American immigrant population. While living and studying in Madrid, I perceived a fair amount of negative comments from Spaniards regarding immigration, including but not limited to influxes from Latin America. I was intrigued by this phenomenon that is so new in Spain in comparison to the United States. Having lived in the United States my whole life, I have been exposed to much ethnic and cultural diversity. Because immigration is relatively new in Spain, however, many Spaniards may not be accustomed to this variety. I was curious to know what affected the stereotypes of Madrid citizens and Ecuadorians towards each other, postulating that it might be related to the amount of contact between the groups, and wondering why such differences might be perceived when two major cultural components – language and religion – are the same. Since designing the project in May, 2009, it has become more detailed.

I seek to describe the current situation regarding Latin American immigration in Madrid, Spain, from the angles of Otherness, postcolonial views and gender issues. I wish to emphasize the dual reality, in which both groups have opinions and are affected by stereotypes and societal attitudes towards migration and the integration of people of various backgrounds. They often live and work in the same neighborhoods, their children may attend the same schools, they most likely buy their food in the same grocery stores. The fact that two populations, sharing what appear to be two similar cultures, could isolate themselves from one another based on perceived differences seems

counterintuitive. I designed two sets of anonymous surveys based on this question. One survey was directed at *madrileños*, most living in Madrid for at least the past ten years. This is important because the largest numbers of Ecuadorians have been present for approximately ten years in Spain. The longer the *madrileños* surveyed had lived in Madrid, however, the better they could provide a comparative history of the city before and after the large scale immigrations began. The other survey was for Ecuadorian immigrants living in Madrid, without a time limit. All surveyed were eighteen years of age or older, thus this project focuses on adults as opposed to the effects on the younger generations, which are a separate topic altogether.

The two surveys each contained fourteen questions, and share several common questions which inquire about age, gender, marital status, occupation, neighborhood of residence in Madrid, number of years lived in Madrid, whether or not the person has children, and leisure activities. The remaining questions follow similar veins in both surveys, but differ depending on which group responds. For instance, the survey for Madrid citizens asks about the amount of contact they have with Ecuadorian immigrants and under what context; their stereotypes of Ecuadorians; what they believe that immigrants bring to Madrid/Spain either negatively or positively; whether or not Latin American immigration in Spain has changed Spanish culture; and finally, I ask what would happen if Latin American immigrants left Spain completely. The Ecuadorian survey probes the respondents about their reasons for leaving Ecuador; why they chose Spain/Madrid; whether or not they feel used to/assimilated into Spanish life and culture; with which populations they have the most contact; their stereotypes of Spain and of Spaniards; and whether or not these stereotypes have changed since immigrating.

In all, twenty-seven surveys were collected from each group, totaling fifty-four respondents participating in the study. In general, many of the responses to both surveys were relatively “normal” for a society in which migration is so recent a phenomenon. Among Ecuadorian respondents, the demographics and reasons for immigrating mostly mirrored statistics of the more global Ecuadorian population. The average age of participants was 39 years; although this is considerably higher than those given by most official figures - for example, Cachón Rodríguez estimates the average age of Ecuadorians in Spain at 28.9 years in 2008 – my data still reflect the fact that they are, on the whole, younger than the native Spanish population (152). The average age of the *madrileños* that were surveyed was 41 years, approximately equal to the calculations made by Cachón Rodríguez which equal 40.3 years (152). I do note, however, that the range of ages among the participants in my survey is revealing of the demographic differences: Ecuadorian ages ranged from 23-69 years, with only eleven percent lying outside the range of 25-55 and seventy-four percent in the 30-40 range. Additionally, while eleven percent had resided in Spain for five years or less, the remaining eighty-nine percent had been in Spain between six and thirteen years – all within the historical window of Ecuadorian immigration to Spain.

Additionally, most all Ecuadorian respondents cited reasons traditionally given as motivation for immigrating to Spain. Two-thirds of the respondents said that they came principally for work and/or economic reasons. Others cited the family that was already living in Spain as their primary motivation for moving. These “kinship networks” have been identified as phenomena of the current migration process, and are said to aid the migrant in adjusting “more quickly and positively” to urban life while lowering the costs

and inherent risks of the migration process (Choldin 10). Because an estimated 78 percent of the immigrants in Spain come with the intention to work, kinship networks have become a significant strategy in the integration of immigrants into at least the Spanish working world, if not the social world. This shows that motivations for migration are complex and often involve more than one process. In the case of the Ecuadorians surveyed, for example, economic push and pull factors overlap with the transnational ties found in kinship groups.

Among Spaniards, I received answers containing approximately the same levels of stereotypes and prejudices that I had perceived after living in Madrid for several months. The range of opinions that *madrileños* gave when asked directly “What are your stereotypes of Ecuadorians?” could have been anticipated in most any country that receives immigrants. Responses ranged from claiming to have no stereotypes (eleven percent of respondents), to somewhat neutral stances (“hay de todo” [there is a little of everything]), to quite stereotypical and either negative or semi-neutral opinions expressed by such descriptions of Ecuadorian immigrants as “ladrones” [thieves], “trabajadores” [hardworking] and “machistas” [male chauvinists]. I found it interesting, however, that many Spaniards also revealed stereotypes in response to other questions that did not specifically request stereotypes. To provide one example, a respondent claimed not to have stereotypes about Ecuadorian immigrants. Upon answering the next question, asking what these immigrants bring to society, the same respondent provided positive and negative contributions that indicate certain preconceptions about Ecuadorians. On the positive side, the respondent cited the mixing of cultures. This was interesting in and of itself, as Spaniards tended to see Spanish and Ecuadorian cultures as quite different,

whereas Ecuadorians did not seem to consider them so markedly distinct. On the negative side, this person mentioned “indignación para los de aquí” [anger towards Spaniards] that he perceived on the part of Ecuadorians. Stereotypes prove to be an abstract and difficult concept to define. The surveys suggest that the definition of this term might vary by culture. For instance, one might consider in the United States that any predetermined characteristic of a people could be classified as a stereotype. Yet certain *madrileño* responses, which I considered to be socially constructed and stereotyped visions of a group of people, appear to not necessarily be considered as such by Spaniards. I conjecture that this could perhaps mean that these attitudes are shared relatively uniformly by much of Spanish society, and/or because the phenomenon is so new that this society does not consider this negative labeling but merely observation.

There were several aspects of the results, however, that I had not anticipated. Although no true conclusions may be drawn based solely on the surveys because of their relatively small scale and extension, the responses do present an interesting insight into the situation. For instance, I had expected that, in reaction to the many negative opinions expressed daily in Spain regarding immigration, most Ecuadorians surveyed would convey equally negative viewpoints of the country and its citizens. Most respondents, however, when asked to share their stereotypes of Spain and of Spaniards, shared views that were surprisingly positive. Of course, some negative adjectives, such as “tacaño” [stingy] and “frío” [cold], were employed to describe Spaniards, though I would argue that these were not nearly as negative as those used by some Madrid citizens to characterize Ecuadorians. Surprisingly, however, about one third of respondents supplied only positive opinions of Spaniards – such as “amable/amigable” [friendly] – and of

Spain – such as “acogedor” [welcoming]. Many respondents used a combination of positive, negative and neutral adjectives. In general, however, I was taken aback by how positively Ecuadorians viewed Spain, and how frequently these people cited the similarities between Spanish and Ecuadorian culture.

Before beginning my research, I had hypothesized that the Spanish respondents – supposed to represent the Spanish population – would be less tolerant of the presence of immigrants as they increased in age. This, however, was not necessarily the case. I found the least amount of tolerance, characterized by the language employed to describe immigration, in the large category of Spaniards between the ages of twenty-five and fifty-five. The group aged eighteen to twenty-four was relatively more tolerant, as I had expected, which I believe to be explained by the fact that they would have had increased exposure to immigration in their schools and daily lives as they grew up. Yet I was certainly incorrect about the large group of respondents in the middle. After the first few youngest people surveyed, most of the stereotypes are, despite a few neutral statements – such as “hay de todo” [there is a little of everything]) – quite negative, ranging from accusations that Ecuadorians do not want to integrate into society, and that they are “ladrones” [thieves], “poco respetuosos” [disrespectful], “violentos” [violent], and “bebedores” [heavy drinkers]. However, starting with the first respondent over fifty-five, there seems to be a reverse in the trend: all respondents over the fifty-five-year cut-off indicated an understanding of the variety within the Ecuadorian population as with any other: “*hay de todo*” [there is a little of everything]. While this cannot be taken as completely representative of the entire *madrileños* population, the correlation is astounding in these surveys.

At first, the answers given by some respondents in both populations seem surprising, yet upon examining the historical context of each of the groups, they can be explained relatively easily. My hypothesis about the opinions of Spaniards was based on the general situation in the United States, in which immigration has increased steadily since its founding but especially during the twentieth century, and in which emigration is an exception rather than a rule. The oldest generations lived with the least amounts of immigration for a longer period of time, and are generally thought to be less tolerant of diversity. I thus assumed that the distribution of opinions would be similar in Spain. The literature review I have done to investigate, however, quickly showed that my seemingly anomalous survey results are not as surprising as I had thought.

Considering the history presented above of Spanish migration patterns, the relative tolerance of the generation of Spaniards over fifty-five seems to me to be logical. Because many either emigrated or had family members who did – indeed, some respondents specifically mentioned this fact when asked about immigration in Madrid – the older generation approaches the subject quite rationally: as long as the immigrants come to work honestly, their presence is acceptable and understandable. Having experienced the same kinds of situations, the older generation of Spaniards consequently better understand the difficulties of establishing a life abroad. Interestingly, many of the reasons traditionally cited for Spanish emigration, such as wanting better social and economic situations, or reuniting with family members already abroad, are the same exact reasons that Ecuadorian immigrants give today (Boix and del Olmo 108).

It follows, then, that the next generation of *madrileños*, which I am labeling as the group between twenty-five and fifty-five years of age, is less tolerant of migration. As the

older generation began slowing its migration trends particularly after the 1970s, repatriating and/or staying in Spain instead of migrating, their children grew up surrounded and exposed only to Spanish culture. In the case of those in their thirties and forties, childhood in Spain was peopled almost entirely by Spaniards, speaking Castilian Spanish and/or their own regional dialects, and practicing their distinct, local and national traditions. Many were never truly exposed to diversity for much of their lives, only recently being confronted with – and thus, shocked by – large numbers of immigrants of many backgrounds. Çağla Aykaç writes that in Europe, and definitely in the case of Spain and Madrid, there exists a general perception of a “security crisis” associated with a perceived “immigration problem,” often presented as “one of the principal triggers of the crisis of racism” (130). The contrast between Spaniards and “foreigners” – and indeed, even between *madrileños* and Spaniards from other regions – can be stark for those of this middle generation who had on the whole never encountered significant diversity for most of their lives. Additionally, this group is most prominent in the labor market, and could be concerned with job security as well. Thus, this large body of Madrid citizens tends to demonstrate generally “reluctant” attitudes towards immigrants. Foreigners are treated as a threat to job and social security, and even as a “social problem” for culture and public order, that has become more politicized as immigrant volume has increased in the past twenty years (Cachón Rodríguez 129, 125).

The youngest generation surveyed – those between eighteen and twenty years of age – certainly demonstrated more tolerance than the generation before them. Their attitudes differ from respondents in the over-fifty-five group, however, in that they are exposed to more societal influences that vie for their loyalties. For instance, this group,

by historical circumstance, has experienced something that the middle group of *madrileños* did not: constant, everyday contact with immigrants of their own age, participating in the same educational and social activities. To them, immigrants form a more or less normal part of Madrid. For instance, the youngest respondent (aged eighteen), cited having had contact with some Ecuadorians in school and on a recreational basketball team. In this case, these Ecuadorians have matured through the Spanish school system alongside native Madrid citizens. This can be conducive to greater acceptance of the presence of immigrants, who would have had the same socialization in Spanish society and therefore similar cultural practices as their Spanish classmates. The same survey respondent mostly cited positive things about Ecuadorians, including “una variedad social positiva” [a positive social variety] that is brought by their presence in Madrid. Yet because each person will have had different experiences and different formations, one cannot assume this to be true for all; there certainly will be exceptions and variations within even this youngest age group.

Additionally, the younger generation is on the whole perhaps the most affected Spanish demographic by mass media and popular culture. The opinions broadcasted in the press “reflect and, to a certain extent help to increase a ‘hypersensitivity’ towards the phenomenon of immigration” (Van Roy 372). Those that regulate access to the country have “power over discourse”; thus, the government decides what type of immigration it will and will not accept, ultimately influencing public opinion (Wodak 67). News influences parents, whose voiced opinions affect those of their children. As a result, one observes a considerably more mixed form of tolerance – which, significantly, does not necessarily mean acceptance – among this population. The youngest respondents cited

positive results of immigration such as the exchange of cultures, while at the same time repeating society's negative stereotypes; for example, immigration leads to increased delinquency. I would argue that these stereotypes are more filtered for this youngest generation when considering their sources of information about immigration. For instance, the younger generation has easier access than the older generation to an array of global, instant forms of communication through popular television programming, such as reality shows, and through the internet. This provides younger Spaniards with a "collage kind of eclecticism" in which "a strong sense of 'the Other' is replaced...by a weak sense of 'the others'" among the young (Kearney 528). Because of this, the group of foreigners is not perceived as so different that it poses a serious threat to Spanish culture, but rather as a collection of diverse traditions that, when mixed with *madrileño* customs, can provide interesting new inspirations for music, film, and other popular culture.

I was initially surprised at the perceptions of both Spanish and Ecuadorian respondents regarding the similarities and differences between the two cultures. Madrid citizens perceived Ecuadorian culture to be completely different from their own, while in general the Ecuadorians surveyed consider their integration in Madrid to have been easy because of the similarities between the two cultures and countries. Overall, I noticed that most were satisfied being in Madrid, and I conjecture that this is due to a number of historical and social factors. First, the increase in Ecuadorian immigration in Spain was initiated by an extensive series of political and economic problems in Ecuador, as discussed above. According to Lilsa L. North, "although many Ecuadorians responded to their deteriorating living standards (and also increased levels of criminal violence in both urban and rural areas) through strikes and protests, many others simply left the country"

(203). Migration became around the year 2000 a significant economic strategy for many Ecuadorians. Because conditions were so poor, the promise of an opportunity to better provide for families by working in Spain may have thus influenced their vision of the host country. In this case, the classification of voluntary versus forced migration has been blurred. Technically, Ecuadorian emigration is considered voluntary because the migrants are not forced to leave Ecuador, moving principally in order to improve their personal situations. Yet one must consider the circumstances as a whole. The International Organization of Migration notes that, “labour markets may not be sufficiently structured to meet the needs of local people in a post-crisis situation” (11). This certainly applies to the case of Ecuador after the economic and political trauma of the late 1990s, for this period led to high unemployment and poverty. One might argue that, although the conditions that they find in Spain are not usually perfect, these people are escaping a possibly life-threatening scenario by coming to Madrid. They may then think more highly of their host society despite the new difficulties that they face, explaining the relatively positive attitudes shared by my Ecuadorian survey respondents. Favorable opinions of Madrid could also be partially explained in that those responding most positively had been established there for a number of years, and thus were more accustomed to life in Spain than were some of the more recently arrived immigrants who seemed less satisfied.

In contrast to many Spaniards, who seem to easily notice different ethnicities in their society and at times react adversely to it, living in a diverse society does not seem to bother most Ecuadorians. This could be related to the fact that Ecuadorians are accustomed to living in an officially “multi-ethnic, multicultural society” (De la Torre and Striffler 337). Ecuador’s strong indigenous movement gained enough support during

the 1990s to be able to write this multicultural nature into the 1998 constitution. Perhaps because diversity forms a part of everyday life in Ecuador, the immigrants who come to Spain have different criteria for defining “culture.” They may consider themselves closer to Spain and Spanish culture, because they speak the same language and practice the same religion, than to certain Ecuadorian indigenous tribes, or even to other immigrants in Madrid from other cultures. Spaniards seem to define “Spanish culture” as a bundle of traditions, language, and religion, but additionally tied to a “pure” Spanish identity “by blood”, and thus cannot see the same connections between themselves and the peoples of their former colonies. Among many of the Ecuadorian respondents one even finds a certain admiration for Spaniards and for Spain as a whole. One person even said that, “igual pasaron mal, pero ha desarrollado en todo” [Spaniards also had bad times, but Spain has developed in all areas]. Many Spaniards, during times of strife throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, moved elsewhere to better their circumstances. Ecuadorians recognize that this is something they have in common with many Spaniards. Spain and its citizens tend to overlook these truths, however, differentiating themselves from the immigrants in their former colonies.

There is thus a marked difference between both the attitudes and the experiences of Latin Americans and *madrileños* despite the fact that they both live in the same areas and have certain things in common. The overall causes of this seem to be due to the novelty of the presence of immigration in Madrid. The ways in which this separation is forced through Otherness, postcolonial structures and gender discrimination are shown in my surveys as well as in scholarly literature. Spaniards (mostly subconsciously) utilize these processes as a way to keep immigration out of their lives as much as possible, to

retain their culture and ways of life against this perceived threat to their world.

Immigrants, however, must interact with Spaniards despite the fact that they are excluded from the Spanish community.

“Otherness” is a concept based on the principle of a person/group defining another – the “Other” – based on differences in features, customs, appearances, etc. Spain often receives criticism for perpetuating this system of distinction. Cristina Martínez-Carazo claims that this comes from a need to maintain homogeneity, for Spain has always seemed to struggle with the multiplicity of groups contained within it (265). For instance, during the medieval period (roughly from the fifth through the fifteenth centuries), there were Jews and Muslims living in the same area in a questionably functional balance and most likely contributing to “Spanish” culture as we know it today. Yet these contributions are not considered an integral part of this culture by most Spaniards, blocked from the historical memory as being far more foreign than familiar.

Today, one is made to feel like an Other through various processes that often work simultaneously. For instance, Ruth Wodak cites the use of direct discriminatory discourse in interaction which makes a foreigner feel alienated, separate and different from the citizens of a host society; and at the same time, the indirect ways of writing or speaking about the “Other” found, for instance, in the media (56). Ileana Rodriguez discusses the “feeling of difference” that comes from the rejection of coexistence of “natives” and “others;” this can be created by things as seemingly insignificant as lowering one’s eyes when passing in the street so as not to make eye contact, or making a frustrated face (28).

The obsession with maintaining pure Spanish culture – and in Madrid, a pure *madrileño* tradition – lives on. Instead of acknowledging separate immigrant groups as having distinct cultures and backgrounds, “all foreigners are assumed to belong to one single group and are classified as ‘migrants or foreigners’” (Jones and Kryzanowski 57). Once again, there is little regard for the status of the migrant; legal, clandestine, refugee and asylum-seeker are all considered the same in the minds of most *madrileños*. The homogenizing mindset was certainly enforced under the centralizing, nationalization efforts of the Franco regime in the form of national pride and autarky, and seems to have remained to a great degree part of the Madrid imaginary (Martínez-Carazo 266).

Connected to the processes of Otherness is the persistence of postcolonial social structures in the case of Ecuadorian immigrants in Spain. Colonial power structures live on in Madrid. The construction of the image of the immigrant as a servile “Other” underneath the dominant culture persists both in work settings, as immigrants are at times expected to endure harsh conditions and low pay, and in social interactions when they might be treated as if they were of low intelligence. Indeed, the surveys showed the postcolonial positions that both parties assume. Adjectives such as “exigente” [demanding], “prepotente” [high-handed/arrogant], and “mandón” [bossy] appear in the Ecuadorian surveys to describe Madrid citizens, while the overwhelming description given by Madrid citizens about Ecuadorians is as “trabajador” [hardworking]. Some Spanish respondents demonstrated a clear belief that immigrants exist essentially to work by characterizing the population dichotomously: there are hard-workers and non-hard-workers. The overall effect of these deeply-engrained structures became apparent in one very insightful *madrileño* response which even mentioned the servile attitudes of

Ecuadorians as a response to postcolonial treatment. When asked to describe stereotypes of immigrants from Ecuador, the fifty-nine-year-old respondent wrote that they are “gente noble” [noble people], “demasiado humildes” [too humble], with a “sonrisa de humillación” [smile of humiliation] as if they were “no [convencidos] de su valor” [not convinced of their own worth]. This exposes an incredible scenario: there are varying degrees of awareness of the postcolonial attitudes held by *madrileños*. Its existence is obvious to some, while to others it may be subconscious. Yet when an employer contracts an immigrant, for example, it can be looked upon not only as buying a workforce, but as acquiring a “personhood” to dominate because of the potential for exploitation of the worker (Parella Rubio 270). Immigrants are often denied basic rights on the job and in society. This is particularly acute if they are without legal work and/or residence permits, placing these immigrants at the complete mercy of the employer. I thus seek to demonstrate that postcolonial attitudes contribute to and exaggerate this predicament for Ecuadorian immigrants in Madrid.

The third major issue deals with gender. This refers to the fact that female immigrants represent an especially vulnerable group, experiencing a “double otherness” in which the woman is separated and excluded from society both because she is foreign and because she is a woman (Martínez-Carazo 271). This is especially pertinent to the Ecuadorian/Latin American immigrant populations, characterized as particularly feminized movements. As mentioned, nearly half of the Ecuadorians in Spain in 2001 were women. They come to Spain to work and save money, often migrating alone despite the fact that many have children that they leave behind in the home country with a relative or caregiver. No matter their qualifications, however, these women are siphoned

almost immediately into work that is both rejected by the native population and that is considered to be “female.” This translates in most cases into work in the domestic service sector, especially domestic help, geriatric care and childcare, with a high rate of illegal, irregular work and efforts to get papers (Flam 179).

The use of stereotypes plays an “efficient role in defining positions in which the presence of a migrant will be acceptable, and even expected” (Flam 187). Even some of the respondents admitted that the jobs into which immigrants are assumed are the positions that Spaniards do not wish to do, and the jobs for female immigrants are some of the most grueling. For instance, the fastest-growing demand currently lays in geriatric care in which pay is difficult to calculate due to the continuous and demanding nature of caring for someone who requires constant assistance. The risk is high, therefore, of receiving a mere part-time salary or not being paid a salary at all (Parella Rubio 223, 209). Domestic work further traps these women into vicious cycles for several reasons. First, they have limited to no leisure time with which to search for other options. Whatever time they do have will be spent recuperating from long, hard hours of work. Additionally, the little money they might earn will not be spent on diversions such as watching films or joining a gym, but will instead be saved to send home or to finance a trip back to Ecuador (Solé 180-181). Finally, because of the informal nature of domestic work, these women often find themselves in a position of extreme vulnerability for which Spain has a bad reputation in comparison to other European countries (Parella Rubio 286). Along this vein, the possibility of falling prey to prostitution either for lack of employment options in general or to pay off debts that a regular job cannot cover is real for many immigrant women in Madrid. Otherness and postcolonial views coincide in the

fact that the immigrant woman is often seen as an exotic sex symbol, as an object, as an Other inferior to Spanish women in that she is considered less intelligent, uncivilized, etc.

Spain is a relatively accessible country, particularly since 1991 with the institution of the Schengen Treaty. By establishing these common rules of control at external borders and better regulating travel, it has become more difficult to enter Europe from the outside (Morén-Alegret 78). Yet at the same time, travel between European countries is now easier than before the treaty was made. As a result, immigrants may enter without permits, posing as tourists, in other countries, and then legally cross the border into Spain. Through this process many immigrants find themselves with illegal status. Spanish employers may choose to hire undocumented workers for a number of reasons. First, they do not have to pay taxes on those that they illegally employ. Additionally, they do not have to adhere to wage laws. Although this places immigrants into an extremely dangerous and vulnerable situation, they often must take these job offers because they cannot be hired otherwise. This inevitably leads to poor working conditions and affords an immense disadvantage for foreign workers.

This is especially crucial for female migrants, who usually find work in the domestic service sector. This is regulated by a “weak contractual relation” and a “servile imaginary,” in which the employer may further the societal distinction between the superiority of Spain versus the primitiveness of its former colonies in Latin America to create slave-like conditions for workers. In some cases, the employers provide decent conditions for domestic workers, yet “working conditions depend fundamentally on personal characteristics of the employers” (Parella Rubio 181). This then leads to invisibility and defenselessness, as well as possible abuses such as confinement,

malnutrition, threats, or sexual and other physical aggression towards the domestic worker who has no legal rights or recognition, nor power to denounce her treatment (Parella Rubio 124).

These three processes, by which Latin American immigrants are excluded and isolated into their own world in Madrid, are demonstrated in popular culture today. This project aims to give a sample of the appearance of these phenomena in *Cosmofobia* and *Una tarde con campanas*. The fact that the problem is being exposed by authors and artists indicates its existence and the issues that it causes in society; the examples that Etxebarria and Méndez Guédez provide serve both to make sense of the processes and to illustrate the problems with them. Essentially, each author paints a different yet clear picture of the scenario: the immigrant and Spanish populations are separated in Madrid, yet this separation is not founded on anything but misconceptions.

A Spanish perspective: *Cosmofobia* (2007) and Immigration in Madrid

Immigration affects different parties in different ways, and the situation of Spaniards and Ecuadorians/Latin Americans examined in this project is no exception to the rule. My surveys have established that while both groups seem to acknowledge some of the same processes at work in Madrid, such as a social structure reminiscent of that which existed during the colonial era, the immigration experience is profoundly affected by one's background. Based on the information presented thus far, one might expect that a novel about immigration written by a Spanish author might reflect a more one-sided viewpoint of immigration. Yet while Lucía Etxebarria will always be Spanish, she aims in *Cosmofobia* to expose the situations and day-to-day relationships between Spaniards and immigrants in Madrid as objectively as possible, resulting in an interesting and overall accurate account of the situations that arise because of immigration in Spain. Her characters come from a variety of countries and backgrounds instead of strictly Latin America or Madrid as is the focus of this project, but the trends and attitudes are certainly applicable to the central theme of a rapidly diversifying city that has yet to truly integrate.

The book confirms what I sensed in my surveys: *madrileños* and immigrants, though located in the same geographical area, are living in two different worlds. The separation of immigrants and native citizens in Madrid is a fundamental theme of this project, and Etxebarria clearly presents the “encounters and dis-encounters,” conceptualized by intellectuals such as Cristina Martínez-Carazo, between immigrants and native citizens (268). According to Martínez-Carazo, there are “spaces of exchange, relationships and encounters” in the city used by immigrants to further their cultures in a foreign place (268). Yet interestingly enough, the visibility of these spaces seems to

depend much on the viewer. The immigrant regularly sees both “sides” of society. He/she is involved with his/her own cultural community, and simultaneously and inevitably with Madrid society and its citizens. Ultimately, the immigrants must adapt to their host city by integrating as much as possible. The Spaniard, on the other hand, has the power to ignore these “other” spaces and people. By working, living, and shopping in certain areas, and even by averting the gaze and de-sensitizing themselves to the presence of other cultures, *madrileños* can easily “avoid” contact with immigrants – or at least they believe that they avoid it.

This was evident in the surveys. Overwhelmingly, Spaniards claimed to have little to no contact with Ecuadorian immigrants. Only about twenty-six percent claimed to have more than “poco” [little] contact with Ecuadorian immigrants. Contrary to my hypothesis before conducting the surveys, however, this is not necessarily influenced by the area of residence. The *madrileños* surveyed lived in twenty-two different neighborhoods in Madrid, and while neighborhoods like Arturo Soria and Chamberí are composed mainly of Spaniards, some, such as Aluche and La Latina, are highly populated with immigrants. Yet, the results were mostly uniform regardless of area of residence: Spaniards claimed very little overall contact with these immigrants. On the Ecuadorian side, however, respondents were asked with which groups they interacted most: immigrants from their own country, immigrants from other countries, Spaniards, more than one group or all groups. In complete contrast to the Spanish results, eighty-five percent of respondents claimed to have regular contact with various groups, many stated that they interacted with “todos” [all groups], and one respondent even cited contact with “españoles” [Spaniards] specifically.

This concept fits perfectly into the structure of Etxebarria's novel. She crafts the book in a way that serves her purpose of presenting Madrid, and in particular the diverse neighborhood of Lavapiés, as a multitude of lives that are all connected in some way, whether they realize it or not. To reflect this, the chapters are each written from different perspectives – both Spanish and non – yet all contain common elements. The many characters mention each other and the places in their neighborhood such as the community center “Centro Social del Parque del Casino” [the Parque del Casino Social Center], and sometimes make reference to the same events and situations. The back cover of *Cosmofobia* describes the book as a “retrato colectivo” [collective portrait], which is appropriate as it reflects the multiplicity of life and the human condition as much in the diverse neighborhood of Lavapiés as in the world. Each chapter is told from the point of view of a different character, yet all of the characters are connected in some way(s), giving multiple perspectives on the same events. The cover of the novel also emphasizes the statement that Etxebarria's novel makes as a “llamada de atención hacia la verdadera identidad de un tiempo y una realidad que a veces no percibimos porque está demasiado cerca” [call for attention to the true identity of a time and a reality that we sometimes do not even perceive because it is too close] (cover). Etxebarria aims to show that while so many may try to ignore the interconnectedness of life as it transcends race, gender and class, one cannot deny the influence that people have on one another. She includes, in the pages before the start of the first chapter, the definition of “cosmophobia” from the Urban Dictionary, as quoted in the novel: “Morbid dread of the cosmos and realizing one's true place in it” (Etxebarria 5). With this title and the fragmented, “collective” structure of her novel, she aims to portray with the example of Madrid both the fears about living

amongst difference and change and the ways in which people act in order to deal with them. Lavapiés can be regarded as a metaphor, as a microcosm of the globalizing world in which different groups come in contact and confront the Other on a daily basis. These fears, Etxebarria demonstrates, are commonly expressed through the three processes which I examine in this project: Otherness, the persistence of postcolonial viewpoints, and the distinction between genders that makes life more difficult for immigrant women.

Etxebarria constructs a variety of typified characters that serve to demonstrate the realities of interactions between Spaniards and immigrants. There are Spaniards who further the convention of exclusion of the Other, such as Miriam, who goes out of her way to take her child to a park where there are few immigrants instead of the park that is closest to her house but that is the play area of children of different backgrounds. Contrarily, just as my surveys have shown, there are Spaniards who seem to sympathize to a greater extent with foreigners, such as Claudia and Isaac, who work at the center and are in charge of the daycare and the “Las Positivas” women’s help group, respectively. Many people of foreign descent come each day/week to take advantage of these services, thus Claudia and Isaac both have daily contact with immigrant populations. None of the Spanish characters are completely set in identity or attitude towards immigration in Madrid, however. Miriam, who tries to avoid the delinquency that she considers a result of the presence of certain immigrants, was once in a relationship with Yamal, a wealthy Arab artist who owns a bar and who plays a central role in the novel. Claudia falls prey to racism as well, for she admits to repeatedly mistaking “un negro alto y guapo con otro negro alto y guapo” [a tall, handsome black man with another tall, handsome black man] (Etxebarria 194).

The array of Spanish characters in the novel shows a spectrum of attitudes among Madrid citizens towards immigration. Silvio is a Spaniard who dates Susana, a Spanish-born black woman, but treats her badly. His mother, though she denies it, is overtly racist and does not welcome Susana into her home, while Esther, Silvio's sister, treats Susana kindly. There are Spanish characters rarely mentioned in the same context as immigrants, such as Diana, whose past two relationships have been with rock musician David and Simón, both Spanish men. Her narration mostly revolves around her relationships with them, yet it cannot be denied that when she was living with David they hired Kerli, a Colombian woman, to clean their apartment. Etxebarria additionally shows the separate worlds that exist in Lavapiés with the lives of the extremely wealthy, such as the model Leonor Mayo, or the former model Dora. Yet once again, these lives cannot truly be taken completely away from the world of immigrants and diversity, for Leonor tells, rather ashamedly, of an affair she had with a Moroccan construction worker, from whom she learns about the difficulties that immigrants face. Dora also has contact with people of various backgrounds and appearances. For instance, she owns a clothing store and although she employs mostly white, Spanish women, she has also employed Susana who is Spanish by nationality but is not considered as such by many people (including Dora).

Etxebarria aims to expose immigration and diversity in Madrid from as many sides of the issue as possible. Because of this, she constructs a number of immigrant characters from several backgrounds, putting herself in the place of a wide variety of people. The aforementioned Susana is an interesting case because she was born in Alcalá de Henares, a Spanish town near Madrid that could be interpreted as the heart of Spain; for example, Miguel de Cervantes, author of *Don Quixote*, one of Spanish literature's

most symbolic and traditional texts, lived much of his life in that very town. Yet Susana is labeled as “la Negra” [the black woman] – indeed, her chapter, written in first-person, carries this title – because her parents, like a growing number of people in Madrid, are of Guinean descent (Etxebarria 52). Spaniards believe that they can tell by the color of her skin that she is not Spanish even though her nationality is Spanish. This fact is meant to show that, although Spain is becoming more diverse, with more and more people born on Spanish soil of heritage other than Spanish, Spaniards have not yet accepted this. To them, one must “look” Spanish to “be” Spanish.

Etxebarria presents a number of other immigrant characters, some of which tell their own stories and others whose stories are told by Spaniards. For instance, the immigrant children at the daycare center are described by Antón, a Spanish volunteer at the daycare who began his work out of admiration for Claudia but who becomes progressively more attached to the children as well. He mentions Salim, Rachid, Fátima and Mahamud, children of African descent; Selene and Yeni of Latin American heritage; Nicky of mixed/mulatto background. Their parents and relatives also play into the story. Salim’s older sister, Amina, cleans houses – a typical female immigrant job as it will be discussed later in this chapter – and is represented in a very exotic and sexual way. She represents the strange and difficult situation that many immigrant women face, particularly the Otherness that they experience that defines them as exotic. In addition to this, the realm of Islam, somewhat foreign and misunderstood, is often represented in her story. Selene’s mother is Kerli, another example of a female immigrant (of a different nationality) who works as a housecleaner.

Perhaps the most curious and central character in this all-encompassing story, mentioned above, is Yamal. As a wealthy Moroccan painter who owns a bar, La Taberna Encendida, in the neighborhood, he represents a sort of link between the two worlds. His father was Moroccan, and his mother Lebanese, two backgrounds that traditionally bring immigrant labor into the unskilled sectors in Spain, yet he is well-known, wealthy and influential. Despite his wealth, he lives in the immigrant neighborhood and owns the bar that serves as a meeting place for many of the characters. The majority of these characters – both Spanish and non – know him. They describe him in powerful terms as well: “atractivo” [attractive], “guapo” [good-looking], even as “un arma de seducción masiva” [a weapon of mass seduction] (Etxebarria 126).⁶ Indeed, he has had sexual relations and amorous encounters with a number of the characters, including Spaniards such as Miriam and immigrants such as Amina, not to mention some kind of contact with nearly all of the others. He seems to be universally accepted, fitting into all groups at the same time. He represents “la esencia misma del barrio” [the actual essence of the neighborhood], “un superviviente, un misterio, un abismo” [a survivor, a mystery, an abyss] (Etxebarria 363). He defies odds as part of two worlds at once – perhaps because of his affluence, which makes him different from most other immigrants – and it is no coincidence that he is the exception rather than the rule.

A variety of techniques provide information about the characters. Some of the chapters, such as that entitled “La Chunga” about Sonia, a Spanish woman, or “La Negra” about Susana, are narrated in first person. More common, however, are those

⁶ This portrayal of Yamal, playing off of the term “weapon of mass destruction” is interesting in itself. He generally has a sort of magnetically attractive appeal, yet this appeal frightens people. He is thus also portrayed as dangerous, as a threat; he is a wealthy (Muslim) immigrant who could potentially influence and change Spanish culture, which is precisely what many wish to avoid.

narrated in third person, a technique which gives the impression of an outside observation of the situations by the author/narrator. Other chapters are written in the form of an interview, in which the interviewee addresses the author/partial narrator directly. This lends the story credibility; the real, conversational style of text gives the impression that the people interviewed are telling their stories exactly as they are, feeling comfortable enough to confide in the interviewer. Finally, Etxebarria places herself as a character at the end of the novel, writing in first person about her contact with the characters. We see that she has been actively involved in re-telling, almost inventing the story of the immigrants – as we will see that Méndez Guédez has done in *Una tarde con campanas* – by observing immigrants and placing herself in their shoes. She nourishes her novel as many perspectives as possible to remove the subjectivity of her own narration and to give various points of view so as to oversee the issues from afar.

There are moments when, if not explicitly stated, it is difficult to decipher at first who is Spanish and who is not. It seems that Etxebarria aims to show how, although Spaniards might like to ignore immigration and deny its effect on their lives, they cannot deny the changes that have been brought not only to the neighborhood but to their own lives. All the characters presented are connected in some way. The denial of this fact is, as the surveys have shown, a common Spanish attitude that is also one of the major themes in her novel. Claudia, despite her obvious wish to help foreigners, still has trouble believing in the complete interconnectedness of the many groups inhabiting the area. She frequently repeats the words, “el barrio es multicultural, no intercultural” [the neighborhood is multicultural, not intercultural] as if they were her mantra (Etxebarria 27). In so doing, she solidifies the distance between immigrants and Spaniards, for the

various communities “se toleran, pero no se mezclan” [tolerate each other, but do not mix] (Etxebarria 27). She sees them when she volunteers at the center or on the street, and her acknowledgement of this is more than many Spaniards allow; yet by denying the intercultural relationships, or the true mixing of the cultures versus their separate existences in the same general area, immigration stays out of her private life, her culture and her traditions. Groups may live in the same area, but this does not necessarily translate to a mixing or sharing of cultures or traditions. A powerful quotation exemplifies perfectly the situations that I observed in Madrid of 2009:

“Es curioso que a dos mundos tan diferentes los separe una calle ancha. A un lado, el Barrio de las Letras, los lofts de diseño, los bares para turistas, los teatros, los hoteles y las cafeterías; al otro, los inmigrantes, los niños derivados de los Servicios Sociales, los borrachos con sus litronas, los latin kings, las maras, las navajas, los traficantes de hachís.”

[It is curious that one wide street separates two very different worlds. To one side there is the Barrio de las Letras, design studios, tourist bars, theaters, hotels and coffee shops; to the other side, there are immigrants, children that are the product of Social Services, drunk men with bottles of alcohol, the *latin kings*, gangs, knives, drug dealers] (Etxebarria 79-80).

This excerpt comes from a chapter narrated in third person about Miriam. While the park near her house is close, she has chosen to take her son to a play area located in the next neighborhood over, Huertas, because there, “los niños son todos blancos” [all the children are white] (Etxebarria 79). She associates higher levels of affluence and white skin color with better conditions for her and for her child, yet this could also indicate a wish to simply avoid the problem. By not seeing it, it does not exist so starkly; and because skin color is the most obvious indicator of difference, she makes an effort to surround herself with white people like herself. While this separation of populations can be and sometimes is delineated by single streets, the stereotypes contained in this one passage represent the social problem at hand. It is created this way by the forced social divide mentioned above. Many Spaniards associate immigration with these exaggerated, stereotypical images of violence and delinquency, drugs and alcohol, and the drain on resources such as social security. Herein lays the root of the problem that Etxebarria seeks to illuminate for her readers. These opinions are so widely believed and perpetuated because of Spanish attitudes of Otherness – and indeed, a double otherness regarding females – towards immigrants, and because of the persistent, underlying belief in postcolonial social structures, that the beliefs have shaped reality.

There is little doubt that Etxebarria is one of Spain’s prolific writers of this generation, whose work always offers some type of social commentary. Since her first novel *Amor, curiosidad, prozac y dudas* was published in 1997, she has worked to draw attention to issues of gender. This includes the “influence of commercial culture in the sexual construction of womanhood,” relevant as she writes in the context of a globalizing world so heavily sculpted by mass media (Henseler 96). María Bengoa has said of

Etxebarria: “siempre deja constancia de su visión feminista y denuncia a través de estética de anuncio publicitario lo que no le gusta del mundo, lo que a sus ojos no es como debería ser” [she always includes her feminist vision and denounces using the aesthetics of publicity and advertising what she does not like about the world, what in her eyes is not how it ought to be] (Henseler 97). Her commonly-employed technique of using fragments of the story at different moments aims to reflect the “video clip” society in which we live (Henseler 97). This characterizes her work, and functions especially well in a novel, such as *Cosmofobia*, in which numerous lives converge and separate at different moments in time. It works extremely well in showing that the problems of the “separation” between immigrants and *madrileños* are fabricated by a Spanish desire to maintain traditional culture in spite of the increasing presence of immigrants. They do this in several ways, which fall under the three categories of Otherness, postcolonial views, and gender inequality. Etxebarria uses the groups in Lavapiés to expose this social problem, arguing that this separation between people is false, fabricated from a fear of change and difference that lead to misconceptions left unchallenged.

Otherness

According to Olga Sabida, the strange and unfamiliar have always been present as part of the human condition, with varying reactions to them throughout history (25). To conceptualize the world in which we live, “human beings define the presence of Others, at the same time that they define themselves” (Sabida 35). Given this, the Otherness that I have presented thus far is simply a normal, human process of self-definition. Yet the degree to which a person or society distances itself from those that it perceives as

different can create societal problems, such as racism, xenophobia, and segregation. I would argue that Spain has created a problematic situation for itself: societal separation of Spaniards from immigrants due to the Othering of these foreigners on Spanish soil.

It is clear that Spanish society on the whole defines itself based on what is Spanish versus what is not. Immigrants come to be conceptualized not only as foreign, but as an unwanted group that has come to do harm to what is most familiar to *madrileños*: their traditions. Many Spaniards feel that with the influx of different people, practicing a multitude of different customs, it will dilute Spanish tradition and things will change – a thought that generally scares people. Etxebarria brings to the surface the majority of the typical “threats”: skin color, difference in religion, language and dialectal differences, stereotypes such as violence associated with certain immigrant populations, etc. Her multidimensional, collective, “video clip” approach allows the reader to see how these perceived differences affect various groups of people, and importantly, demonstrates that these tools employed to distinguish the Other create serious problems for people in many groups.

Otherness can manifest itself in multiple ways. Perhaps the large majority of Spanish citizens practice this subconsciously in their behaviors and comments that exclude certain people. Simply by choosing to associate with certain groups of people over others, whether or not this purposefully aims to exclude certain races, sexes, etc, is a way of defining the Other against oneself and one’s group. We saw this with Diana. She has contact with immigrants such as Kerli, yet this is mainly one of business; she pays Kerli to clean her house – which could be interpreted as a postcolonial relationship established between Spaniard and Latin American immigrant – yet they have no personal

connection. Etxebarria does not mention that they spend time together outside of Kerli's work hours; they are merely coexisting. Etxebarria contrasts this with the fact that Diana's social network, those that she acknowledges as part of her group, is composed almost entirely of Spaniards: David, Simón, Héctor, a Spanish filmmaker, and Miriam, to name some of her closest contacts.

At times, people set verbal boundaries between themselves and the Other. Interestingly enough, Etxebarria displays the fact that multiple groups, in addition to Spaniards, are guilty of this. Her use of child characters affords her a voice of truth on the matter. Children do not know social norms in the way that adults do. Thus, while adults may tend to be more covert in their discrimination by simply choosing to avoid association with certain groups, knowing that it would be badly received to openly berate someone in public, youth often do not know when to refrain from voicing their observations or opinions. For example, Nicky, known for his quick temper and violent nature, becomes angry with Mahamud one day at the center. He yells at him, "un día va a venir la policía y se va a llevar a tu padre otra vez a Senegal por negro" [one day the police will come and take your father away again to Senegal because he is black] (Etxebarria 26). As a mulatto, Nicky is labeled by Claudia, Antón, and others who work at the center as troubled and problematic. Yet Etxebarria provokes the reader to consider the origins of Nicky's insult. A young child does not instinctively know that black skin is a bad thing and that blacks are often criminals. This is an opinion that he will have heard passed down by the adults around him, especially those in his family.

To be mulatto, the mixed race category of white and black, is to be the object of racism in Spain as in many countries of the world . Thus, some mixed-race people may

try to make a distinction between themselves and blacks to simultaneously place blacks lower and themselves higher on the social hierarchy. Antón's chapter presents these attitudes when referring to comments made by mulattos such as the members of Nicky's family: "entre los mulatos se lleva mucho despreciar a los negros y decir cosas como <mira, la niña qué guapa es, qué clarita>" [for a long time mulattos have disdained blacks and said things like 'look at how beautiful that girl is, look at how light her skin is'] (Etxebarria 25). Immigrants themselves, like most any human beings, mirror the processes imposed on them by white society as a survival mechanism. They have learned the perceived social value of being white, the benefits and feelings of belonging that come with this identity. Thus, they put down other groups to try to imitate the Spaniards and, ultimately, to feel included in society and free from discrimination. While this example deals with the mulatto population, mestizo people – mixed indigenous and white – from Latin America certainly face the same situations. Etxebarria's statement is powerful: these processes of Otherness affect all generations and groups negatively. Hatred and discrimination are returned in the same form, and the vicious cycle continues. Spaniards exclude the Other, the mass of foreigners and people who appear different, in order to maintain traditions and resist change; these attitudes are passed down from parent to child and from individual to individual. Meanwhile, the excluded group feels alienated and reacts in several ways. Namely, it tries to reverse the stigma by becoming more like the native population and less like the Other – in other words, it "Others" another group – and possibly lashing out violently. Immigrants come to be associated with violence, which gives another reason for Spaniards to want to exclude them, and they are never accepted. By neglecting a growing portion of the population, however, the

nuisance that Nicky represents at the center is multiplied on a larger scale. The tension between Spain's myriad groups that need each other yet deny it is a problem that must be fixed.

Adults adhere to, or are at least aware of, a more rigid set of social norms. Most, then, will not utter overt, racist words to the Other – though they may often do it in the presence of fellow Spaniards. Yet a subconscious, nearly universal form of labeling someone is through the look, the gaze. This is a covert way of showing disapproval that requires little thought and assumes no consequences for the Spaniard. Sabida conceptualizes this complex gesture as both the formation of a relation between two people, and the establishment of inequality. The act of looking into the eyes of the other creates a link, a reciprocal action of two people that are seeing each other; yet the relationship that this forms is one of “asymmetric reciprocity” (Sabida 42). Just by the way that a Madrid citizen looks at an Ecuadorian immigrant, for example, there is the potential to create a situation of “domination and subordination,” creating feelings of shame or even disgust depending on the people involved and establishing a postcolonial structure (Sabida 42). The gaze has also been conceptualized as a mechanism for “everyday racism” and exclusion; as opposed to the overt discrimination seen in the above examples of verbal and written abuse, the gaze can function as an “absence of recognition” used to exclude the Other (Delanty, Wodak and Jones 3).

This everyday, commonplace form of exclusion, though subtle to some, is significant enough a phenomenon to have made its way into the literature. In *Cosmofobia*, Isaac discusses the cases of many of the women that come to the support group. The majority are immigrants – in fact, Esther and Cristina are the only two

Spanish women – all of which tell similar stories of domestic abuse, and who follow the pattern of coming for help a few times followed by spells of absence in which their husbands lie to them and say they have changed. Isaac believes that they are so apt to believe their lies because of a desperate desire of something good as compensation “a la vida tan perra que arrastran, a las interminables jornadas de trabajo malpagado, a las miradas de mal disimulado desprecio” [for the fucked-up life that they lead, for the never-ending, poorly-paid work days, and for the looks of poorly-hidden disdain] on the faces of Spaniards everywhere (202). Etxebarria significantly lists this gaze as one of the most significant fabrics in the tapestry of terrible immigrant conditions. Indeed, even if one demeaning look seems insignificant, the looks add up for an immigrant who potentially sees hundreds of these looks each day. The effect is the alienation of the immigrant Other, who is made to feel unwelcome and unwanted. Etxebarria demonstrates that the processes of Otherness are so embedded in Spanish society that many Spaniards might not even realize their effect – which in all actuality is very serious.

I suppose that the immigrant reaction to the gaze of Madrid citizens can eventually be ignored to a certain extent. In my surveys, most Ecuadorian respondents had lived in Madrid between five and thirteen years; only seven percent had been there less than five years. One respondent, however, had been in Madrid only one week. This person’s responses, therefore, demonstrate a heightened awareness to the processes of othering, including the gaze. When asked to provide stereotypes of Spaniards, for example, the respondent claimed to identify them “por la forma que te miran” [by the way they look at you]. I suggest that the gaze was noticed above all else because it created a new – and suddenly ubiquitous – type of relation with people. All of the

respondents who had been in Spain for a number of years, while they may still notice the looks they receive from Spaniards, have most likely become very accustomed to these looks, for they did not think to mention it in their responses.

Skin color, race, and physical appearance are incredibly significant in this novel. Appearance is perhaps one of the most obvious impressions one has of another person. For this reason, Etxebarria includes many descriptions of the physical aspects of the characters. Susana is a character who is extremely defined – and self-defined – in terms of her race. She was born in Spain, has Spanish citizenship and speaks Spanish natively. In fact, Guinea’s national language as a former Spanish colony is Spanish, so even if she had grown up in Guinea, she would have learned Spanish. Yet she is not fully accepted as a member of Spanish society, for her black skin color is not usually associated a native Spanish identity. When Dora, her boss in the clothing store, asks her where she is from, she is not satisfied with the answer: “Alcalá de Henares.” She continues to question Susana, asking her where she was born (to which she gives the same answer), and then where her parents were born. When Susana finally admits that her father was born in Guinea, “la señora parecía aliviada ahora que por fin sabía de dónde viene el color de mi piel” [the woman seemed relieved now that she finally knew where I got the color of my skin] (Etxebarria 58). Dora becomes agitated at the mere thought of considering Susana, a black woman, as a compatriot; she is contrarily relieved to learn that she cannot be Spanish. This is a moment in which Etxebarria’s central element of fear, the fear of knowing that people are indeed connected to each other and not isolated as some might hope, screams to the reader. Many *madrileños* and Spaniards in general are still unwilling to renounce their seclusion from the other.

Indeed, skin color is a way to identify, label and categorize people. As a country that, until the late 1980s, was composed mainly of more or less white people considering themselves to be racially Spanish, the sudden diversity may have taken some by surprise. Indeed, while working in the store, Susana recounts instances in which Spanish people – one elderly woman and one young girl - scream upon seeing her (Etxebarria 61-62). Racial identification is surely portrayed in this novel in connection with its various connotations. Susana's experiences demonstrate the negative stigma associated with black skin. It is viewed as a variety of things: inferior, ugly, tribal or exotic. The societal attitudes have rubbed off on Susana, as she says multiple times that she is not attractive.

With this, Etxebarria aims to expose the negative effects of racial profiling on individuals. She contrasts the negative views of darker skin with the positive connotations of being white. Again, whiteness is likened to high status and class. When Miriam discusses the park in Huertas that she deems suitable for her son, she highlights the fact that, "Allí los niños son todos blancos...y la mayoría va con sus cuidadoras, ecuatorianas y colombianas" [there all the children are white...and most of them are with their nannies, Ecuadorian and Columbian women] (Etxebarria 79). She chooses a park where the children have the same skin color as her son, and where the only ethnic diversity is found among the nannies, expected to be docile, obedient, and all but invisible. This exposes an overlap of the processes that Etxebarria presents. Postcolonial structures are present in the fact that only the wealthier – almost exclusively white – families can afford to have nannies, which is indicative of status and reminiscent of colonial times when wealthier families could afford to have more servants. It also factors in the aspects of gender that will be explored later in this chapter. The classifications as

“ecuatorianas” and “colombianas” comprise only female Ecuadorians and Colombians, never males. Being a caretaker for children is in most all cases a job for female immigrants, which implies that these women are considered more nurturing simply because of their gender, and that they are well qualified for this type of work even if they have not had any experience at all.

In addition to having different skin colors, traditions, etc, immigrants in Madrid are very often associated with violence. Just as immigration is often seen as an “attack” or an “invasion,” immigrant groups are portrayed as taking over certain areas. Etxebarria provides several examples of parks, public spaces that seem to be inhabited almost constantly by bands of immigrants. Miriam, as mentioned, does not take her son to the nearest park in Lavapiés. She gives her reasoning disdainfully: “no le hace ninguna gracia la presencia de los borrachos y los marroquíes que esnifan pegamento” [she was not at all pleased by the presence of the drunks and the Moroccans that sniff glue] (Etxebarria 79). Gangs, such as the “*latin kings*” mentioned in both *Cosmofobia* and my surveys by Spaniards, seem to be a concern. Sonia also discusses the parks in Madrid, and her hesitation to go to them because she says, “casi me violan los latin kings” [members of the *Latin Kings* gang almost rape me] (Etxebarria 44). It seems that Etxebarria is suggesting a general image in the of the constantly-present delinquency perceived as practically moving in to Spanish homes. The idea of a constant presence of the immigrant Other is not only a nuisance; it is seen as a threat to the safety of Spaniards – but probably not a problem for the immigrants themselves, who are all considered to be involved in this threat. Certain groups cause unrest and even hatred in the hearts of many

Spaniards who associate immigrants with the minute subset of their population that does commit violent acts.

Yet while host countries like Spain often accuse immigrants of bringing violence to their societies, one must wonder about the true origins of this violence. I return to the example of Nicky. Claudia tells Antón that the psychologist at the Center recommended that he be given responsibilities, such as caring for younger children, to help calm his violent tendencies. Yet he continued to hit other children. She concludes that it didn't help because he is abused at home, and "cuando un niño da por pegar a todo el mundo sin razón aparente es porque le pegan a él" [when a child hits everyone for no apparent reason it is because people hit him] (Etxebarria 25). It is significant that Etxebarria chooses to represent a minority child in this way instead of a white, Spanish child, for this serves to reinforce the stereotype: the violence that Nicky experiences at home is seen as natural, inherent, and it is only natural that Nicky furthers it. Yet, as I will show in the analysis of *Una tarde con campanas*, this violence is not confirmed; it is merely assumed by society who associates an aggressive nature with difference.

With this, Etxebarria perhaps seeks to expose the problem of grouping people automatically into these categories. Niklas Lehmann poses that only the people who feel included adhere to the democratic institutions of justice (Wodak 60). In this case, the blame does not necessarily or at least originally fall on the immigrants themselves, but on the host country and, more specifically, on the very process of "othering". If people are not allowed to integrate into the system, they will feel no loyalty or fondness towards it. If immigrants cannot obtain work and/or residence permits and are employed irregularly or illegally with poor conditions and treatment, they will likely feel resentment and

perhaps will be tempted to act against the law which they believe has served them so poorly. Similarly, although the “acquisition of citizenship becomes the legal means for inclusion” in a society, this does not guarantee that the immigrant will become an accepted member of the host society (Wodak 60). Thus, it can even be argued that the host society furthers the stereotype of delinquency simply by denying those that it defines as “others” a fair chance to live within it.

Etxebarria seeks to show, then, that the root of immigrant violence is anything but intrinsic. Take for example a conversation at the *Taberna Encendida* between Aziz and Hisham, two Moroccan men, about the differences between Northern and Southern Moroccans, who were colonized by the Spanish and French respectively. Aziz, from the South, claims that Northerners are lesser educated because of their Spanish colonial history. Interestingly, he claims that Spaniards – grouping them into one – solve everything by “gritando y peleándose” [yelling and fighting] (Etxebarria 101). Yamal interjects, a voice of reason in a storm of Othering and discrimination, claiming that the violence of the Moroccans from the North, so criticized by Spaniards and which Moroccans feel gives them a bad name, “nada tiene que ver con que hablen español o francés, tiene que ver con la pobreza, con la desestructuración, con tener lejos a la familia” [does not have to do with the fact that they speak Spanish or French, it has to do with poverty, with the disruption of old structures, with being far from their families] (Etxebarria 102). Through Yamal, Etxebarria makes a powerful statement: while it may be easier to blame the intrinsic nature, perhaps influenced by history, of a group of people, the social conditions must be considered in what makes certain people act in violent ways. The violence committed by some immigrants could simply be a reflection

of or retaliation against the often more covert yet certainly persistent racist and discriminatory attitudes, comments and treatment already discussed.

Cosmofobia helps to indicate some of the origins and reasons for the stereotypes of violence. I return to the example of the help group, “Las Positivas.” As mentioned, only two Spanish women come to the group, and the rest are foreigners. This seems to be taken by Spaniards in the book as a sort of proof that immigrants, in general, are more violent. Cristina, one of the Spanish women, comes because of her struggle with anorexia. This is notably not an issue of domestic violence; anorexia can be considered a “luxury” disease, one that often afflicts people that have enough money and time to obsess constantly about physical appearance. Despite the fact that she attends the same self-help group as so many immigrant women, Cristina sees them as Other women, in a separate category as herself. Some of the foreign women are Ecuadorian. Cristina says, in her interview-style chapter with the author – who, we must remember, is a fellow Spaniard with whom she can speak freely – that “a las ecuatorianas del grupo les han pegado a todas, primero los padres y luego los maridos” [all the Ecuadorian women of the group had been beaten, first by their fathers and then by their husbands] (Etxebarria 135). She discusses the effects of upbringing: people learn from what their parents have taught them, thus the large percentage of immigrants who have suffered domestic abuse

Etxebarria aims to expose, in this example as in all of these manifestations of Otherness, the overall negative effects on society that come from trying to force a separation of peoples that are not in any way separate. Affirmations of negative stereotypes could be an expression of a need felt by many *madrileños* to distinguish themselves from the Other. By denying or reducing the apparent problem of violence in

Spanish society in contrast to its high prevalence among immigrant groups like Latin Americans, Spaniards seek to define themselves – favorably. In order to demonstrate what they are not – or rather, what they do not want to be – they distance themselves from the other group. Yet this is unproductive and detrimental. Etxebarria’s title, *Cosmofobia*, exposes the problem: Spaniards, feeling attacked by groups with different appearances, customs, languages and religions, attempt block their incorporation into their society for fear that their culture will change. They do not want to challenge their preconceptions and stereotypes. This fear is in vain, however, for Etxebarria demonstrates how the diversity of Madrid is as intertwined as the lives of her characters.

Postcolonial Views

Ecuador, like much of the Western Hemisphere, operated under Spanish rule for multiple centuries. The territory gained its independence in 1822, officially becoming the state of “El Ecuador” in 1830 (Albó 17). Spain has officially recognized this and other Latin American independences, yet the social acknowledgement of the end of colonialism is another issue. In fact, Spain seems to have found it difficult to completely let go of the blows dealt to its historical pride. For instance, in 1818, Simón Bolívar proclaimed a South American unity whose uniting factors were a Hispanic culture and a continental identity linked by language and its common Spanish past (Martínez 45). Later that century, around the “Disaster” of 1898 in which Spain officially lost Cuba and the Philippines, the last vestiges of its colonial empire, many Spanish intellectuals were reluctant to acknowledge the fact that these republics were indeed their own entities. Miguel de Unamuno, for example, referred to the Latin American republics as “the

Spanish towns on the other side of the Atlantic” (Martínez 47). Indeed, much of Spain’s literary tradition rests upon the glory of the colonial era and its cultural imperialism, regarding it as the peak of Spanish power.

Today, it seems as if some Spanish citizens still hold fast to these strong feelings of national (imperial) identity. Perhaps this reaction to the end of an era, an era considered the “epitome of national glory” by Ortega y Gasset, and Spaniards and their leaders worried about the future, can be understood at the time of change (Martínez 58). Yet the persistence of postcolonial attitudes, those that establish a structure of domination between citizens of the former colonizing country and the formerly colonized country, are significant in the relations between immigrants and *madrileños* today, in the twenty-first century. According to Aykaç, “the creation of a quasi-natural link between racism and migration fails to account for the reality that racism, in Europe, has been in a reciprocal relation with nationalism and colonialism” (125). This is most certainly the case in Spain, which remains connected in several ways with many of its former colonies, very notably those in Latin America. The problem in Spain and in Madrid regarding Latin American immigrants such as the Ecuadorians could be partly understood in terms of resentment of a historical loss of power and prestige, and a consequential failure to move beyond colonial social structures towards tolerance and coexistence.

Migrants in Etxebarria are presented as fundamentally different. For instance, Ismael is a black immigrant from Guinea Conakri, which is again a growing nationality in Madrid. The color of his skin immediately distinguishes him as an Other in the Spanish eye. Additionally, he speaks Spanish poorly, and came as refugee without legal permits for work or residence. These multiple “strikes” against him make him feel both excluded

and disdained. His experience is summarized with these powerful words: “Había soñado un paraíso en Europa, pero estaba igual que en África, incluso peor, porque allí era un hermano y aquí era poco más que un animal, un individuo de segunda” [He had dreamed of a paradise in Europe, but it was the same as in Africa, or even worse, because there he was a brother and here he was little more than an animal, a second-class person] (Etxebarria 108-109). Spaniards not only perceive him as harshly inferior, but also treat him as such. Guinea is a former Spanish colony, a fact which perhaps leads to increased chances of subordination. Knowing that Spain once dominated a land and people seems to give some people the perception that they may continue to dominate them. Blacks, Latinos, and Filipinos in Spain are treated poorly, without rights or influence in society. Etxebarria’s story confirms the survey findings: while Spanish people might very well have contact with immigrants, many look past this contact, using their services if needed but shortly afterwards placing them in the backs of their minds.

This postcolonial attitude is manifested in most every sector of society. Etxebarria describes the thoughts of parents when sending their children to an ever-diversifying school environment. Irene, Antón’s (Spanish) ex-girlfriend tells him that “las madres del barrio no querían llevar a los niños al colegio público, porque estaba lleno de inmigrantes y que por eso la enseñanza era peor” [the mothers in the neighborhood do not want to take their children to public school, because it was full of immigrants and because of that the education was worse] (Etxebarria 28). It is significant that Etxebarria presents this from a tertiary source: Irene tells Antón, whose story is narrated in third person. Irene does not have, to the reader’s knowledge, any expertise on the subject; it is simply her opinion without any factual support. The rationale of the mothers is likely the same: they

assume that these schools are of poor quality because of the immigrant presence. They are seen as intellectually incapable of high academic achievement and performance, and do not want their children to mix with them. Etxebarria derides this scenario, demonstrating both the illegitimacy of these claims and the ease with which they are spread and believed. While it is likely true that many immigrant children arrive without a certain level of education, the problem lies in that they are not given the chance to catch up; instead, they become fixed in this identity of being inherently less capable. Spanish society isolates immigrants by assuming them into the identity of the subject, securing and maintaining the foreigner in a place of inferiority and the Spaniard in a place of power, the immigrants are blamed for these bad conditions. They are confined to a different, separate world, living lives vastly different from their Spanish neighbors with whom they do interact, whether or not the interaction is acknowledged.

Associating with immigrants more than superficially is portrayed as negative in order to show the boundaries that exist in a postcolonial society. Romantic interracial relationships are strongly discouraged. Miriam, for example, originally moves to Lavapiés because of her relationship with Yamal. Even though he is very wealthy and influential, her family cannot accept the fact that she, “la niña de buena familia...acabó viviendo en un barrio de inmigrantes al que su madre se negaba a visitarla” [the girl from a good family...ended up living in an immigrant neighborhood where her mother refused to visit her] (Etxebarria 86). Similarly, Silvio is criticized for dating Susana. His scenario differs from Miriam’s in that his mother and all but one sister, Esther, continue to speak with him and support him, yet his mother does not like Susana. She even asks her son, “¿Es que no hay suficientes españolas de tu edad para que te tengas que ir con una

negra?” [Aren’t there enough Spanish girls your age that you have to shack up with a black girl?] (Etxebarria 72).⁷ While there are some other cases of mixed-race relations in the story, people mostly remain segregated within their nationalities; those mixed relations that are mentioned end throughout the course of the story. Again, Etxebarria comments of the division that people face, not only because the Other is different, but because the Other is inferior.

The colonial empire was founded mainly for economic and political reasons. In order to gain power and status in the world, Spain asserted its dominance over entire populations. A subordinate labor force was created and exploited in order to extract minerals and create products that could be used in trade. The native population was forced to tolerate slave-like living conditions and treated, as Etxebarria voices through Ismael, like second-class people. It appears that these structures are still in place in Spain’s employment market: there are few options for immigrants, and what is available is, to varying extents, exploitative of the migrant workers.

Most demand for foreign labor in Spain falls under the service, agricultural and construction sectors, with significant divides based on gender and, to a lesser degree, on race within these sectors (Parella Rubio 159). The demand for immigrant labor in these sectors has additionally reinforced itself in a vicious cycle: the salaries have become lower for these positions throughout the years, and conditions have become harsher, leaving the Spanish population to reject them further (Parella Rubio 120). The stigma attached to these jobs has become worse for Spaniards throughout the years. As mentioned, these positions are now seen as those of the subject, the colonized, the native.

⁷ This comment shows that Silvio’s mother does not consider Susana to be Spanish in spite of her nationality and upbringing. We can assume that this is due to a postcolonial, hierarchical perception of the superiority of white over black.

The work is considered beneath the native Spanish population. Because these structures have become so engrained in Madrid society, immigrants today are mostly confined to these certain sectors of the economy offering unskilled, low-paying jobs.

Etxebarria invites the reader to consider the more general and ever-present problem: most immigrants face a definite lack of options. The vast majority work on unstable ground. Men often work in the construction, agricultural or other service sectors. For example, Youssou, along with Ismael and Aziz, had at one point performed construction jobs. Youssou worked for only 500 euros per month, hardly enough to support oneself in a city like Madrid, and such low salaries translate to poor living conditions. Youssou and Ismael, when they had first come to Madrid and started working, shared a room in a four-bedroom apartment that was housing eight men (Etxebarria 109). This has been identified as a significant strategy for immigrants, yet it comes at the expense of loss of privacy and increased stress (Quicios García and Flores Ramos 7). Additionally, Youssou works without a contract. This places the employers, who are most likely Spanish, in a dominant position, and the foreign workers in a subordinate one. If at all dissatisfied with the work of the employees, the employer may release them. Nearly all opportunities for work are the same type of unstable wage labor, so there is no other option but to take the work.

Women are even more limited in their work choices, typically working in some type of domestic service. For instance, Kerli works as an “asistenta” [pay-by-day housekeeper] (Etxebarria 36). Like Youssou, she has no contract, no access to the benefits of social security, and must take opportunities to work as they arise. She is treated as a servant in the homes of wealthy Spaniards – reminiscent of the colonies of

centuries past. When she worked for Diana and David, she cleaned their house. The chapter narrated in third person about David gives some insight into the attitudes that Spanish people hold. Significantly, they do vary. While Diana perhaps does not consider Kerli an equal, neither does she think of her as akin to a slave as David does. David leaves his clothing sprawled on the floor of the apartment, and when Diana reproaches him for this, he replies, “¿para qué estamos pagando una asistenta?” [what are we paying a housekeeper for?] (Etxebarria 112). Diana’s response is that “la asistenta no es la esclava de nadie” [she is not anyone’s slave] (Etxebarria 112). Etxebarria’s choice of words demonstrates that some – but certainly not all – truly do think of immigrants, particularly the Latin American women who most frequently perform domestic work, in this inferior way.

Having established that Spaniards look upon immigrants as subordinate, it follows that the working and living conditions of immigrants mirror this. Sonia is one of the few Spaniards in the novel that actually holds any of the stigmatized unskilled positions alongside immigrants. She works as “teleoperadora” [telephone operator], and notes the harsh conditions: “Nos perminten cinco minutos de descanso por cada hora de trabajo. Y en cinco minutos no te da tiempo a ir a mear, porque hay un solo cuarto de baño para tropecientas operadoras” [They give us five minutes of break for every hour that we work. And in five minutes you don’t even have time to take a piss, because there’s only one bathroom for zillions of operators] (Etxebarria 45) She also supplements the poor salary she receives with work at La Taberna Encendida, in which she is often treated poorly by customers. One evening, she tires of a woman who constantly demands glasses of water, so she responds, “me he hartado de ser tu esclava” [I am sick and tired of being

your slave] (Etxebarria 96). Through the eyes of a Spanish character, Etxebarria is able to demonstrate the difficult conditions and show that they are undesirable. Sonia is vociferous and speaks her mind, as if giving voice to what most immigrants feel but cannot say for fear of being fired, deported, etc. The fact that Sonia is treated this way at all also reveals the fact that the Spaniards that come in contact with immigrant workers, be they employers, customers, homeowners, etc, look down upon workers in unskilled positions. Etxebarria demonstrates that some Spaniards may feel free to treat them with less respect precisely because they are in a position of servitude due to class as well as race.

Gender

The Ecuadorian and Latin American populations in Madrid have approximately equal proportions of men and women. Prior to the 1990s most all immigration to Spain was of single men coming as temporary workers. Since then, the demographics have changed significantly, and Hispanic migration to Spain can be considered a particularly feminized process. Significantly, a large number of Latin American women migrate alone, without husbands or families. This shows clearly in my surveys. The Ecuadorian respondents were overwhelmingly female: sixty-seven percent of them were women. While this percentage is higher than the actual Latin American male-female ratio in Spain, it indicates that women are a substantial portion of this population. Another significant finding of my surveys is that half of the women were single, and an additional seven percent were divorced; fifty-four percent of single/divorced women had children –

though whether their children had migrated with them or not was not specified – indicating additional challenges and expenses for these women.

According to official data and my surveys, then, at least half of the Latin American population in Madrid receives worse treatment than its compatriots of the opposite gender. This is seen in a number of arenas, some of the most apparent including the attempts to integrate into the workplace and into a sphere of social acceptance in Madrid. They face a difficult predicament, for these women often leave their home countries because of discrimination and the fewer possibilities they have to accumulate capital and work, yet they arrive in Spain to face a job market that is fragmented by gender and ethnicity (Parella Rubio 122). They often face discrimination based not only on their ethnicity and low socio-economic status, as their male compatriots, but on their gender as well. *Cosmofobia* (as well as *Una tarde con campanas*, to be explored in the next chapter) paints a telling portrait of these issues and how they hinder not only the women who are the object of excessive discrimination and abuse, but also the whole of society with which they are deeply connected.

Foreign women are, in general, at an increased disadvantage regarding their incorporation into the Spanish workforce. According to Bridget Anderson, “women who are defined as ‘other’ in relation to European women, being closer to nature, are ‘naturally’ good at domestic work” (119). The average educational level of Latin American immigrants in Spain/Madrid is no lower than that of Spaniards, a fact which includes the intellectual formations of both men and women. In theory, then, they should be eligible for the same types of jobs as their Spanish peers. Yet immigration policy seems to assume an inferiority of migrant workers’ abilities, an assumption that hits

women the hardest. Foreign men undoubtedly work in a limited number of sectors in the economy, yet the vast majority of women work in the domestic service sector, well known for its undesirable working conditions and low pay. Interestingly and paradoxically, however, most immigrant women have no previous work experience in the domestic sector, as many are relatively young women, and some of which do not have children or husbands, exposing the stereotypical visions that Spanish society holds for immigrant women as qualified only for certain work that associates them with a traditional, “natural” feminine image (Parella Rubio 180).

Ecuadorian respondents of my surveys provided answers that correspond to overall employment statistics. One-third of the women that provided information about their employment (twenty-two percent preferred not to share their occupation, perhaps, but not necessarily, because they might be in some type of irregular/illegal work situation) worked in the domestic sector, followed by twenty-eight percent who worked in another kind of service such as cosmetology, the kitchen/food industry, or telephone operation. Significantly, only one Ecuadorian female claimed a more qualified position – nursing – yet this can still be argued to be a feminized job because of the “nurturing” connotations associated with it. This contrasts with the *madrileño* responses. First, just under half of respondents were women, indicating a more equal population distribution among Spaniards. While forty-six percent of the women surveyed held jobs that required little qualification, such as store attendant or collections officials, the other fifty-four percent were either students, having the opportunity to study for a potentially better future career; qualified workers such as teachers or bankers; or did not work or were retired, a luxury that very few Latin American women have in Spain.

The patterns observed among the Ecuadorian women and contrasted with those of the Spanish women demonstrate the overlap of the three processes that I have discussed. Latin American women are seen as distinct from Spanish women, as “Other” women. The fact that they are thought to be closer to nature indicates a postcolonial, condescending assumption that these women may not be familiar with industrialized society because of their potentially underdeveloped, uncivilized, even indigenous or tribal upbringings. Finally, they are assumed into domestic jobs, the lowest of the low positions in society, because they are women and supposedly are best at performing traditional, female tasks (Parella Rubio 125-6). Sociologist Stephen Steinberg has deemed the domestic service sector as “the exploitation of the whole person” (Takaki 148). Particularly in an illegal or irregular situation, a migrant is placed at the mercy of the employer. Etxebarria confirms this fact with her Latin American female characters, such as Kerli who cleans houses and the Ecuadorian and Colombian nannies who accompany Spanish children to the park in Huertas. The author aims to expose a greater problem with these examples: the lack of options for women who, fairly literally, cannot get any other jobs. Regarding extensive interviews done with immigrants in the European Union, Anderson recounts that “recently-arrived migrants...said that domestic work was the only employment available to them, apart from prostitution, and this was confirmed by migrants’ organizations and support groups” (125). Their professional and/or intellectual backgrounds are not even asked; they are simply assumed into domestic work.

Anderson identifies domestic work in Spain as a situation reminiscent of colonialist structures, “confirming the dependency, inequality and de-humanization that are encouraged in the domestic worker-employer relationship” (123). The processes are,

like the characters in Etxebarria's novel, interrelated. Otherness manifests itself in the separation that domestic work creates between Spanish women and the immigrants that perform various household tasks. Postcolonial structures are obvious in this dependent, servile work and social structure. Etxebarria certainly confirms this precarious position in the examples in her story. Diana and David's employment of Kerli shows how domestic workers are treated not as members of the family, but as inferior, unequal workers. David even says that Diana treats Kerli "demasiado bien" [too well], indicating that she is no better in his eyes than a slave who does not deserve equal treatment; he obviously does not consider her as part of the same class of human being as even Diana, whom he already treats somewhat pejoratively (Etxebarria 112). Yet despite the poor treatment and working conditions, these women must maintain their jobs because there is nothing else.

Additionally, due to the instability of the field and the low wages that these jobs provide, many women are forced to perform multiple jobs. This leaves these women with little free time in which to do anything for themselves, as most any time that they do have will be spent recuperating in order to work the next day. Although a significant number of Latin American women come to Spain either unmarried or without their children and families, a considerable percentage of this population also has family to support.

Etxebarria notes the problem faced by these many women. To quote again the example of when Selene becomes ill, Kerli cannot afford to stay home with her because by doing so, she risks losing the little livelihood she has (Etxebarria 36). Etxebarria makes it plain that Spanish people often do not consider the fact that she is a mother with a child to care for. If she misses work, she will be fired for failure to complete her job. When Selene falls sick at the daycare center, Antón and the other teachers and volunteers cannot do

anything more than give her some pain reliever, shaking their heads at the situation. They seem to feel slightly burdened in having to care for the child when it ought to be the mother who does so. They also remark to each other the shame in the fact that Selene's thirteen-year-old cousin, Carla, "tuvo que perder dos días del colegio para cuidarla" [had to miss two days of school to take care of her] because her parents "no dan mucha importancia a eso de que las niñas estudien" [do not really value the studies of young girls] (Etxebarria 39). The *madrileños* at the Center once again practice Othering and postcolonial views, in separating Latin American immigrants as having different, more primitive and traditional values, and not adapting to Spanish norms.

Another Latin American girl at the center, Yeni, "está muy gorda, pero con una gordura fea, blanda, de esas que sólo tienen los niños pobres" [she is very fat, an ugly, soft kind of fat that is only seen on poor children] (Etxebarria 33). Etxebarria uses this case to further illustrate the predicament of immigrant mothers. Antón's chapter reveals that "la mamá de Yeni limpia casas y apenas saca para mantener a los tres hijos, así que Yeni y sus hermanas comen arroz y pasta cada día, y la fruta casi ni la ven" [Yeni's mother cleans houses and hardly makes enough money to support her three children, so Yeni and her sisters eat rice and pasta every day, and hardly ever see any fruit] (Etxebarria 33). This demonstrates some of the effects on the children of the immigrant women who are experiencing such discrimination. The hard work of mothers goes unnoticed, and problems such as obesity or lack of childcare for their own children are seen as the mother's failure to make a living and support her family.

Etxebarria acts as a sort of advocate for immigrant women. She shows how they are barred access to suitable jobs, and have no way to integrate themselves into the

system. From a Spaniard's perspective, however, this might appear more often to be the fault of the women instead of that of society. Antón notices a difference between immigrant children and Spanish children in their eating habits. He sees that Miriam's son barely eats anything, and must be coaxed into eating more. The immigrant children voraciously devour the food that they receive as snack at the Center, for, according to Antón, "sus padres, que cuentan con la merienda que les dan en el Centro a las seis de la tarde, no les deben de dar de comer a mediodía" [their parents, that count on the snack that they give them at the Center at six in the afternoon, probably don't give them anything to eat at lunch time] (Etxebarria 32). Etxebarria shows how Antón, who is just learning about the situation of immigrants since he began volunteering at the Center, might blame the immigrant parents for being irresponsible or abusing the system. It is important to note that Antón originally began his work at the community center not out of passion for the immigrants' situations, but because he wanted to impress Claudia. After being there for over a month at the time of the novel, he has become more attached to the children; yet it seems as if he still seems to judge the immigrant parents, for instance, for being too poor to properly care for their children and thus leaving those at the Center to care for them. But the author/reader, as an overseer of the entire story, has a more general view that shows the true predicament. The mothers are assumedly doing everything in their power to improve their children's lives, yet due to lack of opportunity they struggle to make a decent living. Etxebarria questions whether or not the semblance of a life that they are able to make in Spain really is the improvement they were seeking.

The question applies both to the lives of the children and families and to those of the women themselves. Migration places a strain on most all parties involved, and those

women that are married have other/additional issues that single women (non-mothers) do not face. Many fall victim to male-dominant, paternalistic, *machista* structures. Domestic violence can happen to any woman, as Etxebarria evidences with Cristina's mother and Esther's and Silvio's mother, who both complained of being abused either verbally or physically by their husbands. The effects on the women and on their children can be significant. As proof, Esther and Cristina both attend the self-help group Las Positivas, seemingly because of insecurities and negative family experiences. Yet Etxebarria also establishes a dichotomy between this domestic violence: among today's Spanish population, domestic violence is not – or at least not openly – the norm, whereas among the Ecuadorian population, it is. We see this distinction from the testimony given by Esther. Her family has a broken relationship, which has caused her anxiety attacks and a cycle of anorexia-bulimia. Yet it is important to note that she does not come because of domestic abuse, for her husband treats her well. She observes, as a distinct group, the Ecuadorian women who seek help at the Center. She says that it is, “siempre la misma cantinela, qué historias tan predecibles, él se bebe todo <<el mensual>> y encima le pega y no cuida de los niños, porque eso no es de hombre” [it is always the same old story, what predictable stories, he drinks away all of her monthly salary and what's more, he hits her and doesn't take care of the children, because that's not a man's job] (Etxebarria 161). Isaac and Cristina recount the same stories of Latin American (particularly Ecuadorian) women in Las Positivas who have suffered these kinds of abuse. With this example, Etxebarria acknowledges both the existence of domestic violence in the Latin American immigrant population and the setting of boundaries between them and Spaniards. Creating this distinction from the Other, Spaniards establish their postcolonial

superiority over the Latin Americans that they see as inherently more violent and less civilized. Perhaps more importantly, Etxebarria notes the hypocrisy of the situation, for she shows through characters like Ismael and Yamal, that not all immigrants are violent, and that Spaniards, such as Cristina and Esther, have not been exempt from violence in their lives. The populations are not truly different; rather, many Spaniards prefer to reinforce their preconceptions rather than question them.

Additional issues facing Latin American women in Madrid deal with the Othering of the body. They are frequently portrayed as exotic, closer to nature. Indeed, the image of Latin American women as natives provokes a sort of focus on them as exotic sex figures, reminiscent of the dominating attitudes of Spanish colonizers who impregnated native women. This view is reinforced by the fact that some immigrant women fall prey to prostitution, either as a last resort when they cannot find another job, or to make extra money to supplement their dismal salaries. Most women migrating from Latin America to Spain do so to save money and eventually to return to their home countries. If they cannot fulfill this with the work they can find, they may feel that prostitution is the only option, or at least the only way for them to make enough money to survive.

On a more quotidian scale, and seen more in the novel, psychological effects such as concern about body image and low self esteem are a general problem that Latin American women in Spain face. As a process of Othering, they face constant comparisons to Spanish women. Lowered self-esteem affects immigrant women in most aspects of their lives; not only does it reinforce their perceived need to be servile in order to maintain a job, it can also compel them to maintain the same behavior in their personal relations. Susana's relationship with Silvio serves as an example of the types of abusive

and detrimental situations that many women, though especially immigrant women, encounter. He seems to have maintained his postcolonial views despite carrying on a relationship with her; he mistreats her in several ways. He abuses her verbally, degrading her constantly for both her race and her gender: “ESTÁS LOCA...PUTA NEGRA DE MIERDA (sic)” [YOU ARE CRAZY.... FUCKING BLACK WHORE] (Etxebarria 70).⁸ He belittles her for making less money than he does, despite the fact that this has far more to do with a flawed, postcolonial system than with her own capabilities. What is more, he expects her to make up the difference by cleaning the house, even though she spends all day working on her feet (Etxebarria 55). Etxebarria shows through Silvio the position of dominance that Spanish males in particular may feel when faced with immigration. She denounces the mistreatment of all women, with examples of abusive husbands in several of the characters, including Silvio’s own father. The author shows that this can be particularly acute when postcolonial attitudes and Otherness are added to the equation. For instance, Silvio seems to take liberties in belittling Susana from many angles in a way that he perhaps would not if she were not black/if he saw her as Spanish. Her skin color would be no different from his, and she would most likely have access to a higher paying job, therefore removing at least two of the factors that he could critique. Etxebarria demonstrates, then, the many disadvantages that women of (apparently) different backgrounds face in Madrid today, particularly the issue of skin color as a determining factor for both acceptance and identity in Spanish society.

Despite so many different problems, these women often cannot remove themselves from their situation. After a fight, Silvio storms out of the house. Susana

⁸ Use of all upper-case letters generally indicates yelling/raised voices. Etxebarria employs this technique to indicate to her readers the anger, violence and aggression with which Silvio addresses Susana.

admits, narrating her own chapter in first person, that she wishes he would leave for good, but “yo sé que volverá, eso es lo peor” [I know he’ll be back, that’s the worst part] (Etxebarria 71). Other women in the story are portrayed tolerating various types of abuse. Etxebarria shows through these examples the compromised position of immigrant women. As a result of Spanish society’s discrimination against race and gender they lack confidence in their own abilities and options.

This lack of self-esteem can affect the ability to find and maintain work. Her accounts of work in the clothing store are indicative of the psychological problems caused by these situations. Perhaps the work in a store is a slight improvement from live-in domestic work in terms of the conditions. One must remember that Susana is herself a Spanish citizen, and that all of the Latin American immigrant women of the story work in some sort of domestic service. Yet, Susana’s work comes with its own occupational hazards. She is in constant competition with the thin Spanish women with whom she works. There is such a pressure on her to maintain a certain appearance in order to keep the job that she develops an eating disorder, and upon gaining weight, fears that she will be fired (Etxebarria 56-7). The standards of what is beautiful or desirable are transferred through the dominant Spanish attitudes as well. Susana constantly worries about her appearance, even belittling herself and reflecting the disdain that some Spaniards might display to her. Susana is interested, for example, in Antón, but does not see a future relationship. He is dating Sonia, and because “Sonia está muy buena y yo no lo estoy” [Sonia is very hot and I am not], she believes that Antón will never be attracted to her (Etxebarria 53). The fact that she holds such a low opinion of her own beauty is telling: she has come to believe that Spanish women are more beautiful than “Other” women –

including herself. This emphasizes the fact that, because she has faced a lifetime of Otherness, forced inferiority and racism, she does not truly see herself as “Spanish.” Because of these processes, her self esteem is extremely low.

In all, Etxebarria’s novel does much to expose the issues that women, particularly immigrant women, face in Madrid today. It is obvious that finding work is a central difficulty and concern, and presents a serious problem considering the fact that the majority of Latin American women migrate in order to earn money to improve their lives in their home countries. They frequently find a slew of obstacles, however, including difficulty finding work, which is limited mostly to the domestic sector regardless of prior education or qualifications; low pay and dismal work conditions; the need to work multiple jobs; the inability to perform certain parental duties; and domestic violence. The issues of low self-esteem, so well detailed in Etxebarria, affect many arenas of their lives and decrease their abilities to be effective members of society. *Cosmofobia* provides a relatively accurate portrait of the situation of immigrants, including the numerous group of Latin Americans, in Madrid today. Etxebarria demonstrates the inefficiency that comes, through Otherness, postcolonial views, and gender discrimination, from the denial of the interconnectedness of society.

***Una tarde con campanas* (2004): Madrid from the Eyes of a Latin American Immigrant Child**

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, Lucía Etxebarria's work presents some of the key difficulties that immigrants face. Yet while she tries to construct a story that examines the issue from the perspectives of both the Spaniard and the Other, to see this different world, and the effects of the processes of Othering, postcolonial attitudes and gender discrimination on immigrants, one also needs a non-Spanish perspective. *Una tarde con campanas* provides this. Juan Carlos Méndez Guédez exposes many of the same problems and situations that are found in *Cosmofobia*, such as the lack of employment options and job security for immigrants or perceptions of foreigners as inferior and different. Yet because Méndez Guédez sees things with a somewhat distinct perspective compared to Etxebarria, his book therefore lends a profoundly different result: exposure of the effects of these processes on the immigrants themselves, inside their homes and removed from official statistics. Yet the two texts are at the same time alike, for both aim to alert the world of the growing socio-demographic problem in Madrid: the separate worlds in which one finds Spaniards on the one hand and "foreigners" on the other, due not to language barriers but to incorrect, stereotypical perceptions rooted in fear that lead to distinction by Otherness and the reinforcement of postcolonial structures.

What makes *Una tarde con campanas* especially interesting is the perspective from which it is told. The story is written as if narrated by a child. José Luis is a young boy who immigrated with his family to Madrid from a Latin American country an undefined number of years before the story takes place. He narrates most chapters in first person. Additionally, interspersed throughout are a handful of chapters narrated from

different perspectives, including several dialogues of two women – Domitila and another whose name is not given – who rent a room in José Luis’ family’s apartment, and three dream sequences narrated in third person about José Luis’ subconscious experiences. The chapters are split between the protagonist’s observations and experiences in Madrid, and memories of his life “en la ciudad donde vivíamos” [in the city where we used to live] (Méndez Guédez 87). He speaks often of his family with whom he migrated: his mother and father, his older brother, Augusto, his older sister, Somaira, and his younger sister Agustina. He also writes of his neighbors, including other immigrants and Spaniards. The Prados family presents an example of those who are less accepting of immigration and diversity, while the Cunqueiro family becomes very close with José Luis’ family.⁹ Their daughter, Mariana, is perhaps the protagonist’s best friend in Spain. Other children in the neighborhood include Ismael Prados and Francisco, two Spanish boys, and Chang, born on Spanish soil – and therefore a Spanish citizen – to legal Chinese immigrant parents.

The protagonist does not fully comprehend the stereotypes or racism that he encounters, for he lacks the vocabulary and life experience to even classify them as such. He simply sees and recounts things as they are, and is most often confused by them. The technique of developing a child narrator allows the author a certain freedom to say what he wants, to expose the situation/problem as he sees it. Children may not have learned the social conventions requiring people to refrain from saying everything that they think in order to be polite, and José Luis embodies this fact. He does not try to interpret or change

⁹ The last name “Cunqueiro” is most likely Galician. This could have something to do with their acceptance of José Luis’ family, for although they are Spaniards, they are probably not originally from Madrid and could potentially better understand the struggles associated with moving to a foreign place. The Prados family, José Luis notes, has lived in their apartment since “cuando en este barrio sólo vivían españoles” [when only Spaniards lived in this neighborhood] (Méndez Guédez 27). Thus, they may feel as if their home has been “invaded”, following the popular representation of immigration.

the meanings of things; instead, he simply reports what he notices. This allows Méndez Guédez the license to say things the way he sees them without the restriction of social convention. With this powerful tool in hand, he demonstrates the separation of groups in Madrid society in which Spaniards maintain barriers between themselves and other groups, including the Latin American populations with which they share a common language. Furthermore, Méndez Guédez is able to show the negative effects that this process has on those labeled as the Other. Certain aspects of José Luis' life simply confuse him. He is simultaneously pulled by two cultures, two worlds. He is growing up surrounded by a Latin American culture, tradition and speech pattern at home, while he must function outside the home in Spanish culture and traditions even though he is not always fully included in this. He sees this neither as bad or good, yet he understands his family's feelings of unhappiness and strife in his surroundings. Méndez Guédez aims to show, then, the effect of the forced, truly false separation of groups into two worlds, which Etxebarria so masterfully presents, on a more micro level: how the stereotypes and misconceptions of the groups affect individual people and families.

Méndez Guédez is a Venezuelan author who has lived in Spain since 1996 and has written the majority of his works there. He has written numerous stories that appear in anthologies such as the celebrated *Líneas Aéreas* (1999), and has published multiple novels such as *Árbol de luna* (2000) and *El libro de Esther* (1999), which was a finalist for the Rómulo Gallegos Prize for Spanish-language novels. His own personal migration to Spain has allowed him a first hand perspective on life as a foreigner on the Iberian Peninsula. In fact, he has said of his writing that, “sería imposible escribir sobre temas, situaciones o personas que no tengan que ver con mi vida, porque...la emoción de un

escritor se logra cuando toma los elementos que le son familiares” [it would be impossible to write about topics, situations or people that have nothing to do with my life, because...a writer’s emotion is attained when he uses elements that are familiar to him] (Plaza 89). Thus, *Una tarde con campanas* can be read as a relatively accurate portrayal of the Latin American immigrant perspective that has been missing thus far from my analysis. Antonio Ortega has said of the story that it is “una novela de espacio...es una novela documental (ciertos tipos sociológicos, históricos, etc., insertados en el universo novelesco)” [a novel about space...it is a documentary novel (certain sociological and historical models inserted into the fictional world)] (www.mendezguedez.com). Indeed, the author seeks to portray, in as realistic a manner as possible, the situations that take place within this “space.” Although Méndez Guédez may not have personally experienced every situation in the book, he is able to represent an array of problems that immigrants in Spain face as a result of Othering, postcolonial social structures, and the additional issues that women face, through the creating of a realistic and convincing narration. He states that he considers his work as a “diálogo” [dialogue] between Spain and Venezuela, between which he sees similarities, differences and connections instead of two separated and one-sided stories (Plaza 89-90).

His choice to use the perspective of a child/young adult is interesting. He was originally inspired to write this novel while riding the bus in Madrid one day. Upon hearing a mulatto child speaking Spanish with the Castilian Spanish accent, he thought to himself that “éste sería el nuevo madrileño y que valía la pena inventarme su historia” [this boy would be the new Madrid citizen and it would be worth it to invent his story] (Plaza 95). Out of this statement shines the key concept of the transnational identity

mentioned earlier in this project, that which creates a situation in which immigrants, such as this boy of a mixed ethnic background who has presumably been educated in Spain, live in multiple spheres. This perspective (with which José Luis provides the reader) is crucial for understanding the Latin American situation in Madrid. As this “new” migration, which became an undeniable trend at the end of the twentieth century, establishes itself in Spain, and the children of immigrants are born and/or raised in Madrid, they become more invested and attached to Iberian culture and way of life. Yet Spain has still not caught up. A critique by Israel Centeno insightfully signals the effect of the use of this pre-adolescent protagonist:

“la novela de iniciación es un pretexto para dar autenticidad a una voz que perderá la inocencia en su roce con la realidad, hay un mundo fuera, hay un mundo que deja de ser la ciudad que fuimos, nos muestra una ciudad que no terminamos de ser, en tránsito hacia la ciudad que seremos”

[the novel of initiation is a pretext to give credibility to a voice that will lose its innocence when it faces reality, there is a world outside, there is a world that stops being the city that we were, it shows us the city that we do not stop being, on its way to being the city that we will become] (www.mendezguedez.com).

This novel, then, acts as a wake-up call. José Luis’ progressive loss of innocence as he encounters the reality of inter-group relations in Madrid, forces readers to face the fact that, as Centeno’s critique demonstrates, many *madrileños* may not want to face:

despite the presence of many Latin Americans in Madrid with important similarities such as language, immigrants are still treated as inferior Others, separating them into a different world.

Otherness

This project has thus far demonstrated that the existence of Otherness between Spaniards and immigrants is undeniable. While Etxebarria gives the reader an inside look at the attitudes that many *madrileños* hold towards people from other countries, including those from Latin America, Méndez Guédez completes the picture. He shows how these attitudes, opinions, gestures and expressions of distinction between people can be perceived and interpreted by Latin Americans being labeled as Others. We have seen that some Spaniards may not verbally express their opinions, only showing them in subtle ways such as looking at certain people differently than others or by choosing to associate exclusively with Spaniards and not with people of other backgrounds. Some may not even harbor racist sentiments at all, as seen in my survey data which showed a variety or even an absence of (expressed) opinions regarding immigration among Spanish respondents. There is no doubt, however, that these opinions still widely circulate and influence intercultural relations – or lack thereof – between Spaniards and Latin Americans.

Othering is a natural process by which people distinguish, identify and place things and people into categories. The fact that a child like José Luis makes distinctions intuitively proves this. For example, he recounts times in the “locutorio,”¹⁰ places that

¹⁰ “Locutorios” are small establishments that charge a minimal fee for customers to access the internet and/or use a phone to make international calls.

tend to be frequented by immigrants because they are owned in many cases by fellow immigrants. The particular venue that José Luis visits with Augusto and Somaira on several occasions is probably owned by other Latin Americans, for he says that it smells like the empanadas that his mother used to make him (Méndez Guédez 137). Locutorios are typical immigrant hubs because people may use the internet and make international calls, two important ways of maintaining transnational ties with the homeland. Looking around him, José Luis notes that “había mucha gente y me quedaba mirándolos porque todos tenían unas caras muy raras” [there were lots of people and I kept looking at them because they all had very strange faces] (Méndez Guédez 137). He notes that they perhaps do not look the same as he, and wonders why – significantly not attaching any positive or negative connotations to the distinctions. His outright staring is acceptable because he is a child. Adults may be less obvious in their bewilderment, yet as the author shows, they too may stare.

Making a distinction between oneself and another can be less innocent, however, as many people are afraid of what is different. Even immigrants themselves, the victims of the Othering that is central to this project, can react negatively against those they perceive as strange. This typically happens through “positive self-presentation and negative presentation of others” (Wodak 62). In the face of difference that can be perceived as a threat, people generally wish to make themselves feel superior to the Other in order to validate their feelings of repulsion or fear. José Luis demonstrates this when confronted with Ismael, who was beaten by his father so badly that his mental and physical capacities were permanently impaired. Since that moment, José Luis throws rotted food at Ismael when he sees him. This gains him acceptance from his peers, like

Francisco and Chang, so he continues to throw food throughout the story. People are social creatures that need confirmation in order to distinguish a person or a group as different. If they do not have this, then they become Others themselves, which is undeniably a negative feeling. The attacks on Ismael, like much of the Othering of immigrants in Spain, are rooted in fear. When José Luis looks at Ismael looks, he thinks to himself that his appearance “me da miedo” [scares me] (Méndez Guédez 29). By demonstrating that Othering is a natural, universal process, Méndez Guédez cancels the idea that only certain populations, such as Spaniards, make distinctions between themselves and other populations. Instead, the author presents this as a *human* phenomenon that has seriously negative effects. The consequences of José Luis’ actions are feelings of fear, discomfort and remorse. Additionally, Mariana is angry with him for his violent treatment of the boy. Eventually Ismael, as an Other feeling alienated, fights back by spitting in José Luis’ face (Méndez Guédez 193). The fact that Ismael retaliates after a long spell in which he seems to be unaffected by the violence is telling. This disproves the traditional argument that immigrants are inherently violent and uncivilized versus Spaniards, and instead demonstrates the importance of conditions in producing violence. Someone who feels threatened, alone and different will eventually defend him/herself.

The use of a child protagonist allows Méndez Guédez a certain flexibility to present the Othering which occurs towards immigrants. Children are most likely to perceive overt negativity, particularly vocal negativity, above all else. Because of this, the more subtle ways of distinguishing people, such as the “poorly-hidden looks of disdain” discussed by Etxebarria, do not always appear in José Luis’ story. The book begins with

an instance of vocal Othering. The very first paragraph tells of a beggar, “un muerto” [a dead man] as José Luis refers to him, who lives near the protagonist’s home (Méndez Guédez 11). José Luis and Mariana never give him any money, which angers him and provokes him to yell at them, “viva España” [long live Spain] and “viva francu [sic]” [long live Franco] (Méndez Guédez 11). The author employs the use of a Spanish character of questionable sanity to demonstrate the attitudes that some Spaniards – who are more conscious of social norms – might also harbor but do not voice. “El muerto” actively asserts his own Spanish identity by excluding the Others. He can certainly tell that José Luis is not Spanish, and while the point is not that this man supported General Franco during his regime (though he might have), he becomes more patriotic when faced with a “threat” to his way of life in which he sees only people who look similar and who have been raised practicing traditions like his. By mentioning the dictatorial regime, aimed at maintaining traditional Spanish culture, he shows that he rejects the “invasion” of foreigners that seems to destroy his city.

Despite being a more covert form of distinction, the “gaze” or the “look” mentioned in the previous chapter is even obvious to the protagonist at times. For example, José Luis and Augusto are riding on the metro one day when José Luis notices “esa señora gorda, esa señora de pelo amarillo y con un crucifijo que nos mira de medio lado como si le costara respirar cuando estamos cerca de ella, y que aparta las rodillas cuando se tropieza con las rodillas de mi hermano” [that fat woman, that woman with the yellow hair who wears a crucifix that looks at us out of the corner of her eyes as if it were difficult for her to breathe when we are near her and who moves her legs when her knees accidentally brush my brother’s] (Méndez Guédez 150). José Luis notices her among

several other people on the metro that day, and her behavior stands out to him as strange. He finds it curious that a person would look at them in such a way, as if he knows somehow that it is wrong but cannot understand why. As a child, he notices the things that he finds different, such as her yellow hair that is probably lighter than his, though he does not seem to completely grasp the concept of nationality as an important factor in defining people. It is interesting that he also notices her crucifix. Due to Spanish colonization of Latin America, most countries in Latin America not only speak Spanish, but are also predominantly Catholic. José Luis is no exception, yet this similarity seems to be lost on the woman, barred by other factors. This situation exposes the ridiculousness of distinctions that are often founded on little concrete evidence, for in reality there are few fundamental differences between Spaniards and immigrants. The fact that José Luis remarks the situation as bizarre exposes Méndez Guédez' message: the Othering that is based on so little has a real effect on people. Yet perhaps Méndez Guédez suggests, because large-scale difference is a relatively new phenomenon in Spain, that Spaniards might not realize the impact or even the existence of this Otherness. Again, many of my Spanish survey respondents claimed to have no contact and no stereotypes of immigrants. Yet naturally, immigrants (like any group) will notice the Othering towards them, even the most subtle absence of acknowledgement of a person, more than a Spaniard is likely to notice his/her own actions. Méndez Guédez' use of a child protagonist allows the reader to see these processes from the perspective of someone who has not yet been persuaded by differences in race, nationality, or color as points of fundamental distinction between people. The effects of this strategy are profound: one questions the true

differences between people, and shows how the ignorance of these processes creates a damaged and divided society that affects all parties.

Just as the purely visual aspect – the act of seeing an Other – causes different facial expressions and reactions, there are several other factors that can cause one group to distance itself from another. Sabida notes that “the disagreeable sensation that the presence of a stranger provokes is related to how close he is, to the possibility of being able to touch him or to be touched by him,” a phenomenon that she titles “repulsion to contact” (54). What the Spanish woman in the metro is expressing, like many Spaniards might, could be related to a “fear of contamination” by the Other (Sabida 55). The separation between populations in Madrid, then, can be seen as motivated by fear; yet José Luis cannot fathom why anyone would be afraid of him or his family. Thus, Méndez Guédez invites the reader to question the fear; immigrants are human beings and are not so fundamentally different that they belong in the separate world in which they are automatically placed.

Méndez Guédez, like Etxebarria, presents appearance as an important factor in the creation of Otherness. Skin color is a prominent factor in people’s definition of a person as the same or different. For example, José Luis describes Pilar, a Spanish woman who lives in his apartment building and in whom Augusto has a romantic interest, by saying that “es blanca y tiene un lunar cerca de la boca” [she is white and has a birthmark near her mouth] (Méndez Guédez 23). The boy does not realize the implications of skin color in a racialized society, yet he notices the differences between his appearance and that of people with contrasting features. Again, Méndez Guédez is able to present the fact that it is normal for people to notice differences in skin color, yet that the classification of

people based on color can also have adverse effects. This becomes apparent to José Luis when, one day at school, some of his Spanish classmates insult him by calling him a “mulato bruto” [stupid mulatto/mixed race boy] (Mendez 123). He does not know quite what this means, yet he knows it is negative. He, like Ismael after being repeatedly humiliated, feels the need to fight back and lashes out at his classmates. Again, José Luis is not a violent person by nature; instead, as a direct recipient of racism that is meant to exclude him, he feels he must defend himself.¹¹

According to Carlos de la Torre and Steve Striffler, “migration has...exposed white and mestizo Ecuadorians to the realities of racism everywhere in the world. Relatively white and wealthy Ecuadorians find themselves racialized as nonwhites in the United States and Spain” (337). This process could be applied to the Latin American community in general in Madrid/Spain. It is, for most *madrileños*, immediately apparent that an Ecuadorian/Latin American is not Spanish; they may not know the precise nationality of the person, but they sense that he/she is different simply based on physical features such as skin color or height (indeed, one *madrileño* survey respondent identified Ecuadorians as “bajos” [short] and “morenos” [dark]). Many Spaniards tend to view Latin American immigrants as part of the same group, not distinguishing their separate cultural identities but placing them into one homogenous, negatively-stigmatized category despite their unique national identities and traditions. The immigrant may not characterize him/herself as mixed race or dark, like José Luis, yet for the purposes of

¹¹ This situation is reminiscent of that of Nicky in *Cosmofobia*. It demonstrates the misconceptions that society often has of the origins of violence. Nicky is associated, as a mulatto, with a violent nature. He is assumed to be exposed to more violence than might a Spanish child, for example, and to emulate what he is taught. The reader can see, however, that this assumption is unwarranted for an entire group in the example of José Luis. He is not violent by nature, and only lashes out when he feels stressed or threatened. Thus, both authors critique the popular belief that the origin of violence is not intrinsic, but rather provoked by circumstances regardless of one’s race or national origin.

Spanish society, he/she must conform to this pejorative identity. This is the product of the “othering” process, and at the same time proves the existence of postcolonial attitudes towards immigrants. To live in Spanish society, they conform to an Other identity that places them in an inferior position.

Negative perceptions of immigrants can be aggravated where there are large groups of immigrants in the same space. For instance, José Luis notes that locutorios and parks are places where one can see many immigrants, of the same or different nationalities, together at the same time. Although this can be an important community-forming experience for immigrants, it makes their presence not only more visible, but audible due to increased noise – which is a social cultural construction due to the subjective character of what is considered an “acceptable” decibel level and what is not, what is pleasing to the ears and what is not (Sabida 52). Sabida denotes this as a “racist auditory refinement,” a tool used to define the limits of labeling someone as “foreign” or “strange” (52). I find it relevant to mention that eleven percent of *madrileño* survey respondents mentioned either direct references to loudness (“cuando están bebidos y no dejan dormir” [when they are drunk and they keep us up]), or to a general lack of respect (“no respetan nada” [they don’t respect anything]) which could also be taken as a failure to conform to these predetermined, acceptable Spanish decibel levels. Méndez Guédez, like my surveys, conveys that there are certain preconceptions of Latin Americans as disrespectfully loud that seem to impose a block towards their integration into society.

Méndez Guédez describes several instances in which “noise” becomes problematic for immigrant communities. For example, in the park, “algunas veces nos juntamos con otras familias y cocinamos” [sometimes we get together with other families

and we cook] (Méndez Guédez 149). The author shows both the separation of worlds and the ways in which immigrants are distinguished in Madrid, for José Luis says that “algunos españoles se acercan, comparten con nosotros pero a veces llega la policía y cuando empiezan a pedir papeles nos escondemos entre los árboles” [some Spaniards come, they share with us but sometimes the police come and when they begin asking for our papers we hide in the trees] (Méndez Guédez 149). This seems to suggest that Spaniards do not want to acknowledge immigrants in general; when they become so visible, audible, even able to be easily smelled because of the preparation of their food, they are quickly identified not only as different, but as a problem. When many immigrants are together, the police check papers because they assume that they will be able to catch foreigners who reside in the city illegally.¹²

The experiences of José Luis’ family – which can be taken as a sample of those of many Latin American immigrants in Madrid – demonstrate why there is so much tension at home. The protagonist writes, “qué lástima: ponerse tan triste mamá en estos días. Justo cuando mi padre tiene tanto trabajo que ni los fines de semana viene a Madrid. Justo ahora. Si él estuviese no habría este silencio en la casa” [What a shame that mama is so sad these days. Just when my father has so much work that he doesn’t even come into Madrid on weekends. Just now. If he were here there wouldn’t be so much silence in the house] (Méndez Guédez 59). In reality, his parents are fighting and have temporarily separated. Tensions such as unemployment have worn on the family, and from the pieces of scattered information that the protagonist gives, the reader can tell that the process of migration has caused serious problems. Although José Luis does not fully understand

¹² The documentary “Extranjeras” by Helena Taberna addresses this issue as well.

why this is happening, he still senses that there is something wrong. Clearly, the stress caused by the family's conditions affect everyone.

The association of immigrants with violence addressed by Etxebarria also dominates in Méndez Guédez, but once again from a different perspective. José Luis confirms, at least within his family, that violence does occur. My *madrileño* respondents' multiple citations of violence, then, are not completely erroneous. Some described Ecuadorians as "violentos" [violent], and when asked what they bring to Spanish society, several respondents said that they bring "violencia" [violence], "delincuencia" [delinquency], and "bandas" [gangs]. Yet what Spaniards do not seem to, or want to, understand is that in every instance, the violence is provoked by some deeper-rooted cause. Méndez Guédez suggests that the accumulation of discrimination and exclusion experienced by foreigners in Madrid leads to stress on individuals and families. This in turn creates, in some cases, the violence, alcohol abuse and poor social conditions that many *madrileños* seem to attribute to the immigrants' inherent characteristics.

Interestingly, these are all problems that can and do exist within the Spanish population as well. For example, the Prados family provides an example of Spaniards who exhibit these violent tendencies that many wish to deny. Mr. Prados, according to José Luis, is violent and "siempre bebe cerveza" [always drinks beer] (Méndez Guédez 27). He is drunk the night that he beats Ismael to the point of severe injury. José Luis' mother calls the police, and although Mr. Prados is taken to jail, he is released the same night. This indicates several problems with the Spanish system regarding the rights of immigrants. First, the police would probably not have come to deal with the incident except for the fact that someone called to report the incident. This is juxtaposed with the various

examples in the novel of immigrant fights or even gatherings such as the cookout in the park, to which the police inevitably come to stop the incident and check legal documents. The fact that Mr. Prados is able to leave jail so quickly indicates more lenient punishment for Spaniards than for immigrants, who are assumed to be violent by nature. For Mr. Prados, this incident could be seen simply as a mistake from which he could recover and reform himself; an immigrant in the same position would be titled a criminal, a menace, inherently violent. It is perhaps no coincidence that violence among immigrants is openly portrayed in the media and that police respond so quickly to situations dealing with immigrants. This is a way for Spain to define its citizens as different from this Other, who must represent these traits of the postcolonial subject, connected to savagery and lack of civilization by misconceptions.

Méndez Guédez aims to show that the many examples of violence in the novel result from high tension and stress. Poor social conditions and lack of respect shown by the society that segregates immigrants into their own world provoke violence and animosity. For instance, one day Somaira and José Luis are standing in line at what is presumably the immigration office, “para sacarse los papeles” [to get papers] (Méndez Guédez 104). When the office opens, fights erupt in line because people are desperate to enter first. The police come quickly and even set off smoke bombs to calm the wild crowd. The fact that they came so quickly to the scene and proceeded immediately to drastic measures demonstrates the existence of a belief in the inherent violence that immigrants bring to Spain. Yet from the immigrant perspective, and from what Méndez Guédez shows of the fear in which immigrants live until they have their legal papers, one can see the roots of desperation which lead them to be violent. Without papers, foreigners

will feel more Othered than if they did have permits because of the fact that they can be thrown out of Spain at any point. Méndez Guédez once again offers a commentary on the underlying causes: stress and exclusion due to Otherness and to humiliating and inferior treatment. Because of false preconceptions about immigrants, Spaniards assume immigrants into this identity of an imposter. As Aykaç so eloquently expresses, migrants' "right not to be discriminated against is set against the question of whether they truly 'deserve' to be in Europe" (125). This is essentially what separates Spaniards and Latin Americans into two worlds within the same city. Foreigners are assumed to be illegal, to be violent, to want to take away Spaniards' jobs – another common complaint among my Spanish respondents – and are therefore excluded from the *madrileño* world despite mutually shared aspects such as language.

The effects of the stress and tension that this provokes trickle down to José Luis. He sometimes misbehaves, occasionally experiencing days in which he cannot handle the stress around him. He mentions several examples of doing "bad" things, like pushing his sister Agustina down to the ground. He says of his own actions, perplexed, "en la otra ciudad yo era bueno. Yo no hacía esas cosas" [in the other city I was good. I didn't do these things] (Méndez Guédez 18) He perceives the tension around him and reacts to it without really understanding why in Madrid he sometimes cannot control his strong emotions, with which he apparently did not struggle in his home country before migrating. When everyone in a household is stressed, even the younger members will react to the negativity in some way.

We have seen that Spaniards at times wish to segregate their own children from immigrant children because the foreign children are supposedly more violent, less

educated and developed, etc. Yet Méndez Guédez shows that these children really are no different or more violent than Spanish children. Once again, the circumstances distinguish the children. Most immigrant children experience tension at home and in society where they are treated as Others for reasons incomprehensible to them. The root cause of immigrant violence, much like Yamal in *Cosmofobia* suggests, has to do with the disruption of life and the situations in which immigrants find themselves. Méndez Guédez further illuminates the problem by identifying the root cause: the misconceptions that Spaniards often have of Latin Americans that are left unquestioned.

Language is another powerful and salient way for Spaniards to distinguish between themselves and “Others”. Some immigrant groups in Spain, such as the Moroccans or the Chinese, speak completely different languages and thus their distinction from Spaniards is obvious. Although Latin Americans speak Spanish, Spaniards can still distinguish based on the notable differences in vocabulary and accent despite the fact that they can generally understand each other. Ecuadorian immigrants, for example, can be identified, if not necessarily as Ecuadorians, as foreigners from Latin America based on their speech patterns. At other times, however, the language differences can be perceived as a source of frustration. José Luis interacts with children from several countries, particularly Mariana. On the very first page, José Luis says that “cuando ella habla rápido me cuesta entender” [when she speaks quickly it is hard for me to understand] (Méndez Guédez 11). They both speak Spanish, but for a child not used to the Castilian accent, the way that Mariana or other Spaniards speak seems different and foreign. Equally, Mariana observes variations in José Luis’ language as compared to her own. For instance, when he wants to tell her she has light-colored hair, he uses the word

“catira” instead of the “rubio” or “claro” normally used in Spain (Méndez Guédez 61). To this, she responds by saying, “qué palabra más rara” [what a strange word] (Méndez Guédez 61). It seems, then, that they speak the same language, a language that is used differently in their separate worlds.

This distinction based on language also shows in my surveys: multiple Ecuadorians surveyed mentioned the manners of communication and even the actual language patterns of *madrileños*. Among respondents, approximately thirty-six percent of them made reference to Spaniards’ forms of communication, speech or language. These adjectives included: “directo” [direct], “buen informador” [informative], “mandón” [bossy], “exigente” [demanding], “comunicativo” [communicative], “gritón” [loud-voiced], “cortante” [sharp in answers or tone], and “vulgar en lenguaje” [unrefined/coarse in speech]. I find it interesting that the differences in language were mentioned by the Ecuadorian respondents (not the *madrileños*).¹³ This might be explained by the fact that Latin Americans, who are forced to have and acknowledge contact with *madrileños*, facing certain types of discrimination or even derogatory speech, notice language as a factor that separates them from the Spanish world although they speak the same language.

This is not to say that making a distinction between oneself and other people based on speech is abnormal or necessarily negative. Yet as with Othering based on appearance, the accent appears often to be a basis for discrimination against the immigrant. At one point in the novel, Somaira makes calls to inquire about apartments for rent, for she wishes to break away from the cramped life with her family that deprives

¹³ It is interesting that the book from an immigrant perspective, *Una tarde con campanas*, mentions the differences in language, while *Cosmofobia*, ultimately from a Spanish perspective, does not, mirroring my surveys results.

her, like many immigrants in Madrid, of privacy. José Luis recounts that “todo el mundo le colgaba cuando le oían el acento” [everyone hung up when they heard her accent] (Méndez Guédez 165). She is immediately classified and judged as an Other for the way that she speaks. The landlords have preconceived notions that she and/or the people with whom she associates – assumed to be non-Spanish, Latin American Others – will bring to the apartment certain aforementioned “problems” such as noise, violence, and drunkenness. In this sense, then, Otherness creates a serious lack of opportunity for the immigrants, as they are fairly literally confined to certain areas and certain landlords that do not refuse to rent to them. In Somaira’s search for an apartment, the only people that will even speak to her about an apartment are employees of a realty company. They try to pressure her into buying a guidebook and tell her that it is impossible to find an apartment without it, “mucho menos nosotros que a lo mejor ni siquiera teníamos papeles” [especially not us since we probably didn’t even have papers] (Méndez Guédez 166). From the moment they hear her speak, they presuppose much about her as a different class of person: they assume that she is less intelligent, inferior and an illegal immigrant who knows little or nothing about life in Spain.

The Otherness that immigrants undergo may create feelings of resentment and resistance on the part of the immigrants. José Luis’ father acts particularly as the voice for maintaining the distinction between Castilian Spanish and Latin American Spanish speech patterns. He is proud of the saying “Chévere cambur”, a Latin American expression meaning that something is “good” (Méndez Guédez 39). He relishes the fact that these words mean nothing to Spaniards, that this is something that he and his family can maintain, and he hopes that his children will continue to say it in order to distinguish

their culture from the *madrileño* one that surrounds them. José Luis also quotes his father, on Sundays on his “tercera cerveza” [third beer], going through a list of words and instructing his son to maintain his own Latin American words: “No digas coche, se dice carro, no digas sandía, se dice patilla...” [Don’t say “coche” (car), say “carro”, don’t say “sandía (watermelon), say “patilla”...] (Méndez Guédez 85). His father, perhaps out of resentment of Spanish ways and a wish to retain his own culture, rejects the assimilation of language that he might notice in the confused José Luis who is influenced by so many cultures. With this, Méndez Guédez demonstrates that a natural reaction by the excluded group can be to exclude in return, thus reinforcing the separation of Spanish and Latin American worlds in Madrid. *Madrileños* obviously have preconceived notions of Latin American immigrants that present an obstacle towards integration; the backlash that is created because of Spaniards’ refusal to challenge and change their views seems to solidify these very views. In my surveys, several *madrileño* respondents mentioned an unwillingness to integrate on the part of Ecuadorians, described by one respondent as “poco abiertos a integrarse en la cultura española” [not open to integrate into Spanish culture], and, by another (previously cited) as demonstrating “indignación para los de aquí” [anger towards Spaniards].

One can conclude from *Una tarde con campanas* that this process of Othering in Madrid creates a feeling of isolation among immigrants. When José Luis and his family first came to Spain, he was forced to repeat many times that he was coming for two months only, to visit his uncle Paco. At first he believed it to be true, not realizing that his family had to lie to enter Spain without being sent back to the tough conditions they were leaving behind in their home country. But José Luis writes that “hoy ya sé que no tengo

ningún tío Paco. Nosotros no tenemos a nadie en Madrid” [now I know that I don’t have an uncle Paco. We don’t have anyone in Madrid] (Méndez Guédez 116). This statement gives voice to the situation that many Latin American immigrants face. They often come to Spain fleeing adverse conditions and seeking better ones; yet sometimes, they have no real connections in the host country. On top of this, *madrileños* generally – though there are definite exceptions, such as the Cunqueiros – do not welcome the newcomers. Instead, whether or not they realize it, Spaniards make the immigrants feel different, as Others who do not belong, isolating them as if on another planet.

Postcolonial Views

Like Etxebarria, Méndez Guédez addresses the widespread existence of postcolonial views among Spaniards. These attitudes further reinforce the separation of worlds by subordinating the Other in addition to isolating him/her. Yet by providing the reader with a non-Spanish perspective, he is able to show how immigrants themselves experience this as part of their everyday lives in Madrid. Postcolonial aspects are especially pertinent in regards to the relationships between Latin American countries and Spain because of the extraordinary number of ways in which the two places are linked. They share several cultural aspects, including language – which, as we have seen, has slight variations by country but which are mutually intelligible – and religion. There is even an established history of migration between the two regions, for, as we have seen, Spaniards were immigrants in Latin America throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This migration is anything but a distant memory. According to Octavio Cabezas Moro, the most crucial moment for Spanish emigration towards Latin America

occurred between 1946 and 1952 due to the combination of economic and political strife of the early years of *franquismo*, though as we have seen, Spanish emigration continued until the end of the 1970s (141-142). As addressed in the introduction, the oldest generation of *madrileño* survey respondents, those over 55 years old, remembers the emigrations as part of their lives. One of these respondents even acknowledged having family members who emigrated themselves. Certainly, then, the links between Spain and Latin America are undeniable. Yet a prominent idea in *Una tarde con campanas* is that the angle from which these connections are seen is asymmetrical between the two places.

Boix and del Olmo cite several different ideologies commonly employed by Spanish schools of thought to explain the ties as they are seen in a postcolonial light. These include the idea that the “New World” was a “creation” of the European settlers; that Spain was a mediator that allowed the Latin American groups to become more European; the missions in South America were the instruments by which Hispanic identity was cultivated there; and that Spanish language is a unifying element between the cultures (65). These attitudes clearly further postcolonial structures, for they reinforce the separation of colonizer and colonized, of master and subject, of creator and created. In terms of relevance to migration, Spaniards moved to South America throughout more than a century, for the most part welcomed into various countries but especially into Argentina. Yet now that the roles have reversed, and Latin Americans seek refuge in Spain, it is clear that many Spaniards do not wish to see the similarities or even acknowledge the historical links. José Luis remarks very few differences between himself and Spaniards in his narration, yet it is clear that his family’s relationships with most Spaniards – again, excepting the Cunqueiro family – is one of inferiority reminiscent of

the opposition of colonizer-colonized during the colonial era. They have few Spanish friends, and likely have contact with Spaniards almost exclusively in work settings.

Méndez Guédez creates an extremely significant and telling portrayal of postcolonial attitudes held by Spaniards through a dialogue between Domitila and the other woman renting the room in José Luis' apartment. She recalls a conversation she had with an older woman from Madrid, who first states, upon seeing her and immediately recognizing her as an Other from Latin America, “estará contenta con este calor, se sentirá como en su tierra” [you must be happy with this hot weather, you must feel as if you were in your homeland] (Méndez Guédez 72). Domitila further recounts that “después la señora me preguntó si en nuestros países ya no quedaba nadie, si todos nos habíamos venido” [afterwards the woman asked me if there was anyone left in our countries, if everyone had come here] (Méndez Guédez 72). These questions indicate the types of engrained attitudes that many *madrileños* maintain. The older woman most likely said these things innocently, simply believing common misconceptions without an adequate education on the processes of immigration. Nuria Vilanova states that there has been a general absence of investigation on the part of Spain about its relationship with Latin America, which she attributes to a continuing “colonial gaze” that “at times is paternalistic, at other times snobby and pretentious, on many occasions full of racism and prejudices” (141). This explains this character's false assumptions. Méndez Guédez constructs this scenario to demonstrate the real and continued existence of postcolonial structures that is often due to lack of understanding and knowledge. The woman first of all assumes that Latin America is a drastically different world, mirroring the way that Madrid society contains separate microcosms of immigrants and Spaniards in the same

physical space. She envisions Latin American countries as tropical infernos that contain people that are fundamentally dissimilar – perhaps even likened to natives or savages.¹⁴

Domitila's friend suggests to her that she should have responded to the first comment by saying that "nosotras venimos del Caribe, señora, no venimos del Infierno" [we come from the Caribbean, ma'am, not from Hell] (Méndez Guédez 72). This is a telling suggestion, for it pinpoints the postcolonial problem: the woman, representing the Spanish postcolonial psyche, compares Latin America to Hell, a place that is negative, hot, sinful, attributed to a colonial subject/an Other than Spaniards do not want to be. The Spanish woman's second statement indicates the ignorance that has come from the general lack of education about the links between regions. She only sees the larger numbers of immigrants that have come into her home country/city in the past few years, yet fails to look further into the past. Domitila tells her not to worry, that "allá habían quedado todos los primos, y los tíos y los amigos de ella que habían tenido que irse de acá en los cincuenta para que les diéramos trabajo" [there were left all of her (the Spanish woman's) cousins, aunts, uncles and friends that had to leave Spain in the 1950s so that we would give them jobs] (Méndez Guédez 72). To Domitila, there is no difference between past Spanish immigration in Latin America and the Latin American immigration, representing a political exile, in Spain today. Yet Spaniards seem to view these as two distinct processes; Latin America should naturally have allowed Spaniards to enter – perhaps because they consider that these "colonies" owe their existence Spanish rule and influence – yet when it comes to letting Latin Americans into Spain, the situation becomes more problematic. It creates a contamination of pure Spanish culture by inferior, less civilized and more native-like people, for, as Rey Chow suggests, "the native...has

¹⁴ See Rey Chow.

been used by the West as a means to promote and develop its own intellectual contours” (132). By viewing Latin American immigrants as natives, and excluding them from Western society, Spanish people can create a seemingly superior identity in many respects.

It is plain even through José Luis’ naïve narration that immigrants are not quite treated like human beings from the same world, but rather as if they were from another, far away and fundamentally distinct from the streets of Madrid. Like Etxebarria, Méndez Guédez shows how immigrants are seen as inferior by nature. The stereotype that Madrid schools with large immigrant populations are inherently and fundamentally underdeveloped is addressed from another angle. José Luis recalls that when he first came to Madrid, his teacher protested his presence in class because he had arrived “con mucho tiempo de atraso” [so late into the school year], implying that he has fallen behind the other students (Méndez Guédez 123).¹⁵ Yet through this example, the reader can see once again that this academic lag is not inherent, but rather due to circumstance. For instance, the reader pieces together that José Luis migrated with his family because there was a repressive military government in his home country.¹⁶ If this were the case, he probably would not have had a complete or continuous education as compared to present-day Spanish children who did not have the same kinds of disruptions and discontinuity; whatever he did learn would have been regulated by the corrupt government. The gaps in his education are due to the conditions that he endured, and his family left their country in hopes of bettering these conditions. What is significant is that this is seen by Spaniards

¹⁵ This could also imply, however, that the education in his home country is behind education in Spain.

¹⁶ One might infer José Luis’ home country to be Venezuela because of the reference to the military government, but it is never explicitly stated. This is interesting, though, for it shows that a child does not yet understand the concept of borders, of changes in treatment based solely on geographical location, etc.

not as a temporary problem that might be remedied with some extra attention, but as a condition of the immigrants themselves. Luisa Martín Rojo brings to light the fact that “difference is seen as a ‘disadvantage’ or deficit that needs to be compensated for” in the Spanish school system, and that, perhaps consequentially, immigrant children are not redistributed evenly among public schools to avoid this very “disadvantage” (283). Be it because violence is considered inherent to their nature, or because they are not seen as sufficiently intelligent, even those immigrant children from Latin America who come to Spain speaking the language are regarded as less academically capable than Spanish children. This, in a way, predetermines immigrant children to be seen as both Others and inferior before having a chance to prove themselves, for separating them in education is a way to “restrict paths to co-existence and integration,” furthering the population separation into the younger generations (Martín Rojo 285).

The aforementioned violence associated with immigration provides another look through the postcolonial lens that shades many Spanish eyes. As natives or savages, these people are labeled as less civilized by nature. There are neighborhoods in Madrid, such as the Lavapiés that Etxebarria portrays, that are labeled as “immigrant neighborhoods” in which communities of foreigners form all but isolated from Spaniards. These are the places in which housing is least expensive, which often translates to small spaces and poorly-maintained facilities. These areas are neglected, yet the low quality of the neighborhoods tends to be blamed on immigrants. María del Pilar Quicios García and Estela Flores Ramos note the vicious cycle that in reality leads to the poor conditions attributed to the immigrant presence: “Given the price of housing in Spain, the immigrant

population, logically, has to take shelter wherever it can in often inhumane conditions and paying disproportionate, even abusive, rents for its accommodations” (2-3).

In *Una tarde con campanas*, Augusto “se queja porque dice que vivimos muy apretados” [complains because he says that we live in very tight quarters] (Méndez Guédez 79). In the apartment, in one room and in the same bed sleep José Luis, Agustina and their mother and father; in the next tiny room, Augusto sleeps in a small bed; in the third bedroom sleep Domitila, her friend and their two respective daughters; and finally Somaira sleeps on the couch in the living room (Méndez Guédez 79). The dilemma of immigrants when finding housing is somewhat of a vicious cycle. As the trend of migration to Spain consolidates itself, turning into chain migration of people from the same countries, these same neighborhoods continue to be populated out of necessity, and are ever overlooked and ignored.

Adding to the poor reputation of these neighborhoods is the phenomenon known as *camas calientes* – literally, “warm beds,” a term referring to the phenomenon in some immigrant apartments of renting not a room in an apartment but a bed or even a place in a shared bed for several hours in order to sleep between jobs (Quicios García and Flores Ramos 11). Both men and women participate in this process, particularly those that have come to Spain without any family and with few resources (Quicios Garcia and Flores Ramos 11). According to Quicios García and Flores Ramos, “it is necessary to have arrived in the country legally and to have established oneself in order to benefit from the system” of social security in terms of finding housing, for many people will not rent to anyone who does not have a residence permit (13). There are, then, resources for immigrants, yet they are difficult to obtain because of the complications of arriving in

Spain with permits already in hand.¹⁷ Many simply cannot do this, however, as they may rush out of their home countries to escape dangerous or destitute conditions.

José Luis' father participates in the phenomenon of *camas calientes* by renting bed space in their apartment to other immigrants in an effort to earn extra money. He places four mattresses on the balcony and rents places to men needing a place to sleep for a few hours. This does far more than confirm the difficulties that immigrants, particularly recently arrived immigrants, face in finding housing. It takes a toll on José Luis' family first and foremost. José Luis describes how “gente rara” [strange people] would come into their home, sleep for a few hours, and then leave in time for another set of strangers to come in and sleep a while before leaving as well (Méndez Guédez 179). Additionally, José Luis' mother says that “uno de los hombres había querido abrazarla en la cocina” [one of the men tried to hug her in the kitchen] (Méndez Guédez 180). This finally provokes his father to throw away the mattresses and stop renting space on the “warm beds,” yet before this, the family tolerated the stress because of their need for extra money.

Aside from being an uncomfortable situation for the immigrants themselves, this process can contribute to postcolonial misconceptions in that it places an unusually large number of people in one single apartment. Not only is this uncomfortable for those living in the space, it inevitably increases the noise level in the area. Several *madrileño* respondents in my surveys mentioned the noise that Ecuadorian immigrants make, identifying them by their decibel levels as different, inconsiderate, even uncivilized. Yet what Spaniards fail to see is the larger picture, which Méndez Guédez presents with this scenario. Immigrants are all but confined to certain living conditions, perhaps even

¹⁷ This process is detailed in María del Pilar Quicios García and Estela Flores Ramos.

unable to find or afford housing at first. They must often cohabit with larger numbers of people than might be desirable, in tighter conditions and in overlooked areas. Indeed, Quicios García and Flores Ramos note that a possible solution employed by many new immigrants is to live grouped by nationality in the periphery of the cities (7). More people in one area will always make noise despite their conscious efforts to be quiet. They are not uncivilized people trying to maintain tribe-like communal living, for example, yet when Spaniards are only aware of a fraction of the whole scenario, they may reinforce their own postcolonial viewpoints. The entire situation, then, reinforces the separation of the Spanish and immigrant populations: socially, Latin Americans are excluded and isolated for unaccepted “characteristics” such as loudness; physically, they are further isolated as they become more established in certain “immigrant” neighborhoods.

Another of the arenas in which postcolonial structures remain firmly in place is the job market. There seems to be an overwhelmingly shared view among Spaniards and *madrileños* that immigrants only come to Spain to work. For example, one of the Spanish respondents in my surveys described Ecuadorians solely as “gente que viene para trabajar” [people who come to work]. Yet even if this is the case, they are clearly not given a fair opportunity in finding work; postcolonial social structures are furthered in Madrid today through employment. The opportunities that are accessible to immigrants are far sparser than those that are available and attainable for native Spaniards. Yet this is most definitely not proportionate to ability, intelligence, or even educational background, particularly regarding Latin American immigrants. As mentioned, Latin American immigrants tend to have equal or even superior educational backgrounds as compared to

Spanish citizens, with a significant proportion of incoming migrants having completed some kind of higher education.¹⁸ Yet they rarely are recognized for their credentials when looking for employment. It is not because they studied under different educational systems that Spain refuses to recognize their training, however. In reality, they face this situation because there is only demand in certain sectors of the economy in Madrid today. One can attribute this to the fact that “work niches” – occupations that demand and are reserved for immigrant labor because of a lack of Spanish workers to do them – have opened since the late 1980s when Spain joined the European Union and the welfare state was more or less consolidated.¹⁹ The use of immigrant workers in certain sectors of the economy has become an important strategy for many employers, for it allows them to reduce costs in a more uncertain and competitive workplace; yet this has created a general, progressive lowering of salaries and working conditions in certain economic sectors that further their rejection among the Spanish population (Parella Rubio 120).

There undoubtedly are fewer career options available to most immigrants entering Spain. Because it is difficult to acquire a work permit, many find themselves in unofficial, irregular work situations (Gil Araujo 211). This shines through in *Una tarde con campanas* not only in the examples of employment that the reader finds within José Luis’ family, but in the effects that this has on them. His mother and Somaira work in the domestic sector, cleaning houses and caring for the elderly. His father and Augusto work several jobs throughout the course of the story, including in the construction and the agricultural industries, performing tasks such as building swimming pools – a luxury item that wealthy Spaniards can afford – or picking lemons and tomatoes. These are seasonal

¹⁸ See Quicios García and Flores Ramos, and Parella Rubio for more information about these topics.

¹⁹ The concept of “work niches” is discussed in both Cachón Rodríguez and Parella Rubio.

jobs and appear, from the way in which José Luis tells it, to be all but stable; there are times in which they are employed and others when they have no work. This is interesting, for one of the reasons for coming to Spain for this family was the unemployment in their home country. His father and Augusto were without jobs before migrating, and “muchos de los hombres estaban igual” [many of the men were in the same situation] (Méndez Guédez 81).

Yet when they come to Spain, they still cannot find steady work. For example, José Luis recalls a moment early in their stay in Madrid in which Augusto was still unemployed. The two brothers spent hours walking around Madrid looking in newspapers and in shop windows to see if anyone was hiring workers. Frustrated after a fruitless day of searching, Augusto said that he wanted to leave Spain, to return to his homeland, yet it does not seem to be possible because of the situation there. When he tried to call people in his country from a payphone on the street, all numbers are busy. He grumbled that “nuestro país nunca iba a salir adelante porque la gente se la pasaba hablando por teléfono” [our country was never going to move forward because the people spent all day talking on the phone] (Méndez Guédez 175). This demonstrates a result of persistent postcolonial views, for it shows that many immigrants have become convinced of a certain inferiority about their countries. According to Stuart Hall, not only did the colonial experience allow the dominant power to construct the colonized “as different and other within the categories of knowledge of the West by those regimes. They had the power to make us see and experience *ourselves* as ‘Other’” (225). He has come to believe and even embody the idea that his country is delayed in comparison to Spain. His attitude

reveals that he believes things are done less efficiently there than in Spain, and therefore, to make a living for himself he must be in Spain, striving to do things the Spanish way.

Once in Spain, instead of finding the success that they dream of, many immigrants fall further prey to postcolonial structures. They are forced to accept whatever work is available, such as the agricultural or construction work that Augusto and his father find themselves doing. This is far from desirable, and is most likely not what most immigrants have done formerly or have trained to do, yet they must take it. In essence, these are the jobs that have not been covered by the Spanish workforce, “either because of the roughness and hardship of the work, or because of the length of the workday, or because of the low wages that it pays” (Quicios García and Flores Ramos 29). Yet the immigrant finds him/herself at a crossroads, for if he/she does not take this type of position, he/she cannot survive or incorporate themselves into Spanish society.

The price, however, is the reinforced separation of Spaniards and Latin Americans into their postcolonial worlds of colonizer on one hand and colonized on the other. This can naturally be a source of embarrassment or stress. For instance, knowing that his father and brother work in the fields picking produce, José Luis points to the tomatoes in his salad one day and asks if Augusto had picked them. His mother responds “tal vez. Después suspiraba. Triste” [maybe. Then she sighed. Sad] (Méndez Guédez 121). The work is gravely undervalued, which lowers the self-esteem of immigrants who may begin to feel subordinate and inferior. At the same time, some Spanish employers paradoxically embody the paternalistic approach to postcolonial structures mentioned above by Vilanova. They regard their hiring of immigrant workers – with either “illegal” or “legal” status – as a type of favor to the immigrants. They believe that few employers

will hire immigrants, and see the fact that they provide foreigners with work at all as a good deed. In return, they may expect the workers to be entirely grateful to have a job and, in return, expect them not to complain or denounce their lousy conditions or low pay.

The immigrant's anticipated purpose in Madrid, then, becomes reminiscent of colonial structures: they must do their work exactly as they are told. This can lead to slave-like conditions with demanding work and long hours. For instance, José Luis remembers instances in which his father and brother came home – though this was not very frequently, as they had to spend time near the jobsites – “quemados por el sol...y tenían las uñas verdes. Y las manos le sangraban a Augusto” [burnt by the sun...and their fingernails had turned green. And Augusto's hands were bleeding] (Méndez Guédez 121). Yet nothing is done to change these conditions. Unlike Madrid citizens, who are able to denounce improper treatment and conditions and defend their rights, immigrants – particularly those who do not possess legal residence documents – cannot refute their situations. They have no voice, and postcolonial structures prevent this from changing. Although the rights are better now for immigrants since the institution of the Plan Regional para la Inmigración in 2000, allowing some foreigners to gain residence and work permits, the process can be difficult, and those that do not have the permit do not reap any benefits (Quicios García and Flores Ramos 31-32). When the government can more or less decide who to allow into the country, this leads to the possibility of what Ricard Morén-Alegret denotes as “institutional racism”: a situation in which the denial of residence and work permits to foreign workers leads to an “appropriation by employers of surplus value from workers” (4). In essence, if an immigrant has an illegal status,

he/she cannot as easily speak out against certain treatment because it could lead to “expulsion from Iberia at any time” (Morén-Alegret 4). Thus, at both a legislative and personal level, the immigrant is placed in a submissive and vulnerable position without a real ability to protest if they want to stay in Spain. Aykaç’s identification of the European mindset of whether or not immigrants “deserve” to be on the continent prevents true integration or dialogue between the two worlds.

Economic factors may also affect Spanish attitudes towards the relative advantages and disadvantages of immigration. I sense that there was further aggravation and hostility on the part of the Spanish respondents of my surveys than might have been present in a better economy because of the aforementioned economic crisis that affected Spain heavily during the spring/summer of 2009. Lorenzo Cachón Rodríguez outlines a common relationship between economic woes and attitudes of the native population towards immigrants: Crisis leads to unemployment, which leads to scarcity, which then leads to increased competition in the job market; because of this, the native population feels the need first to socially exclude the “outsiders”, and as the crisis becomes more severe, exclusion turns into hostility, then xenophobia and finally racist violence (53). This is an interesting cycle that certainly held true in Spain in 2009. In the context of the aggravated economic situation, several survey respondents cited the competition for jobs and even the presence of xenophobia as a by-product of immigrant presence in Madrid. Yet I find it interesting that, despite the fact that many Spaniards saw immigration as a threat to job security, the immigrants do the jobs that are most affected by a crisis because most have only seasonal contracts, or no contract at all. Thus, I would argue that the roots of this hostility and xenophobia towards immigrants run deeper than simple a

economic downturn; instead, they lie in a cultural belief in postcolonial societal structures that generally leave immigrants in a world of servitude and Spaniards in a world in which they are served.

The processes of postcolonialism are inextricably linked with Otherness. As I will demonstrate further in the next section, and as I have already shown in my analysis of *Cosmofobia*, these processes affect women to an even greater degree than they do men. There is essentially no way for immigrants to fully integrate because they are always seen not only as different but also as inferior. To demonstrate this, Méndez Guédez offers the telling case of José Luis' neighbor, a fellow "illegal" immigrant. One day, the neighbor witnesses a woman being beaten by a man in the metro, and tries to stop the situation. The neighbor is pushed onto the tracks, losing a foot and having one side of his face mangled. Later, "el vecino apareció en la televisión con sus dos caras, saltando en un solo pie para darle la mano al alcalde y recibir su permiso de trabajo y una medalla porque él era un héroe" [the neighbor was on television with his two faces, hopping on one foot in order to shake the mayor's hand and receive his work permit and a medal because he was a hero] (Méndez Guédez 15). This is revealing of the situation for Latin American immigrants in Spain, for it demonstrates the trap that postcolonial structures provide. The man is now officially "accepted" into the Spanish system and is given his legal right to reside in the country with the so desperately desired papers. In order to do so, however, he had to lose a part of himself. José Luis hears his neighbor whistling happily in the stairwells after the incident, yet the extent to which he can truly be happy is questionable. He will likely not be fully accepted into Spanish society, for he is not Spanish as far as many are concerned. Yet he no longer truly belongs to the immigrant community, as José

Luis informs us that his family no longer talks to him. He is, a bit like Yamal in *Cosmofobia*, floating between the two worlds. Yet his case contrasts with Yamal's precisely because he is not accepted. This demonstrates Méndez Guédez's belief in the fact that because of Otherness and postcolonial prejudices, immigrants in Madrid today are not able to fully cross over to the other side and are instead isolated in a separate world.

Gender

The issues facing female immigrants, as shown in my surveys and as already explored in the analysis of *Cosmofobia*, are often greater and sometimes distinct from those that affect men. Certain issues, such as prostitution, are exclusive to women. This is a serious problem that affects many women both foreign and Spanish in Madrid, yet it is not directly addressed in the novel. José Luis is a pre-adolescent, to whom the concept of prostitution is beyond comprehension and who therefore will not be aware of the issue. Additionally, it cannot be denied that the novel is written from a male perspective. While Méndez Guédez certainly is aware of certain issues, like prostitution and domestic violence, he simply cannot empathize with aspects of women's issues because he has always been male. Thus, as in Etxebarria's account of the issue, Méndez Guédez also creates a gendered account. For instance, unlike some of the Latin American immigrants in Etxebarria, and contrary to the high numbers of Latin American women who come to Spain single or without their families, José Luis' mother and sister – like half of my female Ecuadorian survey respondents – belong to a family unit. The author is still able

to present a variety of the important problems that women face in general, though with a decided emphasis on those women who have migrated with family members.

One of the most significant challenges facing Latin American women in Madrid lies in finding and maintaining work. As we have seen, immigrants in general are challenged to find employment at all, let alone desirable positions that might pertain to their interests or any prior educational or professional formation. While men are seriously limited to certain sectors of the economy – namely agriculture, construction, hospitality and domestic and/or commercial services – female immigrants are even more restricted in their choices. As mentioned in the previous chapter, domestic service is overwhelmingly the most available sector for female immigrants. Scholars such as Vanesa Sáiz Echezarrieta and María José Sánchez Leyva suggest that Latin American women are typified in Spain as “traditional women,” whose situation is inevitably worse than that of Spanish women; they are consequentially assumed into a “subaltern position” because they belong to “a backwards and machista culture...come from underdeveloped areas and are poor” (178-179). The Spanish mindset thus considers them as Other women in contrast with Spanish women, most fit for domestic or sexual work and not qualified enough to do certain tasks.

The gender divide in employment is expressed in José Luis’ family. As we know, his father and Augusto have worked in agriculture and construction, performing different jobs according to the availability and season of the work. His mother and Somaira, by contrast, work exclusively in the domestic sector. José Luis recalls that “a veces mi madre tiene que ir a limpiar alguna casa” [sometimes my mother has to go clean someone’s house], not realizing that this is one of her only hopes for earning money to

help support the family (Méndez Guédez 183). Somaira takes care of an elderly Spanish woman, employed thanks to the growing need in Spain for geriatric care as Spanish women incorporate themselves into the workforce and have less time to look after their kin as regularly as is needed. This isolation into domestic work – and, to an extent, prostitution – comes once again from the dangerous preconceptions that Spanish society has of these “Other” women. They are restricted to these types of jobs because they are socially considered to be “feminine” due to their association with “submissiveness, obedience and the care of others” (Parella Rubio 121). Additionally, Parella Rubio identifies a patriarchal, perhaps even postcolonial, assumption that women will work for a lower salary and are more prepared to do routine tasks than men (121). Yet this cannot be true of women in general; Spanish women reject the positions that Latin American women fill, thus proving the postcolonial misconceptions that prevent these women from being accepted as equals in the *madrileño* world.

Méndez Guédez demonstrates through his characters not only the difficulties that immigrants face in finding work, but also the instability of these “immigrant sectors.” One can see that this instability is extremely stark for women. There are even fewer options available to women to find a new job in the likely case of unemployment. The stress caused by the threat of being without work is exemplified when the old woman for whom Somaira cares becomes sick. Somaira prays that the woman will make a recovery because “si la viejita se muere Somaira se queda sin trabajo. Y Somaira llora cuando piensa en eso” [if the old woman dies, Somaira will be left without work. And Somaira cries when she thinks about that] (Méndez Guédez 114). She knows how badly she and her family need the money that she earns, and how much more difficult life would be

without it. Her mother tries to console her by reminding her that there are many elderly people in Madrid. Yet Somaira “se acuerda de que la familia de la vieja es muy buena gente, porque no le pidieron nada, porque casi le pagan lo mismo que a las mujeres que tienen sus papeles y sus permisos [remembers that the old woman’s family is very nice, because they didn’t ask her for her papers, because they pay her almost the same amount as people pay women who have their papers and permits] (Méndez Guédez 114). She knows that most immigrant women, perhaps even some that have “papers,” do not fare as well as she has in securing (satisfactory) employment. Domestic workers find themselves at the mercy of their employers. Because of the private and subjective nature of the entire sector, it can sometimes lead to servile conditions that further solidify postcolonial structures. Although Somaira’s work conditions are not detailed, still Méndez Guédez adequately addresses the stress associated with domestic work for immigrant women in Madrid. This example shows the important fact that the conditions of domestic workers, because of the informality of the sector, depend directly on the employer (Parella Rubio 124). In essence, Somaira is lucky because her employers seem to treat her well, but the acknowledgement of the problem is there: many women must tolerate very poor circumstances and risk making little money and remaining isolated.

Latin American women in Spain are primarily working women as opposed to housewives. The percentage of the Latin American population that is actively working hovers around eighty percent, and women make up approximately fifty three percent of this population.²⁰ As mentioned, many are single or come to Spain without their families. Yet Méndez Guédez is able to show the difficulties faced by women who do have families with them in Madrid. According to Sandra Gil Araujo, “women are in general

²⁰ See Vanesa Sáiz Echezarrieta and María José Sánchez Leyva for statistics.

the ones responsible for the subsistence of their families, which is why they also find themselves obligated to find formal or informal work, in an effort to make up for the deficit in income” (193). If the immigrant women are married, like José Luis’ mother, they must supplement their husbands’ incomes which are most likely insufficient to support a family in Madrid. If they are single mothers, they must provide for the entire family. At the same time, however, they are still expected to provide childcare for their own children, cook food for their families, and ensure that the home is in order. The issue of the “double day” mentioned in the previous chapter is also prominent in Méndez Guédez. In addition to working one or more jobs, José Luis’ mother is still expected to maintain the household. Although the reader knows more about her duties inside the house because of José Luis’ limited vision of his mother’s activities, the reader knows that she works outside the home – to keep the homes of wealthy Spaniards clean as she does her own. Her availability for her children is thus limited by the need to earn a living. She therefore must rely on her older children, especially Somaira, to take care of José Luis when she cannot. José Luis recounts instances in which Somaira takes him with her on her outings, including when she goes out with her boyfriend. This affects Somaira in that she is bound by the necessity to take care of her brother, impeding her from exploring and developing her own options.

As postcolonial subjects labeled exotic, closer to nature and native, immigrant women often face sexual objectification. They are seen, as mentioned, as traditional women, whose function is “centered in their condition as mothers and as sexual beings” (Sáiz Echezarrieta and Sánchez Leyva 182-183). This is in contrast to Spanish women, who, since their incorporation into the working world, are seen as more equal to Spanish

men than immigrant women. In fact, Spanish men may consider immigrant women to have a different purpose or “function” in their society – to fulfill strictly “feminine” duties. Notably, Méndez Guédez presents the outlook as postcolonial, domineering, likening the women more to objects than to human beings. This is illustrated in the novel when José Luis tells the reader that “Somaira tiene el cabello amarillo...y cuando voy con ella los hombres la miran mucho” [Somaira has blonde hair...and when I am walking with her men look at her a lot] (Méndez Guédez 25). She is immediately identified as different, as an exotic Other. Men openly stare at her without thought to how she might feel. They reject her as a member of their own society, yet at the same time fantasize about her exoticism and her natural feminine characteristics. One can infer that these men most likely would not stare at a Spanish woman in the same way, thus Méndez Guédez demonstrates this process, combining Otherness, postcolonial views and gender issues, as a serious impediment towards integration.

The lack of respect paid to many immigrant women transfers to their personal relationships. Somaira represents an example of a common problem, low self-esteem, which prevents her from leaving negative situations and finding better ones. This places her in a subordinate position in her romantic relationships. The reader learns through the dialogues between Domitila and her friend of Somaira’s boyfriend. He is an immigrant as well (important because it shows a relative absence of dating outside of one’s “group”), yet he is married and has children. He repeatedly lies to Somaira and claims that he is in the process of getting a divorce. Domitila and her friend say of the situation, “hay que estar en la luna para pensar que ese tipo tiene buenas intenciones...hay mujeres que prefieren no darse cuenta” [you would have to be in the clouds to think that this guy has

good intentions...there are women that prefer not to see it] (Méndez Guédez 77). This reveals the common story of women who do not feel strong enough to end a relationship with a man even though she knows she should. It even makes her uncomfortable. For example, José Luis, who knows that there is something he does not like about the boyfriend, warns Somaira that her boyfriend has “sarna,”²¹ and that she shouldn’t get close to him. He describes Somaira’s reaction: “se ríe un poquito. Una risa muy rara, como para adentro, como pequeñita.” [she laughs a little bit. A very strange laugh, like an internal laugh, like a giggle] (Méndez Guédez 184). She becomes more vulnerable, likened to a young girl who lacks the strength and confidence needed to do anything about the relationship that she knows is harming her.

Domitila and her friend eventually reveal the most likely reason that Somaira chooses to fool herself into staying: the boyfriend has his “papers.” With this, Méndez Guédez once again highlights the effect of the stresses placed on Latin American immigrants, and how it may place women in subordinate positions both in their personal lives and in society. Domitila observes that “ella sentía que ese hombre podía representarla, ponerle una casita, sacarle los papeles” [she felt that this man could protect her, buy her a nice house, get her “papers”] (Méndez Guédez 210). Feeling an urgent need to survive, prosper, and escape the poor conditions that she has experienced, Somaira searches for a better life. This is embodied throughout the novel by a preoccupation to gain papers, for “acquisition of citizenship becomes the legal means for inclusion” (Wodak 60). Although this does not always mean a complete social inclusion, as has been demonstrated, having some form of legal permit removes the worry of forced

²¹ “Sarna” is a skin disease, like scabies, which usually implies transmission by being “on the streets” or by “sexual contact.” This provides an additional commentary from the author (not from José Luis, who would not comprehend the connotations of the disease) on the base character of Somaira’s boyfriend.

evacuation of Spain. This stress manifests itself differently in different people, but Méndez Guédez demonstrates in this case how painful and degrading this desperation can become for immigrant women, such that they stay, for instance, in abusive or unhealthy relationships.

Méndez Guédez shows that some Spaniards may at times take advantage of the vulnerability of immigrant women. The incident at the real estate office in which the agents use intimidation to nearly force Somaira to buy the housing guidebook shows how the most demeaning behavior is often reserved for immigrant women. The agents not only speak condescendingly to her, they also lock her in a room and take her wallet and passport until she pays them (Méndez Guédez 166-167). While most Spaniards probably would not do anything as drastic as this, the incident shows that it very likely can – and probably does – happen. The real estate agents can best intimidate an immigrant woman because she is the weakest of all. They consider her a foreigner, less familiar with the way their business works, and as a postcolonial subject, assuming that she is of inferior intelligence and ability. Méndez Guédez is able to demonstrate in Somaira this triple discrimination – Otherness, postcolonial views, and gender subordination – that Latin American women face in Madrid today.

Married women face even more personal issues as well. I have addressed the fact that the process of migration strains families. Because the weight of the family rests so heavily upon the woman, the effect on José Luis' mother – as on many Latin American women in Madrid – is significant. For example, issues arise in her marriage. As a child, José Luis is not aware of why his father is sometimes absent. He recalls that his father had not been home from the countryside in a long time when his mother takes him and

Agustina to visit their father in a hotel (Méndez Guédez 200). José Luis does not realize, as the reader does, that this means that his parents have fought and have temporarily separated. One can assume that the troubles in their marriage stem from stresses that the family experiences: limited and irregular availability of work and resources, uncomfortable conditions, worry of being caught and deported by the authorities for lack of permit, and constant and steady discrimination and isolation that they meet in Madrid.

The stresses of the migratory process can take tolls on mental health, particularly for women as they face increased problems in comparison to men. Carlota Solé addresses problems with depression and hysteria as a result of social conditions, and how women under stress use these as types of “escape routes” from their situations (260-261). This is evident in the case of José Luis’ mother. Indeed, the protagonist seldom sees his mother happy. The exception to this pattern, he informs the reader, happens every Sunday morning when she paints her nails. José Luis tells the reader that,

“el resto de la semana las manos de mi mamá huelen a cebolla, a tomate, a ajo, a perejil, a puerros, y las uñas se ponen feas...pero cuando mamá se pinta las uñas la piel se le pone mas suave...Por eso me gustan los domingos...por mi madre que es feliz esos minutos, sola, mirándose las manos...como si ya se le hubiesen olvidado para siempre los lunes”

[the rest of the week my mom’s hands smell like onions, tomatoes, garlic, parsley and leeks, and her fingernails look ugly...but when mom paints her nails her skin gets softer...that’s why I like Sundays...because my mom is happy during those moments, alone, looking at her hands as if she had forgotten that Mondays even existed] (Méndez Guédez 119-120)

This is a profound observation on the part of José Luis, representative of the situations that trap many immigrant women. His mother spends the majority of her time pleasing other people, feeding them and cleaning for them, worrying about everyone and everything but herself – as is expected of her not only as a woman, but as an immigrant woman. Yet this short time of solitude allows her to concentrate on herself, and only on herself. This bit of weekly stress relief does not cure all, however. Humans can only last a certain amount of time under stress, and his mother is no exception. Around the time of the fight between José Luis' mother and father, his mother takes him to a café with a slot machine where she proceeds to spend practically all of the money she has. José Luis knows that this behavior is odd, noting that, “yo pienso que mamá cuando está sin papá es una persona muy rara” [I think that when mom is not with dad she is a very strange person] (Méndez Guédez 182). Once again, the reader can infer that her uncharacteristic actions are provoked by the stressors that surround her. Domitila and her friend discuss the incident, by concluding that, “esa señora estaba dos días como loca. Tanto llorar no puede ser bueno” [that woman was acting crazy for two days. So much crying can't be good] (Méndez Guédez 213). Eventually, the accumulating pile of aggravation will topple; immigrant women are human just like Spanish women, with feelings just as real. Because of the roles that they are forced to assume, their stress affects the entire family.²²

Thus, Méndez Guédez creates a telling portrayal not only of how women face additional difficulties that men do not experience, but of how these challenges are intertwined with those faced by Latin American immigrants in Madrid as a whole.

²² José Luis' family does, in fact, become fragmented at the end of the novel. Although his father returns to live with his mother, at least for a period of time, Augusto and Somaira take José Luis with them when they move to Salamanca. This could be due to several of the situations discussed in the novel, including the undesirable living conditions or the lack of work; in any case, one cannot deny that the immigration experience has contributed to the split of a family.

Otherness and persistent postcolonial social structures isolate, alienate and subordinate women. By essentially confining them to domestic service, immigrant women automatically – perhaps unwillingly – assume the identity of a simple, traditional woman meant for female reproductive roles. One must acknowledge, however, the fact that Méndez Guédez, like Etxebarria, writes from a gendered perspective. As a man, the author has not experienced the true discriminations that many women might face, the true comments and looks that may overwhelm Latin American females on a daily basis. He can give the most overt ways in which women are disadvantaged – in their work or in their relationships, for example – and can approach the issues, yet it is clear that he cannot empathize with their feelings. Overall, however, by crafting a tale from the perspective of immigrants, Méndez Guédez shows that this seemingly simple process creates real problems for women and their families. He is also able to show, by writing from the foreigner's perspective in Spain, the central theme of this thesis: Latin Americans and *madrileños* do indeed live in two different worlds within the same city. It is certainly not language that separates them. Rather, sets of preconceptions on the parts of both parties generally create a rift that divides the same physical space into two separate worlds.

Concluding Remarks

This project has been an attempt to demonstrate the current situation of Latin American immigrants living in Madrid, Spain at the end of the decade of the 2000s. I have chosen to focus on the nature of the interactions between *madrileños* and Latin Americans and the mutual perceptions between the populations. The project began with surveys, supposing a sampling of twenty-seven *madrileños* to represent general views of the group as a whole, and an equal-sized sampling of Ecuadorians to represent Latin American immigrants as they are the largest group from that region residing in the Spanish capital. The responses, along with extensive literature review, illuminated the existence of the three main causes for the separation of the groups into two different “worlds.” These processes – Otherness, the persistence of postcolonial views and social structures, and a gendered experience that makes being an immigrant more challenging for women than for men – are the focal point of my thesis. In turn, I am to explain the separation of *madrileños* and Latin American immigrants despite cultural and linguistic similarities. A major focus of this project, then, was to demonstrate not only that these processes exist, but that they have become significant factors in the relations between Spaniards and immigrants. Throughout the past decade especially, as Latin American migratory networks solidify in Spain, a clear separation has formed between these two groups. This must be attributed to something other than language. I have argued that the separation is essentially the result of continued, unchallenged misconceptions and stereotypes that often provoke fear and other adverse reactions, such as those that Juan Antonio’s story exposed at the very beginning of this project.

Popular culture is a mirror of reality. Its content tends to reflect the situations found in the societies in which it is produced. Problems, such as those between immigrants and Spaniards created by Otherness, postcolonial structures and gender issues, will be addressed by authors and artists who see these topics as problems that must be confronted, questioned and challenged. Even today, only ten years since the boom of Latin American immigration to Spain began to take hold, creators of popular culture are signaling the existence of these processes and the problems created by them. This is significant, for it indicates that the distress that the separation has caused has become notable to people living in both the Spanish and the immigrant worlds. By examining the issue through mediums of popular culture such as literature, music, and film, for instance, one can see a larger portrayal of the issue, examine it from different viewpoints, and gain insight into its root causes and reactions.

I have taken a minute sampling from the vast sea of popular culture to demonstrate its role in bringing awareness to and questioning processes, such as the three central processes of this thesis, that relate to immigration. I chose to focus on fictional literature, using one example from each of the two “worlds,” though in reality both Méndez Guédez and Etxebarria aim to expose the same processes as problematic. I selected these particular novels because of their direct relevance to the topic of Latin American immigrants in Madrid. There are, however, multiple examples of immigration in literature that would effectively demonstrate these processes, such as *Perros verdes* (1988) by Agustín Cerezales or *Nadie dijo que sería fácil* (2006) by Pedro Ruiz García to name only two works that address the topic of immigration in Spain. Film is another interesting medium, and can be quite powerful due to its accessibility to people of many

backgrounds. In fictional film, *Flores de otro mundo* (1999) by Icíar Bollaín and *Cosas que dejé en La Habana* (1997) by Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón provide classic examples of the issues that immigrants face with Otherness and postcolonial prejudices, particularly acute at the beginning of the Latin American migration trend to Spain. *Princesas* (2005), by Fernando León de Aranoa, is a newer film that deals especially with gender issues and the controversial topic of prostitution. Non-fictional films, such as the documentary *Extranjeras* (2003) by Helena Taberna, lend a different outlook on the situation because the stories recounted belong to real people; however, it is impossible to completely remove the subjectivity of the director's questions and editing of the film. Finally, music can provide yet another interesting view of the issue. Immigration's first appearance in Spanish-language music is credited to Manu Chao with the song "Clandestino" (1998), the first well-known song written about the experiences of illegal immigrants. The movement has now expanded, and other Spanish-speaking artists, such as Concha Buika, herself an immigrant from Africa, and Nach have written songs themed around the struggles of migrants. Any of these forms of popular culture could have been the focus of a thesis demonstrating the Otherness, postcolonial structures and gender discrimination that separate Latin Americans and *madrileños* today.

Another way to direct this project would have been to examine immigration as it is portrayed in newspapers and/or popular journals. To make that work, however, I would have needed to ask more specific questions in my surveys. For instance, I would have asked the *madrileño* respondents about their sources of information about immigration. I might ask them if they read newspapers; if so, which newspapers; and how often they consulted them for information about immigration. I could then focus on studying the

words/language used in newspapers to see what correlation (if any) there was between Spaniards' attitudes and the way immigration is portrayed in the press. To keep the "double perspective" approach, I would have asked Ecuadorians the same types of questions regarding the press to gauge whether or not they read newspapers or journals to learn about Spain and Spaniards.

Even though the scope of this thesis has been narrowed to two fictional novels, it has lent interesting and revealing results as to the causes of the separation between Latin Americans and *madrileños*. One major area in which I would have probed for more detail, however, lies in the Ecuadorian surveys. I wish I would have pressed for more details about the marital and family situations of the respondents, especially as they applied to women. While I did inquire as to whether or not respondents were married and/or had children, I did not ask them to specify if they had migrated with their husbands (if married) and/or with their children (if they had them). This would have given me a more accurate picture of whether these women were coming independently or whether they were attached to a family and the additional duties association with this. To have this information would have provided for an interesting comparison of responses between those who had come alone versus those who came with family, and might have enhanced the insights of the thesis as a whole.

Overall, however, I am pleased with the path that has led from my surveys to this final project. I think that the analyses of *Cosmofobia* and *Una tarde con campanas* give an adequate picture of the situations at hand, and help one to see the separation of Latin Americans and Spaniards in Madrid. One clearly remarks, from the "birds-eye" view of the situation with which the authors provide the reader, that this separation is not founded

on true, concrete and fundamental differences as many people might think. The groups speak the same language, practice the same religion and share many aspects of a common history. Instead, it is plain to see that in general, the unknown breeds uneasiness which creates a need to define and redefine the familiar and keep out the foreign. In Madrid society today, misconceptions about immigrants lead many to distinguish and isolate the Other, maintain postcolonial structures and further discrimination against women.

Scenarios like that which Juan Antonio experienced after Barcelona's World Cup soccer victory are perhaps born because of natural reactions to difference. Yet the message of artists, like Etxebarria and Méndez Guédez, is that one must question one's reactions and views. Only by confronting these misconceptions will people learn that their preconceptions may be just that; only then will Madrid overcome the difficulties of supporting two worlds in the space that has become tense due to the artificial separation of populations. Through the understanding and awareness that artists are increasingly contributing to the world, Madrid – and indeed, a great many places – may finally create one, integrated world.

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