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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Sandra Stickle Martín

The Graduate School
University of Kentucky

2010

MOROCCAN WOMEN AND IMMIGRATION
IN SPANISH NARRATIVE AND FILM (1995-2008)

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of doctor of Philosophy in the
College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

By

Sandra Stickle Martín

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Ana Rueda, Professor of Hispanic Studies

Lexington, Kentucky

2010

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

MOROCCAN WOMEN AND IMMIGRATION IN SPANISH NARRATIVE AND FILM (1995-2008)

Spanish migration narratives and films present a series of conflicting forces: the assumptions of entitlement of both Western and Oriental patriarchal authority, the claims to autonomy and self determination by guardians of women's rights, the confrontations between advocates of exclusion and hospitality in the host society, and the endeavor of immigrant communities to maintain traditions while they integrate into Spanish society. Taking into consideration current theories of space, mobility, feminism, and assimilation, I center my analysis on four significant moments of migration: the inundation of Western media in other countries that inspires individuals to find alternatives to poverty and oppression; the trauma of the physical and emotional separation from the land of origin; the trials of adjustments to an unknown and, at times, hostile culture; and the construction of a new community within a host society.

The works give testimony to how contact with different cultures, religions, and languages has given way to a unique space between Western images and multicultural realities where power, identities, and destinies are negotiated. Exploring the patterns of displacement and gender roles, I point out how some authors align themselves with the power structures that stifle immigrants' initiatives, while others choose to challenge the status quo. This space creates an opportunity for change propelled principally by the courage, agency, and mobility of female characters that weaken patriarchal domination in Muslim society and counter powerful Western ideologies. The resulting new culture imbued with personal values rekindles Hispanic-Moroccan historical links and opens the door to a revived multicultural, multilingual, multiethnic Spanish identity. I argue that the determination of the female characters is the key to the changes taking place in the twenty-first century Spanish society, which, according to Spanish migration narratives and films, could anticipate the dissolution of the *Fortress Europe* and the consolidation of integration. Establishing a dialogue between opposing forces, my analysis invites readers and viewers of the narrated process of immigration to consider their own personal positions on such a pressing issue.

KEYWORDS: Immigration, Gender Relations, Multiculturalism, Feminism, Hispano-Moroccan culture

Sandra Stickle Martin

February 4, 2010

MOROCCAN WOMEN AND IMMIGRATION
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Director of Dissertation

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To all the women who are changing the world through immigration

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This dissertation draws attention to the conflicting approaches towards migration reflected in Spanish novels, short stories and films from 1995 to 2008, a time in which immigration has a great impact on Spanish culture. The works selected put human faces on stereotypes of oppressed Moroccan and Spanish female characters fleeing from poverty and injustice while searching for an opportunity to take control of their lives. Presenting perspectives other than official governmental reports filled with discriminatory rhetoric, migration narratives approach the situation of illegal immigrants with an position of solidarity described by Brad Epps in “Passing Lines”: “For in every crossing, however solitary, there is something that implicates everyone, something that folds ‘us’ into each and every individual, something whose complexity is also called complicity” (Epps 99). More than empathy, complicity suggests partnership and identification with the Other, the most outstanding trait found in Spanish migration narratives and films.

The other exceptional trait is the evolution of the focus on gender relations and female agency. Dolores Juliano, in “Moviidad especial de género”, observes that the female characters strive to free themselves of dominant but deciduous gender concepts by reacting to attractions, risks, and challenges of migration. Female characters tend to view migration as an opportunity to construct a new life, whereas male characters consider it an occasion to demonstrate their manliness (309). In general, male characters equate migration with the loss of control over their family, especially the women of the family, for which reason they construct barriers to external influences that upset the status quo. Experiencing a mitigation of their self esteem, they are forced to deal with their insecurity while observing the increasing strength of the women around them who become the main source of moral support and income. As a result, the interiorized stereotypes of strong men versus weak women are deconstructed creating a tension that ruptures the patriarchal family structure. To recuperate their drifting authority, the majority of male characters resort to religion or blatant violence

For many female characters, immigration is an irreversible step, a permanent separation from their home, family, and past. Clearly undermining the patriarchal order that insists on fixating women to a demeaning role of subordination, female characters become heroines that focus on the future and the country they must convert into a new home. To defend themselves from a tradition that strives to hold them in “their place”, many female characters grasp their independence while being exposed to the risks of drowning in the straits, of being trapped by human trafficking organizations, and of suffering innumerable forms of prejudice and discrimination. Relocation for them is linked to strategies of survival, resilience, and flexibility. Motivated by the need for integration, many female characters establish alliances and negotiate alternatives that favor coexistence and even a sense of belonging. Earning a salary never dreamed of while in their country of origin, several try to alleviate the dire economic conditions of their families in the country of origin. These female agents of change contribute to a new feminism whose influence affects the nascent second generation of immigrants that participate in the construction of a contemporary Spanish nation with a multiple identity. I argue that the narrative voices favor a commitment to the creation of an integrated plural Spanish society.

To support my analysis of the selected migration narratives and films, I have chosen the following theoretical framework, which will be developed in detail at the beginning of each chapter.

Theory of Reverse Orientalism

Contrary to the construction of feeble, vulnerable, defenseless women that represent foreign nations, detailed in Edward Said’s theory of Orientalism (34-96), migration narratives produce female characters with a strong sense of self that resist the entrapment of stereotypes. Representations of women through film, television, and radio

are the new transmitters for contemporary myth construction. Visualizing Western lifestyles, female characters initiate a quest for a new life which, for the great majority of women in the world, entails migration. However, this goal is not simply an act of occupation for the sake of personal benefit, which would be equivalent to Orientalism. Without a significant change of values, the only difference would be a simple inversion of the target of invasion and the invader. When these protagonists come into contact with the Western world through mediated images, their ability to capture the ambiguous signs of modernism liberates them from the dehumanization of Orientalism and allows them to observe Western culture from a critical standpoint, that of Reverse Orientalism. Through the female gaze, non-Western female characters are not seen as men's Other but as dynamic individuals with the strength, decision, and courage to establish an image of female power and agency.

Theories of Space, Movement, and Mobility

Within the multiple theories of space that are applicable to migration narratives and film, I am most interested in the ones that collapse the boundaries that separate genders. Though several of the selected narratives situate the female characters confined to the inside of the home and the male characters on the outside with freedom of movement, the pretended control over the female characters at times fails because, as film critic Naficy states, "in the liminality of diaspora and exile, the boundaries between self and other, female and male, inside and outside, homeland and hostland are often blurred and must continually be negotiated" (33). Naficy, as well as Göktürk, a German film critic, identifies the space of entrapment as a prison where the female foreigner must bargain with an incomprehensible male authority seen as a Foucaultian panopticon.

In *Third Space* (1996) Edward Soja identifies the "radical openness" of spaces on the margins of modern society which confirms the concept of fluidity of migrant movements and Homi Bhabha's concepts of hybridity (183). Tim Cresswell, in *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World* (2006), differentiates between movement

and mobility, a distinction which I apply to describe the movement of patriarchal nations and the mobility of immigrants. According to the author the concept of movement refers to the abstract idea of geographical displacement between two places with a linear projection from point A to point B. In contrast, the concept of mobility corresponds to a social construction frequently linked to ideologies of freedom, transgression, or creativity (25-56). For me, the nation, whose identity is determined by its fixation on territory, produces linear movements, while the immigrant community, whose identity is associated with its fluidity, produces multidirectional mobility. This theory magnifies the ability of immigrants to penetrate a nation state regardless of the barriers set up to hinder movement across borders. Having loosened the ties to territorial space, the immigrant's mobility helps communities to adopt flexible identities based on inclusion of diversity. Self determination, nurtured by autonomy and mobility, is the epitome of immigrant communities.

Theory of Resistance to Western Lifestyles

When displacement is achieved, the important lure of modern Spanish society portrayed by the media as a paradise that offers a better standard of living and opportunities for women transforms into a source of disappointment when immigrants discover that such lifestyles are out of reach, especially for adult women. Too often the violence of patriarchal authority in the home town is substituted by the abuse of human traffickers and the prejudice of members of Spanish society which hinder immigrants' ability to integrate into a modern consumer society. In these narratives and films, the female characters construct alternatives to the violence of patriarchal authority and resist the distress caused by the inaccessible luxuries of Spanish consumer society by focusing on personal relationships situated on the margins of urban sites, an option which Gyan Prakash calls "non-modern."

The negative side of modern society is also addressed by Anthony Giddiness who foresees the breakdown of social classes and a tendency of individuals towards self-exile.

However, the actors in migration narratives, the characters who reject the capitalistic paradigm of progress and well being, do not break away from modern Spanish society completely. Instead, they sustain intermittent connections with it which enables them to maintain a modest income and, afterwards, retreat to a safe haven in a marginal community. In my analysis, I suggest that the female characters are particularly responsible for constructing the bridges between the two spaces that integrate immigrant and Spanish societies and favor inter-racial and multiethnic relationships.

Theory of Self Invention

Self invention is a characteristic of contemporary society that defends the agelessness of individuals who claim the responsibility of designing their image and temporary identity to meet the demands of the market. The goal is not to join the masses of middle class that confuse consumption with personal value, but rather to create an image to improve the possibilities of survival in a competitive market. By converting the self into a commodity in perpetual transformation, an individual can develop latent qualities to adjust to demands of transnational societies without becoming a slave to consumerism. The characters of the migration narratives participate with the capitalist system by implementing the art of self-invention in order to survive, but they do not identify with it. The principal concepts in my analysis of the self-invention of immigrants are based on theories of Jennifer Maguire, Kim Stanway, Joanne Morreale, Walker Smith and Ann Clurman.

Feminist Theories

In this study I am most interested in Saskia Sassen's theory of the "Feminization of Survival" that recognizes the increase of women immigrants who address the burden of displacement by earning incomes with whatever means they have, prostitution, domestic labor, nursing, etc. She debunks the gender neutral accounts of globalization to

highlight the importance of immigrant women who situate themselves in “the nexus between subsistence economies and capitalist enterprise...[or]...between the dismantling of an established, largely male ‘labor aristocracy’ in major industries” and the construction of a female proletariat (502).

Among the abundant anthropological and sociological publications on gendered migration that focus on women immigrants from Morocco to Spain, Gunther Dietz, Fatima Mernissi, Ángeles Escriva, Ángeles Ramírez Fernández, and Elisabetta Zontini, I am particularly interested in Patricia Pessar and Sarah Mahler’s article “Gender and Transnational Migration” (2001) which draws attention to the global concepts of social, political, economic and personal spaces of female migration that constantly interact and overlap to hold the different parts of the migration process in place. Applying Pessar and Mahler’s framework of multidimensional perspective of female immigration to narrative and film, I underline the existence of female solidarity, which strengthens the bonds between the immigrants and the citizens of Spain. Nicola Piper, Mary Nash, Annie Phizacklea, Francisco Chueca, and Pilar García del Pozo present the benefits of an increasing labor force of immigrant women that manifest their solidarity by generating currency flows with remittances to their country of origin.

Film Theories

In the sections dedicated to film, I support my analysis with Ana Kibbey’s *Theory of Image*, that deals with with “Liberating women from her image”, and Ann Kaplan’s *Looking for the Other. Feminism, Film, and the Imperial Gaze*, concerned with the deconstruct stereotypes. I am also interested in recognizing the effort of the directors to represent immigrant communities in Spain. Ángel Quintana uses the term *realismo tímido* (timid realism) (254) to describe a recent tendency in Spanish film that presents a realistic scenario of marginal spaces without revealing some of the sordid realities that inform neighborhoods of immigrants. The protagonists move about a background of ethnic

plurality that communicates very little of the pangs of discrimination or the struggle for survival that accompany these spaces.

Also very relevant to this study is Bill Nichol's theory of documental films which speaks of the negotiation between subjective fiction and objective depiction of the diverse lifestyles of immigrants. Stella Bruzzi, in *New Challenges for Documentary*, says that, "The fundamental issue of documentary film is the way in which we are invited to access the 'document' or 'record' through representation or interpretation to the extent that a piece of archive material becomes a mutable rather than a fixed point of reference" (420). Nichols also establishes in *Introduction to Documentary* the impossibility of total objectivity for all scenes are filtered through the director's eyes. In spite of the obstacles to objectivity, he speaks favorably of the observational mode in which the viewer takes a voyeuristic position intruding on the lives of the public secretly captured on film, recalling the Italian neo-realists. This engagement with the viewer is implemented by Helena Taberna, Fernando León and Fernando Colomo, who film spontaneous scenes of immigrants on the streets of Madrid. With this method film directors give faithful representations of the process of migration with special adjustments that provoke an emotional response from the viewer.

The body of this study consists of four chapters followed by concluding remarks. My criteria for selecting the works correspond to my interest in investigating the representation of women as agents of change whose determination prevail over men's resistance. Male characters portrayed as adventurers who indulge in power struggles and strive to maintain patriarchal dominance are of less interest than the female characters that are motivated to find a new life in Spain regardless of the innumerable sacrifices they must endure. Observing the difficulties created by the tension between the members of a host country and immigrants, several female protagonists try to steer clear of the mistakes made by the patriarchal model that tries to solve conflicts by imposing norms, exclusions, and barriers. The female agents of change seek to avoid confrontations with authorities in order to gain improvements in matters that affect women besides negotiating with religious authorities of the Muslim church and international NGOs. Some protagonists

resist hegemonic pressures of patriarchal domination by occupying a multidimensional space where the possibilities of response to oppression multiply. These spaces converge to give way to alternative routes which are reflected in a feminine discourse woven into the fabric of migrant narratives. Blurring the boundaries of inside and out, of fact and fiction, the authors seek out the uncertain spaces in between to nurture the migrant identities of their female characters.

Besides the unique depiction of female characters before the challenges of immigration, the authors and film directors of the works share common interests in Moroccan immigration to Spain. Some have intellectual interests such as Gerardo Muñoz Lorente who is a scholar of Moroccan literature and culture. Others like Antonio Lorenzo and Encarna Cabello, who have lived in Morocco, are very familiar with the drama of immigration that their characters experience. Nieves Garcia Benito is directly involved in governmental organizations (NGO) that attend to immigrants who cross the straits. Andres Sorel focuses on the injustice of Moroccan patriarchal authority that drives women away from their homes, and Lourdes Ortiz is concerned with the injustice of Spanish indifference and prejudice towards foreigners. The film directors, Imanol Uribe, Fernando Leon de Aranoa, Helena Taberna, and Fernando Colomo, communicate their own interpretation of the injustice and heroism linked to immigration. Laila Karroch and Najat El Hachmi offer first hand testimonies of Moroccan women that live the process of immigration as both a sacrifice and an opportunity.

The structure of this analysis follows a chronological order of the migration experience, parting from the initial decision to migrate, passing through the difficulties of separation from patriarchal authority and the vicissitudes of relocation and adaptation to a foreign environment, and ending with the initial steps towards integration into Spanish society. First, I analyze the influence of Western culture and the empowerment of women in the decision to migrate. Then I address the question of displacement itself as a disconnection from patriarchal hegemony to favor feminist values of resistance, fluidity, and diversity. Next I analyze the tensions during the stage of adaptation to Spanish communities where different nationalities, races, genders and sexualities intersect while

resisting the pressures of a capitalist society. Lastly, I examine the construction of new identities during the stage of assimilation which questions notions of fixity and purity and embraces those of flexibility and diversity. These four key aspects of migration will be approached in the following chapters.

In the first chapter, *Dreams of Migration and the Female Gaze*, I study the influence of the mass media on the decision to migrate as reflected in Spanish narratives. Primarily concerned with the authors' perception of the role that Western images play in the female characters' decision to migrate, I argue that as images filter through the female gaze they tend to create imagined spaces of opulence and comfort as well as contradictory standpoint positions that I associate with Orientalism, Occidentalism and Reverse Orientalism. I also analyze the significant role of the gatekeepers and sympathizers of patriarchal order that is overcome by the agency of the leading female characters that I refer to as key holders. The selected works for this chapter are the short stories: "Al-Yaza'ir" by Nieves García, "Mujer sin cabeza", "La gran ramera" and "Alí y Loi, Ángeles de Ceuta" by Andrés Sorel; and a novel, *Ramito de hierbabuena*, by Gerardo Muñoz Lorente.

The second chapter, *Displacement as Movement and Mobility*, focuses on the crossing of the straits of Gibraltar as a symbolic separation of women from patriarchal tradition. I analyze here the representation of the process of displacement into liminal spaces as a crucial factor in the development of identity and agency. Implementing theories of movement and mobility, I explore how some female characters are depicted as more autonomous, flexible and multidirectional as a result of migration, whereas others are represented as victims anchored to their country of origin or drowned in the straits. The outstanding factor in the analysis of this chapter is that the struggles between the mentalities of movement and mobility take place on the female body. The selected works for this chapter are the short stories "Mujer sin cabeza", "Parir en el mar" by Andrés Sorel, "Al-Yaza'ir" by Nieves García, and "Fátima de los naufragos" by Lourdes Ortiz; the novel *El último patriarca* by Najat El Hachmi; and the film *Bwana* by Imanol Uribe.

The third chapter, Non-Western realities in Modern Spanish Society: Reducing the Gap, examines a range of survival skills during the stage of settlement in a host society and the alternatives for both Spanish and Moroccan female characters confronted with racism and discrimination. I underline the significance of the intersection of race, class, gender and sexuality in the negotiation process between Western and non-Western cultures which destabilizes the status quo of patriarchal power. I also address how part of the negotiation includes a resistance to the stigmatization of the female prostitute and the apologia of women in the private sphere. The selected works for this chapter are the novels *La cazadora* by Encarna Cabello and *Donde Duermen los Ríos* by Antonio Lorenzo, and the film *Princesas* by Fernando León de Aranoa.

In chapter four, Assimilation and the Art of Self Invention, I discuss the art of self invention as the key to positive cross cultural relationships between Spaniards and immigrants. While analyzing how female characters claim a voice of authority and the right to a personal space, I discuss the evolution of dual identities that influence second generation immigrants who find little affiliation with the country of origin. This chapter also addresses the increasing visibility of professional immigrant women in Spain, which is reflected through female characters that gain independence from patriarchal normativity. The selected works for this chapter are the novels *Jo també sóc catalana* by Najat El Hachmi and *De Nador a Vic* by Laila Karrouch, the documentary *Extranjeras* by Helena Taberna, and the film *El Próximo Oriente* by Fernando Colomo.

Since the Spanish short stories and novels selected for each chapter are unavailable in English, I have supplied a translation of the quotes. This is also the case for the two Catalan novels and other critical works written in Catalan, such as *A Cara Descuberta*. Therefore, unless otherwise indicated, it should be understood that all the English translations of the quotes in this dissertation are mine.

To conclude, I emphasize the gender dimension of migrant literature of Spain to draw attention to the increasing female agency and the revaluation of non-violent men evident in the selected works. Besides the change in gender roles, the works also reflect a change of attitude towards Western society which on the one hand offers a higher standard of living but on the other forces characters to choose between having and being,

between physical comfort and coherence with their own ideals. Though positioned differently in their power struggles, these characters maintain a relative level of poverty in exchange for a certain freedom from gender and class fixation. Above all, my analysis highlights how the works echo the way immigration is reshaping Spanish society, which is learning to negotiate between the traditional concepts of exclusive nationality and an inclusive, multicultural identity.

CHAPTER 2: DREAMS OF MIGRATION AND THE FEMALE GAZE

...a critical feminist reading of the text, of all the texts of culture, instates the awareness of that contradiction and the knowledge of its terms; it thus changes the representation into performance which exceeds the text.
Teresa de Lauretis *Alice Doesn't* 36

Migration, motivated by the burden of poverty and repression, has been an alternative for both men and women for centuries (Appendix I-II). However, in this chapter I take into account other conditions, more gender specific, that encourage contemporary migration. Arjun Appadurai in *Modernity at Large* comments that: “[...] when it [poverty] is juxtaposed with the rapid flow of mass-mediated images, scripts, and sensations, we have a new order of instability in the production of modern subjectivities” (4). My primary concern in this chapter is to explore the subjectivities of the characters in several Spanish short stories and a novel written at the turn of the twenty-first century that address the initial stage of Moroccan migration to Spain, the firm decision to leave the country of origin. Though I am not concerned with the task of verifying the results of sociological studies that accurately decipher the degree of influence of mediated images on the Moroccan consumer, an endeavor that would go beyond the scope of this work, I am interested in analyzing the correlation between the presence of foreign media in the selected works, mainly television programs and commercials with strong Western ideology, and the characters’ motivations to migrate. In this analysis I will also take into consideration the Spanish authors’ knowledge of Muslim traditions as well as their sensitivity towards the role of gender in the different responses to Western media.¹ The result of this analysis will enable me to defend the hypothesis that the consumption of contemporary foreign media is a determinant factor in the characters’ decision, especially the female characters, to migrate from Morocco to Spain.

¹ For this reason I ask the reader to bear in mind that the focus of this work is not on the validation of a sociological hypothesis, but rather an analysis of literary texts. For more scientifically oriented information, Andrew Morrison, Maurice Schiff, and Mirja Sjöblom offer a detailed up-to-date sociological study of immigration and the role of gender in *The International Migration of Women* (2008).

The selected works include four Spanish short stories, “Mujer sin cabeza” (Woman without a Head), “Alí y Loi, ángeles de Ceuta” (Alí and Loi, Angles from Ceuta) and “La gran ramera” (The Great Whore) in the collection *Las voces del Estrecho* (Voices from the Strait) (2000) by Andrés Sorel; “Al-Yaza’ir” from the collection *Por la vía de Tarifa* (On the way to Tarifa) (2000) by Nieves García Benito; as well as the novel *Ramito de Hierbabuena* (Handful of Mint) (2001) by Gerardo Muñoz Lorente. These works illustrate the lives of Moroccan women whose desire to migrate is enhanced by their contact with Western culture. Andrés Sorel, director of the Association of Writers in Spain, “Asociación de Escritores de España”, and of the magazine The Republic of Letters, “República de las Letras”, has written more than forty books including short stories, novels and essays since 1973 concerned with human rights. Founder of the newspaper “Liberación” ‘Liberation’, he has supported the socialist party since his youth and is very interested in the evolution of political events in countries like Cuba and Morocco where diaspora, exile and migration are decisive factors. Nieves García Benito, member of the Association Pro- Human Rights in Tarifa, “Asociación Pro-Derechos Humanos”, has actively participated in this NGO since its foundation to help Moroccan immigrants. She has written extensively in an on-line magazine, Mugak, with the hope of changing the mentality of Spanish society that she describes as indifferent towards the injustice of the situation of immigrants. She centers her short stories on profiles of Moroccan immigrants, the reasons that push them to leave home, and their deceptions, vulnerability and disillusion. Gerardo Muñoz Lorente, an author from Alicante, has combined his literary profession with political activities in the Socialist party, like Andrés Sorel. A scholar of Moroccan culture and traditions, Muñoz has placed the setting for several novels in Morocco, including the one analyzed in this chapter.²

In the analysis of the above short stories and novel, I observe that the protagonists become inspired to migrate through contact with Western culture which is

² For more information about the authors see: Andrés Sorel <http://www.canf.org/2006/1es/noticias-de-cuba/2006-ene-25-el-escriptor-andres.htm> , <http://www.elpelao.com/letras/2123.html>; Nieves García Benito http://revista.mugak.eu/articulos/list_by_author/48; Gerardo Muñoz Lorenzo <http://www.gerardomunoz.com/webs.htm>

intricately linked to a personal interpretation informed by the female gaze which not only buttresses the resistance to dominant discourses like Orientalism or Occidentalism, but also endorses Reverse Orientalism, a feminist view of Western culture. According to individual interpretations of images, some characters are empowered with an agency to change while others defend positions that represent their relationship with patriarchal hierarchy. For a comparative analysis, I have placed the characters into three categories. The Gatekeeper, a term coined by Kurt Lewin, a social psychologist, to describe the process of controlling, relaying or withholding information from the masses, is the name I give to the characters who resist change and sustain patriarchal order; the Sympathizer, who would like to participate in the change, has no power to do so; and the Key Holder, that demonstrates an active rebellion against patriarchal authority, opens the door to change by supporting migration or by participating in it. The link between the female characters' attraction towards Western culture and their decision to migrate allows me to draw some conclusions about the influence of Western culture which I argue is indeed a significant factor in the shift of balance of power in gender relations. These categories do not correspond to clear cut definitions, for at times characters display more than one response, and, at others, characters present an evolution that places them first in one category and later in another.

The Gatekeepers are both male and female characters, normally from an older generation that accepts an identity constructed by a dominant patriarchal authority. This attitude reveals an internalized conformism with not only tradition but also feminized stereotypes employed in *Orientalism* based on the division of spaces for men and women. Female Gatekeepers strive to live up to the expectations of idealized female stereotypes to sustain certain privileged positions in the family or society, even though it entails an unhealthy denial of the self in favor of an authoritarian figure.³ Male Gatekeepers maintain their authority by subjecting women to physical violence. Though these

³ For an analysis of the struggles between self, family and state for women immigrants see Passar and Mauer, "Gendered and Transnational Migration." (2-30)

characters have had little or no previous contact with images of other cultures, when encountered, they provoke an unconscious rejection, a defensive mechanism related to a fear of losing a certain category or status within the patriarchal hierarchy (Kelsky 187). These are the predominant traits in the characters that represent authority in the selected narratives.

Though similar to Gatekeepers in that this position is occupied by both male and female characters, Sympathizers do not try to impose their will on others like Gatekeepers. They prefer to limit their actions to silent rebellion while showing compassion to members of younger generations who seek opportunities elsewhere. However, these characters, out of sheer desperation, alienate themselves from society and give the impression of being devoid of personal identity. Having experienced a life of coercion and marginalization, they are unable to develop their own discourse of resistance and dare not break out onto individual paths. Dominated by dread of the consequences, they spy from behind the curtains in fear of the Gatekeepers while sympathizing with the Key Holders. Their conduct can be associated with that of supporters of Occidentalism who criticize the presence of Western culture without challenging its assumed superiority. I argue that the weakness of the position of Sympathizers is due to a lack of a sense of self value needed for a position of power.

The third kind of response to Western culture corresponds to exclusively female characters whom I call the Key Holders. Their narrative voice reveals a self-constructed identity that manifests an active defiance of patriarchal tradition and its inflexible designation of women's roles. These characters experience a revision of self-image and the development of self-esteem when they begin to imagine different lifestyles which, in these narratives, are provoked by images of Western culture filtered through a female gaze. After the images have been subjected to personal interpretation, the characters gain an awareness of difference with other lifestyles that ignite a desire for change. Pat Collins' Standpoint Theory, which analyses the construction of black American female identity, is very useful in the explanation of the procedure that takes Key Holders from the point of recognition of difference to the creation of a platform that catapults women to action (Collins 243).

I suggest that the Moroccan women who decide to migrate in these selected narratives and black American women who become politically active have comparable experiences. First of all, Collins draws attention to a bond among women based on an overall common experience of poverty and victimization under a dominant patriarchal order (244), a circumstance with which all the women in these narratives can identify. For women who perpetually live under oppression there is a legacy of self sacrifice, submission and sexism that privileges males, an experience, according to Collins, that unites women with a sense of solidarity and resistance. Secondly, Collins states that consciousness of a woman's identity is gained through self articulation of difference and personal assets independent of the deterministic patriarchal values. The necessary separation from prevailing ideologies enables the subversion of dominant viewpoints that construct women as inferior Others (247). Thirdly, Collins goes on to acknowledge in her Standpoint Theory the importance of a collective recognition among women of their worth and the validation of their ideas and actions (246). For this scholar, the awareness of a community of women with similar experiences creates a sense of belonging that stimulates courage and agency in individuals to counter oppression (248). In these narratives, the courage drawn from a sense of collectivity leads women to act in accordance with the dreams provoked by images and personal contacts with Western culture. The female characters that bond with other women who have experienced victimization, who construct a self-defined identity contrary to that of patriarchal values, and who acquire a sense of belonging with a female community that recognizes their worth, are the true Key Holders that open the door to migration.

A. Encounters with Western Culture

In spite of centuries of historical conflict and eleven miles of ice cold water separating Europe from Africa at the Straits of Gibraltar, there has always been an irrefutable sensation of closeness between Morocco and Spain, a perception that is echoed by the young protagonist in Nieves García Benito's story "Al-Yaza'ir", who discovers on a clear night, when the wind blows from "poniente" off the Mediterranean Sea, that the lights of the harbors on the other side of the Straits of Gibraltar can be seen

from both continents (101). The anthropologist, Gema Martín Muñoz, in *Marroquíes en España*, confirms that Spanish culture reaches every corner of northern Morocco,

...en el norte de Marruecos la imagen de la España exterior está estrechamente ligada a la imagen 'interior' que de lo español allí existe: son muchos los que fueron vecinos de españoles o tienen padres que les han transmitido una memoria de España, ven la TV española, les interesa la liga de fútbol española más que cualquier otra, y consumen multitud de productos españoles – sobre todo de contrabando- que funcionan como auténticos y eficaces transmisores de comunicación y aproximación a la cultura y sociedad españolas (...in the north of Morocco, the exterior image of Spain is closely linked to the 'interior' image that exists of Spain: there are many who were neighbors of Spaniards or who have parents that transmitted a memory of Spain, they watch Spanish TV, they are more interested in the Spanish football league than any other, and they consume a multitude of Spanish products – mostly smuggled – which work as authentic and efficient transmitters of communication with and approximation to the Spanish culture and society). (46)

The fascination with the proximity of the unknown is augmented by television, magazines, and personal accounts that cross frontiers with alluring images that ignite the spectator's determination to discover what is on the other side.

Ángeles Ramírez, commenting on female emigration from Morocco, clarifies that in the sixties and seventies women left rural areas to go directly to foreign countries to reunite the family previously separated by the emigration of the male head of the household. Later, in the eighties, women began to migrate on their own from the rural areas to the cities of Morocco that “[c]onstituye el punto de conexión entre las migraciones interiores e internacionales” (constitutes the point of connection between the interior and international migrations) (Ramírez, *Migraciones, géneros e Islam* 172). According to this anthropologist, many women went to the Atlantic coastal regions of Garb-Atlántico and Yebala, and to cities like Casablanca, Rabat, Kenitra, Tangier, and Tetuan. This is the area of Morocco with the greatest penetration of foreign radio and television broadcasting companies like Radio Mediterranee Internationale, which was introduced in Tangier in 1980, and 2M TV which was inaugurated in Casablanca in March, 1989. Internet was introduced in Morocco by ONPT and Maroc Telecom in 1995. Five years later, mobile phones began to connect Moroccan society of all social classes. In November, 2006 MTV Arabia launched programs from Arab countries around the

world. Originally targeting forty million households, it reached more than eighty million by the beginning of 2008. This area, where Moroccan and Arab broadcasting companies compete with two other giants, BBC World and CNN International⁴, filling Moroccan middle class homes and cafeterias in urban areas with Western images (Appendix I), sets the background for the selected works.

Television is very prominent in migration narratives like the novel *Diario de un ilegal* (Diary of an Illegal) (2002) by Rachid Nini, which begins with the sentences “Ayer en la televisión una patera se estrellaba contra la costa rocosa” (Yesterday on television a patera crashed against the rocky coast) (9). Another example is the novel *Dorir al raso* (Sleep in the open air) (1994) by Pasqual Moreno Torregrosa and Mohamed El Gheryb: “En la cafetería donde me encuentro con Abdukadar y cuatro amigos más está puesta la televisión. Se sintoniza muy bien el canal 1 de TVE” (In the cafeteria where I hang out with Abdukadar and four other friends the television was on. Channel 1 of Spanish TV is tuned in very clearly) (24).

There are many very popular programs that have recently appeared on Moroccan television channels like MTV, RTM, and TV Maroc and other broadcasting companies via satellite. One of the most popular programs is “Lalla Laarossa”, a replica of a typical American contest that invites women of all ages accompanied by male family members to demonstrate their knowledge by answering questions within a time limit. There is also an important dose of consumerism as the winner takes home money, cars, and household appliances that would otherwise be unattainable. The majority of the young women on the program are unveiled while the older women keep their head scarves well tied. Whatever the dress code is, there seem to be no objections from the male participants who leave the criteria for respectability in women’s hands. Another popular TV program, the comedy called “Chassity” which is a mock of Western news programs like CNN, often gives voice to women who scold and ridicule their male partners. The principle

⁴ For a view of the range of television programs available in Morocco see Amézaga, Josu. “Biladi. Usos de la televisión por satélite entre los y las inmigrantes magrebíes en Bilbao” *Zer. Revista de estudios de comunicacion*. 1-16; <http://www.ehu.es/zer/zer10/10amezaga.html>; www.RTM.com; and www.livewtv.com/arabic_channel/rtm.htm. For information about accessibility to satellite programs see <http://www.satcodx.com>. Also <http://www.aimc.es> offers information about communication medias.

novelty about these television programs is the dominance of the female voice that openly expresses opinions about the world, an unusual trait in traditional Moroccan society.

In addition to the female voice, Western television programs also transmit stereotypes of adult men and women that contrast sharply with the majority of Moroccans today. In general, the principal TV characters are depicted as heterosexual, white, and single, with at least a high school education, owners of a marvelous home surrounded by a garden, a large car, and a considerable amount of money to spend on personal gratification (Rodríguez 179). Fatima Mernissi expresses her concern about the growing number of youths who are influenced by the images of inaccessible lifestyles visualized on the media: “The dream of happiness for many Arabs [...] is a European vacation. Our nation [...] is becoming a huge land of individuals who roam standing in place, one eye on the television and the other on their passports” (*Islam and Democracy* 55-6).

Judging by the descriptions offered in the selection of narratives, Western images influence not only urban women in Morocco, but also rural women who seem to hear of Western culture by word of mouth.⁵ One of the sources of information about Western culture in rural Morocco comes in the form of women’s magazines with attractive images as well as articles with feminist ideology. On the front cover of an American magazine sold in Morocco, “Muslim Girl” (Fig. 1.1), we see a young girl exhibiting self confidence and pleasure in wearing a fashionable dress with a head scarf that evinces respect for the norms of propriety for Muslim women.

⁵ Only 40% of Moroccan women are literate which eliminates the text of newspapers and magazines as a source of information. Electricity is also scarce in Morocco, which limits the possibility of the average Moroccan citizen to watch TV. According to the statistics, there are 100 television sets per 1000 people. There is free access to national TV, but European, American, and Atlantic channels must be accessed through cable or satellite. For more information see CIA Fact Book, 2009 and <http://www.pressreference.com/Ma-No/Morocco.html>.



Figure 1.1: Cover page *Muslim Girl*

At the same time, she defies the required humility of Moroccan women by placing her hands on her hips, displaying a broad smile and making eye contact with the reader. Next to the image is the title of an article, “Girls Go Global,” that encourages women to gain knowledge of foreign countries. Another Moroccan woman’s magazine, “Femmes du Maroc” tantalizes the reader with suggestions for discreet makeup and fashion from the Spanish chain store “Mango”. An article gives an account of the rebellious acts of women in films like *The Last Samurai* and *All About My Mother* that contrast the lives of women who adhere to the tradition of convened marriages and those who are free to choose their own partners. Simply the presentation of alternatives represents an advance in women’s condition in Moroccan society. *Lamalif*, another feminist magazine in Morocco, publishes articles about the rising Islamic feminism, influenced by Western feminism. In one article an outstanding feminist, Abdessamad Dialmy, encourages women to participate in the rewriting of Moroccan national history.⁶ An on-line

⁶ Liat Kozma informs her reader about the strong feminist movement taking place in Morocco in her article “Moroccan Women’s narratives of Liberation: A Passive Revolution?”

magazine, “Elle Africa,” also offers a variety of articles on women’s rights, one of which speaks of the need to abolish the practice of female circumcision in Africa.⁷

Apart from the influence of the media, one of the most significant changes brought about in the lives of women who migrate to urban areas is the acquisition of personal incomes that allow them to enjoy things that are normally been forbidden to women in rural areas (Ramírez, *Migraciones* 258). The economic empowerment in urban settings no doubt contributes to the decision of about 60 to 70 percent of Moroccan immigrant women to settle in cities when they migrate to Spain, in contrast with only 21 percent of male immigrants (Ramírez, *Migraciones* 232). Furthermore, the access to a professional life often converts women into a key source of income for families left in Morocco. With these advances in personal autonomy, women begin to believe in the possibility of participating in the lifestyles displayed by the Western media.

Whatever their occupation⁸, the new lifestyle offers women a range of possibilities that could never be dreamed of in rural towns where the lack of education and personal freedom tied them to the will of their families and communities. The average young adult woman in the rural areas is illiterate and fairly isolated from society, except for the family or neighborhood circle. In 2006, 74.8 percent of the total population of Morocco received no education, and 61 percent of them were women between 24 and 35 years of age (Van Dalen 757). Only 50 percent of the women had drinking water in their homes, and practically none had electricity (Nazir and Tomppert (184). Furthermore, persistent poverty gave her little margin to attend the needs of her family, let alone time for an occasional respite for herself. According to Van Dalen, in 2006 about 36 percent of the women declared that they barely got by, and 31 percent declared their situation to be frankly insufficient. Even though customs are changing, women in rural towns are usually married at the onset of puberty and find themselves surrounded by four to five children before the age of twenty due to resistance to the introduction of birth control, only available in exceptional circumstances since the 1980s (Van Dalen, Nazir, Martín Muñoz “Las mujeres musulmanas”). In addition to the burdens of motherhood, they are accustomed to physical and

⁷ For more information about women’s magazines in Morocco see www.femmesdumaroc.com/Magazine, www.elafrica.com/, www.muslimgirlworld.com/, and Al Wasat Magazine <arabist.net/archives/2005/07/16/712>.

⁸ Considering new professions for immigrant women in cities, several authors, including Gema Martín Muñoz, “Las mujeres musulmanas: entre el mito y la realidad; Ángeles Ramírez, *Migraciones, géneros e Islam*; José Miguel Vila and Carmen Vila, *Mujeres del mundo. Inmigración femenina en España*; Gunther Dietz and Nadia El-Shohoumi, *Muslim Women in Southern Spain*, point out that the majority finds work as a domestic, a number of them are able to begin a small neighborhood business, others work in agriculture, and some fall into the world of prostitution.

psychological exhaustion due to long hours of hard labor and domestic violence imposed by both the husband and mother-in-law (Welchman 29). Most Moroccan women in rural areas have no personal income or access to resources and depend completely on men for mobility. This distressing panorama leaves them in a very vulnerable position before male authority, especially the widows or divorcees who have minimal means of income (Nazir and Tomppert 184).

By contrast, life in the city becomes a liberating experience for women not only for the freedom of movement and the control over their lives, but also for the contact with other cultures. The most important advancement in the cities is the access to education, for both girls and adult women, which in turn causes a dramatic change in their expectations (Martín Muñoz, “Arab Youth Today” 17). Fatima Mernissi, in *Marruecos a través de sus mujeres* (1993) and *Women’s Rebellion and Islamic Memory* (1996), finds that Moroccan women with a secondary education increase the time span from adolescence to adulthood, delaying the age of the first job, marriage and maternity. Another important change in the profile of urban women is found in the civil status of women, as a larger proportion of independent single, divorced or separated women have begun to migrate to foreign countries (Martín Muñoz, *Marroquíes en España* 54). Furthermore, migration to cities has created a new collective of educated urban youths that have begun to express frustration caused by unemployment and an uncertain future (Martín Muñoz, “Arab Youth Today” 18). One of the main difficulties for young Muslim women that both Gema Martín Muñoz (2000) and Nayereh Tohidi (1994) point out is the lack of inspiring female role models in history, in literature and even in current Islamic events. Gema Martín Muñoz complains that the few options presented to them are to either: “mimic [...] male/masculine models” (Tohidi 131) or to “[g]o in search of new actors and ideological references with which to identify” (“Arab Youth Today” 23).

A recent exception to this void of female role models is the case of the Moroccan woman, Aminetu Haidar, a Subsaharan political activist referred to as the “Gandi española” and the “Pasionaria saharauí” (Aristegui). This woman protests against the thirty year old Moroccan occupation of part of the Arab Republic of Saharawi, recognized by the United Nations as an independent state. After being exiled from her home town, Aiaun, and sent to the Spanish Canary Islands, Aminetu carried out a hunger

strike until she was allowed to return to her own country. With her struggle being reported on all the important news programs throughout the world, she has become an international symbol of the strength of pacific resistance to unjust political maneuvers. This situation is an example of how Moroccan women are looking for alternative lifestyles that do not succumb to the patriarchal tradition of determining women's lives. In this chapter, based on an analysis of the above mentioned short stories and novel, I hypothesize about the agency of women being stimulated by role models found in Western media.

Taking into consideration Ángeles Ramírez's statement that women migrate with the hope of finding better lifestyles (*Migraciones* 124), I would argue that this desire becomes a true incentive to migrate particularly when images of attractive lifestyles and female agency are actually seen on television or film. Fantasies of magnificent lifestyles remain stories until they materialize before your eyes. The options presented to Moroccan youths in magazines and on television, like the ones in the selected short stories and novel, repeatedly encourage the viewers to dream of imagined spaces of personal comfort. Though a clear correlation between foreign media in today's Moroccan society and the motivation to migrate cannot be drawn for it would require further investigation, the short stories and novel do postulate a cause-effect relationship. Appadurai affirms that "both the politics of adaptation to new environments and the stimulus to move or return are deeply affected by a mass-mediated imaginary that frequently transcends national space" (6). Since the media converts Western lifestyles into part of the daily life of almost every corner of the world, it has become a "component[s] of the collective imaginary and resources for collective agency" (Silverstone and Georgiou 434).

Once the characters come in contact with Western culture through images, testimonies or personal contacts, the work of imagination triggers marvelous dreams of better lifestyles. The anthropologist Arjun Appadurai, in *Modernity at Large*, describes "the *work of the imagination* as a constitutive feature of modern subjectivity" which is fomented by the media (3). In this chapter, I analyze in detail the importance of fantasies, hopes and dreams for the female characters in selected narratives. But first let us take a look at how various theories of the gaze may help articulate the analysis.

B. Theories of Images and Imaginations

Janice Radway theorizes about women who escape oppression or simply frustration through subjective images that reflect their desires. She states that by placing a distance between real life and imagination it is possible to open a gap, a virtual, imaginary door, which nurtures a desired state. The resulting imaginary site does not necessarily deal with a single individual, but normally contemplates the lives of a community that is embraced by a sentiment of solidarity. For Radway, women gain a sensation of well-being which emerges from dreaming, a diversion that “temporarily refuse[s] the demands associated with their social role as wives and mothers. [...] It function[s] as a ‘declaration of independence,’ as a way of securing privacy while at the same time providing companionship and conversation” (11). This author affirms that the more the imagination penetrates the psyche, the closer a person comes to creating a bridge between the known world and an alluring, self-constructed personal space, thus providing an escape from an unwelcome reality.

Even more important than the possibility of escape is the way dreaming contributes to the development of self esteem, a disposition to learn, and a personal autonomy that leads to “emotional gratification” (Radway 96). The illusion of escape, often represented by the concept of autonomy from any obligation other than to care for the self, becomes an opportunity to abandon the expected passive behavior for women imposed by a patriarchal society in order to assume an active role as subjects with positive expectations and agency. It seems that women that fantasize about a more satisfying life come closer to realizing their dreams than those who do not use their imagination. In accordance with the theory of Radway, the female characters in these narratives come to know themselves better and strive harder for a necessary autonomy after visualizing an imaginary world linked to images of Western culture.

Film critic Gregory Currie also expresses his belief in the close relationship between images and dreams. For him there is continuity between the two that makes film directly involve our psychic life: “In fact, what is peculiarly visual about cinema is that it encourages perceptual imagining” (Currie 185). Francesco Casetti seconds this concept by stating that dreams, like mediated images, are visual representations with a “great

freedom of movement” that convey subjective desires (160-1). In his analysis, Robert Stam maintains that films can nourish dreams of mobility and encourage social transformation (310). He also points out the habitual interconnection of both receptive and resistant readings of film that influence the development of subjective interpretations of images: “The cinematic experience has a ludic and adventurous side as well as an imperious one; it fashions a plural, ‘mutant’ self, occupying a range of subject positions” (Stam 233). Therefore, a single image can have diverse receptions depending on the active or passive position of the reader. In the context of the selected narratives, I observe that when the female protagonists consume images of Western lifestyles, they focus on the appealing aspects of foreign culture and actively convert them into dreams of personal gratification, which has a great influence on their lives.

The key to the influence of dreams provoked by images, in both real people and narrative characters, lies thus in the individual’s interpretation. Many critics have analyzed the reception of images and the characteristics of the gaze⁹, a term coined by Laura Mulvey in her ground-breaking article *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975) which identified men as in control of not only the production of images but also of their meaning and significance (Kibbey 40). This power seemed to give men a psychological advantage over women, portrayed as the object of desire, even though, according to Mulvey, the control of the gaze actually spurred from male anxiety caused by, in Freudian terminology, the fear of castration (17). In other words, the construction of passive female images corresponds to the need of men to exert their power over

⁹ Among other authors that have analyzed the gaze is the psychologist Michael Argyle, who states in *The Psychology of Interpersonal Behaviour* that there are certain social codes that regulate the way to look and establish taboos in all societies; for example, it is considered impolite for some societies to stare at strangers, or to have direct eye contact with a person of a higher status. The length of the gaze is also indicative of boldness, insincerity, or friendliness according to the implicit social regulations (93). John Berger in *Ways of Seeing* defines the traditional owner of the gaze as assumed to be male, white, heterosexual, and over the age of puberty with “a desire to possess things (or lifestyle)” (83-92). Catherine Lutz and Jane Collins observe that “the mirror and camera are tools of self-reflection and surveillance. Each creates a double of the self, a second figure who can be examined more closely than the original - a double that can also be alienated from the self - taken away, as a photograph can be, to another place” (376). Paul Messaris determines that the position of power in the control of images, which Hollywood places in the hands of men, indicates a fundamental insecurity of the male hierarchy in American society. Jacobson speaks of Hollywood mainstream films as a manifestation of fear of change which is “projected onto the women and by forcing the woman to adopt the norms and rules they become controllable” (23).

perceived threats that are projected onto the female body. The position of control over images facilitates the persuasion of the spectator to internalize dominant patriarchal values. Possibly influenced by Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle* (1967) written a few years earlier, which describes an omnipotent media that creates a passive society manipulated by commercial interests¹⁰, Mulvey conceives the spectator as an inert consumer who passively accepts images and ideologies.

Both Debord's theories and Mulvey's observations uncover the subversive use of stereotypes transmitted through intentionally constructed images destined to perpetuate patriarchal domination. An expert in interpretive marketing research, Jonathan Schroeder, explains that manipulation of public opinion through the creation of stereotypes is based on the assumption that the receptor believes and identifies with the images portrayed. Therefore, the art of identity construction is based on the ability to gain a public's trust by means of a representation that synthesizes the constructor's filter, the receptor's subjectivity, and historical settings (Schroeder 202).

Coinciding with the detection of the male gaze and the subversive power of mass media that contributes to the distortion of female images, the Second Wave Feminist's Movement initiated a renewed confrontation with patriarchal domination. Judith Fetterley addresses the need to resist such manipulation in *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction* in which she recommends reading patriarchal messages with a critical eye (564-573). That same year her censorship of female stereotypes as powerless, passive territory consistently dominated by men resonates in Edward Said's influential theory of *Orientalism* (1978) that draws attention to the domination of Oriental nations through the construction of images that serve the interests of the West. Placing the twentieth century gender conflict into a global context, Said articulates a need for political resistance to the Western practice of essentializing Eastern nations by representing them with exotic female images as the Other.¹¹ Uma Narayan explains that

¹⁰ Jean Baudrillard's theory on the manipulation of the masses in *The Precession of Simulacra*, (1994) adds another perspective that supports the idea of a passive spectator.

¹¹ With the indulgence of the reader, I will focus only on the reaction of the stereotyped images of Orientalism without addressing the issues of hegemony over colonies or third world communities.

the presentation of patriarchal convictions, either nationalistic or foreign, is untrustworthy and loaded with misconceptions because they are shown as “natural”, a practice which reinforces assumptions based on biological and deterministic concepts that resist change or evolution and sustain the myth of universal truth (407). Aware of the power of constructing negative political images to undermine a competitor, Said draws attention to Western nations’ intentional degradation of Oriental nations associated with belittling feminized stereotypes. The subversive use of images, from a Freudian point of view, is a response to a fear of a competitor or aggressor. These stereotypes not only respond to a sensation of insecurity but also to economic interests, for the images of Oriental nations as backward, malleable, and submissive women camouflaged Western societies’ intentions of invasion, by allowing them to adopt the role of savior. In this way the Oriental nation, constructed through stereotypes as weak and helpless, became the recipient of unsolicited Western protection and domination.

In reference to Morocco, one of the nations under the influence of a feminized Oriental stereotype, Gema Martín Muñoz describes the effects of Orientalism based on patriarchal hierarchy that

supported by a mediated representation of the Islamic revolution associated with all Muslim countries [which] has created a cumulus of mistaken or negative interpretations that endeavor to create universal, static stereotypes that deny social change or self determination ...The Western deterministic stereotype of an inferior, backward Muslim world closed to economic progress and social change due to an omnipotent Islamic religion can see its own reflection in an Oriental deterministic stereotype of a superior, technologically advanced Western world closed to progressive government and social change due to an omnipotent capitalistic hegemony. (*El fenómeno de la migración femenina en España* 205-206)

Her warning against the stereotyped images that only favor Western commercial and political interests is supported by Chizuko Ueno, a scholar of Japanese philosophy, who explains that these demeaning stereotypes are considered particularly insulting since the

majority of Muslim nations identify with a history of medieval supremacy in Europe as a result of advanced Muslim science and military powers (226).

In confrontation with the tactics of Orientalism that degrades the image of Oriental nations and its women, a counterattack was devised. Based on the incisive criticism of Rabindranath Tagore, a prominent writer and Nobel-prize poet from Bengali, Nabil Matar, a contemporary Moroccan intellectual, presented the ideology of Occidentalism which challenged European claims to modernity and progress by emphasizing Eastern superiority for its spiritualism in detriment of Western materialistic positivism (Bonnett 40-41). However, a close observation of these tactics reveals their mutual affiliation to the patriarchal hierarchy.

Both Orientalism and Occidentalism are used by patriarchal nations to enhance the weaker qualities of the Other by feminizing their opponent's image in order to augment, by contrast, a strong masculine identity of themselves. The only true difference is the target of their criticism, either the East or the West. A third option, presented by Chizuko Ueno in "The Feminine Guise: A Trap of Reverse *Orientalism*", is based on a feminist strategy of self-identity construction (226) which eliminates the recognition of external stereotypes, and, in the process, impedes patriarchal impositions. Ueno explains that the goal is not to conquer the dominant nations depicted as a male authoritative figure, but to deconstruct stereotypes of the female Other. The intention of Reverse Orientalism is to validate difference without damaging the patriarchal ego in the position of power, creating a negotiated balance of power.

Fatima Mernissi offers an example of what I understand to be Reverse Orientalism in *Beyond the Veil* (1975). She deconstructs Western "paternalistic defense of Muslim women's lot" by addressing the generalized misunderstanding of women's liberation seen as a question of "succumbing to foreign influences" (vii). She affirms that liberation for Muslim women should not be misunderstood as acquiescence to the influence of Western feminist values, but a process of negotiation that takes into account a plethora of concepts, both Western and Muslim, that contribute to an improved status for women in Moroccan society. Based on this example, I argue that Reverse

Orientalism is not accepting or rejecting Western culture, but selecting those aspects of it that favor women, such as the possibility to secure a personal income, freedom of movement, and, in general, a voice in the design of her own destiny. These aspects of women's liberation are much more meaningful and longer lasting than the adjustment of an exterior image which would simply prolong the manipulative practice of stereotyping. It is Reverse Orientalism that focuses on change and relief from oppression by taking advantage of the positive aspects of Western culture and applying them to the lives of individuals in non-Western culture. This appropriation of selected aspects of Western culture begins with its visualization, which returns us to the power of the gaze.

Detracting from Mulvey's interpretation that the gaze is dominantly male, Ann Kaplan argues in her article "Is the Gaze Male?", that at least half of the population consists of female spectators who cannot and will not identify with patriarchal myths that pretend to position women as the Other (37). In agreement with the theory of a defiant female audience, Teresa de Lauretis affirms that the female spectator can resist an exclusively masculine reading of works by actively negotiating the female image (36), a volatile process of interpretation that "can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew" (in Bhabha 55).¹² With her characteristic flexibility, a concept that will be analyzed in detail in Chapter 2, the female spectator can escape the patriarchal control over images and circumvent the intended messages.

For me, confrontation with patriarchal powers through Reverse Orientalism is a feminist response that disavows the assumption of passivity of the female audience. Even though the usurpation of the male gaze encounters a great resistance from patriarchal positions as it undermines male power, the possession of the female gaze endows women with the ability to transcend patriarchal power struggles. Contrary to Orientalism or Occidentalism, which simply reverse the direction of criticism motivated by short-sided national pride and commercial interests, this feminist response converts the intrusion of dominant Western culture into a gratifying experience for women who

¹² Stuart Hall in "Encoding/Decoding" uses the term "negotiation" to refer to ways a viewer desists from being a passive consumer of ideologies and becomes an active producer of meaning (137).

are able to contemplate mediated Western images and dream of imaginary, personal spaces.

Reverse Orientalism manifests itself in the selected narratives by means of a strong feminist resistance to patriarchal dominance that is questioned in Western media. The distance erected between Western images and non-Western realities, “entre el modelo y lo real” (between the model and reality) (Ramirez 115), favors a multidimensional¹³ process of identification with female characters, a deconstruction of patriarchal impositions, and a construction of imagined spaces imbued with personal meaning and desire. Some characters, who observe the material abundance and the freedom that surround women in Western culture, become painfully conscious of their own deprivation and begin to image themselves in a Western world. Other females become suspicious of the apparent advantages of Western culture. The assimilation of or opposition to foreign images depends greatly on the degree of alignment with patriarchal values, either Western or Oriental. Reverse *Orientalism* supports an active female gaze that questions the assumptions of patriarchal dominance, both Western and Oriental, while actively constructing imagined female spaces.

By switching the focus from the patriarchal message of female subservience under a male provider to one that observes the context in which Western women live, the female viewers are able to register the comparably high standard of living and freedom of movement. For some characters this realization has a life-changing significance. No matter how much emphasis is placed on the object of the male gaze, the female gaze is able to counterbalance the representation of women as sexual objects by ignoring the sexualized images and fetishizing the surrounding physical world of well-being. It is a conscious act of rebellion that takes the gaze away from the central performance and places it onto the margins that reveal how the mediated characters live.

¹³ In line with this spatial aspect of Reverse Orientalism, Gillian Rose in *Feminism & Geography, The Limits of Geographical Knowledge* describes the ability to occupy “multidimensional” spaces simultaneously as a fundamentally feminine characteristic (104).

That rebellion, in the words of Mulvey (7), takes the form of a transformation from being the bearer of meaning to the maker of meaning. Avoiding a confrontational rejection of Western culture, Reverse Orientalism looks beyond the superficiality of the images and messages to visualize, according to Doreen Massey in *Space, Place, and Gender*, a unique space for negotiating power, identities and destinies (51).¹⁴ The focus on female spaces observed by non-Western women can also be associated with Linda McDowell's analysis of the fluidity of women and space as entities in progress: "[P]olitics of location does not depend on a territorially based identity but rather on the development of networks between members of an imagined community of Third World women" (214). As long as patriarchal power can control women's mobility, it can maintain her subordination and the status quo; however an escape from this control, facilitated by the capture of the gaze, hinders patriarchal domination in Muslim society as well as counters the invasion of powerful Western ideologies into third World countries. I argue that when non-Western female characters in the selected narratives view images of Western worlds, they initiate a procedure of Reverse Orientalism by positioning themselves within the mediated spaces. This action represents an inversion of the stronger controlling the weaker through fixed feminized stereotypes. With Reverse Orientalism the weaker initiates a maneuver to circumvent oppression from the stronger by negotiating a favorable relationship which allows a woman to take advantage of an advanced and more gender-oriented culture. The most important difference is that the women take the initiative by appropriating the gaze with which they discover empowering mechanisms to convert desires into realities through migration.

The imagination of women constitutes a true threat to authoritative figures in Moroccan society because it leads the women towards mobility and change, actions that weaken patriarchal hierarchy. Primarily concerned with the control of their dominions, the figures of authority are perplexed by the uncontrollable nature of women's dreams. Ángeles Ramírez reminds her readers about the effect of Western images in the 1980s and early 1990s that promoted sexual liberation by eliminating many sexual taboos in

¹⁴ The concept of negotiation of space that allows women to cultivate a combination of identities is an idea presented by Doreen Massey in *Space, Place and Gender* where she discards the need for a fixed place to achieve a stable identity (151).

films. Such images touched the imagination of the Moroccan female population (*Migraciones* 122). Now that images of sexual liberation are rampant in many mediated images from Western countries, dreams of liberation have turned into a concrete objective for many young Moroccan women (Mernissi *Fear of Democracy, Sherezade Goes West*). Fatima Mernissi specifies that in Muslim countries female dreaming, especially that which elucidates female sexual desires, is feared because it violates the patriarchal construction of self-abnegating femininity (*Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory* 111-112). To assure patriarchal control, Muslim women were traditionally required not to desire a better life, meaning one that they could control themselves. Such autonomy would be an act of *Nushuz*, which would earn a woman a bad reputation and the male members of her family discredit and shame. In justification of such oppression, acts that depict sexual liberation are condemned as “the invasion of Western, capitalist, consumerist individualism”, which is feared for its ability to enlighten the feminine imaginary (Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory* 110). This anti-American rhetoric, an example of Occidentalism, reveals Muslim patriarchal societies’ insecurity about their control over women. Miriam Cooke, an anthropologist who specializes in Moroccan culture, speaks of Arab women and their escape through imagination in *Women and the War Story*

fraught with contradictions: it threatens the self with loss as it falters between competing identities while also offering the opportunity of imagining and creating new, in-between identities, discourses and agencies that can escape co-optation in a flattening global system that would subdue and homogenize differences as ludic. (299)

Film critic Susan Jeffords links the anguish caused by the loss of control over women’s identities to women’s freedom to interpret images. She says: “It is quite possible to subvert it [Western images], but one must first invert the gaze by altering the structure of this theater, changing the ways in which we watch and are watched by films that are attempting to shape us” (453). She correctly concludes that by controlling the gaze, interpreting images from a personal feminist perspective, and imagining

alternatives different from those originally intended by the producer of the image, women take control of their identity.

One can only speculate about the dreams of liberations of young Moroccan women in response to Western images.¹⁵ To illustrate my hypothesis about inspiring images I have chosen the following picture of the glamorous film star Julia Roberts (Figure 1.2) transmitted repeatedly in the newspapers, on television programs of CNN and MTV, and on the web in the feminist magazine “Elle Africa” in the fall of 2007. Represented by a sumptuous picture, the star increases her popularity by demonstrating her appropriate dose of humility while accepting the award: “The actress' co-stars and other admirers came out in force to honor her as the 22nd winner of the organization's annual award. Julia Roberts is humble on stage while accepting her American



● **American
Cinematheque
honors Julia
Roberts 2007-
10-15**

[http://www.el
africa.com/](http://www.el
africa.com/)

Figure 1.2 Julia Roberts

¹⁵ Due to a lack of documented surveys on the actual reception of Western images in Morocco, I feel it necessary to present my own interpretation of what I consider possible responses of women in Moroccan today.

Cinematheque Award.” After laconically establishing the star’s concordance with the social norms for a public woman who is expected to display beauty and modesty¹⁶, the reporter leaves the viewer to contemplate the image of the artist who displays her rolling curls, sparkling white smile, and brilliant pink dress that reveals her bare arms and dangling long legs. A reaction that would reverse the male gaze interested in objectifying the female body is the imagination of the life of an attractive and daring woman surrounded by luxury in another part of the world.

Another Western image that frequently appears on Moroccan media is the sitcom “Full House” which, from a patriarchal point of view, displays a persistent rebellion of the younger female generation subdued by the authority of the male head of household. However, for me, a female gaze would notice that physical and emotional boundaries are respected, and conflicts are subdued or rationalized without violence. It is evident that the female characters enjoy a better personal, family, and social status which contrasts sharply with the lives of Moroccan women more accustomed to silent submission, violence, and non-negotiable poverty. Another program on Moroccan television, which I consider overtly feminist, is “The Simpsons” in which an extravagant woman with blue hair acts as the head of the household in which she makes all the important decisions. She not only assumes the authority over her husband, but she also sustains a magnificent standard of living, from Moroccan society’s point of view, that seems to be the norm for the entire community, judging by the similarity of all the homes, cars, and televisions portrayed on the program. Moreover, the protagonist enjoys absolute mobility by having free access to a car without having to give accounts to anyone about where she goes or with whom. The practice of interpreting images from the present position of the viewer is emphasized by Silverstone and Georgiou who state that “[m]ediation is also a political process in so far as dominant forms of imagining and story-telling can be resisted, appropriated or countered by others both inside media space, [...], or on the edge of it, through the everyday tactics of symbolic engagement, in gossip,

¹⁶ Deborah A Kapchan, in “Catering to the Sexual Market: Female Performers Defining the Social Body” in *Gender on the Market: Moroccan Women and the Revoicing of Tradition*, explains the controversial reception of and prejudice against women who lead public lives. (185)

talk or stubborn refusal” (434). In other words the images are not passively consumed but dynamically interpreted by a critical viewer.

Let’s now turn to the dreams and imagined spaces of characters in response to Western images in the selected short stories and novel. I suggest that Western images are the foundation of strategies that transcend the simple enjoyment of fantasy to become dreams of emancipation. Furthermore, I argue that the thoughts and actions of the female characters, in anticipation of an escape from oppression, represent a meaningful defiance to patriarchal dominance and become the platform for migration.

C. Analysis

1. Short Stories

Andrés Sorel

Andrés Sorel is an author that is very politically involved in questions of class conflicts and social injustice. Occupying positions such as Secretary General of the “Asociación de Escritores de España” (Writers’ Association of Spain), founder of the newspaper *Liberación* [*Liberation*], and director of the magazine *República de las Letras* [*The Republic of Letters*], he has written about political conflicts and demands of human rights since the beginning of his career. During his youth he was concerned with the unjust situations caused by Franco’s dictatorship. His fight for freedom from the dominant conservative right is reflected in many of his works that are clearly tainted with a leftist political voice: *Apócrifo de Luis Cernuda* (2004), *Concierto en Sevilla* (2003), *La noche en que fui traicionada* (2002), *Regreso a las armas* (1998), *Jesús, llamado el Cristo* (1997), *El libertador en su agonía* (1992), *Babilonia, la puerta del cielo* (1982), *Crónica de un regreso* (1981), *El perro castellano* (1979), *Discurso de la política y el sexo* (1978), *Free on board Carolina (Como la enfermedad, como la muerte)* (1975), *Crónicas de amor y muerte en diez ciudades del mundo* (1973). He also addresses the problem of the abuse of women and the lack of human rights for all immigrants, especially in *Las voces del Estrecho* (1999) in which he expresses indignation for the deaths of many people who flee poverty and repression.

The short stories of Sorel analyzed in this chapter are included in the volume called *Las voces del Estrecho* which gathers the imagined testimonies of many individuals that dream of liberation from subjugation and poverty through emigration. The stories with female protagonists, in particular, exemplify the theory of Reverse Orientalism by portraying characters, allured by attractive images on Western media, which circumvent oppressive male figures in order to reach an imaginary paradise. Unfortunately for these characters, Andrés Sorel either doesn't visualize migration as a possible means to improve personal lifestyles, or he prefers to terminate their lives in the straits of Gibraltar to emphasize the tragedy that Moroccan immigrants undergo.

The narrator of "Mujer sin cabeza" (Woman without a Head) is a girl called Nadiva, whose fantasmagoric voice emerges from the waters of the strait of Gibraltar to detail her tragic experience in first person to the other victims of the wreck of boat that was supposed to take them to Spain. Since the reader is another listener of the story, Sorel ingeniously incorporates him/her into the mass of individuals uselessly sacrificed to the sea, encouraging in this way solidarity with immigrants. The story is about three women who have conflicting views of female migration and who deal with patriarchal oppression in different ways. First the grandmother, then the mother, and finally the daughter confront the abuse of powerful male characters and the lack of alternatives to survive without them. The evolution of these female characters coincides with the amplification of personal spaces that extend from an isolated, rural home to a Moroccan city, and finally to a beach that represents a threshold to a new life in Spain. The more informed about Western lifestyles, the more determined the women are to leave closed spaces and rebel against men's control. It is significant that oppression and closed spaces in this story are linked to death. The grandmother, enclosed in her room, has nightmares about death. When the daughter is locked in her husband's house, she attempts to commit suicide on several occasions. In a different scenario, the mother in urban spaces and the daughter in the open sea never contemplate the possibility of death in spite of their dangerous circumstances.

The characters of the story fall neatly into the categories of Gatekeeper, Sympathizer, and Key Holder. The primary female Gatekeeper is the grandmother who

lives exclusively within the walls of her rural home surrounded by her family and secluded from the outside world. Being the oldest member of the family, the grandmother occupies the top of the patriarchal hierarchy, a privilege which she uses to protect her daughter and granddaughter from the selfishness of the male members of the family who resent having to provide for them ever since they were abandoned. A symbol of the grandmother's power is the key to the food pantry which she keeps on a chain around her neck: "Aunque fuera arrastrándose, era ella quien se desplazaba para abrir aquel cuarto mágico" (Even though she had to drag herself, she was the sole person who went to open that magic room) (113). Besides protecting her daughter and granddaughter, the grandmother also guards the reputation of all the women in the family whom she keeps under constant surveillance (112). Responsible for the maintenance of the status quo, this elderly woman is alarmed at the idea of women working outside the home and even migrating to other countries: "Rompeamos nuestras tradiciones y me da miedo, ...escucho decir a mi alrededor, una y otra vez: con tal de que mantenga a la familia, no importa que la mujer salga, que se vaya a otras tierras" (We break our traditions and it scares me, ... I hear people around me say again and again: provided that the family is supported, it doesn't matter that women leave to go to other countries) (117). She considers this nuance an unfortunate mistake with regrettable consequences.

When this Gatekeeper dies, the mother and her two children are forced to leave the family home: "mi madre, que Dios la tenga en su Gloria, ya no estará más con nosotros, ya no nos puede amparar, hijos. Tendremos que marcharnos de aquí, buscar otra casa. [...] ningún pariente puede hacerse cargo de nosotros" (my mother, God bless her, won't be with us any more; she can no longer help us, children. We will have to leave, look for another home. [...] no relative can take care of us) (114). When they first move to the city, the mother and daughter continue implementing patriarchal traditions with disastrous outcomes. Nadiva's mother tries to find a solution to their poverty by arranging a marriage between her daughter and a distant cousin forty years older than her. However, the marriage is a failure. The husband insists on dominating his wife with physical violence and sexual demands. When Nadiva becomes pregnant, she frustrates her husband's desire for offspring by performing household, life-risking abortions. After

a time, he gives up on Nadiva, who is reduced to domestic slavery, and brings home a second wife.

When Nadiva abandons her husband, her brother-in-law, a male Gatekeeper, tries to retrieve her from her mother's house by threatening to call the police (119). This man uses discourses of Islamic tradition and Muslim religion to defend men's superior position in society: "el Profeta sólo habla de los hombres, las mujeres son distintas, no tienen para la misma consideración" (The Prophet only talks to men. Women are different. They don't have the same consideration) (119). He pretends to justify the dominance of men over women by giving the example of his sister who he claims was punished by Allah with poverty and disease for daring to leave the family home and live alone. Nadiva's mother confronts his threats with a diatribe that defends women's rights to live without men: "¿Acaso es mejor morir de necesidad?" (Could it possibly be better to die of hunger?) (120), and the man, shocked by the strength of her words, curses all emancipated women: "Dios maldice a las mujeres que pretenden convertirse en hombres..." (God curse women who try to become men) (120). At the end, the brother-in-law recognizes his inability to impose his authority over the mother and leaves without Nadiva.

Nadiva's brother follows a different road. Though a Gatekeeper of patriarchal order at the beginning of the story, he turns into a Sympathizer after coming into contact with women in the city. Nadiva observes how he becomes aware of the changes in the role of women that were once exclusively housekeepers and are now able to provide for their families. His strong prejudice against women who migrate and fall into prostitution is substituted with recognition of their plight.

Ya no son mujeres de mala reputación las que emigran, antes íbamos a que iban a las grandes ciudades, nosotros los hombres las buscamos, las pagamos y las maldecimos, pero ahora son nuestras propias hermanas, hijas, y si fueran más jóvenes, lo harían nuestras madres. Son los tiempos y las necesidades, que entierran hábitos, tradiciones.

(They are no longer women with bad reputations who migrate. Before we went for what they all went for in the big cities. We men sought them out, paid them and cursed them; but now they are our own sisters, daughters and, if they were younger, our own mothers. It's the change in the times and our needs that bury customs and tradition). (117)

With the influence of the city, the brother becomes more supportive of women who are faced with difficult choices in order to survive. Nevertheless, in spite of his sympathy, he himself makes no attempt to help his mother or sister.

Nadiva also observes how the influence of Western culture prevalent in the city of Chaouen brings about significant changes in her mother who encourages her to take on the role of Key Holder: “el trabajo fuera de casa abrió sus ojos. Casi no la reconocía [...] Mi madre se había vuelto menos reservada” (work outside the home opened her eyes. I almost didn’t recognize her [...] My mother had become less reserved) (118). After becoming aware of new opportunities to solve the problem of poverty, the mother speaks to Nadiva about exploring other countries, “otras tierras” (117) and introduces her to a cousin who was educated in the city of Rabat and knows of other women who earn a good living in Spain. This cousin explains how the traditional place of women in Morocco is an injustice:

[...] durante siglos las mujeres vivimos sin llegar a conocer lo que es la vida. Siempre encerradas, sumisas, obedientes. ¿Y sabes a que esperábamos? A morir. Como pájaros enjaulados, cantando nuestra propia tristeza. Por eso es mejor volar, no debes tener miedo a volar. Mírate en un espejo, pero sobre todo aprende a ver tu alma y comprenderás que quiero decir. (... for centuries women have lived without ever knowing what life is, always closed up, submissive, and obedient. Do you know what we wait for? Death. Like birds in a cage, singing our own sadness. That’s why it’s better to fly; you shouldn’t be afraid to fly. Look at yourself in the mirror, but above all learn to see your soul and you will understand what I want to say). (118)

The cousin ends the conversation with an insightful comment about the hypocrisy of Moroccan families that condemn women for migrating but praise them if they send back a little money. Listening to the advice from her mother and cousin, Nadiva gains a sense of entitlement to a better life and decides to pursue the adventure of migration.

Since these changes take place after moving to the city, I conclude that contact with Western culture helps both Nadiva and her mother to identify with a collective of women who migrate to Spain to be able to sustain their families. Through the development of the female characters, Andres Sorel expresses his admiration for the strength of women who rebel against violent Gatekeepers of patriarchy. However, even though the author

recognizes the noble efforts of the Key Holders, who deconstruct patriarchal arguments and risk their lives for their dreams, he emphasizes their victimization as an inevitable destiny.

Other examples of Sorel's characters that come into contact with Western culture are found in the short story "Alí y Loi, ángeles de Ceuta" (Alí and Loi, Angels from Ceuta) which *describes* the lives of abandoned Moroccan children who cross the frontier that divides Moroccan territory and the Spanish coastal town of Ceuta (See Appendix IV). When they are thrown out, they wait patiently at the gate for a chance to slip back into the Spanish community again to look for something to eat. By closely observing the foreigners and watching Spanish television programs, accessible to the public in cafeterias, the children learn to mimic Spanish ways and to discover opportunities to travel to the Peninsula: "[...] aprenden a ver, a callar, a emular a sus nuevos ídolos, horas contemplando la televisión allí donde pueden entrar y no les echan" (... they learn to watch in silence, to imitate their new idols, hours of watching where they can get in without being thrown out) (201). The programs on TV fill them with comforting images and exhilarating dreams of a supposedly gratifying future: "En la televisión los programas se comen unos a otros, se atropellan en relatos de noticias, aventuras, historias, telefilms, concursos, paisajes, anuncios. Y ellos también aceleran su lenguaje, su búsqueda de identidad..." (On television, the programs eliminate each other; they trample each other with stories of news, adventures, history, sitcoms, contests, landscapes, commercials. They also accelerate their speech, their search for identity...) (203). With this story Sorel emphasizes the tragedy of small children who nurture their dreams of attaining a comfortable Western lifestyle by stealing, begging, and trafficking with their own bodies.

Sorel's story "La gran ramera" (The Great Whore) also describes the Moroccan characters' fascination with Spanish cities perceived as "la Tierra Prometida" (the Promise Land) (135), an idea transmitted by Western media. With a third person narrator, Sorel constructs two Moroccan female characters that complement each other. The younger one, Khadija, is so desperate to escape from her degrading life that she looks forward to belonging to a high-class Spanish prostitution net. The older one, Leila, spins

her golden web around her innocent victim by elaborating on bewitching myths about life in Spain and adventures with lovers in Morocco.

After moving to Ceuta with her husband who earns a living by smuggling Spanish products into Morocco, the twenty one year old Khadija escapes from a life of hard labor and beatings. “Obligada a limpiar la casa, preparar la comida, fregar los cacharros, lavar y planchar la ropa, y dejarse penetrar, tenga o no ganas, por el hombre, cuando éste la reclama ...” (Forced to clean the house, cook the meals, do the dishes, wash and iron the clothes, and allow her body to be penetrated, whether she wants to or not, by a man whenever he wants...) (135). The mother-in-law is even more demanding and unpleasant than her husband: “Las mujeres que con él habitaban, y su padre, eran más autoritarias que el propio esposo. Éste le chillaba, le pegaba alguna vez. Las otras, el padre, no la dejaban respirar un minuto, acosándola con sus órdenes, con su presencia y vigilancia constante” (The women that lived with him and his father were more authoritarian than her own husband. He shouted at her and hit her a few times. The women and the father didn’t leave her a minute to rest, tracking her down with their orders, their presence, and their constant vigilance) (135). Once again Sorel portrays the indifference of men towards the plight of their wives and the mechanism of older women who defend their status by controlling the younger women.

Unwilling to tolerate this situation any further, the protagonist searches for alternatives in the city where she hears comforting stories of women who practice prostitution in Madrid and Marbella. Walking through the streets, she observes the travellers who come from the other side of the sea and the Moroccan youths who attempt to dress, walk, and emulate the facial expressions of Westerners. She notices how Moroccan women use Spanish newspapers and magazines to look for Spanish clients willing to help them escape to Spain: “Siempre anda con periódicos y revistas españolas con la esperanza de encontrar en la sección de contactos alguien que pida casarse o tener relaciones con una mujer como ella” (She always walks around with Spanish newspapers and magazines with the hope of finding someone in the classified section who is looking for a woman to marry or to have a relationship with) (138). All the references to Western culture, which contrast sharply with her experience in her Moroccan family, are

irresistibly appealing. Without considering the possible misfortunes of women in prostitution, Khadija thinks that “si le iban mal las cosas, podría pagar con su cuerpo, como ahora pagaba al marido, recibiendo a cambio sólo golpes y trabajo y teniendo que atender a toda su familia” (if things went wrong, she could pay with her body, the way she pays her husband, enduring in exchange blows and work having to care for all his family) (135). Therefore, with the help of Western media, Khadija becomes an easy prey.

The second narrator, Leila, presents herself as a friend and helps the protagonist prepare the way to immigrate to Spain. Living in the Spanish city of Melilla in Northern Africa, and practicing the art of oral storytelling, Leila unites Moroccan and Spanish cultures to allure the young women into the world of prostitution that supposedly offers luxury and relaxation. In the role of a Sympathizer, Leila gives testimony of other women like Khadija who struggled against patriarchal control. “No encontraba ningún aliado alrededor suyo; era como una no-persona. Por eso decidió emigrar a España clandestinamente ...” (She didn’t find a single ally around her; she was like a non-person. That’s why she decided to immigrate to Spain illegally) (135). Feeling she has earned the right to experience pleasure and comfort, Khadija is especially drawn towards immigration by her dreams of a paradise in Marbella, Spain, where la Gran Ramera, a matron of a prestigious house of prostitution, has a reputation of taking very good care of her workers. Leila describes the Spanish matron as a motherly figure with the moral obligation of freeing all women from uncompensated sexual subordination to men:

Ella, la Gran Ramera, extendía su manto protectora desde su acomodo en la Tierra Prometida, al sur de España, a cuantos habitan en el infortunio, intentando atraer a su lecho primero a las mujeres de su familia, luego a las necesitadas. A todas ha de sacarlas de Marruecos, del África abandonada por los dioses, decía sonriendo...” (She, the Great Whore, extended her protecting cloak from her shelter in the Promise land, in the south of Spain, to all those who live in misfortune, trying to allure to her bed first of all the women of her family, then all those in need. She must take them all out of Morocco, from the Africa abandoned by the gods, she said smiling...). (135)

Hearing this description, Khadija is convinced that she will be free of oppression and have ample time to herself to spend the generous economic compensations as if she were a glamorous film star.

The contact with the outer world, which includes Leila, Khadija undergoes a change of identity and an inversion of relationships with men. Gaining consciousness of her own human rights and desires, she constructs a highly improved self image. The recognition of her self-value gives her the sensation of freedom from all obligations towards men, who she comes to consider as merely a means of transportation to paradise: “Un hombre español no tiene edad, es, simplemente, un salvador” (A Spaniard has no age, he is simply a savior) (138). Moreover, her discovery of entitlement to a better life opens the door to new experiences of sexual satisfaction with Leila, who helps her overcome an internalized self denial and remorse. “Khadija nota el cuerpo de Leila oprimiendo el suyo y encuentra entonces otro mundo de sensaciones...” (Khadija is aware of Leila’s body pressing against hers and then discovers another world of sensations) (140). In this way, Sorel confronts self-awareness, lesbianism and liberation with unconsciousness, heterosexuality and slavery.¹⁷

The erotic relationship, which Sorel describes with explicit passages, helps Khadija to shed her sexual objectification and deconstruct the patriarchal presumption of superiority and of being the exclusive model for sexual conduct. While allowing herself to be allured by images of high living standards in Spain, she mocks her husband’s intentions of domination. This illusion of power leads Khadija to migrate to Spain. With this story, Sorel expresses his comprehension of women who voluntarily fall into prostitution adorned by attractive images of Western lifestyles. Even though the inspiration to migrate is supported by deceptive promises of well-being, it is portrayed as the lesser of the evils that young women suffer.

¹⁷ Linda Nicholson in *The Second Wave* explains the ambivalence of a lesbian who discovers her sexuality in a heterosexual community. “ The turmoil she experiences tends to induce guilt proportional to the degree to which she feels she is not meeting social expectations, and/or eventually drives her to question and analyze what the rest of her society more or less accepts. She is forced to evolve her own life pattern, often living much of her life alone, learning usually much earlier than the ‘straight’ (heterosexual) sisters about the essential aloneness of life (which the myth of marriage obscures) and about the reality of illusions” (155).

Nieves García Benito

Professor of History at the University of Cadiz, Spain, Nieves García is an active member of the NGO Asociación Pro-Derechos Humanos (Pro- Human Rights Association) in Tarifa, which takes care of survivors that reach the coasts of Spain. Her participation has led her to write innumerable articles in the Basque magazine “Mugak” which support feminist groups and denounce racism and xenophobia throughout Spain. Most of her articles concentrate on the injustice of the ill treatment and rejection of immigrants, for example “Ni un muerto más en el Estrecho” (Not one more death in the Strait) (2007) and “Nada es verdad, ¿ni es mentira?” (Nothing is true, nor is it a lie?) (2003). She describes in great detail how many illegal immigrants drown before they reach the coast of Spain and criticizes vehemently the indifference of both Spanish and Moroccan political powers. Her political agenda is visible in her literary account of immigration problems in a volume of short stories titled *Por la vía de Tarifa* (On the Way to Tarifa) (2000). In this volume, the story titled “Al-Yaza’ir” (Island) offers insight into the experience of women immigrants who welcome the opportunity to migrate to Western countries, only to encounter an unsolicited turn of destiny.

Told in retrospect in first person, “Al-Yaza’ir” is a story of a Moroccan town girl who is very interested in European fashion. One day she is ordered by her father to travel to Spain to help him with the work in an orchard in Murcia. For the trip, she puts on a ‘European dress’ full of flowers and fills a ‘French red, white and blue bag’ with her few belongings (100). Since she had never left the town of Kenifra, the reference to a European dress and a French bag indicates that she has seen images of these articles of clothing and has associated them with a different, more attractive, culture. Women’s magazines are a popular means of learning of Western fashions, especially for illiterate women like Al-Yaza’ir who live in rural areas without the necessary electricity for radio or television. In such a situation, it is understandable how fashion images transmit powerful messages of consumer values and feminist ideologies that contrast sharply with the quotidian reality of poor rural towns in Morocco. By replicating the fashion, this

female character is evincing the influence of Western culture and expressing her desire to appropriate it.

The first stop of her trip takes her to Tangiers where she is overwhelmed by the novelty of the coastal city inundated by Western cars and tourists. “Nunca me hubiera podido imaginar una ciudad tan grande como Tánger, con tantos coches y casas tan altas” (I would have never imagined a city as big as Tangier, with so many cars and high buildings) (101). The buildings and the traffic represent for the protagonist an extraordinary modernity that intensifies her enthusiasm about the world that returns her greeting from the other side of the Straits with sparkling lights.

Nevertheless, this enthusiasm is not shared by the other women in her family. Al-Yaza’ir’s grandmother believes that her granddaughter should stay in the rural town and take care of the vegetable garden that could sustain the whole family if only her son would invest his money in buying some land in Morocco. Having no need to leave her home town in search of wealth, the grandmother complains about her son’s greed. “No comprendía el empeño de que todos sus hijos estuvieran con él en Murcia, recogiendo pimientos” (She didn’t understand his insistence on having all his children with him in Murcia, picking peppers) (101). However, in spite of all her complaining, she does not defy her son by keeping her granddaughter from going to Spain. Al-Yaza’ir’s mother, another helpless woman who passively resists the impositions of her husband, also suffers his aggressions in silence. These sympathizers recognize the injustice of patriarchal authority, but do nothing to put a stop to it. Thus, Al-Yaza’ir embarks on an adventure to learn of the Western world, which unfortunately does not fulfill her expectations.

2. Novel

Gerardo Muñoz Lorente

Also a journalist, though not from Cadiz but from Alicante where he contributes to a newspaper called “Información”, Gerardo Muñoz collaborates with Radio Alicante (SER) where he keeps his commitments to social justice and liberal politics by engaging

in cultural activities sponsored by the *Centro Democrático y Social* party and the *PSOE* party in Valencia. Author of many essays and novels, Muñoz has demonstrated his extensive knowledge about Muslim culture and society, in particular that of Morocco where he lived for many years. Some of his novels are *El fantasma de Lucentum* (The ghost of Lucentum) (1987, re-edited in 2004); *El Manuscrito* (The Manuscript) (1990), *El Hallazgo* (The Discovery) (1991) and *La Búsqueda* (The quest) (1991), re-edited in a trilogy titled *La pica de Balbino el Viejo* (The pickaxe of the old man Balbino) published in 2003; *Secretos* (Secrets) (1993); *El fruto de la melancolía* (The fruit of Melancholy), finalist of the Premio Azorín de Novela in 1998; *Un negro detrás de la oreja* (A Blackman Breathing down Your Neck) (2000); *A la cuna del sol divino* (The cradle of the divine sun) (2002); *Los Mensajes del Corán* (The Messages of the Koran) (2001); *El Rosario de Mahoma* (The Rosary of Mahoma) (2004); *La semilla de la Dama Negra* (The seed of the Black Lady) (2005); and *Refugio de Libertad* (Refuge from Liberty) (2006). His most recent novel appeared in 2006, *Asesinato en Molívell* (Assassination in Molívell). All his novels demonstrate an extensive knowledge of the Muslim society and a profound respect for its people.

In *Ramito de Hierbabuena* (A Handful of Mint), a novel published in 2001, the female protagonist, Maimuna, lives with her fairly prosperous family in a rural home that has had running water and electricity since 1985 and a bathroom with a toilet since 1990. When she was ten, her family enjoyed watching the official Moroccan television channel after installing an antenna to the roof. Some of her neighbors were able to receive Spanish TV programs from Melilla and sitcoms from different parts of the world, an attraction which mainly interested the women. “Llegó la adicción a las telenovelas, especialmente las egipcias y mexicanas, adicción que compartían madre e hijas...” (They became addicted to the sitcoms, especially the Egyptian and Mexican ones, which were shared by both mothers and daughters...) (22). Maimuna is so intrigued by the images on television, she asks her brother Yusuf to take her to Melilla to see the sights for herself since she feels a need to confirm her fantasies.

Just like Maimuna, there are many characters in Spanish narrative that are

dominated by an irresistible desire to experience the imaginary spaces of Western culture, especially after their dreams are validated by the testimony of others. Sira García and Marta de la Serna describe the reaction of many women confronted with the reality of Western lifestyles in *A Cara Descuberta, Ser marroquina i viure a Catalunya* (*With a naked face, Being Moroccan and Living in Catalonia*). These authors explain that immigration is not only a question of economy but also one of enticement: “les cartes que rebia de la seva mare, que havia emigrat ja feia un temps amb el seu padrestre cap a Catalunya, le havien fet crear-se una imatge idíl·lica del que vol dir emigrar a Occident: feina, diners, menjar assegurat, progrés” (the letters that she received from her mother, who had migrated some time ago with her step-father to Catalonia, made her believe in an idealized image that made her want to migrate to the West: work, money, guaranteed food, progress) (27). Describing the motivation of women who migrate, Maria García-Cano also believes that economic hardships are only part of the attraction towards Western society: “la motivación económica aparece estrechamente vinculada o supeditada a otro tipo de cuestiones de tipo social o familiar y, en el caso de las mujeres, los deseos de escapar de una situación de represión o excesivo control vividos en la sociedad de origen” (the economic motivation appears closely linked or subordinated to other kinds of social and family questions, and, in the case of women, the desires to escape from a situation of repression or excess control lived in the home society) (124). In the selected works, when the images of attractive alternatives seen on Western media are authenticated by personal contacts, the sorrowful reality of Moroccan women in rural areas often becomes unbearable, and the dreams of the characters turn into concrete plans to construct a better future elsewhere.

Maimuna’s curiosity takes her to Nador, another modern coastal city south of Melilla, where European cars constantly circulate through the streets. Maimuna sighs in expectation of a wonderful European world. “*¡Insh’Allah!* – mirando el lejano horizonte e imaginando cómo sería su vida en el paraíso europeo” (Bless the Lord! – looking at the distant horizon and imagining how her life would be in the European paradise) (30). The city helps Maimuna grasp the difference in the standard of living in Spain that she has seen on television. What also catches the protagonist’s attention is the freedom that

Spanish women have to dress the way they please. “Algo que a ella misma le hubiera gustado hacer si no fuera porque en Segangan eso causaría escándalo, y también en el televisor de la casa de Yasmina había visto películas en las que las mujeres salían tapando su cuerpo con minúsculos biquinis...” (Something she herself would like to do if it weren't for the scandal it would cause in Segangan. Also, on television in Yasmina's home she had seen movies of women that covered their bodies only with scanty bikinis) (31). She is surprised by the lack of modesty in women who are “exhibiéndose con unos pantalones tan cortos que no le bajaban de las ingles, y un top que dejaba al aire sus hombros y ombligo, marcando perfectamente sus pechos y pezones!” (revealing themselves with pants that were so short that they barely covered their crotch, and tops that showed their bare shoulders and navel and clearly delineated their bosom and nipples!) (31). Her comments, far from being demeaning, seem to be full of admiration. Enticed by the idea of participating in a Western lifestyle, she reverses the male gaze that dominates the television and admires these women for their courage.

To confirm the veracity of this liberating spectacle, Maimuna asks her friend Yasmina about other Spanish towns like Melilla which is described as “las magníficas atracciones que los españoles de Europa trasladaban hasta allí...” (the magnificent attractions that the Spaniards of Europe brought there...) (31). This secondary female character is also attracted by the European lifestyle.

Las imágenes que aparecían en las televisiones españolas, que ella había tenido ocasión de ver en casa de su amiga Yasmina, mostraban un mundo maravilloso donde reinaba la opulencia. Hombres y mujeres hermosos que poseían casas fantásticas, semejantes a los palacios de *Las mil y una noches*, con coches nuevos, vestidos elegantes y enormes ciudades repletas de comodidades: supermercados, tiendas, cines y restaurantes.

(The images that appeared on Spanish television, which she had an opportunity to see at Yasmina's house, illustrated a marvelous world of wealth. Beautiful men and women that owned fantastic homes, just like the palaces in *The Arabian Nights* with new cars, elegant clothes and enormous cities full of things that made life comfortable: supermarkets, stores, cinemas, and restaurants). (29)

Impressed by what she has seen and very confident of herself, Yasmina decides to leave her parents' home without saying goodbye to migrate to Spain.

For other characters in the novel, the Spanish cities of Ceuta and Melilla are sources of Western goods that are smuggled out of the town and sold to Moroccans for a profit. Other contacts with Western culture come from immigrants who return from Spain for a summer vacation with good cars, beautiful clothes, and healthy children. They bring loads of articles to sell and fabulous stories about how good life is in Europe, “contaban cómo en Europa el trabajo bien pagado no faltaba, los hogares eran confortables y sus hijos podían comer bien todos los días y estudiar hasta bien mayores” (they talked of how work in Europe was well paid and readily available, homes were comfortable and their children could eat well every day and study until they were quite old) (29). With their goods, stories, and testimonies, these characters constantly remind fellow Moroccans that the marvelous imaginary world of Europe is a reality that lies not far from their own home town.

Habib himself is allured by the stories of Western lifestyles, but he senses the hypocrisy of the members of his home town who return on vacation from their work in Spain. He is aware of the fact that they boast about becoming rich in Spain while silencing the hard labor and sacrifice that their earnings require. Lacking the strength to confront Faruk and ask for Maimuna’s hand in marriage, Habib migrates to Spain to encounter the truth about the marvelous images of Spain and prepare the way for his *Handful of Mint*.

These main characters, Maimuna, Yazmina, and Habib, reach for the dreams provoked by images or contacts with Western culture. In the case of the female characters, the Western images, filtered through a non-Western female gaze, become models of happiness that motivate female agency.

D. Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I have underlined the impact of Western culture and the powerful effects of the non-Western female gaze that trigger dreams of escaping to the unknown world of Spain. The new found agency of female characters reflects part of a new feminist movement in Morocco that encourages the political involvement of women:

These new feminisms begin with concepts of difference rather than sameness, identity and particularity rather than universality, celebrating the status of the other or outsider rather than wanting inside, embodiment rather than the view from nowhere and, finally, a relational rather than binary approach. At the core of this approach is an attempt to base the analysis of politics on the experience and perspective of women rather than men. (Arneil 187)

By drawing attention to the needs of women who strive to construct an individual identity and validate a position outside the patriarchal norm, the authors of these stories and novel establish relationships that point to a way to surpass the strict binaries of social conventions. To avoid confrontation with patriarchal dualistic strategies, negotiation must take place on a feminist platform of identity and diversity that opens a road of communication between both Western and Oriental cultures.

The voices of the women in these narratives speak of the need to escape from conditions of oppression and poverty and to find alternatives observed in images of Western culture or through personal contacts. The defiance to patriarchal control on behalf of the Key Holders contributes to the deconstruction of patriarchal authority, no longer accepted by female characters as natural or universal. On the contrary, these privileges are recognized as a social construction that only favors the patriarchs and their Gatekeepers. Though violent backlash against rebellion takes its toll, it also reveals the weakness and limitations of patriarchal positions that lose control over women. These stories supply examples of female emancipation which alter the balance of power in traditional gender relationships.

Nadiva discovers she is able to negotiate, through her mother, a balance of power that frees her of marital obligations and leads her to a world where women can be autonomous. Rejecting the fate of a married woman, she learns to construct her own destiny. Khadija also rejects the life of a married woman under patriarchal control. When she abandons her husband, she comes in contact with the Western world where she discovers a more gratifying sexual alternative. Al-Yaza'ir, leaves a traditional life of a rural woman who dreams of escaping to a better life. In Tangiers, she feels as if she has become part of a modern world she dreamed of. Maimuna, refusing to comply with her brother's authority, forms an alliance with her friend Yasmina to break away from patriarchal oppression to gain the freedom she observed in the city. All these women gain

autonomy and agency by deconstructing the feminine stereotype of subordinated women dominated by patriarchal power in their families.

Nevertheless, the female characters that decide to migrate are not necessarily the ones who most need to escape, but the ones who are able to imagine and anticipate a better lifestyle for themselves. I have suggested that the inspiration that leads the protagonists to believe in the possibility of change comes mainly from images of Western culture and from contact with people who have been to Western countries. Even though Western images are full of stereotypes that portray women as sexual objects, the female characters of these works are able to look beyond them to visualize a more fulfilling way of life. Especially the female characters that develop a strong sense of self are able to observe Western images from a standpoint of difference that demands independence from patriarchal domination. As Collins points out, the awareness of being a member of a larger community united by the consciousness of difference prepares women to undertake autonomy. Furthermore, to avoid the tendency to maintain the status quo, as with the *Sympathizers*, interplay of desire of a better life and the anticipation of success or personal gratification must take place.

The principle motivation that stem from Western images, even more than a better standard of living, is the depiction of freedom of choice and movement for women. The ability to visualize an imaginary, highly satisfactory world is the key that opens the door to escape from poverty and oppression. Once the protagonists gain self esteem and autonomy by visualizing themselves as individuals worthy of better lives, they gain the courage to cross the strait into an alluring enigma of unknown worlds.

In response to stereotyped Western images, the non-Western female viewer adopts an active role in the decisions concerning her life by mentally creating alternative images that correspond to an internal discourse of desire and resistance. When their dreams of liberation and life improvement are rescued from the imaginary and brought into reality, the female characters react with an agency that deconstructs patriarchal hegemony. This agency, which empowers the female characters to choose their own destiny, to migrate or to stay, to risk the adventure of a new world or to reaffirm the

tribulations of the known, revives power struggles whose consequences will be analyzed in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 2: DISPLACEMENT AS MOVEMENT AND MOBILITY

“The movement for change is a changing movement, changing itself, demasculinizing itself, de-Westernizing itself, becoming a critical mass that is saying in so many different voices, languages, gestures, actions: it must change; we ourselves can change it”

Adrienne Rich *Blood, Bread, and Poetry* (225)

Immigration is considered a catalyst for both physical and psychological displacement. Many Spanish migration narratives and films present displacement with predominantly catastrophic endings, which often convey the discomfiting reality that anyone can become a potential victim of unexpected turns of destiny. Transmitting a sense of inexorable change in the world due to immigration, the authors and film director analyzed in this chapter appeal for a commitment with the displaced. The reluctance of the reader/viewer to recognize the implications of migration represents a challenge to those who wish to enhance the awareness of the public about the contentious situation in Spanish society. Focusing on patterns of displacement, I take a second look at a few works presented in chapter one, like “Mujer sin cabeza” (Woman without a Head) by Andrés Sorel, “Al-Yaza’ir” by Nieves García Benito, and *Ramito de Hierbabuena* (A Handful of Mint) by Gerardo Muñoz Lorente. I also include other short stories from Sorel’s *Voces del Estrecho* (Voices from the Strait) such as “Parir en el mar” (Giving Birth in the Sea) and “Voces del Estrecho,” as well as the story “Fátima de los naufragios” (Fátima, Our Lady of the Shipwrecked) (1998) by Lourdes Ortiz and the film *Bwana* (1996) directed by Imanol Uribe. These works reveal tragic experiences of immigrants who leave behind the security of a familiar life and cross the strait of Gibraltar. All of them face serious difficulties. Some deal with them by tracing firm movements, clear objectives, and defensive barriers. Others cope by implementing fluid mobilities that disrupt assumptions about gender and patriarchal power.

Before initiating the literary and film analysis, I offer a background on the physical displacement of the crossings of the Strait of Gibraltar in *patera* from Morocco to Spain and the difficulties that immigrants must surmount. Once clarified the steps of the physical crossing, I discuss the theoretical concepts of movement and mobility and their relevance to patterns of displacement associated with and the authors' approach to migration. By examining these patterns, I observe that some characters assume power structures of movement that sustain traditional gender relations stifling immigrants' initiatives, while others undertake strategies of mobility that counter patriarchal conventions, thus addressing migration as an opportunity for change. I also explore the mechanisms of converting protagonists into agents of mobility that embody "the importance of *becoming* at the expense of the already achieved – the stable and static" (Cresswell 47). My intention is to open a dialogue among the readers/viewers who are invited to consider their own personal positions towards migration.

A.The Crossing of the Strait of Gibraltar

The strait takes on different connotations depending on the position from which it is observed. For some it is a threshold, a space that divides the past and the future. The passage over this line often signifies the possibility of freedom from known and feared patriarchal pressures. For others the strait is a space in-between, a site of fluid abstraction where dreams can be constructed. Whether seen as an obstacle that separates or a passageway that unites, the strait is a platform from which countless immigrants launch their expectations for a better life, creating an unrelenting current of unforeseeable change.

From the point of view of Nieves García Benito, in the volume of short stories titled *Por la vía de Tarifa* (2000), the strait of Gibraltar is a hostile territory where a powerful mafia organization laughs at the sovereign states that pretend to control the waters of the strait. In reality, these waters are virtual highways for illegal trafficking of drugs and people (51). Juan José Téllez Rubio, in his prologue to García Benito short stories, describes the strait as treacherous waters breached by immigrants who cross in

unremitting waves with stories of triumph and tragedy (9). Juan Goytisolo, in *Revindicación del Conde don Julián* (1995), refers to the strait as a scar between the two continents left by the wound of the “Reconquista” of the Catholic kings who threw the Muslims out of Spain in 1492: “después, tirarás de la correa de la persiana sin una mirada para la costa enemiga, para la venenosa cicatriz que se extiende al otro lado del mar ...” (afterwards, you will pull the cord on the blinds without looking at the enemy’s coast line, or at the poisonous scar that extends along the other side of the sea...) (304). Regardless of the diverse ominous images of the strait, the fact remains that there are always more immigrants who await an opportunity to tempt their fate crossing the strait for the sake of a dream for a better future.

The preparation for the crossing begins by establishing contact with a chain of intermediaries to reach the so called *tiburón* (shark), usually a member of the wealthy sector of coastal communities that are able to construct boats, buy over-board motors and hire navigators to take desperate people across the strait. Alí Lmrabet, in a collection of newspaper articles called *Mañana*, gives a firsthand account of the preparation of his crossing in 2000. After searching for the *tiburón*, negotiating the price, and making the payment that ranges from 600 to 1,800 euros¹⁸, he explains how taxing the waiting period is (95-106). James Babcock, a reporter from the magazine *The Middle East*, states that the crossing in *patera* in 2004 costs some \$2000 (a little more than a thousand euros) and in *zodiac* (see Figures 2.1 and 2.2) from \$3000 to \$5000 (from fifteen hundred to twenty five hundred euros) (19). More recent testimonies published in the anti- racist magazine in Bilbao, Spain, *Mugak*, in 2005 declare that the crossing costs between four and five thousand euros.¹⁹ The worst part of this ever-increasing amount is the exceptional

¹⁸ In 1996 the price of the crossing in “patera” ranged from 100.000 to 300.000 pesetas (600 to 1800 euros), Alí Lmrabet’s crossing cost 180.000 pesetas (1,081 euros) in 2000. Jorgen Carling found the price to range between 70 and 100 euros in 2000.

¹⁹ A testimony of the cost of crossing the strait: “El yate que transportaba a los “clandestinos” salió de Ceuta (enclave español en el norte de Marruecos), con destino al puerto deportivo de Marbella, Puerto Banús, el 23 de diciembre de 2002. La embarcación debía transportar, pasadores incluidos, 20 personas. Entre ellas, dos menores y una mujer. La travesía, de cuarenta kilómetros, costó entre 40.000 y 50.000 dirhams (4.000 y 5.000 euros) por persona” (The yate that carried the “illegals” left Ceuta (Spanish enclave in the North of Morocco), directed towards Marbella, Puerto Banús, the 23rd of December, 2003. The boat probably transported, including those in charge, 20 people. Among them were two minors and a woman. The crossing, of forty kilometers, cost between 40.000 and 50.000 dirhams (4,000 and 5,000 euros) per

economic sacrifice by the poverty stricken immigrants who need to produce an amount at least three times the monthly salary of a lower class worker (Nash, 2005: 45). After overcoming the difficulties of contacting the *tiburón* and paying an outrageous sum of money, the future immigrant is presented with three further potential obstacles: the boat itself, the navigator and the weather.

There are two types of boats mentioned above, the *patera* and the *zodiac*. The first one is a shallow, unstable, wooden boat, with benches. Originally destined for fishing, the boats are normally constructed to hold half a dozen people. When used for illegal transportation of immigrants these boats often hold more than twenty passengers (Nash 47; Carling 20). It is possible to imagine how the *patera*, with the extra weight, sinks close to the surface of the water until those sitting on the edge can dip their fingers in the sea. The *zodiac* is a larger, inflatable, rubber boat that is said to accommodate, if necessary, more than seventy passengers (Carling 20). There are no benches, only an open space where passengers are wedged in tightly. Passengers are also placed on the outside edges where they must hold onto a rope to avoid falling overboard. Needless to say, this slippery rounded surface offers little security. In these flimsy boats, immigrants are extremely vulnerable next to the immensity of the sea.



Figure 2.1: Image of a patera (ww.arxxiduc.files.wordpress.com/2007/08/pateras.jpg)

person.) Revista Mugak nº22 (10 Jan. 2005) Amigos & Familiares de las Víctimas de la emigración clandestina.

El Zodiaco



Figure 2.2: Image of a zodiac

(http://bluemako.customer.netspace.net.au/Reliable_and_sturdy_-_my_Zodiac.jpg)

The navigator of these boats needs to be able to interpret signs of weather change and sea currents that could benefit or endanger the crossing (Binebine 82). This person also needs to be an expert mechanic capable of repairing any malfunction with the overboard motor while at sea. His hypothetical knowledge is a tacit guarantee that the patera won't get lost or collide with large vessels and other heavy traffic constantly crisscrossing the strait (Carling 22, García Benito 11, Lmrabet 107). Unfortunately for the passengers, these requirements are seldom met, a circumstance that increases the danger of the trip.

The moment of the crossing normally takes place on a moonless night to gain invisibility. If the sea is calm and there is visual contact with the lights on the Spanish coast, the crossing of eleven kilometers would take only three or four hours (Lmrabet 107, Carling 15-17). This time becomes an eternity for passengers who must endure the constant rocking and splashing of cold salt water. One can only imagine the current getting stronger and passengers struggling frantically to hold on tightly to keep from hitting against the edge of the boat or the benches. Lmrabet describes the crossing in a

turbulent sea as “una barca que cabecea, personas aferradas unas a otras y vomitando” (a boat that nods, people holding on to each other vomiting) (107). The life threatening problems begin when there is a sudden change of weather, something for which the strait of Gibraltar is famous: “puede ocurrir de todo: desde un amanecer con un Levante suave y con niebla, hasta un anochecer, del mismo día, con una tormenta y un viento que asusta al más osado marinero;” (anything can happen: from a dawn with a soft breeze and mist from Levante, to a nightfall, on the same day, with a thunderstorm and wind that scares even the bravest sailor) (García Benito 73).

The unpredictability of the weather makes navigation across the strait a risky business. A web site for navigation comments about the unusual characteristics of the strait of Gibraltar: “Sometimes at the beginning and end of the Strait, the wind is only at 5 knots whilst in the middle it’s blowing 50 knots! [...] The weather can worsen very quickly with no particular indication from the sky (clouds) or from the barometer (stable)” (Youcansea.com). Without warning, a boat can be swallowed by a storm that converts the waves into a perilous rollercoaster that can elevate a boat twenty meters or more and then drop it in mid air letting it crash against the sea. Repeatedly, bodies out-of-control bash against each other while the boat submerges dangerously into the water only to be elevated again. Slipping and sliding through vomit, tears and sea water, the passengers must pray that the wind doesn’t push them out into the sea. If someone does go overboard, how many navigators are likely to turn around? How many passengers can swim, let alone afford a life vest after paying the fee for the trip? This diabolical voyage can last for many hours until the *patera* breaks or it reaches the Spanish coast.

The most heart-lightening moment of the crossing, according to many literary accounts, comes when lights appear on the horizon. Sadly, it is also the most dangerous moment since most navigators literally drop the passengers off in international waters to avoid being arrested by the Spanish Coast Guard (Carling 23). Exhausted, bruised, and drenched, the passengers must find the strength to swim in ice-cold water to the beach. NGOs have gathered testimonies from survivors who declare that many sink helplessly into the sea, while others latch onto fellow passengers who can swim in a desperate

attempt to live (Lalami 11, Lmrabet 108). Some arrive to the beach in such a state of shock that they are unable to look for refuge. The lucky ones, like Alí Lmrabet, recuperate quickly and mix into the crowd to look for a way to start a new life (108).

Unfortunately it is impossible to find out how many immigrants never arrive to the coast of Spain. Mohammed Ali Tabji, a political activist in Tangier, Morocco, declares that “The strait has become a cemetery” (Babcock 19). The organization SOS Racismo informs its readers that there are two particularly dangerous moments: one occurs on the coasts of Morocco where many *pateras* are thrust against the rocks, and the other is the moment when the boats are being intercepted by the coast guards. Instead of accepting their arrest, many passengers take their chances in the sea and die of hypothermia before they reach the coast (MUGAK). In sight of this human disaster, many associations have been organized to help those whose only infraction is the search for a better future.²⁰ The Asociación de Familiares de Víctimas de la Inmigración Clandestina de Marruecos and the Amigos & Familiares de las Víctimas de la Emigración Clandestina en Málaga (The Association of the Families of the Victims of Illegal Immigration of Morocco and The Association of the Friends and Families of Victims of Illegal Emigration in Malaga) are the two main organizations that try to keep a record of the deaths in addition to activating resources to help the survivors. These organizations claim that more than five thousand people have died since 1996. Furthermore, in the “Congreso Mundial de Movimientos Humanos e Inmigración” (World Congress of Human Movements and Immigration) in Barcelona 2004, the

²⁰ For information about the organizations “Asociación Las Pateras de la Vida”, Asociación Almería Acoge La Red de Asociaciones del Norte de Marruecos, and La Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos de Andalucía (APDHA) see <http://www.apdha.org/documentos/documen.htm>. It is possible to contact members of the group called Amigos & Familiares de las Víctimas de la emigración clandestina at the following email: afvic@hotmail.com. Other associations that help find family members lost in the process of immigration are:

- Comisión de Defensa de las Familias Víctimas de la Emigración Clandestina, Cuenca del Loukos (Ksar Kebir).
- Asociación Marroquí de Derechos Humanos, sección de Larache, AMDH.
- Asociación Derechos para Tod@s, Madrid.
- Asociación Nacional de Diplomados en Paro de Marruecos, ANDCM (Larache).
- Comisión de Defensa de las Familias Víctimas de la Emigración Clandestina (Alhucemas).
- Asociación de Amigos y Víctimas de la Emigración Clandestina de Marruecos, Juribga.
- Asociación pro-Derechos Humanos de Andalucía (APDHA)

calculation of deaths was raised to ten thousand (APDH report 2004). However, in spite of their good intentions, the associations have a practically impossible task, as the data fails to reflect the fact that: “por cada muerto encontrado hay al menos dos o tres desaparecidos” (for every dead body found there are at least two or three disappeared people) (Asociación de Familiares de Víctimas de la Inmigración Clandestina 2004). What these associations do affirm is that the deaths are “fruto de la política de cierre de fronteras” (a consequence of the politicians closing of the frontier) (Asociación de Familiares de Víctimas de la Inmigración Clandestina 2004). Nonetheless, Spanish border officials are required to give illegal immigrants asylum and medical attention until they return them to their country.

Deaths due to crossings from Morocco to Europe in hazardous conditions continue to appear in the news, though with ever-dwindling frequency. The recent crash of the airline Spanair in Madrid in September 2008,²¹ for instance, received much more attention than the similar number of victims trying to reach a promising future during the last week of that same month (APDHA.org). The government, interested in recuperating a damaged public image, started an immediate investigation to clarify the persons responsible for the deaths of the plane crash. However, there was no investigation to establish responsibilities for the deaths of more than a hundred illegal immigrants. It seems as if the governments on both sides of the strait have signed a pact of silence which is broken only by the voices of NGOs, journalists, and authors who pierce the opaque political curtain to reveal the dilemma of individuals stripped of their fundamental human rights. In the following section, I will analyze this devastating reality of illegal migration from Morocco to Spain in the light of the theories of movement and mobility.

²¹ Passengers were en route to the Canary Islands when the plane crashed upon takeoff from Barajas airport in Madrid on August 20, 2008. All but 18 of the 172 passengers and crew died. It was Spain's worst air accident in 25 years. For more information see <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/oct/16/madrid-plane-crash-spanair-mechanics>

B. Movement and Mobility as Theoretical Parameters

The *patera* and the *zodiac* symbolize a crucial axis of time and space in the life of Moroccan immigrants onto which both movement and mobility converge. All activity, planning, hopes and suffering lead up to this precise moment and space. Once on board the *patera*, an immigrant leaves behind a past life in a familiar setting to dive into an unknown space and an uncertain future. In this section I explore the significance of movement and mobility and their relevance to patterns of displacement associated with the role of gender in immigration.

In *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World* (2006) Tim Cresswell offers a nuanced migration theory that differentiates between the concepts of movement and mobility. He explains that movement refers to an abstract idea of displacement in a physical space between two locations on a map with a linear projection from point A to point B, which are fixed points of reference that serve as orientation to go from a site of origin to a site of destination (2). Furthermore, for me, it is precisely the hegemonic control over these fixed points of reference what produces the power to direct the movement of people. In the context of illegal migration from Morocco to Spain, the physical space refers to the waters of the Strait of Gibraltar controlled by power structures that displace immigrants from one geographical point to another in *patera*. Caren Kaplan, in *Questions of Travel, Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (1996), discusses how the abstract space of displacement acquires political significance: “Maps and borders are provocative metaphors, signaling a heightened awareness of the political and economic structures that demarcate zones of inclusion and exclusion as well as the interstitial spaces of indeterminacy” (144). In the words of Jennifer Hyndman, in *Managing Displacement*, the boundaries marked by hegemonic structures “are locations and testimony to dominant geopolitical discourse that create both conflict and violent representations, designating those who do and do not belong” (27-28). Adding to Kaplan’s and Hyndman’s insight on the importance of power structures that convert abstract space into exclusive political territory, Cresswell also looks at the “movements of people (and things) all over the world and at all scales [which] are, after all, full of meaning. They are also products and producers of power” (2). In other words, not only

does political power propel the movement of immigrants, but the movement of immigrants also creates power itself.

First of all I would like to analyze the strategic position of power, the territory, and the vulnerability of immigrants which I associate with Michel Foucault's theories on disciplinary institutions in *Discipline and Punish*. The restrictions imposed on prisoners can be associated with the regimen imposed on the immigrants in the *pateras*. The dominating force that controls the movement of the prisoners can be associated with the *tiburón* or navigator, who fulfills the functions of a jailer who controls the passengers. In preparation for the crossing of the strait, the *tiburón* establishes the norms for a rite of passage: the price, a place of departure and landing, and the destruction of individual identification, a habitual procedure that requires all passengers to hand over all identifying documentation (Binebine 127).²² The denial of individual identity foments the creation of an amorphous body of passengers easily controlled. The power of the *tiburón* is enhanced when he occupies the position of the Panopticon, a central tower from which the dominant power can maintain a permanent surveillance and eliminate any attempt of rebellion among the prisoners (*Discipline and Punish* 218).

The image of immigrants who escape from their homeland only to be confined to a prison is very common in migration narratives. Though a *patera* may be considered a vehicle of freedom, in the hands of an unscrupulous *tiburón* it becomes an obstacle to their hopes. Deniz Göktürk, a German film critic that analyses transnational cinema, explains that displacement in narratives often ends in an entrapment where protagonists are held within insurmountable walls, both physical and psychological. Many times they "can only escape this enclosure and confinement by retreating into their subjectivity, into flashback memories and dreams" (8). The great dilemma for immigrants who make enormous efforts to free themselves of poverty and abuse is discovering a way to avoid falling into the hands of powerful organizations that have few qualms about taking advantage of their vulnerability.

²² This action is a mechanism to hinder the legal processing of immigrants who, if caught by coast guards, are able to deny their place of origin and, thus, put off their deportation.

The injustice of the situation for women is not only transmitted with descriptions of imprisonment. The containment of female agency is often represented by the portrayal of stymied motherhood associated with the crossing in *patera*. There are scenes of laboring women who never become mothers, of newborns that never go beyond their first breath, and of mothers who mourn the death of their child. The interruption of a natural relationship between mother and child in migration narratives becomes a prolific metaphor of rupture between expectations and reality. There are several examples of posthumous female voices that return from the dead to narrate loving memories of their mothers and grandmothers and to protest against the loss of their own children.

The finger of accusation for such injustice normally points to the vertical movement that extends from governmental positions downward through political circuits whose indulgence for crime and abuse reaches the *tiburón*. At the same time, the mafia's control over the displacement of people in *pateras* or *zodiacs* generates an upward movement of economic gains that benefits first of all the *tiburón*, and afterwards other positions of increasing importance in the echelon of power. Juan Goytisolo, in *El peaje de la vida. Integración o rechazo de la emigración en España*, says that “no hay una voluntad política por parte de esos mismos Estados de evitarla. La estrategia de los grandes organismos mundiales (el FMI, el Banco Mundial, etcétera) [...] por desgracia no obedece a una visión de equilibrio mundial, sino a las órdenes terminantes de los Estados más poderosos (G7), y a los intereses a corto plazo de las grandes firmas internacionales” (there isn't a political will on behalf of these same States to avoid it. The strategies of the great world organisms (the IMF, the World Bank, etc.) [...] unfortunately do not obey the vision of a balance of world power, but the categorical orders of the most powerful States (G7), and the short-term interests of the great international companies) (47). Though this indifference towards immigrants is repeatedly highlighted in the narratives, there is a display of resistance which returns us to the confrontation of movement and mobility during the displacement of Moroccan immigrants.

To continue my analysis I would like to recall the idea of Cresswell that movement is not only an instrument of power structures, but it also creates power itself.

The effort to escape from hegemonic movements opens many possibilities, especially for female characters that become agents of change. Linda McDowell describes the mobility of women as a defensive strategy to create spaces outside the domain of power structures: “[P]olitics of location does not depend on a territorially based identity but rather on the development of networks between members of an imagined community of Third World women” (214). As long as patriarchal power can control women’s mobility, it can maintain their subordination; however, an escape from this control weakens patriarchal domination and offers possibilities for a new life.

On the axis of movement and mobility, the latter serves as a checkmate to abusive hegemonic control. Cresswell defines mobility as “a socially produced motion” with three “relational moments” (3). The first refers to “pure motion” that can be mapped onto physical surfaces to demonstrate “empirical reality”, for example the maritime routes of *pateras*. The second refers to an ideology that “becomes synonymous with freedom, with transgression, with creativity, with life itself” (Cresswell 3). This ideology appears in migration narratives where characters abandon conventional lifestyles and turn to migration as an outlet to a different life. The third “is a way of being in the world” (3). “[I]t is a paradoxical unity, a unity of disunity: it pours us all into a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish” (18). This definition of unity under a common experience of calamity clearly describes the essence of migration itself.

Cresswell associates these three moments of mobility with three different theorists who support strategies of mobility relevant to immigration. The first is Michel De Certeau, author of *The Practice of Everyday Life*, who speaks of space as dominated by “strategies” of rationalized power through which nomads are able to pass by implementing “tactics” (34-39). The strategies represent a force destined to defend the possessions and boundaries of a fixed place through, “the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships” (35-36); the nomadic tactics represent a force of outright insurgence due to its sense of play that, “...do[es] not obey the law of the place, for they are not defined or identified by it...” (29-30). By applying Certeau’s theory to migration, I argue that the crossing of the strait by illegal immigrants who mischievously use their

invisibility to pass through closed frontiers, is a manifestation of resistance to the power structures.

The second theory that Cresswell presents is Mikhail Bakhtin's "carnavalesque" which presents the concept of a perpetual mobility of identity that threatens a fixed "official cultural" (Cresswell 48). Robert Stam in *Subversive Pleasures, Bakhtin, Cultural Criticism, and Film*, explains that "[t]he carnivalesque principle abolishes hierarchies, levels social classes, and creates another life free from conventional rules and restrictions. In carnival, all that is marginalized and excluded [...] takes over the center in a liberating explosion of otherness" (86). With the carnivalesque, characters take on new identities to rebel against powerful institutions that place barriers or prohibitions to free expression. However, uncannily, this is also a "rite in which mask-wearing revelers become 'possessed' and transform themselves (whether through costume, attitude, or musical frenzy) into blissful alterity" (Stam 89). The ability of immigrants to create mutable identities not only disarms boundary controls, but also brings about personal transformations that influence the characters' outlooks and attitudes. Women, habituated to seclusion and domination, when faced with the possibility of immigration, can become dynamic figures of agency that challenge any attempt to control their movements. For most characters, the success at transgressing limits during displacement depends on their subversive interpretation of other identities.

The other theorists acknowledged by Cresswell are Deleuze and Guattari, who present the concept of "deterritorialization" in *A Thousand Plateaus*. Their theory compares the fixity of a tree with the mobility of a *rhizome* which "has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*. The tree is 'filiation', but the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance" (25). For immigrants freedom from imposed "filiation" or fixation within a power structure gives them the ability to move from one culture to another and form new alliances that favor their mobility and strengthen their position in unfavorable surroundings. In fact, it is normally their ability to form alliances what converts migration into a successful experience.

These three theories underline important characteristics of nomadic mobility that facilitates migration: the ability to flow through space dominated by fixed power structures, the ability to redefine the self and adopt new identities, and the ability to form alliances to circumvent hegemonic control. These strategies, instruments used by characters interested in bringing about a change in gender roles, are also the basis for the analysis of mobility in the characters in the narratives.

In the narratives and film selected for the analysis of movement and mobility during the process of migration, it is significant that the female authors, Nieves García Benito, Lourdes Ortiz, and Najat el Hachmi, depict feminine characters as agents of mobility and the masculine characters as representative of power movements. Furthermore, the male authors, Andrés Sorel and Gerardo Muñoz Lorente tend to place the struggle between movement and mobility on the female body, converting the female characters into victims of power movements. In order to escape the negative consequences of this relationship, the characters associated with mobility develop a counter offensive by establishing non-hegemonic relationships that encourage nomadic displacement in an undefined, fluid space on the margins of power. Urry compares mobility with “fluids stretching across societal borders [that] raise important questions about the power of societies [...] to resist” (32). In the context of immigration, the perpetual flow of changes and innovations caused by the incessant arrival of *pateras* challenges the preservation of an established society’s way of life. Susan Friedman points out the most threatening implication of mobility: “Identity depends upon a point of reference; as that point moves nomadically, so do the contours of identity, particularly as they relate to the structures of power” (*Mappings* 22). To escape from hegemonic imposition on a physical plane, nomadic characters use mobile reference points open to different choices on a metaphysical plane. This openness to difference is the greatest appeal of displacement for it represents an invitation to abandon the comfort zone of a known territory, however intimidating it may be, in favor of a new way of life in an unknown place.

C. Analysis

1. Short Stories

Andrés Sorel

Movement in this author's stories is unmistakably associated with powerful male characters obsessed with the defense of a territory which determines their identity. The male protagonists, driven by their envy and thirst for material gains, go through a series of trials and return home to receive compensations for their effort, including the woman of their choice, actions that correspond to a pattern of patriarchal power described by Vladimir Propp in *Las transformaciones del cuento maravilloso* (in Juliano 309).

Although movement for Sorel's male characters may involve adventure and self gain, for the female characters it entails great personal sacrifice. The action of these characters entertains mobility, which is associated with unselfish desires to find security for their families and the imperative need to flee repression. They have greater capacity for transitional identities and nomadic mentalities that enable them to flow through adverse territories and evade imposed destinies. One of the main confrontations between the movement of men and the mobility of women emerges when the female characters refuse to hand over their bodies as a reward for male egos. The friction peaks upon the arrival to the *patera*.

The first story to analyze from the collection *Voces del Estrecho* (Voices from the strait) is "Mujer sin cabeza" (Woman without a head) in which Nadiva, the protagonist, is a Moroccan woman whose posthumous voice returns from the cold waters of the Strait of Gibraltar to tell her story to other victims of negligent navigators that crossed the strait in *patera*. Her dead companions clarify the circumstances of her death: "Luego fuisteis vosotros quienes me informasteis de que la hélice de un barco partió en dos mi cuerpo y de que todavía no ha aparecido mi cabeza" (Later you were the ones who informed me that the propeller of a boat cut my body in half and that my head still hasn't appeared)

(122). This is the culminating point of Nadiva's life from which all memories are extracted and to which all actions are directed.

Her first memories focus on the peaceful years of her youth with her mother and brother in the home of her grandmother. This matriarchal figure protects Nadiva and her immediate family, members of the Christian church, from expulsion from the Muslim home due to religious prejudice and to the resentment of several members who are obliged to support the members of the family ever since the father disappeared. Unfortunately, after the grandmother's death, Nadiva and her family are forced to move out of the home and into a ghetto of a nearby city where they come in contact with Western culture. Looking for a solution to their poverty, Nadiva consents to an unwanted marriage with a distant and much older cousin, a situation that ends with a conflict between movement and mobility.

Nadiva's marriage is similar to a prison where she is locked up in her husband's home and coerced into fulfilling sexual duties. Her husband considers her body part of his patrimony which he hopes to increment with numerous children. However, Nadiva has no intention of complying: "En cuanto al cuerpo, nada sentía, le dejaba hacer a él, y él me gritaba, se quejaba de que no le acompañase, me acusaba de estar maldita y de que por eso no le daba hijos" (As for my body, I felt nothing, I let him do and he shouted at me, complaining that I didn't participate, accusing me of being damned and for that reason I didn't give him children) (116). According to traditional social convention in Morocco, "La mujer no ha de salir más que dos veces en su vida de la casa: la primera, desde la del padre a la del marido; la segunda, desde la casa del marido al cementerio" (Women shouldn't leave home more than twice in their lives: the first time, from the father's home to her husband's; the second time from her husband's home to the cemetery) (121). Trapped by the overpowering authority of her husband, Nadiva makes frequent attempts at suicide until she decides to escape to her mother's and ask for help. This physical displacement from her husband's home initiates Nadiva's strategic mobility that temporarily liberates her from the movements of patriarchal control.

Once again the bond between women enables their release from repression. Earlier the grandmother had saved Nadiva and her family from the assault of the other members of the family. Now Nadiva and her mother rebel against the prepotency of marital law, an act that is challenged by the husband's brother-in-law who stands on tradition to demand obedience to social conventions: "Nuestros libros sagrados lo escriben, y nuestras tradiciones son leyes para nosotros. ¿Acaso no lo hemos escuchado siempre?" (Our sacred books express it, and our traditions are laws for us. Haven't we always listened to it?) (119). To this exhortation the mother again replies, "Vivimos otros tiempos. La buena mujer, sumisa y obediente, trabaja como una bestia, y lo que es peor, para nada, para limpiar y limpiar, restregando con sus dedos, con las lágrimas, un plato en el que no hay comida" (We live in other times. The good woman, submissive and obedient, works like a beast, and what's worse, for nothing, just to clean and clean, scrubbing with her fingers, with her tears, a plate on which there is no food) (120). Defending women's rights to lead a better life, the mother refuses to turn her daughter over and wields cogent arguments against every complaint. When the man discovers the girl's intention of abandoning the country, he throws diatribes against female migration by saying, "[N]o puede abandonar su casa, su tierra, encontrarse con los infieles..." (She can't abandon her house, her land, encounter the infidel...) (119). To this vituperation the mother responds, "Acaso no nació nuestro mundo, el que heredamos de Abraham, con una emigración?" (Didn't he [the Profet] create our world, the one we inherited from Abraham, with a migration?) (119). Defeated by her agile discourse, the brother-in-law leaves the women alone threatening to return with the police.

However, the women do not desist in their preparation for the trip to Spain. The mother introduces her daughter to a cousin who studies in Rabat and is familiar with the alternatives that Western countries offer women: "Tienes que irte de Marruecos. España es un buen lugar." (You have to leave Morocco. Spain is a good place) (117-18). Under the influence of her mother and cousin, Nadiva begins to display a new attitude, shedding the image of a helpless woman dominated by her husband: "ahora nos toca a nosotras hacerlo [emigrar] para buscar el sustento de nuestras familias cuando no existe otra manera de conseguirlo..." (now it is our turn to do it (emigrate) to look for a way to

support our families when there is no other way...) (120). Filled with hopes of employment and opportunities in Spain, Nadiva embraces her mother's enthusiasm about the trip. "¿Sabes cómo llaman a esa operación? 'Ir de atunes'. Te vas a convertir en un atún más, hija" (Do you know what this operation is called? 'Fishing for tuna'. You are going to become another tuna fish, honey) (121). After giving her daughter all her life savings, the mother takes Nadiva to Tetuán to look for, "un hombre que te ayudará a cruzar el Estrecho" a man who will help you cross the strait) (121). What the mother doesn't explain are the stipulations that condition this help.

Unfortunately, the mobility of both women, who find ways to circumvent the demands of the men in the family, only leads them to another entrapment. In the coastal town they look for a *tiburón* who turns out to be an old man dressed in European clothes (121). He explains that the trip will be at night when the 'poniente', the dangerous wind from the West, changes to a soft eastern breeze from 'levante' (121). In the truck that takes Nadiva to the *patera*, there are fifteen men and four women, a heterogeneous group of strangers that form a faceless collective with a single objective, to survive.

Up to the moment of departure, Nadiva and her mother manage to survive the abandonment, tyranny and abuse of the male character. They gain independence and autonomy of action seldom achieved by women in Muslim societies. Sadly, when Nadiva begins her journey, the power movements of the male characters resume their control over the female characters. Just before embarking, Nadiva becomes aware of the fact that her mother has lost her freedom: "La última visión que tuve de mi madre fueron sus lágrimas y su mano diciendome adiós. [...] [El tiburón] la tenía agarrada por la cintura mientras fumaba nerviosamente y clavaba sus ojos en el camión, que no tardó en arrancar camino de la playa" (The last vision I had of my mother were of her tears and her hand waving goodbye. [...] He [the tiburón] held my mother by her waist while he smoked nervously and stared at the truck that promptly started driving towards the beach) (122). It seems that the mother, hoping to improve her daughter's future, offers her own body to the Tiburón in exchange for a passage in a *patera*.

In this story, the relationship of male characters with other female characters is centered directly on the bodies of the women, which are considered possessions of patriarchal territory. Their movements try to enclose female characters with boundaries by locking the doors on homes and wrapping their arms around their waists. These actions establish rights of access to the female bodies converted into merchandise attainable for a price. When the *tiburón* allows Nadiva to board the *patera*, in spite of the resistance through tactics of negotiation and strategies described by De Certeau, both women are once again trapped by male characters that defend traditional patriarchal patterns of gender relations. Regardless of their Bakhtinian resistance to fixed identities with which Nadiva and her mother open their minds to new ways of life, the female characters are unable to totally free themselves from sexual obligations. Despite the alliance among the female characters, the grandmother, the cousin, the mother and the daughter, who unite like Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomes to create new options, they are unable to fulfill their quest for a new life in Spain. For me, the outcome of the female characters demonstrates Sorel's disregard for mobility and his allegiance to power movements controlled by male characters.

The short story that lends its title to the collection, "Las voces del Estrecho" (The Voices from the Strait), is a cluster of narrative voices that convey testimonies and lamentations about tragedies caused by crossings of the strait. These narrative voices are positioned on different levels: the characters that die during the crossing, the relatives of the characters that recall the fatal experiences of their loved ones, Abraham, the writer that gathers the testimonies of victims, and the same writer who reflects about the injustices and discusses with a friend the significance of the deaths. This echelon of voices ends with the submission of the writer himself to the same kind of death that he has been transcribing.

The direct testimony comes from a female character that is the mother of a boy who drowns during a crossing in *patera*. When the police deny her the right to recuperate the body of her son, she insists repeatedly. "Vieron imágenes en la televisión de España y él era uno de los ahogados. [...] Y me llevaron a las autoridades y las autoridades no me

escucharon. Luego me contactaron con gentes que dicen de ONG, pero nada supieron decirme” (they saw images on the Spanish television and he was one of the drowned people. [...] And they took me to the authorities and the authorities didn’t listen. Then they put me in touch with the people they call NGO, but they had nothing to say to me) (208). At that time, she begins to hear her dead son’s voice calling out to her: “me llegaba el eco, los desgraciados gritos de quienes en la patera le acompañaban. Contemplaba cómo ésta se hundía y ellos se agarraban desesperadamente a las maderas inundadas por las aguas...” (their echoes came to me, the fierce cries of those who accompanied him in the *patera*. He watched as the boat sank and the others desperately held onto the sinking pieces of wood) (208). When she finally finds the owner of her son’s sunken boat, a *tiburón* who had his papers and his money, he calls the police to have her put her in jail. “En la cárcel me amenazaron, me golpearon, me dijeron que estaba loca y después me arrojaron a patadas, cómo un perro solitario, a la calle” (in jail they threatened me, beat me, called me crazy and then kicked me out, like a stray dog, into the street) (208).²³ Afterwards, the voices became louder and louder.

Walking through the streets, “alguien me dijo: yo sé dónde se reúnen los muertos, los ahogados; dónde habitan y conversan; vete allí” (someone said to me: I know where the dead, the drowned, meet; where they live and talk; go there) (209). Responding to this enigmatic voice, the mother goes to that mysterious place to find her son and close his eyes, but instead she encounters an infinite number of people whose voices begin to speak to her of their terrible experiences. Among the dramatic testimonies is that of a woman who talks about the way prisoners, including pregnant women, were tortured, drugged and thrown into the sea from planes²⁴. Another woman speaks of how she was arrested in Melilla, a Spanish town on the northern coast of Morocco, raped by two policemen, and released only to be arrested and abused again a few hours later by another

²³ This story is based on a report about immigrant women who were arrested and abused in a jail in Malaga in 2005. The facts were disclosed by Amigos and Familiares de las Víctimas de la Emigración Clandestina in an article published by “MUGAK”.

²⁴ This is obviously a reference to the measures taken by the military regime during the “Guerra Sucia” or the systematic elimination of political rival with leftist tendencies in Argentina in the 70s.

group of policemen (210-11). The next woman explains how she and many others drowned after being tricked by the navigator who took his passengers to a different coast in Africa instead of to a beach in Andalucía. After listening to an endless amount of testimonies, the woman understands that all the voices represent a single collective cry that demands to be heard: “el mundo entero tendría que escucharos, que debierais taladrar sus tímpanos, penetrar en sus conciencias, lo sé ...” (the whole world should listen, their eardrums should be shattered, and their consciousnesses penetrated) (215). At this point, Sorel startles the reader, by abruptly changing the focus from the character of the young mother to the writer of the story.

By converting the writer of the story, Abraham, into a new character, Sorel blurs the boundaries between character and narrator raising the dialogue about death in the strait of Gibraltar to a new level of consciousness. Abraham curses the sea, which he portrays as a female demon, of swallowing those who flee from a “pesadilla” (a nightmare) (216). The writer also accuses the powerful and ignorant members of society of being accomplices who fail to recognize their responsibility. With a clearly defeatist disposition, Abraham, the collector of the voices of the strait, abandons his commitment to write about the tragedies and sets out on a final crossing in *patera* to fuse his own voice with the other victims.

The binary oppositions in this story, good and bad, victim and slayer, man and natural forces, set the scene for conflicts between movement and mobility. The helpless victims, tied, imprisoned, battered and killed, are mainly female characters that are all denied mobility, while the perpetrators of violence, represented by male characters, the navigator, the *tiburón*, the policemen, and the NGOs, either elevate barriers to keep immigrants out of their society or dump them into the sea, a natural element which is portrayed as a cruel accomplice to an inevitable destiny. The pleading and begging of the women are as useless as the floating boards of the wrecked *patera*. The victimized immigrants have no tactical or strategic resistance discussed in De Certeau’s theories, nor the variable identities that Bakhtin suggests to be a means of escape from dominance. The only mobility in this story comes from the alliance between Abdelak and Abraham

that has some resemblance to Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomes. Abraham's initial commitment to disclose the testimonies of abuse seems to be a valid weapon against the power movements of the authorities that cover up their crimes by imposing silence on their victims. However, the only escape from immigrants' suffering is placed in the hands of a narrator who abandons his project to join this collective in an eternal silence: "Es el gran silencio, el no declarado: el que cae sobre las víctimas sin nombre, el de las voces del Estrecho" (It is the great silence, the one that isn't recognized: the one that falls on the victims without names, the one from the voices of the strait) (216). This subjugation to power movements confirms Abraham's negation of mobility as a useful mechanism to change the fate of immigrants.

The third story of Andrés Sorel to be analyzed in the light of movement and mobility is "Parir en el mar" [Giving birth in the sea], the first part of a section titled "No se pueden cerrar los ojos de un niño" (187). Here Sorel again presents a protagonist whose posthumous voice returns from her death in the sea to tell the story of the women in her family who use different strategies of mobility to deal with the injustice of powerful movements of the Muslim family structure that sustains its rights over the bodies of women.

Amina Alaoui, the female narrator of the story, recalls the peaceful years of her childhood even though the family lived in extreme poverty. One day her older sister, Zohra, is sent to work at an office where she has to comply with her boss's sexual appetite to earn a small salary. After a time, her parents stop appreciating Zohra's sacrifice, which leads her to threaten to abandon the family altogether, a strategy that puts her parental abusers on the defensive. Unaware of the family arrangements, Amina is impressed by the empowerment of her older sister and goes to see her at work. Horrified at the sight of Zohra with her boss, the younger sister runs home, followed by her sister in tears trying to explain that she goes along with the family's demands as long as her virginity is kept intact, a condition that their society requires of women to be eligible for marriage: "todavía soy virgen, eso es lo que importa, soy virgen, ¿comprendes? Y algún día podré casarme, y nadie lo sabrá, y tú tampoco se lo vas a contar a nadie, a nadie" (I'm

still a virgin, that is all that matters, I'm a virgin, understand? One day I will be able to marry, and no one will know, and you won't tell anyone either, not anyone) (189). This crisis propitiates a bonding with the younger sister who honors Zohar's request for a pact of silence.

It is clear that the mobility of Zohra not only consists of an alliance with her sister, but also of a construction of various simultaneous identities to adjust to the demands of her circumstance. For her parents, she complies to be a semi slave who produces an income in return for a place to live. For her boss she becomes a source of cheap sexual entertainment. For her sister, she is a role model of courage and strength. Assuming these different identities, Zohra helps her family, protects her reputation, and shelters her self-esteem while teaching her sister to develop her own strategies to survive the difficult years that follow.

When Amina turns fifteen, she is forced by her parents into a miserable marriage with an older man who rapes her and treats her as a prisoner. By the time Amina is twenty, she has two children and a body marked from continuous beatings. After trying to abort her third child, she is taken to a hospital where she escapes with the help of Zohra who offers to pay for the *patera* to Spain. With this strategy of escape described by De Certeau, Amina is able to flee from her husband, but not from her tragic fate. Placed in the hands of an inexperienced navigator, Amina sinks with the rest of the passengers in the *patera* shortly after departure just when the labor pains of her third child start: "Aprietas queriendo salir a la vida cuando yo estoy a punto de entrar en el reino de la muerte" (187). With the drowning of Amina and her baby, Sorel emphasizes not only the injustice but also the uselessness of the efforts of women to escape their dismal role in Muslim society. Though the older sister defends her virginity to avoid social criticism and the younger sister implements household abortions to frustrate her husband's desire for a large family, their attempts to escape the ruthlessness of the male characters are fruitless.

The striking metaphor of death linked to birth is one of Sorel's trademarks. The tragedy that he presents lies in the fact that women have with little control over their

bodies and therefore very limited mobility to escape the consequences of Muslim customs that privilege male authority. The female body, capable of bringing life into the world, is either trampled by men or devoured by the sea. Carol Gilligan in “Woman’s Place in Man’s Life Cycle” states that women must escape from patriarchal dominance if they want to survive, for: “[w]omen’s failure to separate then becomes by definition a failure to develop” (201). However, Sorel’s female characters are unable to implement effective strategies of mobility to separate themselves from the power movement of male characters.

In these stories, displacement is seen by the female characters as an opportunity to challenge traditional gender roles and decenter patriarchal control. These characters deny imposed marriages, refuse to surrender their bodies, and take control of the birth of their children. Some are even the providers for their families. In the hands of the male characters displacement favors patriarchal hegemony that defends traditional gender patterns. These characters construct physical and psychological boundaries, place female offenders in prison, abuse their bodies, and lead them to a certain death.

The confrontation between female and male characters takes place at the intersection of movement and mobility, in a fluid space where boundaries are momentarily blurred, identities mixed, and expectations are uncertain. The point of conjunction is the *patera*, a crisis heterotope, where the passengers arrive after developing strategies of resistance and fleet and embark on a supposedly nomadic experience only to encounter their fate in the hands of aggressive figures. I have argued that the mobility of women, when resisting the movement of men, creates currents of insurgence that challenge tradition, cultural, and privileges of race, class and gender. However, Sorel, who fails to see the power in female mobility, portrays women as vulnerable bodies reduced to two alternatives, either marriage or death. Though Sorel’s solidarity with the dramatic situation of women is unquestionable, it tends to be deterministic since all his female characters either succumb to oppression or die. For many female authors, women immigrants are not passive victims of a doomed journey but survivors committed to overcoming the poverty of their families and the repression of

their husbands. In other words, displacement in the context of migration for Sorel is a movement from one point to another that perpetuates power institutions, even though for others it represents mobility which opens new alternatives to traditional gender roles.

Nieves García Benito

Presented in Chapter one, “Al-Yaza’ir” is a circular story that begins and ends with the recollection of past events that lead up to the death of the protagonist. Narrated in first person by a young girl who is initially thrilled to go to Spain, the plot follows the evolution of an individual who is ruthlessly manipulated by patriarchal figures. Regardless of the protagonist’s use of numerable elements of mobility, she is overcome by the movements of powerful male characters that play the role of Gatekeepers whose primary objective is to maintain the status quo of gender relations by using implacable violence and establishing insurmountable barriers. The conduct of the Gatekeepers, who view the girl simply as an object of exchange, reflects their obsession with their reputation and the expectation of some kind of reward.

As you recall, the seventeen year old girl is ordered to leave her home town to help her father on a farm in Murcia. The first Gatekeeper that Al-Yaza’ir must deal with is Mustafa, a brutal man in charge of taking the protagonist across the strait to Spain. Pressured by the responsibility of guarding the honor of the girl’s father and fulfilling the terms of the agreement, he closes Al-Yaza’ir up in a hotel room and tells her to wait until the moment of embarkation. When he discovers that she left the room to visit the city, he punishes the girl with a brutal beating. “Vociferaba que si no fuera por lo que le había pagado mi padre, no se hubiera metido en líos cómo éste” (he yelled that if it weren’t for what my father had paid him, he wouldn’t have got himself in a mess like this) (101). Afterwards, Al-Yaza’ir is rushed aboard a *patera* and pushed into a corner where she is told to keep still under the threat of being thrown overboard. Before she realizes what is happening, she is gliding across an immense sea at a terrifying speed. At the end of her devastating voyage, Mustafa, having fulfilled his part of the bargain, forces everyone to

jump into the water at a considerable distance from the shore and disappears into the darkness of the sea.

Another Gatekeeper is the man that picks the protagonist up out of the bushes close to the beach where she hides after swimming to shore. This Spanish man also demands a compensation for his actions, “*Tratando, imagino, de incorporarse, su boca ávida y sin dientes, oscilaba entre la piedad y el deseo*” (Trying, I imagine, to get up, his toothless mouth avid, fluctuating between pity and desire) (103). In spite of his lustful intentions, she manages to establish a tacit agreement that allows her to stay in his home as long as she fulfils the traditional obligations of women: cooking, washing and sexual availability (103). Though he does not place any physical barriers to impede Al-Yara’ir’s freedom, he takes advantage of her vulnerability and binds her with the invisible threads of fear.²⁵

The third Gatekeeper is the father of the girl, another patriarchal figure who is more concerned with his own reputation than with the girl’s well being. Incited by the envy of a friend in France who claims to have everything imaginable, he arranges for his daughter, whom he considers cheap labor, to help him make a larger profit. However, he takes his time going to get her. When her father finally arrives, he is shamed at the sight of her pregnancy. Feeling the need to restore his patriarchal honor, the father negotiates the price to recuperate Al-Yaza’ir from the Spaniard, who reluctantly gives up his prized possession. In the meantime, the girl watches the two men fight over her “*como buitres reclamando su presa...*” (like buzzards claiming their prey...) (104). Out of frustration from having to pay the man who saved her from thirst and starvation, he gives Al-Yara’ir another devastating beating. Then the father throws her into an isolated room in his house in Murcia which becomes her tomb.

²⁵ In reference to the home seen as a prison for women both in the homeland and in exile, Hamid Naficy explains that “confinement is both national and gendered. It is national because the girl is posited as a metaphor for all [Moroccans] condemned to live in a panoptic disciplinary society, and it is gendered because the girl’s confinement to a room...is itself a haunting metaphor of women’s lives in [Morocco]” (37-38).

At each encounter with the Gatekeepers, Al-Yaza'ir develops strategies of mobility to ease her devastating situation. Her first strategy is the use of silent protests against her multiple forms of imprisonment that continue up to the end of the story. Al-Yaza'ir initiates her silent protest when she is enclosed in a tight space in the *patera* where the cold waves constantly slap her face during the crossing. "Ahí empezó el temblor por dentro, descontrolado, que aún continua Aprendí a llorar sin lágrimas" (That's when the trembling began inside, uncontrollable, that still continues... I learned to cry without tears) (102). Robbed of the control over her fate, she learns to control her voice.

Though she cuts off all verbal communication with her jailers, she is able to reach a beneficial agreement with the second Gatekeeper. When the Spanish man happens upon her at the beach, she can't comprehend his words, even though she understands perfectly the conditions of his proposal to which she submits in exchange for a meal and the warmth of a home (103). Playing the role of a silent consort to a stranger, Al-Yaza'ir is free of surrounding social impositions of patriarchal norms. With no authority over her to condone or reject her conduct, she explores a new relationship forbidden to women in her home town. As long as she complies with the demands of her provider, her life is secure and sometimes pleasant: "En una cama, no tuve tiempo al miedo...su cuerpo ávido, a veces regalaba ternura" (In a bed, I had no time for fear...his body lustful, at times showed kindness) (103). This ability to negotiate with her body to gain a relatively satisfactory lifestyle represents a nomadic circumvention of patriarchal structures described by De Certeau. If she had denied his access to her body, she would have died in the bushes while waiting for her father. Her flexibility to adopt a radically different identity also represents Bakhtin's strategy of the carnivalesque in which an innocent girl takes on a role that contradicts her age, her lack of experience, and her inherited set of values. These tactics and strategies not only give her the opportunity to survive but even turn her jailer into an ally who does his best to defend her from her father.

The attempt to free herself from the third Gatekeeper is less successful. Nevertheless, it also becomes a positive experience since her imprisonment in her father's home facilitates a profound and liberating self analysis. Al-Yaza'ir learns to

escape from her confinement by recurring to memories that García Benito portrays through flashbacks, a habitual mechanism in immigrants narratives that recall irreversible circumstances (Göktürk 8). Spending the days in a humid room without windows or ventilation, Al-Yaza'ir unfolds her memories, converting the prison into a second home where she mentally reconstructs her peaceful childhood in her hometown of Kenifra next to her mother and grandmother. This reconstruction of a personal space is described by Gillian Rose: "identities are a process of 'both deterritorialization and reterritorialization'...every outside is also an alongside; the distance between and proximity is sometimes no distance at all..." (140). Here Al-Yaza'ir's territory begins to take shape when she summons the presence of her deceased mother who speaks in a soft voice to explain how very proud she is that the king of Morocco begins to construct the great mosque on the same day she is born (99). Al-Yaza'ir also recreates the scene in which her grandmother argues with her father about the terrible mistake of going to Murcia: "Me la imagino aquí, plantándole cara a mi padre y protegiéndome" (I visualize her here, facing up to my father and protecting me) (100). As she contemplates her past when she was protected by her mother and grandmother, she remembers feeling liberated from the limiting patriarchal movements of her father and brothers. These pleasant thoughts are interwoven with the memories of her grandmother who cried bitterly the day she left her home town: "Decía que de no haber sido tan vieja, se vendría conmigo" (She said she would come with me if she weren't so old) (100). With these thoughts, Al-Yaza'ir sadly recognizes the victimization of the female members of the family. Roberta Satow explains how women are inevitably dominated by the male members of the family. "A Moroccan woman needs permission from a male relative to marry, to name her children, or to work" (214).

Fighting against the oppression of the male members of the family, she enacts another subversive tactic of Bakhtin. She challenges the right of patriarchs to give names, a strategy of *Orientalism* to force stereotypes onto dominated communities. "Me llaman Isla, [...]. A mi padre le dio por llamarme Al-Yaza'ir aunque mi nombre es Zuhara o Al-Zuhara, así me dice la abuela y me gusta ser Lucero" (They call me Isla, [...]. My father got into the habit of calling me Al-Yaza'ir even though my name is Zuhara or Al-Zuhara.

That's how my grandmother calls me, and I like being Morning Star) (99). In this story, the patriarch treats the girl as if she were his property which gives him the right to give her a name and, thus, impose an identity based on his negative interpretation of the girl's tendency towards solitude. However, the protagonist, who rebels against his authority with strategies of Reverse Orientalism, manifests her preference for the name given to her by her loving grandmother and mother which has positive connotations of a light that shines in the dark. By choosing her own name, she circumvents the authority of her father and gains the necessary self respect and agency to construct her own destiny. This insistence in confirming her own name distances her from the patriarch's domination and allows her certain space for maneuvering. She defies the patriarchal privilege of conditioning the fate of a child by naming it according to patriarchal criteria.²⁶ Coinciding with her change of name, the protagonist undergoes another liberating transformation.

With the memory of the kindness of her mother and grandmother and the articulation of self-definition through the conscious choice of a name, the protagonist recuperates her voice with which she narrates her story. Wedged between the memories of the past and the cruelty of the present, Al-Yaza'ir begins to speak softly to the comforting walls that surround her "En este lugar donde estoy consuela hablar con las paredes" (In the place where I am, it consoles me to talk to the walls) (99). As she communicates with Allah and with Karim, "el niño-vecino [que] da tres golpes en la pared por las tardes" [the neighborhood boy (that) knocks three times on the wall in the afternoons] (104), she begins to see how to dismantle the patriarchal walls and take back the power to determine her fate and that of her child. Expressing satisfaction with the living arrangements with the Spaniard, an alternative to the patriarchal institution of marriage, and experiencing delight in her grandmother's rejection of the dependency of women on men, Al-Yaza'ir no longer feels tied to the conventional duties of women who are expected to obey their fathers, to be virgins until marriage, and to protect and nurture

²⁶ Nevertheless, for me, there is incongruency with the title of the story. The fact that García Benito uses the name that the father selected indicates acquiescence to patriarchal authority. However, the name given her by her grandmother would be more representative of rebellion.

their children. This is an example of mobility through flexible rhizomatic alliances described by Deleuze and Guattari.

Then, convinced that she will surely die, she communicates with her God and the small boy that visits her intention to decide the fate of her own child whom she prefers to sacrifice rather than to hand it over to the same patriarchal structure that has dominated and abused the women of her family for generations. “He contado todo eso a las paredes y a Alá porque el niño está naciendo y yo voy a *morir* [my emphasis] su primer llanto” (I have told this to the walls and to Allah because the child is coming into this world and I am going to *die* its first cry) (104). This choice of verb, which could appear to be a mistake, is very deliberate, for it combines the idea of death with the act of homicide. The author seems to say that the protagonist, once she has gained enough strength by articulating her story to God, doesn't really intend to kill her child, but to allow it to die. In this way García Benito avoids criminalizing her protagonist who she has constructed as a victim from the beginning of the story. She also allows Al-Yaza'ir to have a relative triumph of mobility over movement even though it requires an outstanding sacrifice.

By identifying the movement and mobility of the characters are very distinguishable. Mustafa put Al-Yaza'ir's life at risk for an economic remuneration. The father, blinded by the myth of abundance in Europe, demands the displacement of his daughter without taking into consideration the dangers involved. Afterwards he again considers the girl to be a commodity with a price when he finds her with the Spaniard. The Spaniard, herself, is willing to let the girl go for a price. “Hence, the oppression of women, although not a functional prerequisite of capitalism, has acquired a material basis in the relations of production and reproduction of capitalism today” (Barett 124). Contrary to the capitalistic gain that motivates the movements of the male characters, the pleasure in personal relationships motivates the female protagonist. By denying the value system of the male characters, Al-Yaza'ir evolves from adolescent to adulthood by constructing strong relationships with women who accompany her in the resistance to patriarchal power.

Lourdes Ortiz

Born and educated in Madrid at the same time as Andrés Sorel, Lourdes Ortiz receives a similar education which makes her aware of cultural developments in Europe and encourages her to participate in clandestine activities that resist the repression of the dictatorship of Franco (Morgado 12). While working for a degree in Geography and History at the Madrid university *La Complutense*, Ortiz became acquainted with the literature, philosophy and literary theory circulating outside Spain in the fifties which included Foucault, Sartre, Camus, Fromme, Faulkner, Goytisolo, Cortázar, Carpentier, and the exponents of Nouveau Roman. Constantly reading forbidden books, she was profoundly influenced by an outstanding novel that changed the course of Spanish literature, *Tiempo de Silencio* by Martín Santos (Morgado 14). She also participated in cultural and political activities connected with the leftist party “Izquierda Unida” and besides becoming a member of the Communist party which she later abandoned due to the deception caused by the invasion of Prague and the failure of the student rebellion in Paris in 1968 (Morgado 15).

After the death of Franco in 1975, Ortiz initiates a prolific stage in her literary production that coincides with her work as director of the Royal School of Dramatic Art (Real Escuela Superior de Arte Dramática). Some of her most renowned novels are *Urraca* (1982), *La fuente de la vida* (1995), and *Las manos de Velázquez* (2007); some her best short stories are in the collection *Los motivos de Circe* (1988), *Fátima de los naufragios (relatos de tierra y mar)* (1998), and “Alicia” in *Relatos eróticos escritos por mujeres* (1990); in the field of drama some of her most known works are *El cascabel al gato* (1996) and *La guarida* (1999). Nuria Morgado summarizes Ortiz’s exceptional contribution to Spanish literature by saying, “Es una mujer que siempre ha destacado por su compromiso social con distintas causas relacionadas con la liberad de pensamiento, con los ideales de justicia social y la equidad de género” (She is a woman who has always stood out for her social commitment with different causes related with freedom of thought, ideals of social justice and gender equality) (18). This search for social justice is reflected in her approach to immigration, which she defends by siding with the victims

and by striving to educate the Spanish communities that can do much to alleviate human suffering.

In “Fátima de los naufragos” (Fátima, Our Lady of the Shipwrecked), (1998) Lourdes Ortiz surprises the reader by switching the customary gaze of the victimized immigrant to observe the response of a Spanish community that is deeply affected by an immigrant woman who seems to have been deposited by destiny on their beach. With this change, Ortiz introduces the concept of relativity in the comprehension of immigration “trata[ndo] sobre percepciones de lo que es y lo que aparenta ser” (address[ing] the perceptions of what is and what seems to be) (McGovern 27). As if she were a life-size mirror, the female survivor of the wreck of a patera becomes a reflection of the town’s fears, ideals and illusions and unintentionally induces the Spanish community to initiate a self analysis concerning their own experience with maritime tragedies. Transcending religious differences, cultural backgrounds, and individual egotisms, the collective voice of the town extrapolates their own understanding of shipwrecks and heroic actions onto the mysterious woman who is described as patience, stoic, loyal, and loving. Eventually, the Muslim character becomes a symbol of maternity, spirituality, and Catholic divinity which, for the town, merits the title of the scared Virgin of Fátima, comparable to the Portuguese Virgin of the same name, famous for her miracles. With this short story Ortiz seems to suggest that contact with immigrants creates the necessary mobility in Spanish communities to cure its insensitivity towards the plight of immigrants. Moreover, this awareness implies a devaluation of power movements and a reinforcement of mobility.

The only testimony that overtly defends patriarchal order comes from a young Moroccan called Mohamed, a survivor of the same shipwreck who defends male privilege and female malice. Believing in masculine superiority based on physical strength he explains how he prepared for the trip to Spain developing his physical condition to be able to swim to the beach when the time came. After a night of fighting against the waves, he managed to get to the coast: “Fue viento malo, terrible mar, olas inmensas que primero abrazaban la patera y al final acabaron volcándola. A muchas millas de la costa” (It was a bad wind, terrible sea, immense waves that first of all

embraced the boat and finally turned it over) (Ortiz 12). Apart from the belief in physical superiority, he also reinforces the patriarchal concept of women whose value depends on their looks and willingness to serve:

Era joven y bien puesta la Fátima que yo vi. Y cha..cha...cha...charlatan. No parraba de hablar. Nosotros mareados de tanta charla y el marido desconfiado...estaba contenta, emocionada con el viaje, animada y animaba. Ella decía: ‘Todo bien, bonito viaje, buena noche, buena luna’. Cantaba canciones para el niño, para que se durmiera y no tuviera miedo. Ella bonita voz. Esperábamos todos nervios, muchos nervios. Ella tranquila. Ella hermosa y joven (The Fátima that I saw was young and attractive. And yack..yack...yack...talkative. She didn’t stop talking. We seasick of so much talk and the husband anxious... she was happy, enthusiastic about the trip, cheerful and heartening. She said: ‘All well, a pretty trip, a good night, a good moon.’ She sang songs to the boy, so he would sleep and wouldn’t be afraid. She a pretty voice. We were all nervous, very nervous. She peaceful. She beautiful and young). (Ortiz 16)

Three years after the wreck, the young Moroccan man arrives to the town where Fátima remains vigilant on the beach. Surprised to see her, he insinuates that the cause of the wreck and the unusual resistance of the woman are a question of witchcraft “mala cosa traer mujer. Mejor dejar mujer cuando uno se lanza a la aventura” (It’s a bad thing to bring a woman. It is better to leave the woman behind when one strikes out on an adventure) (11). For Mohamed, if women are unable to serve men, the rightful owners of power, they are sources of evil. However, this attitude is not shared by the town.

The description of Fátima before the shipwreck only increases the community’s imagination about the immigrant. After years of watching the resistance of the Moroccan woman on the beach, the Spanish men of the town forget their tendency towards practical movements to solve the problem of immigration. Instead, the police, the priest, and an old sailor, begin to embrace mystical imaginations about the female survivor nurtured by stories of members of their own community lost in the sea. “Los maderos” (the policemen) (7) don’t bother to ask her for her immigration papers. “El cura” (the priest) hands her a blanket, a gift from a neighbor (9). The old sailor, Antonio, says she’s crazy, “Está pa’allá” (8), but at the same time he carefully hands food to the lonely woman, “como quien depositara una ofrenda” (as if he deposited an offering) (9). A neighbor, Paquito, is very condescending with her bizarre presence, saying that “No es mala. Es del

otro lado del mar” (She’s not a bad person. She’s from the other side of the sea) (10). Another man, Felipe, when the town’s people see the body of a young man in Fátima’s arms, wants to call the authorities, but he too waits indecisive and expectant (20).

The women of the town also abandon their skepticism to enforce clear acts of mobility characterized by a significant change of attitude towards the mysterious Moroccan woman. Recognizing her harmless nature, a “concejala” [political figure in the town hall] stops treating her as a predicament and offer instead her social assistance. An influential woman of the town, “una senora de postin”, gains enough confidence in Fatima to offer her a job. Felisa, the wife of the bakerman, stops gossiping about her strangeness and begins to talk about the Moroccan’s magic powers and her ability to produce miracles. María, the wife of the postman, realizing the distanced position from which the community talks about the immigrant woman, makes all the members of a gathering recall their own lost family members: “creían oír, como tal vez escuchaba la mora, los lamentos de todos los desaparecidos en esa aldea...” (they thought they heard, perhaps just like the Moroccan, the cries of all those disappeared from the town) (18). Angustias, previously suspicious of the eccentric woman, converts Fátima into a Catholic Virgin by calling her “Macarena tostada al sol” (the Macarena tanned by the sun) (7) and “La Marcarena de los Moros, la madre que perdió su hijo” (the Macarena of the Moors, the mother who lost her son) (7). The women’s conduct indicates a transition from a negative attitude to an actively open reception of the immigrant woman.

Later, when Fátima discovers the body of another victim of the *pateras*, she abandons her inertia to, in the opinion of the people of the town, play the role of the Virgin Mary caressing the body of Jesus Christ. They even believe they hear the voice of God, “Fue tal vez la voz rotunda de la mujer que brotaba ronca desde las entrañas tan frágiles de aquel cuerpo desmadejado, una voz ancestral que más bien – así lo comentaban después las mujeres con una mezcla de arrobo y temor – parecía proceder de las nubs y repicar entre la espuma, creando eco, reverberando contra las casa blancas” (It was perhaps the categorical ancient voice that – this is how it was commented afterwards among the women with a mixture of rapture and fear – seemed to come from

the clouds and rebound off the surf, creating an echo, reverberating against the white houses) (21). In this way a Muslim woman brings about the devotion of the neighbors of the town who transform a human being into the Virgen de Fátima and the Virgen de las *pateras*. All rational reactions to interpret and control the movement of the woman are abandoned to pay tribute to the creation of a new Virgin. Under her blanket, the silent woman occupies a mysterious abstract space which becomes a point of connection for immigrants and the Spanish community, a space that Deleuze and Guattari call an “inbetweenness” or the “interconnections” of the rhizomes (25). The people of the town, the tourists, and the young immigrant man, each with different cultural backgrounds and religious beliefs, unite to convert the lonely immigrant woman into the image of the Virgin of Fátima.

After crying over the young body, closing his eyes and kissing his cheeks, Fátima gets up and starts walking towards the sea, submitting herself to the same destiny as those in her *patera* without anyone trying to stop her. This unexpected action also undermines the controlling movements of power in a way similar to that of the female character in García Benito’s story, Al-Yaza’ir, who recuperates her voice to take control over her destiny. In this story, the protagonist also undergoes a voluntary Bakhtinian change of identity from an enthusiastic, talkative woman that begins a journey with her husband and son to a lifeless human statue that allows her body to waste away into skin and bones: “ya sin su manto, ... todos pudieron ver la delgadez de sus caderas, sus escuálidos brazos y la silueta doblada de su cuerpo famélico” (now without her blanket, everyone could see the slimness of her hips, her slender arms, and the curved silhouette of her starved body) (21). Her voice indicates a new found awareness and agency which she uses to end her suffering through suicide.²⁷

Fátima’s decision to die is linked to the theme of futile motherhood just as in the short stories of García Benito and Andrés Sorel. Once more the truncated objective of a

²⁷ Though her walking into the water admits many other interpretations, for instance it could be seen as a symbolism of baptism, I have chosen the one that adjusts to the tragic outcomes of many attempts to cross the Strait of Gibraltar.

mother dedicated to nurturing a family is emblematic of the unreachable goal of immigrants who strive to achieve a new life in a foreign country. Unable to fulfill her desire, Fátima finds an alternative in the sea where she joins the other members of her family. In this way, Ortiz deals with the concept of death, not as a regrettable consequence of injustice, but rather as what Braidotti calls “the opening up of new intensities and possibilities of the inhuman or non-human kind” (*Transpositions* 248). Feeling that she has fulfilled her purpose in life, Fátima looks forward to the next step beyond life, a mobility which makes her “imperceptible”:

Becoming-imperceptible is an eruption of desire for the future which reshapes the present... It is a time sequence based on *aion*, not on *chromos*; it marks the time of becoming. It is a qualitative leap that precipitates a change of existential gear, acceleration, a creative speed. All of this is literally invisible and cannot be perceived by the naked eye and yet in philosophical nomadism this movement can be conceptualized in terms of immanence. (Braidotti, *Transpositions* 261)

The increasing “imperceptibility” of Fátima begins when she speaks with an unrecognizable voice that seems to float down from the clouds (21). No one links this powerful voice with that of the frail woman on the beach. Afterwards, as her body sinks slowly in the water, everyone looks on transfixed by the impression of a floating angel. Then the entire town watched spellbound while her body disappears under the water: “una línea vertical y limpia sobre el azul que cada vez se iba acortando más hasta llegar a ser un punto oscuro sobre la tranquila superficie de las aguas, una cabeza morena diminuta y despeinada que al instante dejó de verse” (a clean, vertical line on the blue horizon that became shorter and shorter until it turned into a dark dot on the peaceful surface of the water, a tiny, brown, unkempt head that all of a sudden disappeared) (22). At the end her presence became “el lamento o la plegaria o la canción de cuna de aquella a la que ya todos llaman la Virgen de las *pateras*, nuestra señora de los naufragios” (a cry or a prayer or a lullaby from the one who everyone calls the Virgen of the patera, our lady of the shipwrecked) (22).

With this story Ortiz offers a model for international human bonding that springs from the hospitality of the Spanish community. By giving the protagonist the power to unite the beliefs and imaginations of the host town, Ortiz suggests a new understanding

towards immigration. As a positive social contributor, this protagonist is able to influence those around her, and above all, to produce in the community a feeling of respect for the victims and solidarity with the survivors of patera crossings. The awakening of the members of the town turns all those who experience immigration into new mestizas defined by Gloria Anzaldúa as a people who understand that, “Only by remaining flexible [are they] able to stretch the psyche horizontally and vertically. La mestiza ... learns to juggle cultures. She has a plural personality, she operates in a pluralistic mode – nothing is thrust out, the good, the bad, and the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned” (101). With the mobility of Fátima, the people of the town gain mobility which is manifested through their solidarity with the immigrant women from across the sea.

2. Novels

Gerardo Muñoz Lorente

In *Ramito de hierbabuena* (A Handful of Mint) (2001), also presented in the first chapter, questions the value of immigration with a focus similar to Sorel's. The protagonist, a young woman from Rif called Maimuna, fights against violent patriarchal characters, human barricades to her dream of living in Spain and having a family with the love of her life, Habbib. In contrast with this courageous but candid character, her close friend Yazmine is a practical person who rejects all manifestations of sentimentality in her struggle against the power movements of ambitious male characters. Incited by their desire to participate in a Western lifestyle, these female characters display considerable mobility to gain control over their bodies and lives through spatial displacement and confrontation with oppressive social conventions, actions that indicate a change in gender relations for the typical Moroccan women. However, though their agency increases as the novel progresses, Muñoz Lorente confronts his female characters with an unpredictable enemy that hinders their self-determination through migration.

The omniscient narrator, who directs the action of the novel towards the culminating scene of the dramatic crossing of the strait, insistently describes the manipulation and abuse of vicious male characters that cling to their possessions, especially women, with irrefutable capitalistic strategies. Faruk, Maimuna's brother who is solely interested in his own personal gains, is a character that clearly fits the profile of a villain. Reducing his mother to the status of a slave, he takes steps to control the household goods and eliminate all competitors. The *tiburón* and the navigator, also focused on earning money from the crossing, neglect the passengers with whom they traffic. Even Habib's affection for Maimuna becomes doubtful. Having successfully crossed the strait, he encourages Maimuna to contact the same *tiburón* that organized his crossing; however, he fails to warn her of their criminal conduct for he had to accept transporting a cargo of drugs to be able to get on board (149). This information would have saved Maimuna great suffering. Furthermore, at the end of the novel, Habib quickly overcomes his grief and goes on with his job in Spain. For the most part, the conduct of the male characters display limited actions dedicated exclusively to raising barriers to defend personal territories, including the women.

The female characters, interested in avoiding the power movements of Gatekeepers, are determined not to be trapped. At the beginning of the novel, Maimuna makes and breaks alliances with different members of her family and friends following Deleuze and Guattari's theory of rhizomes to navigate her way out of prejudicial situations. The protagonist's mother, Fátima, is a female Gatekeeper who wants to control her daughters by placing barriers to their contact with Western culture. This authoritative figure, which forbids the girls to listen to modern rap music while doing chores (22), happily subordinates herself to her son Faruk, the male Gatekeeper, when he takes over the household. In this way she is assured a position of status and security. Moreover, Fátima has so internalized her obligations to the patriarchal hierarchy of the family that she loses all sense of commitment to her daughters. When the brother, Faruk, tries to deceive his sister, Maimuna, by making her believe that the love of her life has abandoned her, the mother corroborates her son's lies. Both the Gatekeepers stand on patriarchal tradition to defend their privileged positions and economic gains without

considering the needs or feelings of the other women in the family. Even the mother of Habib goes along with the foul play of Faruk because she depends on his financial support. Against the interests of the Gatekeepers, the protagonists find the courage to defy patriarchal hierarchy and migrate to Spain.

Nevertheless, before achieving this liberation the protagonists must overcome several difficulties. The protagonist and her friend Yasmina attempt to negotiate with the patriarchal figure of the novel, until it becomes clear that they are being victimized. Appalled by the deceit and maneuvering of her mother and brother to push her into a marriage with an older man, Maimuna breaks off relationships with both family members and makes peace again with her cousin Yazmina with whom she flees to the city to find a way to cross the strait of Gibraltar. Yazmina, also profoundly disappointed by her own family members, turns her back on all of them to go with Maimuna. “Somos jóvenes, podemos ganarnos la vida trabajando en cualquier cosa ...” (We are young; we can earn a living working in anything we want) (145). This union, similar to a rhizomatic alliance, is formed to resist the movements of patriarchal institutions that try to maintain women under their control. Their mutual contempt for the hypocrisy of patriarchal order and the desire to live in Spain are the basis of an indissoluble bond between the two.

Once the two female characters leave their rural home and step into the modern world of Tetuan, they are confronted with different forms of aggression and learn new defensive tactics. Confiding in Habbib, Maimuna contacts the same *tiburón* called “el Holandés” (Muñoz 147), and, as a consequence, is imprisoned by a psychopath from whom she escapes after several months of demeaning treatment. In his grip she experiences two different kinds of displacement. Physically, her body is transformed with a tattoo on her breast and scars around her ankle caused by the chain that held her to a bed. Psychologically, she learns to control her emotions and adjust to her jailer’s moods. Realizing that a gentle character pleases him and makes him lower his guard, Maimuna adapts her performance to become the person he desires. This Bakhtinian carnivalesque representation gives her the necessary leverage to discover his weaknesses and escape from the diabolical game of her stalker.

When she returns to the city, she finds Yazmine, who has also undergone physical and psychological transformations in order to survive. Her only resource being her body, she begins to practice prostitution and, as a result, contracts a deadly disease. Psychologically, Yazmine has little difficulty in shedding the social demands for women in her home town. Adjusting quite well to her new circumstance, she astutely escapes the manipulation of powerful drug mafias who force innocent young girls to work for them and learns to identify the men that are trustworthy. Their tactics of adaptation and resistance, like those discussed in De Certeau's *Practice of Everyday Life*, help them escape the power movements of male dominated family structures, the ruthless punishment of a masochistic psychopath, and the merciless ambitions of pimps.

Together the two female characters manage to endure the last months in Tetuan until they earn the money to embark on a *zodiac* to Spain. The account of the crossing portrays Muñoz Lorente's great respect for one of the most insensitive and cruel forces of nature. Voluntarily submitting themselves to the Foucaultian space of a crisis heterotope, the two characters are accepted onto the *zodiac* after handing over to the navigator all their belongings, except for a telephone which Maimuna hides in her clothes. Without prior notice the plans for the crossing are changed to take a longer route than usual designed to avoid the new vigilance system²⁸ (Muñoz 147). In the *zodiac*, there are some thirty men, a pregnant woman who has plans to unite with her husband in Lleida, and a young mother with a small child. Though Maimuna manages to sit on the floor with her legs entwined with those of the mother who clings to her year old boy, Yazmine is forced to sit on the edge where she has to hold on to the ropes. The journey begins under a star lit night that allows the travelers to see the lights of Tarifa, but after a while, "el viento empezó a dejarse sentir desde poniente" (the wind began to blow from the West) (289).

At this moment of the novel, the action speeds up to leave the reader breathless with anticipation: "El mar comenzó entonces a crispase, a ondularse con olas cada vez más pronunciadas, más altas y más frecuentes. La *zodiac* cabeceaba ante cada embestida,

²⁸ Carling has studied the installation of SIVE, a satellite based vigilance program to detect *pateras* and *zodiacs* that try to reach the Spanish coasts. He reports that instead of reducing the number of embarkations, SIVE is forcing the immigrants to risk their lives navigating longer distances to places where the system has not yet been installed, like the Canary Islands (14).

bajando y subiendo a merced del oleaje espumoso, provocando los primeros gritos de pánico [...] pronto todos los pasajeros se empaparon con el agua que salpicaba desde los bordes de la embarcación” (Becoming very choppy, the sea began to produce waves that were increasingly higher and more frequent. The zodiac dived with each onslaught, sinking and raising at the whim of the white waves, producing the first cries of panic [...]) Soon all the passengers were drenched with the water that splashed over the edges of the boat) (299). As the passengers grapple with the instability of the boat, the pilot silently calculates the number of passengers that without doubt will be lost: “No le preocupaban las cinco o seis pérdidas que pudiera sufrir, pero temía las consecuencias de un ataque colectivo de pánico” (The five or six possible losses didn’t bother him, but he was worried about the consequences of a collective attack of panic) (300). The first passenger to go overboard is the pregnant woman who goes to the edge of the boat to vomit. No one does anything to save her as they are all occupied with saving themselves. Eventually, Yazmine also falls overboard followed by Maimuna, victims of the navigator’s manipulation of the zodiac. At the end, “el cuerpo sin vida de Maimuna fue arrastrado por las corrientes y depositado por las olas en una playa de Tarifa, al amanecer de aquel lunes, 24 de julio del año 2000” (the dead body of Maimuna was pushed by the currents and deposited by the wave on a beach of Tarifa, at the dawn of that Monday, 24th of July, 2000) (302).

In this novel, the effort of the women in their struggle against the power movements of men, though fruitless, is outstanding. The female characters are abused and threatened without ever receiving any compensation for their tribulations, unlike the male characters who manage to gain some kind of profit. However, the women display a mobility that enables them to challenge their oppressors and bring about a change in their relations. The mother, who loses her household status by betraying her daughter and succumbing to the demands of her son Faruk, recognizes her error and leaves her home to live with a beloved niece. Having no choice but to practice the denigrating profession of prostitution, Yasmina never loses her dreams of a better life in Spain. Even when she is desperately ill, she finds the strength to earn the necessary money to migrate. The protagonist, who never embraces her lover on the Spanish coast, undergoes a

considerable change of character from docile submission to outright rebellion against male domination. Though doomed by Muñoz Lorente's deterministic outlook, these female characters resist patriarchal dominance with their flexibility, innovation, and nomadic mobility.

Najat el Hachmi

A resident of Catalonia born in Morocco, Najat El Hachmi migrated to Spain when she was a small girl to join her father who migrated a few years earlier. Fluent in her maternal language, Berber, the national Moroccan language, Arabic, and the language of her present home, Catalan, she earned a degree in Arabic (Filología árabe) from the university of Barcelona. She participates on the Catalan radio program called *L'Oracle* with Xavier Graset and writes a few articles for local newspapers. In 2004 she published her first novel, *Jo també sóc catalane*, which reflects her profound knowledge of Moroccan culture and the difficulties of Moroccan immigration in Catalonia. In an interview with Ernest Alós, El Hachmi recognizes that her narrative descriptions stem from both personal experience and the observation of other Moroccan women (mundo arabe.org). Her most recent novel, *El Último Patriarca*, is a recreation of different experiences that Moroccans undergo when migrating to Spain. Particular attention is paid to the role of women that must negotiate with Western ideologies while struggling to conserve family traditions. Emigrating from Morocco to Spain, the characters display both movement and mobility that position them either as traditional patriarchs that tend to fixate women into nonnegotiable family roles or as liberals that free women from predetermined destinies. These positions are presented in the confrontation of the principal characters of the novel, the dominating Muslim father and the rebellious Moroccan daughter.

The first part of the novel is narrated by the male protagonist, Mimoun, who spends most of his life looking for his "destiny" (100). This search corresponds to a sense of insecurity about his place in the family, as a result of the traumatic experience of

being raped by his uncle and beaten by his father when he was a small boy. The grandfather of Mimoun also tries unsuccessfully to inculcate in him norms of respectability and responsibility as the epitome of patriarchal authority, but this character insists on maintaining his own personal interpretation of masculine power: “Mimouna conseguía siempre que las mujeres de su vida le fuesen convirtiendo en patriarca” (Mimouna always got the women in his life to convert him into a patriarch) (103). The young patriarch repeats the violent behavior of his family with all the women in his life whom he often dominates by force. Mimoun first experiences sex with his neighbor Fatma (36). Unfortunately, when he discovers that she has sex with her father as well as with almost every man in town, he repudiates her for she no longer serves to boost his self esteem and social status. Afterwards, he begins to take advantage of his hegemonic position by brutally beating his sister simply because he imagines that she is interested in a boy. After several disastrous encounters with women, his mother, the primary gatekeeper of patriarchal order in the family, arranges his marriage with a cousin who has been properly trained to be totally submissive to the manipulation and abuse of men.

After they marry they migrate to Barcelona where the marriage goes sour due to Mimoun’s excessive jealousy, which he alleviates with the use of increasing brutality. Due to his disenchantment, he begins to seek out a series of lovers while he forces his wife to remain in the house, a pattern that recalls the behavior of other patriarchs in previous migration narratives. The train of women, that Mimoun uses to satisfy his feeble ego throughout the novel, fulfills Dolores Juliano’s definition of the brave conquerer that goes out into the world only to return home to receive as compensation the woman of his choice (308-13). Mimoun’s conduct is an unrelenting movement in search of personal benefit void of human relationships. There is one exception, his daughter to whom he would like to hand down the patriarchal throne. However, instead of following Mimoun’s movements, the daughter’s behavior takes the form of a mobility that undermines patriarchal authority.

The second part of the novel is narrated by the protagonist’s counter part, his daughter, who is left unnamed by the author perhaps with the intention of representing the collective of Moroccan immigrant women. Having lived in Morocco as a young girl,

the daughter is aware of the Moroccan customs that place women under the control of men. However, after migrating to Barcelona, she observes the way Western women carry on in public, make their own decisions, and express their own opinions. Impressed by their autonomy, she carefully exercises some of this agency to avoid her father's brutal punishment, a goal not always achieved. The worst conflicts arise when the daughter is forced to observe from the shadows her father's brutality towards her mother. Unable to convince her mother to abandon this man, the young protagonist finds refuge in education and secret relationships.

Her strategies of mobility help her overcome the depression caused by living with domestic violence. As in the tactic suggested by De Certeau, she begins to pass through the boundaries of power relations concealing the true reasons for leaving her home during short intervals by offering to go to the market or do other errands just to find a moment of relief. She also adopts strategies of Bakhtin by dressing like Spanish girls in public while conserving the traditional dress code at home. This disguise gives her a sense of a new identity that she prefers to the model offered by her mother. Another outstanding strategy that the daughter develops recalls Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "deterritorialization." When she is unable to avoid the scenario where her mother suffers terrible beatings, she escapes by constructing an alliance or a *rhizome* with words which are placed in between, in "*intermezzo*", her persona and the violence of her home. Reading the Catalan dictionary, she repeats and almost masticates each word in such a way that it frees her from the emotional ropes that bind her to an infernal life:

Él hizo plaf, una bofetada, y nadie supo qué quería decir. No quiero oírte ni una palabra más, dijo. A partir de ahora haré lo que me dé la gana de la misma forma que tú hiciste lo que te dio la gana. Nadie sabía qué era lo que le daba la gana hacer ni quién era ella ni por qué lo tenía que decir con una bofetada, pero todos entendimos que la tregua ya se había acabado. *E*, nombre de la letra E. *E*, prefijo latino o *eben*, ébano. (He went smack, a slap, and no one knew what it meant. I don't want to hear another word from you, he said. From now on I will do whatever I feel like just like you did what you felt like. No one knew what he wanted to do or who she was or why he had to say it with a slap, but we all understood that the truce had ended. *E*, name of the letter E. *E*, latin prefix or *eben*, ebony (197)

Thus, words become her allies, her only means to understand the world around her, her island of respite. When she finishes the dictionary, she begins to navigate through new channels towards freedom.

Sex for the daughter is also a learning process in which she is able to escape her father's control and gain consciousness of her own personal value. She comments that as a little girl she became acquainted with her body, about the same time that her father began beating her mother. Another act of rebellion is the moment when she decides to maintain a relationship with her boyfriend in spite of the threats from her father. When the boyfriend leaves her, she has no qualms about living on her own without the support of a man, for she has gained sexual autonomy. She realizes that the only way to defy the patriarchal order of her family is to take away the father's control over her body. When her uncle, her father's lifelong enemy, arrives unexpectedly at her apartment, she gives herself to him and experiences an anal orgasm, making Mimoun remember his childhood humiliation and forcing him to lose face before his family who will inevitably blame him for his daughter's conduct.

The two narrative voices of this novel represent the confrontation between the values of movement and mobility. At the end, this novel seems to declare that the destiny of "el gran patriarca" (the great patriarch), regardless of his egocentric, brutal movements, is destruction and disempowerment caused by the mobility of women who gain agency through education and the recognition of their right to control their own bodies.

3. Film

Imanol Uribe

Born in San Salvador in 1950 from Basque parents, Imanol Uribe was raised in Guipúzcoa, a Basque province in a northern province of Spain. Shortly before the death of Franco, he moved to Madrid to study journalism in the Escuela Oficial de Periodismo

and later the art of cinema in the Escuela de Cinematografía. He won several awards, the most important ones being the Goya for Best Director and the Concha de Oro in the San Sebastian Film Festival, for films that concentrate predominantly on the political situation in the País Vasco. Married to a young actress, María Barranco, who plays the main female part in *Bwana* (1996), Uribe offers his own insight on the various responses of Spanish society towards immigration.

Bwana takes place on an isolated Spanish beach where Imbasi, a black male immigrant, swims to shore with a drowned friend after the wreck of his *patera*. There he encounters a diverse set of people: a typical middle class family that are at the same site spending the day collecting clams; the owners of a modest kiosk involved in smuggling; and a group of skinheads patrolling the coast to capture illegal immigrants. These characters, agents of movement and mobility, convey interchangeable patterns of gender relations whose implications affect the lives of Spaniards and immigrants.

All the characters that arrive to the beach have been displaced from their natural habitat where they once claimed certain hegemony. In the displaced context each one must negotiate a new place of hierarchy, revealing gender roles that either condone or disrupt notions of patriarchal tradition. In their relationships, some characters are powerful agents of movement that pretend to control the behavior of others within a specific territory which they pretend to guard against intruders. As Santaolalla explains in her article *Close Encounters*, these agents tend to place people and objects into simple categories of “‘good’ and ‘bad’, through a process of othering by which unwanted material is projected outside the Self onto the Other” (111). These characters symbolize the role of an ultra conservative society determined to avoid illegal immigration and miscegenation to achieve national ethnic homogeneity. Obsessed with maintaining hegemony of the Self image, they claim the right to judge and execute those who do not meet their ideal. What’s more, these violent characters demand some kind of compensation for their work. Diametrically different from the agents of movement, the agents of mobility subvert or circumvent domination to enjoy independence and autonomy counting on their intelligence to defend their integrity and pursue a personal

well being. They engage in the recognition and inclusion of difference within a loosely defined territory. Open to change and dialogue, these characters invite others to share their space without expectations of reciprocity.

One of the most unique techniques of Uribe in this film is the placement of characters in contrasting settings of sunshine and darkness, which reinforces the dichotomy between movement and mobility as well as the whiteness and blackness of the characters' skin color. The representation of movement, placed in settings of bright sunlight, is directly related to visible spaces and physical actions that mark territories to exclude foreigners. The first sunlit scene is the beginning of a Sunday excursion. Antonio, the father of a typical nuclear family, yells and argues to demonstrate his authority over an unruly wife and son who constantly question his decisions. Contrary to the representation of the "macho" that he pretends to be, Antonio undergoes a significant inversion of masculine superiority by becoming a vulnerable foreigner who depends on others for help. When they stop for something to eat at a kiosk, a group of men are reluctant to serve strangers from the city. They joke about not having "alemejas en lata" (canned clams) because they only eat them raw, a comment full of sexual connotations clearly directed towards Dori. Failing to provoke the family with these comments, the men poke fun at Antonio for being a taxi driver. Antonio decides to assuage the thirst of the hooligans for rambunctious fun by graciously accepting the ill-intentioned jokes. Referring to himself as "buena gente" (a good guy), Antonio bribes them for their silence and quickly abandons the place to avoid further harassment. Out of place, Antonio negotiates a tenuous respect for his persona and that of his family by implementing a strategy of flight to escape a hostile territory where foreigners are mistreated.

This situation is repeated later in the film when Antonio goes to a caravan parked by the road to ask for help with his car. Again he has to escape from a group of male and female skinheads covered with tattoos. Hearing them speak in a foreign language, Antonio tries to communicate with them in English, but soon he desists, finding himself in danger. When the men begin to use his body as a punching bag, Antonio breaks loose and runs away while listening to a trail of insults. Unable to challenge these agents of

power movements, Antonio again uses De Certeau's strategies of resistance and flees from an enemy territory.

The representation of mobility, associated more with intuition and open mentalities that favor inclusion and bonding, takes place in the shadows of night. Just before nightfall, while Antonio and his son collect clams, the daughter Jesse discovers two black men who she believes to be dead. However, one of them, Ombasi, is not only alive, but becomes an important element for the survival of the family. Stranded on the beach after losing the car keys on the beach, the family decides to spend the night in Ombasi's company. Overcoming the language barrier and their apprehension towards the stranger, the family negotiates a coexistence with the stranger to share the warmth of the fire and the only existing food for dinner. Gradually, Dori abandons her learned prejudice against Africans and dreams of Ombasi as a sensual lover. Just before dawn, Ombasi, who sings to his gods with his naked body turned to the rising sun, convinces Dori to share with him a swim in the cool sea waves. It seems that the shadows erase the movements that make differences stand out, and enhance the mobility of the characters.

The moments in which light and darkness are combined set the scene for a negotiation between movement and mobility. This occurs when Antonio and Dori catch the men from the kiosk smuggling merchandise from a motor boat and putting it into their truck. When the men recognize Dori and Antonio, they begin to harass them as before, but this time with a more threatening tone. Ombasi, realizing that his friends are in danger, makes the intruders flee by running up to the group with flaming logs held up in the air, giving him the Bakhtinian carnivalesque image of an enormous fierce animal with fire shooting from its horns. This conversion of Ombasi into a flaming monster embraces both darkness and light, both movement and mobility, for the powerful movement of Ombasi casts the unwelcome intruders out of their dwelling with the light of the fire, and, at the same time, the darkness of the beach gives the younger member of the smugglers an opportunity to abandon his companions and become a new member of the mixed racial group. Moreover, Ombasi's brave and original performance sparks Dori's awareness of his intelligence and ingenuity.

These spaces of light and darkness also highlight the frontiers of male and female gender roles. The two women of this film exemplify an overshadowing of conventions and stereotypes. With her muscular body and rough speech, the female neonazi gives the impression of being just as masculine as the rest of the group. However, in her interaction with the rest of the group, she is relegated to a subordinate position. On the beach, while the men beat up the young town boy, she is left to guard the foreign intruder. And when the group takes off in pursuit of Ombasi, she is placed on the back seat of the motorbike where she can only follow the others. In this way, regardless of her masculine mask, she has no personal mobility and fulfills the traditional role of women in a patriarchal society.

Especially unsettling is the moment in which she participates in the incrimination of Omasi and Dori for having been together in the water. The German skinhead asks what the punishment should be, and the girl very obediently responds by showing all her teeth and shouting out in a military-like response “Castration!” The German then goes on to declare that Dori is to be raped, “from back to front like pigs.” A natural reaction for a woman is to feel intimidated, for she too could suffer the same punishment if she fails to meet her companions’ expectations. However, the girl continues to repeat the men’s words as if she were just another guy. Then, this female skinhead makes up for her missing phallus with a flashy steel knife that she uses to subject her victim. Is she intuitively comparing the size of his phallus with hers, or is this a gesture of uncontrollable desire? This scene takes place under a bright morning sun which, in accordance with the events of the film, coincides with brutal acts of power and reinforcement of territorial boundaries. However, although this aggressive he-woman carries a sharp knife as an agent of movement, her ambiguity between her performance as a man and her identity as a woman gives way to Ombasi’s mobility.

In sharp contrast with the female skinhead who pretends to be in control of power movements, Dori is presented as a silly useless housewife who has internalized the privileges of power movements. With simple objectives of looking pretty and caring for her family, this stereotype of a housewife is completed by the image of her unquestionable sexual availability. She displays her ignorance by verbalizing her

interpretation of the black man as ignorant, prehistoric, and probably a cannibal. Dori's description of the Other exemplifies bell hooks's argument that "white women have been historically socialized 'to accept myths, stereotypes, and false assumptions that deny the shared commonness of [their] human experience'" (in Ballesteros 171). However, as she gets to know Ombasi, her perception becomes keener, and she learns to accept him, and herself, as an individual. Her initial contempt for Ombasi as a rude, primitive animal turns into admiration for an attractive, intelligent and brave man. At the same time, she stops considering herself the family's work horse to become a person who deserves an occasional satisfaction. This transformation in Dori seems to indicate that Dori needs the help of an independent, intelligent man to help her evolve from strategies of movement towards manifestations of mobility.

Escaping from her husband's domain, Dori indulges in a liberating conversation with Ombasi at the crack of dawn. As Ombasi displays his impressive black body, Dori becomes "the bearer of the look" (Ballesteros 119), a position that is traditionally occupied by men. Flexing her new power, she takes the determination to do something for herself for a change and accepts Ombasi's invitation to go for a swim. Her audacity demonstrates that, in spite of her habitual subordination to the socially constructed expectations of her gender, she has the mobility to pursue her own happiness. With this action, Dori exemplifies women's astute use of the rhizome alliances of Deleuze and Guattari. On the one hand, Dori counts on Antonio to help her out of the precarious situations with the smugglers and the skin heads, and, on the other, she unites with Ombasi to momentarily free herself of the burden of social conventions. Her agility to navigate in between patriarchal forces contrasts greatly with the female skinhead who pretends to partake in the role of masculine power without the necessary mobility or agency to escape the domination of the other men.

The uncertainty of gender roles also becomes evident with the juxtaposition of the two male protagonists, Antonio and Ombasi. As we have seen before, Antonio, in spite of his attempt to impress his family with his masculinity, actually performs the stereotype of a defenseless, vulnerable, and helpless female. He has little control over his children who

persistently test the limits of their father's tolerance. Antonio's son, Ivan, tries to take charge of the car while the daughter intentionally tricks him into believing that she knows where the car keys are even though she has no intention of handing them over. After the ordeal with the car, the family sits by the fire where Ivan has the audacity to identify himself to Ombasi as Bwana, a colonial master of slaves, as if to say that his father has lost that privilege. At dawn, Antonio's son even demands his right to participate in the gaze of his naked mother.

Antonio also has difficulty maintaining his dignity with his wife, who belittles him by repeatedly threatening to unleash an uncontrollable scene if he doesn't obey her: "No me empieces, Antonio, que no me empieces..." (Don't get me started, Antonio, don't get me started...). Late at night, this reversal of power movements occurs again when Antonio is asked to comply with her sexual demands. When he puts up some objections, she tells him not to be "mariquita" (a wimp). Shortly after that, the smugglers arrive and start demeaning Antonio and threatening Dori on the beach. Once more, the patriarch, whose only defense is to pacify his aggressors with bribery, is portrayed as a helpless individual who is easily controlled by others.

By contrast, Ombasi, the supposed desolate, ignorant immigrant, is portrayed as a savior and provider for ladies in distress. When Jesse falls into his camp from her lookout, Ombasi picks her up and returns her to her family safe and sound. Later, he provides the stranded family a warm place to spend the night. When Ombasi realizes that the Spanish couple is being harassed by the smugglers, he rescues them and sends the smugglers running for their lives. His ability to adapt to unknown situations and find ways to escape threatening situations are evidence of his mobility.

The height of the conflict comes when the sun is fully out and the violent skinheads, agents of movement, try to punish Dori and Ombasi, the agents of mobility. When confronted by the group of skinheads, Ombasi doesn't try to fight, though his size could give him an edge. Especially when he is left alone with the female skinhead, he could have taken the knife away from her. Instead, he uses his intelligence to escape. By swinging his gaze back and forth from the woman's knife to the scene of the aggression

on the young smuggler, he captures her interest impelling her to watch the brutal punishment. At a moment when her sight is fixed on her companions, he dashes away so fast that she can't catch him. Acting under a brilliant sun, this international group, which symbolizes the xenophobic tendency in Europe, uses its powerful movements to inhibit the process of racial integration in Spanish society.

After running for a while, Ombasi reaches the Spanish couple's car on to which he hurls himself screaming for help. His desperate situation is literally thrown into their faces. Shocked by the image of a frantic black man whose life depends on their decision, the family begins to debate their alternatives. Though Antonio feels remorse for the plight of foreigners, he is inclined to eliminate an impressive sexual rival (Santaolalla 122). Dori, reacting in complete denial of her previous feelings towards Ombasi, hides behind her duty to protect the children when she is actually protecting herself from stepping outside the conventional roles of women in Spanish society. Weakened by their doubts, both decide to leave Ombasi behind so that they can continue their lives as if nothing had happened, "Vete de aqui. No puedo ayudarte" (Get away from here. I can't help you).

When Ombasi falls off the car into the hands of the skinheads while Antonio and Dori drive away with tears in their eyes, he searches the couple's eyes for a gesture of humanity finding nothing but egotism, self interest, and protectionism. However, Ombasi burdens the couple with a sense of shame for their responsibility in the metaphorical castration of immigrants who, given an opportunity, could prove to be meaningful members of society. With this ending, Uribe wants to "demostrar la realidad y denunciarla, reclamando de la sociedad española la oportunidad de hacer algo para concluir con una situación de marginación, sobreexplotación y discriminación de unos seres humanos cuyo 'delito' es ser extranjero y buscar un hueco en nuestra sociedad" (illustrate the reality and denounce it, demanding from the Spanish society an opportunity to do something to end a situation of marginalization, exploitation and discrimination of human beings whose 'crime' is being a foreigner and looking for a place in our society) (Cattiello 18-19). In this way Uribe gives his spectators an opportunity either to be accomplices of the powerful movements to eliminate interracial relationships and

demarcate clear gender boundaries, or to be agents of mobility that find ways to increase tolerance for racial difference and alternative gender roles.

D. Concluding Remarks

The analysis of the above works underlines the roles of movement and mobility in the displacement of immigrants from Morocco to Spain. After observing the actions of the characters in the narratives and film, it is possible to see how movement is a hegemonic force that pretends to maintain society within the status quo of established authority, while mobility is a fluid force that resists the imposition of power institutions. In the selected narratives and film, the agents of movement impose their criteria with the imprisonment and abuse of the bodies of immigrants. In order to recuperate the control over their own bodies, the agents of mobility negotiate relationships similar to the ones in the theories of DeCerteau, resist fixed identities as in the carnivalesque theory of Bakhtin, and form convenient alliances like those found in theories of Deleuze and Guattari. Furthermore, the characters convey a significant change in traditional gender relations, the implications of which affect the lives of immigrants and Spaniards.

The background to this struggle of forces is the Strait of Gibraltar, representing a division between the past and the present, a threshold to a new life. The effort to step from one space to another creates an irreversible flow that affects the lives of those who cross, as well as those on either side. The *patera* is a point of conversion, an intersection of movement and mobility in a fluid space that “disregards boundaries, mixes identities and disrupts relationships” (Urry 31). It is the space in-between where characters reveal the authors’ identities, interests, and values.

Most of all, the authors’ different approaches to migration reflect their attitudes towards sexuality and gender relations. Sorel and Muñoz, who fail to see female mobility as a competitive social force, portray women as vulnerable bodies reduced to two alternatives, subjugation to men or death in the sea. At some point before, during, or

after the crossing in patera they are decapitated, raped, branded, or drowned. Obsessed with difference, the male characters behave as if they had the right to judge those who do not meet their ideal. Sexuality for them is an instrument of power which is used as a commodity of exchange, or a means of punishment. For García Benito and Ortiz²⁹, female characters are not passive victims of a doomed journey but survivors which refuse to be considered claimed territory. For García Benito sexuality appears as an instrument of negotiation that benefits the female character. Her protagonist converts a woman's place, where sexuality is conquered by men, into a woman's space, where sexuality is a previous step to maternity, a symbol of female bonding (Rose 137). In the short story of Ortiz, sexuality only appears for an instant in the gaze of the patriarchal figure that is quickly overcome by the spirituality of the protagonist who controls her own destiny. Uribe, in a more eclectic view, portrays female characters as both instruments of power and a threat to it. Even though the sexuality of the female character is a commodity for the patriarchal figure that is obligated to pay to maintain his right over his partner's body, it is a gift for the enigmatic male immigrant who treats the female body with respect.

Their perspectives illuminate the difference between movement and mobility, and illustrate how the latter has many advantages over the former. The mobility of immigrant characters, both male and female, when resisting the movement of power institutions, creates currents of insurgence that challenge established norms of gender and sexuality. Judging by these works, displacement for women, much more than a movement from one point to another, foments a psychological, intellectual and emotional mobility that creates fluid relationships which resist the negative forces of men and nature. In sum, displacement, in the words of Cresswell, can be seen from three different viewpoints. It is a "pure motion" (Cresswell 3) that corresponds to the movement of people and objects, immigrants and *pateras*, in a physical space; it is an act of faith that promotes the freedom of individuals subject to oppression; and it is a demand for a lifestyle tolerant of different sexual and gender relations, more attuned to the imaginations of individuals that live in the twenty-first century.

²⁹ Other female authors that offer more optimistic alternatives in other languages are Laila Lalami, *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*; and Hirsi, Ayaan, *Infidel*.

CHAPTER 3: NON- WESTERN LIFESTYLES IN MODERN SPANISH SOCIETY: REDUCING THE GAP

...the 'in-between' is itself a process or a dynamic, not just a stage on the way to a more final identity...It is the space in-between which imposes itself as a reception place for differences at play. (McDowell *Gender, Identity, and Place. Understanding Feminist Geographies* 215).

How can we – this time – not use our bodies to be thrown over a river of tormented history to bridge the gap? Barbara says last night: “A bridge gets walked over.” Yes, over and over and over again. (Cherrie Moraga *This Bridge Called My Back* 14)

After surviving the perils of a journey to Spain, many immigrants, allured by the glamour imagined Western societies, arrive to a destination looking for opportunities to enjoy a better standard of living. However, overflowing with disenchantment, unemployment, and hiper-consumerism, Spanish society offers little comfort to immigrants. In the narratives and film of this chapter, *La cazadora* (The Jacket) (1995) by Encarna Cabello, *Donde mueren los ríos* (Where Rivers Die) (2005) by Antonio Lozano, and *Princesas* (Princesses) (2005) by Fernando León de Aranoa, the clash between expectation and reality forces the female characters, both immigrants and Spanish citizens, to adjust to a new situation and overcome their disappointment. Regardless of their place of origin, all the female characters have in common a quest for freedom from patriarchal oppression and personal autonomy that takes priority over material well being. With this outlook, they establish a counter discourse to the hegemony of Western ideology spread to every corner of the world by the media.³⁰

³⁰ The resistance to the hegemonic forces of marketing is found in the negotiation of the masses with the authority over the cultural artifacts (Femia *Gramsci's Political Thought* 23-60). This revaluation is in essence a production of popular culture extended to the masses through the mass media. Postmodernism proposed an escape from the dominance of High culture by appropriating culture from the subaltern and transmitting it through the mass media in order for it to be consumed by all classes. However the culture that the masses consume is produced with capitalistic interests and with no consideration for authenticity. For an excellent study of Postmodernism in Spain see Jesús Ballesteros *Postmodernidad: Decadencia o Resistencia*.

Gyan Prakash, professor at Princeton University and editor of a book compiled of papers from a seminar on imperialism, *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements*, offers reflections on “Western dominance and resistances...to revisit the historical record, to push at the edges, to unsettle the calmness with which colonial categories and knowledges were instituted as the facts of history” (6). His theory questions colonial freedom from imperial domination and psychological freedom from stereotypes and dichotomies established through colonialism, a process identified by Edward Said’s *Orientalism*. Linked to Gandhi’s concept of a non-modern society supported by a doctrine of non-violence which seeks to free men and women from an assigned identity determined by capitalistic values, Prakash’s theory proposes a resistance to oppression by denying capitalistic values and adopting different forms of pacifism. In the works, the female characters defy Western stereotypes and construct spaces of non-violence beyond the reach of capitalism. Even though his theory of non-modernism is questionable, Prakash’s doctrine of pacific harmony ³¹ claims to unite individuals with acts of solidarity ignoring social class differences and disdaining power struggles. An individual’s identity in a pacific society would not be a product of an aggressive power struggle, but recognition of his/her own qualities.

Coinciding with Prakash’s interest in the negative effects of capitalism, Zygmunt Bauman, in *Work, Consumerism, and the New Poor*, also observes patterns of oppression, but his theory does not focus only on societies dominated by Western capitalistic values. He attributes acts of domination to all patriarchal orders that control sectors of society by imposing guilt on the head of the victim which facilitates the invisibility of the oppressor (83). He distinguishes between two principal methods of patriarchal oppression which are relevant to the analysis of resistance in this chapter: the imposition of order and the establishment of a norm. On the political level, Islam enforces order and punishes any disorder by force. This order deprives women of a voice

³¹ Gonzalo Navajas collates harmony with architectural dissonance in urbansites. For him, the lack of harmony that disrupts literature and/or architectural hierarchies seems to be a valid price to pay in favor of the construction of a peaceful coexistence with difference.

and a place in public spaces. Those who do not respect this order are beaten. Western nations establish norms to be followed, and marginalize those who do not comply. Women, especially immigrant women, who do not respect the norms become victims of social prejudice and are excluded from society. In questions of economy, Islam establishes a gendered order of opulence and poverty enforced by social vigilance that control women in private spaces. If the divide is not respected, the offender is punished. In Western societies, capitalism establishes norms of consumerism. Dissenters in this case suffer self-marginalization for not fulfilling the expectations, especially women who tend to flee from the public eye. Consumerism establishes a power struggle that separates the haves from the have nots, enforcing social class differences. Sustaining a pretense of superiority and worthiness of those who are able to consume, capitalistic societies defend the right to exclude and even condemn those who are unable to participate in a consumer society. Both politically and economically, the powerful patriarchs that establish order and norms “stigmatize those parts of reality which are denied the right to exist, and are destined for isolation, exile, or extinction” (85). Bauman explains how such oppression is justified: “Depriving the excluded of their freedom ... is a move undoubtedly required for the protection of law and order, and can also be argued to be in the best interests of the excluded” (86). However, those who truly benefit are the ones that make up the order and norms; those who are required to obey for fear of guilt or physical punishment are the victims.

Jürgen Habermas identifies the most dangerous form of violence in modern Western societies as “structural violence” which indirectly enforces “social inequality, degrading discrimination, pauperization, and marginalization” while maintaining an appearance of peace, progress, and the advancement of mankind (in Orosco 72). Johan Galtung conforms to this postulate, stating that “the absence of direct violence in a society indicates the presence of ‘negative peace’” (in Orosco 74) which he feels is “based in masculine modes of experiencing the world, where individual bodily integrity, disconnectedness, and physical strength are valued” (in Orosco 75). Feminists, like bell hooks, confirm this negative view of patriarchal societies that sanction hypermasculinity or machismo and condone the ideology of male superiority or the right of men to

dominate and control the weak, particularly women, through physical and psychological violence (hooks 18).

The characters in the works of this chapter indeed defy Western stereotypes and display personal identities supported by value systems that reject capital gain, consumerism, and the manipulation of Western ideologies. The female characters question the assumptions of patriarchal superiority, both Western and Oriental, while actively constructing satisfying personal relationships on the margins of modern urban centers. In these spaces female characters have power over their bodies and the ability to avoid the trap of capitalism and the prison of social classes. By crossing back and forth the bridges that connect their communities with modern societies, they are able to take advantage of the opportunities that cities offer and, at the same time, dwell in a comfort zone where the characters construct meaningful alternatives to modern Spanish lifestyles. This agile negotiation reduces the power of oppressive modern societies and increases the scope of non-Western lifestyles.

A. Alternatives to Modern Spanish Lifestyles

In *Consequences of Modernity* Anthony Giddens sees modern, global societies as a source of neurosis in individuals who are forced to live with a manifest perception of risk and a permanent awareness of the inability of the so-called specialists to protect mankind from a catastrophic destiny (124). He draws attention to different strategies to resist an innervating, modern lifestyle. In agreement with Bauman, he considers self-marginalization to be one of the options to be escape perpetual anxiety. This voluntary isolation helps individuals recuperate a sense of control over their lives and freedom from the dependency on a fallible “superior being”. The natural settings are particularly effective to avoid the manipulation of capitalism and the contamination of the media (Giddens 127). For Giddens, the most dangerous form of contamination is the saturation of information which maintains the individual in a permanent state of awareness of risk. Self-marginalization enables the exchange of a state of alertness for one of relaxation

Another alternative that Giddens points out to counter the neurotic state of the modern world is a “sustained optimism, which is essentially the persistence of the attitudes of the Enlightenment, a continued faith in providential reason in spite of whatever dangers threaten at the current time” (136). For Giddens, confidence in rational thought allows individuals to deny the pessimistic perspectives of modern society and to have faith in a better future. The idea of a “better future” in the narratives and film is associated with marginal lifestyles of immigrants that live in a relatively comfortable state of poverty in contrast with the Spanish society controlled by capitalistic interests. Those characters who display solidarity and kindness towards their fellow man live in a conscientious state of poverty, a choice that avoids the manipulation of capitalism and the media. A third strategy is the use of cynical humor, especially black humor that “takes the edge off pessimism” (Giddens 137). Rejecting perspectives of future panaceas, cynicism parodies present anxieties and fickle hopefulness. Self-marginalization to natural settings, optimism, and humor are all strategies that the characters in the selected works use to avoid the violence of modernity.

A third alternative is found in José-Antonio Orosco’s study of Cesar Chavez, in *César Chavez and the Common Sense of Nonviolence*, that celebrates an alternative to masculinity which favors a combination of masculine passivity and feminine subjectivity manifested with acts of solidarity and self discipline to promote nonviolence: “By refusing to be a macho, Chavez also made room for the redefinition of masculinity and the consideration of different styles of leadership that are more in line with feminist notions of decision making and empowerment...” (Orosco 89). Chavez differentiates between being powerful and having power, a concept that will be developed in Chapter 4, in which being powerful entails generating communication and interaction with a community and having power denotes imposing a criteria or controlling a community by force. It is important to note that the former produces agency and solidarity, but the latter fear and violence.

B. Theories of Resistance to Capitalism and Patriarchal Normativity

Prakash points out that modern cities under the influence of globalism are no longer banners of progress and power: “The global processes and representations of contemporary urbanization have destroyed the halo of this modernist urbanism. Today, it is difficult to sustain the paradigmatic notion of modern cities as unified formations, securely located within their national borders, with clearly legible politics and society” (Prakash *Spaces* 4). The separation from modern spaces fosters the validation of the non-modern lifestyle where women and non-violent men have the autonomy to construct independent identities and lay bridges over the socially constructed boundaries.³²

In addition to a resistance to capitalistic values, a non-modern lifestyle escapes the rigor of patriarchal control that oppresses both men and women.³³ David Frisby in his article “Street, Imaginaries, and Modernity” defines the modern city as a claustrophobic place of “[e]ntrapment” that invites dreams of ‘a past *elsewhere*, far from ‘our banal modernity’” (*Spaces* 34). This ‘past elsewhere’ reflects the ways both Spanish and immigrant female characters generate lifestyles outside the domains of patriarchy, even though for the sake of survival they must maintain contact with modern patriarchal spaces. These marginal spaces are portrayed in the narratives and film with fragile physical structures, such as cardboard huts and rundown apartment buildings, and with strong personal relationships that appear within them. Ignoring the material value of their homes, the protagonists focus on expressing solidarity with friends, family, and newcomers, thereby facilitating a plural society that softens patriarchal ethnic, social, and sexual boundaries. Ann Kaplan, when referring to migration narratives in “Healing Imperialized Eyes: Independent Women, Filmmakers and the Look” says that authors and film directors “seek to intervene in the imaginary – to change how images are produced – rather than to present minorities ‘as they really are’” (Kaplan 219). The emphasis has

32 bell hooks in *The Will to Change. Men, Masculinity, and Love* (2004) defends the importance of men learning to be non-violent in order to enable a positive interaction with their partners and in their community.

33 Susan Moller writes in *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* “At its most abstract level, I define patriarchy as a hierarchical system in which control flows from the top. Thus, in a patriarchal system, men oppress other men and not only women. This is why ending such a system is better for all humanity and not only women” (44-5).

switched from a search for “reality” to an intuitive interpretation of the life of immigrants. This change appears in the narratives and film of this chapter in which the actions of the female characters represent an effective resistance to the gatekeepers of patriarchy by denying the universality of capitalist values and enhancing the integration of different cultures and social classes. The most important role of these narratives and film is that they illustrate a pacific co-existence of immigrant communities with the modern Spanish society of a plural twenty-first century.

Gema Martín Muñoz presents an interesting study of the resistance of Moroccan youth to Western ideology in her article “Arab Youth Today: The Generation Gap, Identity Crisis and Democratic Deficit”. She recognizes the impatience of the youth with “the need to rediscover on a cultural level their own Islamic values (Islamic legitimacy) as opposed to the values imported from abroad – that is to say, the West” (22). She observes that the youth views modernism as a source of oppression for non-Western countries. Left with few alternatives in their own country Martín Muñoz sees that the new generation is left with three alternatives: migrate, submit to the established patriarchal system, or go in search of “new actor and ideological references with which to identify” (23). In spite of the resistance to modern Western ideologies, the last option observed by Martín Muñoz is manifested by the protagonists of the works in this chapter.

Jordi Moreras en su libro *Musulmanes en Barcelona, espacios y dinámicas comunitarias*, habla de cómo las nuevas migraciones contribuyen a transformar las ciudades al confluir diversas culturas. Especifica que los “espacios compartidos por poblaciones con referentes culturales diferentes, donde su proximidad física no siempre se transforma en proximidad social, lo que contribuye a la formación de espacios duales, aparentemente compartidos pero simbólicamente y significativamente aislados unos de otros” (243). Caen en las manos de las administraciones públicas corregir las acciones segregadoras que surgen a raíz de las fricciones resultantes por la sensación de estar invadidos. Una de las mayores quejas es la creación de guetos que culpan de degradar la sociedad y afean los aspectos plásticos sin tener en cuenta que los espacios marginales de la ciudad se han creado a consecuencia de la segregación social.

During the process of negotiation between immigrants and members of Spanish society, many obstacles are encountered concerning ideologies of class, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality that are guarded by gatekeepers who attempt to restrain the agency of immigrants and some members of the host society.³⁴ The greatest obstacle towards the integration of non-modern and modern societies is the existing sentiments of racism and a fixation with traditional patriarchal normativity. Racism is defined by Tzvetan Todorov as, “On the one hand, a matter of *behavior*, usually a manifestation of hatred or contempt for individuals who have well-defined physical characteristics different from our own; on the other hand, a matter of *ideology*, a doctrine concerning human races” (64). For Todorov it is important to distinguish between “racism” founded in the inherited “ideal type,” and “racialism,” which defines doctrines that privilege the Western European over others seen as different or even inferior biologically, culturally, and intellectually (66). This discrimination supports the naturalization of Western patriarchal normativity and the criminalization of all other identities and/or behavior.

Joane Nagel amplifies the definition of race to include ethnicity, a concept that reflects not only visible distinctions like skin color or hair, but also common social characteristics like historical backgrounds, language, or religion (6). She clarifies that ethnicity is “the result of a dialectical process that emerges from the interaction between individuals and those whom they meet as they pass through life. An individual’s ethnicity

³⁴ Gonzalo Navajas gives a personal interpretation of harmony. For him the lack of harmony, observed in postmodern literature and architecture, is a positive sign of adjustment to difference. “En los edificios eclécticamente dispares de ciudades arquitectónicamente emblemáticas como Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Barcelona o Berlín, [el arquitecto posmoderno] ha roto la secuencia jerárquica y ha reconstituido el modo de las relaciones internas del paradigma estético. Esto es así porque la arquitectura, a diferencia del texto literario, está más preocupada por los aspectos concretos de la habitabilidad del edificio que por su ubicación dentro del paradigma estético. Por ello, los elementos clásicos, como columnas, superficies y volúmenes simétricos procedentes de la arquitectura clásica se combinan inarmónicamente con los elementos procedentes de la cultura popular” (In eclectically dispar buildings of the architectonically emblematic cities like Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Barcelona or Berlin, [the postmodern architect] has broken the herarchical sequence and has reconstituted the internal relationships of aesthetic paradigms. This is so for the architecture, different from the literary text, is more worried about the concrete aspects of the living space of the building than about its location within the aesthetic paradigm. Therefore, the classical elements, like the columns, surfaces, and symmetric volumns that come from the classical architecture combine without harmony with the elements that stem from popular culture) (Navajas 29). His praise of the lack of harmony with established forms that disrupt literature and/or architectural hierarchies seems to be a valid price to pay in favor of the construction of a peaceful coexistence with difference.

is a negotiated social fact – what you think is your ethnicity versus what others think is your ethnicity” (Nagel 42). The isolation of ethnic groups who appropriate or reinvent spaces abandoned or rejected by urban authorities fosters the creation of plural communities that deconstruct the myth of modernity. In my analysis of the selected works, I will give evidence of how the negotiation with patriarchal gatekeepers who guard against the inclusion of race and ethnicity in Western societies takes place in the interstices of modern society. The female characters of the selected works demonstrate three different ways to resist social prejudice and fear.

One form of resistance is the appropriation of the dominant patriarchal discourse through “language slippage,” a term coined by Judith Butler to describe the way a person can escape a “discursive command” by intentionally misinterpreting the original words creating an opportunity for “disobedience” (Butler, *Gender is Burning* 122). In the context of migration, any utterance which transmits a call to order of Western patriarchal normativity can be seen as an invitation to a double reading which the addressee can use to construct a platform for verbal resistance to a position of power. In a series of encounters with conflicting positionalities in the novel *La cazadora*, the protagonist uses language slippage to defend a non-modern stance on the margins of modern Western society. She aligns herself with members of a multi-ethnic immigrant community truncating the strategies of a rigid patriarchal society that tries to fixate individuals in categories of race, gender, and class.

The second form of resistance in a non-modern society is the suppression of the male gaze that focuses on the racialized female body. By inverting the gaze (a term discussed in Chapter 1), the selected works observe modern Western society through the eyes of the marginalized Other. As explained by Ann Kaplan, such a gaze does not intend to portray the truth about minorities, a presumption typically Western, but rather legalizes difference by describing “the oppressed, the diasporan, without specifically confronting the oppressor’s strategies” (221). Antonio Lorenzo’s *Donde mueren los ríos* portrays a female Moroccan immigrant who defies Western stereotypes of female frailty by coordinating the practice of prostitution with the demand of women’s rights over their

own bodies. Even though the protagonist's desperation forces her into prostitution, she is able to distance her identity from her body, which becomes an essential tool for survival. Her existence on the margins of Western society gives her insight on the drawbacks of modernity and liberates her from markers or labels used in power struggles. Besides traditional feminist tactics of resistance³⁵, this female protagonist exercises a non modern vision of society that resists patriarchal dominance.

A third kind of resistance comes in the form of a challenge to metaphors of progress in modern Western patriarchal societies that pretend to lend agency and autonomy to women when they actually impose resignation and subordination. This contradiction is also reflected in the concept of success which is exemplified by the accumulation of material wealth in the modern community, while in the non-modern community it is often measured by the intangible substance of friendship and family relations. In Fernando de León's *Princesas*, rivalry for success and progress in a modern urban city is replaced by acts of solidarity with women who suffer from male violence and prejudice against the racial Other. The indexical signs of insubordination to modern Western lifestyles validate a non-modern ideology that disavows the positionality of gatekeepers who pretend to secure a power structure by dominating women and foreigners.

³⁵ There are many traditional feminist strategies that female characters use to resist the dominance of Western patriarchal values in modern societies. One form of resistance can be linked to the theories of Guillian Rose who undermines the authority of patriarchal power by describing it as "a pauperism of reductionism of 'the Same and the Other'" (137). Linda McDowell, criticizing the phallogocentric dominant discourse, proposes the elimination of the word "difference" to avoid singling out the "Other". She recommends a feminist discourse that reflects, "a fluid amalgam of memories of places and origins, constructed by and through fragments and nuances, journeys and rests, of movements between" (1999: 215). For Adrienne Rich the best defense for women's space is her discourse. She argues that the verbal resistance of women is able to subvert masculine dominance without engaging in confrontation. In this way women are situated on the "matrix of power, resistance and subjectivity" (139). Mary Frye, on the other hand, seeks controversy to resist patriarchal violence with a clear female discourse that expresses anger (in Rose 142). A slightly different concept of resistance is offered by James Scott in *Weapons of the Weak*, which recommends avoiding direct confrontation with authority. This strategy allows members of an oppressed society to express themselves while living under the control of a hegemonic force (29-31). Teresa de Lauretis elaborates on this thought alleging that feminine and patriarchal discourses are "neither in opposition to one another nor strung along a chain of signification, but they coexist concurrently and in contradiction. The movement between them, therefore, is not that of a dialectic, of integration, of a combinatory, or of *differance*, but is the tension of contradiction, multicentricity, and heteronomy" (in Rose 140).

C. Analysis

1. Novels

Encarna Cabello

The novel *La cazadora* (1995) openly challenges patriarchal normativity through the unnamed Spanish female protagonist, possibly with the intention of representing a generic female resistance against the imposition of socially constructed categories of whiteness, heterosexuality and middle class values. At the age of eight, this author moved from her home town, Siruela, Badajoz, to Madrid where she came in contact with Moroccan immigrants whose positive influence led her to pursue Arabic studies in the University of Melilla. After living in Morocco and Egypt, Cabello wrote her thesis, “El concepto de lo femenino a través del hombre y de la mujer árabe” (The Concept of the Feminine in Arabic Men and Women) that demonstrates her profound knowledge of the Arabic people and culture which stands out in her novel *La cazadora*. The protagonist is also familiar with Moroccan culture. Born in the Spanish city of Melilla on the Moroccan coast of Africa, this character falls in love with a young Moroccan immigrant called Nur and settles down with him in a shanty town on the outskirts of Madrid. Practically devoid of a main plot, the action of the novel is closely linked to the movements of the characters to and from the city. Nur navigates through a series of confrontations with his father, his brother, his fellow workers, and the police, while the protagonist accompanies him reflecting on the implications of the actions and on their relationship.

This novel presents three conflicting positionalities with different stances towards the normativity of race, class and sexuality. The first position is represented by the police, the gatekeepers of patriarchal racist normativity; the second one corresponds to an in-between positionality represented by the young Moroccan lover who is trying to hang onto both his patriarchal heritage and his liberal Spanish lady during his process of assimilation; and the third position is taken by the young Spanish woman who rejects the established normativity of Western society to favor the ideology of a non-modern immigrant community that exists outside the dominant social regulations. When there are

confrontations among these positions, it is the Spanish female character that creates an imbalance of power and undermines the authority by softening the boundaries of normativity through language appropriation.

The challenge to normativity through discourses of resistance that attach divergent meanings to utterances is defined by Elinor Ochs as follows:

Interlocutors may use [linguistic] structures to index a particular identity, affect, or other situational meaning; however, others co-present may not necessarily assign the same meaning. This circumstance is captured by Searle's distinction between illocutionary act (act meaning intended by performer) and perlocutionary act (act meaning interpreted by others) where illocutionary and perlocutionary act meanings are not the same... (413–14)

In the novel the inversion of the utterances occurs when the addressee applies different meanings to those originally intended, creating a double reading of an utterance minimizes the power of authority through language. Foucault describes this kind of resistance to power as a “discourse [that] can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy” (101). On several occasions in the novel, the interrogative, imperative, and declarative modes of speech from hegemonic figures have unstable meanings that are susceptible to interpretation. Judith Butler considers this potential instability in the intended message the key to the empowerment of individuals confronted by the discourse of hegemonic figures (“Gender is Burning” 122). She also speaks of the “range of disobedience” in reference to an act of interpellation which could be “refused...ruptured... [or]...forced into rearticulation” (“Gender is Burning” 122), actions that index nonconformity with the hegemonic stance of the utterance. On significant occasions in the novel, the illocutionary utterances in the form of a call to order become perlocutionary utterances when the addressee disobeys the “call” by questioning or ignoring the referential indexicality of the discourse and, as a result, reducing the status of power of the hegemonic figure.

The first encounter takes place late at night in a plaza in the centre of Madrid when the protagonist and two Moroccans, in Spain without papers, come face to face

with the police. The different language used by the three positions evinces the tension among a dominant power, a racialized foreigner, and the Spanish lady as a gendered Other:

Andamos sin prisas y en la más absoluta despreocupación...cuando de súbito un coche, entrando en dirección prohibida, paró tras nosotros y nos apeó del sueño. Unos gritos nos ordenaron parar. Cuando volvimos nuestros hombros nos encontramos cara a cara con una realidad siniestra. Tres uniformes acababan de bajar de dos coches....

-¡Jeringuillas fuera! -¡Jeringuillas fuera!- escupía aquel tablón de madera. Como de los tres sorprendidos nadie llevaba la mano a los bolsillos, sino que se mantenían inmóviles, la desesperación del agente iba a más.

-¡He dicho que las jeringuillas fuera!

-Yo no tengo jeringuilla – musitó Nur.

-Venga, la jeringuilla.

-Que no tengo.

Cuando a pesar de su idiota incredulidad, repetimos que no había eso – que él pedía con certitud histórica -, se acercó a los hombres, comenzaba el registro...

-¿Y esto?

-La llevo pa pelá manzanas en la obra, trabajo en una obra.

-Mira éste, aquí lleva una pela-manzanas. ¡No te jode! ¡Ja ja!...

-A ver, papeles – exigió... [No los tenían]

-Os vamos a devolver a vuestra tierra...

-¡Estos moros que se larguen a su país! – sentenció el que parecía y debía de ser el jefe.

-Bonito racismo – hablé sin medir mis palabras.

Vivamente contrariado, el tipo se me vino acercando chulo y desafiante:

-Abre el bolso.

-Ábralo – dije al tiempo que se lo extendía

-No, ábrelo tú. La jeringuilla fuera.

Lo abrí dejando ver el interior.

-¡Ah! Déjala – pidió con expresión aburrida otro policía.

Sólo entonces reparé en que mis acompañantes estaban siendo conducidos a uno de los coches.

-A éstos nos los llevamos.

...Los vi ya sentados e hice el gesto decidido de introducir una pierna junto a ellos. Mi intención alarmó a los agentes.

-¡No! Tú si quieres ir a la comisaría vas andando. De todos modos no los podrás ver esta noche.

Estaba claro que se negaban a la inoportuna, incómoda presencia en el coche patrulla: una españolita sin jeringas escondidas en el bolso. (44-46)

(We were walking slowly and without a care...when suddenly a car drove up ignoring the wrong way sign, stopped behind us, and brought us down from the clouds. Some cries ordered us to stop. When we turned our shoulders around, we were face to face with a sinister reality. Three uniforms just got out of two cars...

- Throw down the syringes! Throw down the syringes! – that wooden board spit at us.

Since the three of us were so surprised that no one reached into his pockets, but just stood motionless, the exasperation of the agent got worse.

-I said to throw down the syringes!

-I don't have any syringes – Nur whispered.

- Come on, the syringe.

- I really don't have any.

When in spite of his idiotic disbelief, we repeated that there was no syringe – which he asked for with hysterical certainty -, he approached the men, the search began...

-And this?

-I carry it to peel apples on the site, I work in construction.

-Look at this guy. Here he has an apple-peeler. Doesn't that piss you off? Ha, ha...

-Let's see, papers – he demanded...[They didn't have them]

-We're going to send you back to your country...

-These Moors should go back to their country! – sentenced the one that looked like and probably was the chief.

-Great racism you've got there – I spoke without measuring my words.

Clearly annoyed, the guy came towards me acting all defiant and cocky.

-Open your purse.

-You open it – I said as I handed it to him.

-No, you open it. Get the syringe out.

I opened it allowing him to see the inside.

-Ah, let her go – another policeman said with a bored expression.

Only then did I notice that my companions were being escorted to one of the cars.

-We're taking these in.

-...I saw them already sitting down, and I made a move to get in putting my leg next to them. My intention frightened the agents.

-No! If you want to go to the police station you can walk. You're not going to see them tonight anyway.

It was clear that they opposed an untimely, uncomfortable presence in the patrol car: a Spanish girl without syringes hidden in her purse.”) (44-46)

The power relations among the three figures are established by visible ethnic markers and discourses that index racial differences. The police are intent on marking the Moroccans as illegal foreign immigrants by demanding to see their papers and accusing them of having a syringe which is directly associated with drugs. They also try to link them to acts of violence by giving a different meaning to the knife found in the immigrant's pocket. Lastly, their recognizable foreign accents and also their language register mark the immigrants as members of a lower social class than the Spanish female character, whose speech is a blatant act of defiance. The Spanish lady is indexed as a member of the middle class due to her attire of a very short skirt, a full length coat and high heels. The interaction between the police and the others displays three positionalities: on one side, the police take a stance of authority that attempts to restrict the agency of the foreigners with accusations; on another, the Moroccans try to deny any legal infraction with very little negotiating power; and in between them is the Spanish lady who reproaches the police's intolerance of foreigners and defends the right of her Moroccan friends.

The language of the police has a direct indexicality of power that pretends to dominate the foreigner and their female companion. The Moroccans' ability to speak the native language, their participation in the country's work force, and their Spanish companion all evince their desire to become members of Spanish society. However their effort is rejected by one policeman who focuses exclusively on the foreign accent. The illocutionary utterance of the policeman indexes undisputable racism as he calls to order the members of the group by shouting and cursing at the foreign detainees demanding obedience and subjugation: "Jeringas fuera", "No te jode". The verbal response made by the Moroccans, shaken by the police's interjection, contains a recognizable foreign accent which Jane Hill describes as: "a cultural dimension of speech and therefore lives largely in the realm of the imaginary, this construct is to some degree anchored in a core of objective phonetic practices that are difficult to monitor, especially when people are nervous and frightened" (681).

Picking up the “signs of a racialized identity” (Hill 681), the policeman repeats the words of the immigrant, correcting the diction in reference to the use of the knife that it is: “*pa’ pela’* (my emphasis) manzanas” (for peeling apples). In response the policeman, from the stance of an inherent linguistic superiority of a native speaker, corrects his pronunciation, saying “*para pelar* (my emphasis) manzanas...” In spite of the felicity of the utterance of the Moroccan, for his words were perfectly understood by the policeman, the latter performs the role of gatekeeper of language ideology in charge of keeping a sharp watch out for differences and maintaining language “in order” (Hill 681). In other words, the appropriation and alteration of the Spanish language by the Moroccan is perceived as a sign of invasion of national territory, a disorder that demands correction. In words of Rusty Barret: “Code-switching (the alteration between two languages or two varieties of the same language) represents another process by which the language... serves to challenge linguistic hegemony” (Barret 215). Nevertheless, in spite of the immigrant’s effort to communicate in the national language, the policeman chooses to focus on the incorrect pronunciation and in this way maintain a position of superiority.

The indirect indexicalities of the policeman’s performance are read by the female protagonist as signs of weakness and insecurity in the policeman; in response she transforms his discourse into a platform for resistance. In solidarity with the ethnic minority, the Spanish lady converts the policeman’s language slipperage into a position of power by questioning the correctness of the police’s utterance: “*Estos Moros que se larguen*” (Get these Moors out of here!). The protagonist’s sarcastic utterance of “*Bonito racismo*” (Great racism you’ve got there) obliges the policeman to recognize his discourse as racist. Immediately afterwards there is a ricochet of orders and counter orders, which reveals the policeman’s total loss of authority. Forced to quibble with the woman about opening her bag, “*Ábralo > Ábrelo tú*” (Open it > No, You open it.), the policeman occupies an inferior position which is reinforced by a fellow officer who, becoming bored with the useless interaction, suggests moving on. The Spanish lady’s contempt for the agent can be visualized by the reader through a series of demeaning adjectives that she uses to describe the policeman: “*chulo*” (cocky), “*contrariado*” (annoyed as in nervously upset), “*alarmado*” (frightened). She also observes his

ridiculous “deseperación” (desperation) and “histeria” (hysteria). Symbolic of his defeat, these pejorative references to the policeman index him as an emotional female unable to control her actions. This gender inversion indicates the Spanish lady’s contempt for the patriarchal hegemony of the policeman, which is inversely proportionate to the protagonist’s increase in agency.³⁶

Shaken from her thoughts, the protagonist realizes that her Moroccan friends are being taken to the police car. Defiantly she invades the strongly fortified space of the detainees by placing her white leg in between those of her Moroccan companions in the back of the police car (46). This act of defiance breaches of racist normativity of the police who respond with a cry of alarm: “No!” Defending the boundaries of their territory, the illocutionary force of the police’s utterance obliges the woman to abandon her protegées in the car, but opens new possibilities for her dissident agency.

In the subsequent encounter at the jail, there is a new confrontation between opposing positionalities in which the police guard and the Moroccan detainee compete for the attention of the Spanish lady. The couple is in the visiting room of the jail, where a white policeman with an insolent attitude controls the surveillance of foreign detainees. Once again the intervention of the Spanish lady disrupts the intended domination of the authoritative figure to create an imbalance of power. When the Spanish lady and her Moroccan lover meet, they start kissing passionately, and the policemen are again surprised by the Spanish lady’s preference of the Moroccan as her sexual partner. Feeling powerless to impede the sexual victory of the immigrant, the police guard is uncomfortably aware of his inferiority and reacts aggressively against the couple:

-¡Vamos ya!...

Ante la inminencia de la despedida, fui a su boca, le besé en su interior.

-Venga, las caricias en otro sitio, no aquí!

-Muérdeme aquí – dijo impaciente señalándome el cuello, le obedecí.

-Má fuerte, má fuerte – suplicaba...

-¡Vamos, tenemos mucho trabajo! – no privándose su cara de expresar toda la repulsión que le producía la escena (0 a saber cuáles eran sus

³⁶Frank Krutnick explains the importance of gender inequality in the maintenance of patriarchal power “Patriarchal culture relies upon the maintenance of a gender-structured disequilibrium. This involves not merely a power-based, and power-serving, cultural hierarchy of male and female, but also the establishment of normative ‘gender values’ which are internalized by both sexes” (76).

verdaderos sentimientos: tal vez frustración y hasta envidia de lo que un ‘moro de mierda’ obtenía delante de sus narices y de una nacional), el policía entró a por él.

-Dame un cigarro – dijo apagando el que tenía ente los dedos. Se lo fui a dar.

-¡No, no se fuma en los calabozos!

-¡Sólo pa el camino – clamó con ansiedad.

-¡Nooo! (47-48)

(-Come on already!...

Realizing the imminence of our farewell, I went for his mouth; I kissed him on the inside.

-Come on, the caresses somewhere else, not here!

-Bite me here – he said impatiently showing me his neck. I obeyed.

- Harder, harder – he begged...

-Let’s go. We’ve got a lot of work! – not without putting on a smirk of total repulsion for the scene (Or who knows his true feelings: may be frustration and even envy of what a ‘Fuckin Moroccan’ got in front of his very eyes and from a national), the policeman came in after him.

-Give me a cigarette – he said putting out the one he had in his fingers. I was going to give it to him.

-No, you can’t smoke in jail!

-Just one for the road – he begged anxiously.

-Nooo!) (47-48)

In this scene, there is a humorous language slipperage that incites a double reading of the utterances of the police whose illocutionary act demands that the lovers kiss somewhere else. The immediate response of Nur to the police’s prohibition of physical contact exemplifies an infelicitous utterance in which the Moroccan insists on his lover kissing him “somewhere else” on his body. This slipperage is an example of the construction of resistance to authority through language use: “An understanding of such inferences leaves the status of the dominant code (white English) in a state of ambiguity in which the code itself is used to undermine the cultural authority it represents” (Barrett 215). Once the couple is separated, the Moroccan, deprived of cigarettes and the loving attention of his partner, is conducted back to the cell while the Spanish woman is asked to testify against the immigrant.

The protagonist is approached by another policeman who, unable to compete with the Moroccan for the affection of the Spanish lady, tries his luck at making her aware of

her difference of class: “No cree que la diferencia intelectual entre usted y él es muy grande?” (Don’t you think that there’s a big intellectual difference between you and him?) (102). In an effort to enforce Western normativity, the policeman’s interrogative utterance clearly indexes the Moroccan lover as inferior to members of the Spanish community. However, the policeman’s illocutionary act becomes a new language slipperage when it produces the opposite effect. Instead of shaming the Spanish lady for her alliance with a foreigner, his utterance makes the protagonist recall the fact that: “Era tan poco lo que me unía a los españoles” (There was so little that linked me to the Spanish people) (51). For her there are many benefits to abandoning the values of the Spanish middle class, which she reproaches for their indifference towards the less fortunate. Distancing herself from the ideology of poverty constructed from the position of the privileged, she describes the marginal communities as a paradise: “Las gentes más míseras de la tierra me hacían sentir en su chabola una esclava en el paraíso” (The poorest people in the world made me feel in their hut a slave of paradise) (64). Refuting the stigmatization of the lower class and the mimicry of lifestyles of the elite, the protagonist’s thoughts underline the policeman’s ignorance, and perhaps fear, of the superiority of the Other.

The third encounter, which entails a confrontation between Nur and his Spanish lover, addresses the assumptions of normativity in heterosexuality. After a fight between Nur and another Moroccan, an exchange takes place between Nur, an effeminate man who attempts to demonstrate his affiliation with the myth of male virility, and the Spanish lady, who is indexed as a butch, or a woman with female anatomy dominated by masculine traits that mocks heterosexual pretensions and defends sexual ambiguity. Withdrawn in the intimacy of their home on the margins of society, they negotiate their discrepancies between gender roles and sexualities. After allowing Nur time to digest the humiliation of his public defeat, the protagonist listens to Nur’s first words:

-Vete tú. Yo *toodavía* (my emphasis) tengo qu’hacer algo...

-Ven tú también. ¿O es que quieres que te pille otra vez la policía?

-¡No m’importa volver a la cárcel! –gritó con las hermosas facciones sacudidas y enajenadas por la rabia...

-Por tu culpa se va *echapar* (my emphasis) ese.

-Pero ¿qué es lo que te ha hecho?...
-Se quiso pegar con Abdellah el otro día...
-Entonces es un asunto de tu hermano.

-Has hecho de mí una mujer, que ni pegarme con un tío [puedo]- sollozó arrebujándose su cara entre su cuerpo, como queriendo huir del aire.
-Lo que pasa es que no quiero verte muerto. Para mí sigues siendo un hombre aunque no te pegues. (105)
(-Leave me alone. I still have something to do...
-You come too. Or do you want the police to get you again?
-I don't care about going to jail again – he yelled with his beautiful factions shaken, crazy with rage...
-It's your fault that he's going to escape.
-But, what is it that he did to you?
-He tried to hit Abdellah the other day...
-Then it's your brother's business.
-You've made a woman out of me, I can't even fight a dude – he cried bitterly as he pressed his face against his body as if he wanted to flee from the air.
-I just don't want to see you killed. For me you are still a man even though you don't fight). (105)

In this conversation, Nur tries to sustain a position of masculine virility reinforced by the threat of a knife, a strong phallic symbol. The protagonist, realizing Nur's entrapment by the myth of patriarchal honor and masculinity, talks to him about the incongruence of the fight: “esa loca –vana y arrogante – idea de muchos hombres que estiman su hombría en la astucia de un puñetazo y en la ceguera de una puñalada” (that crazy –vain and arrogant – idea of many men that measure their manhood with the cunning of a punch and the blindness of a stab) (105-106). Like a child being scolded by his mother, Nur adopts a fetus position, ashamed of what he understands to be a lack of manhood.

During their conversation Nur performs an illuminating illocutionary act by saying “You have turned me into a woman.” Influenced by patriarchal binaries, Nur seems to feel that the only way to be a macho man is to be aggressive, and the only alternative to aggression is to be a woman. By picking fights with other men he tries to perform the role of the macho to defend the patriarchal honor code and fulfill the stereotype of the powerful heterosexual male. Cabello's description of Nur choosing to abandon the fight is a statement against the deceptive morals of patriarchy. Does the reputation of his family really depend on Nur's ability to fight with a knife? Does his

refusal to fight mean that his family has no dignity? Fighting is strictly a function of machismo that requires men to validate their supposedly superior status with public acts of violence. The pledge to defend the weak, the family, or women is simply a justification to indulge in this ego-boosting activity. In words of Ana Castillo, “There is no justification for machismo...Machismo has lost its *raison d’etre*, as has the very nature of the way the present society functions. We must not feel inclined to long for a mythical time when man, in the form of the father (God), protected women” (in Orosco 87-8).

Furthermore, though his discourse reflects the negative patriarchal construction of womanhood, his performance expresses acceptance of his effeminate gender role when he abandons the discussion with his partner to indulge in the culturally coded feminine activity of cooking. The contradiction between Nur’s utterance and his performance fits into Goffman’s definition of lamination, “a transformation of the original utterance into a new frame or context, with a resultant change in its social meaning. Through the lamination of animated speech, “speakers may... simultaneously project both their own and others’ identities” (Bucholtz 450). The utterance of Nur, referring to himself as a woman, projects his own disgust the socially constructed repulsion towards a man being considered a woman. In this way the initial utterance of self admonishment takes on the socially demeaning construction of homosexuality. The underlying conflict between Nur’s utterance and his performance can also be interpreted as what Mary Bucholtz calls a divergence between “identity and ideology” (444). Even though Nur’s words express remorse for being a “woman”, ideologically constructed to be weaker and inferior to men, Nur actually manifests a feminine identity in spite of his efforts to maintain a veneer of masculinity.

Although Nur’s struggle with his ambivalent sexual identity intensifies when he is under the public surveillance of modern society, in private Nur turns very sensitive and subservient. He is always in charge of domestic chores such as cooking and washing clothes. When involved in conflicts with his brothers or father, he has difficulty controlling his tears. Actually his repeated submission to a woman who maintains a hegemonic position over him augments his feminine indexicality. Nevertheless Nur’s feminine traits are not treated as defects by the author. Similar to Charlotte Hooper in

“Masculinities in Transition” the author presents positive images of men with feminine qualities such as a greater flexibility, the ability to maintain good personal relationships, and an aptitude for team work: “The ‘New Man’ is [...] not so much defined against femininity or effeminacy, as against a pathologized version of 1950s tough-guy masculinity, now projected on to less privileged groups of men, such as working-class men and Latinos, who may in practice lead more egalitarian family lives” (64). In support of the feminine qualities of men, Cabello places beautiful young Moroccan men in the peaceful context of a bucolic paradise of the country side, “una vida muy primitiva junto a la tierra, espiando los árboles frutales” (a very primitive life close to the earth, spying on the fruit trees) (32). Though this reference to life surrounded by nature is traditionally associated with women³⁷, Cabello links it to nonviolent Moroccan men. Like Cabello, bell hooks also praises men who “choose against violence, against death, [...] These are men who are true heroes, the men whose lives we need to know about, honor, and remember” (74).

In spite of the protagonist’s praise for his choice of non-violence, Nur continues to be disturbed by the feminine connotations of this decision. In response, she doesn’t deny his identity as a woman. On the contrary, she reinforces his position of vulnerability by showing solidarity: “I just don’t want to see you killed”. The intention to protect her partner, constructed as an attractive, inferior, and weaker female, corresponds to the role of the modern Western male who controls the Other through a discourse of Orientalism, defined in Chapter 1. However, the Orientalism of this character does not serve the purpose of hegemonic forces interested in invading, occupying, and exploiting foreign lands and its people. In this novel, Cabello gives an ironic twist to heterosexual Orientalism by placing hegemony in the eyes of a European woman who sees the ethnic Other as a man. With her gaze, she is converting the image of a beautiful but weak and innocent man into an alluring and accessible sexual object. While trying to comfort the damaged ego of her lover, she is voicing her delight in living with Moroccan men with

³⁷ See Sherry Ortner’s article “¿Is Female to Male as Nature to Culture?” in which she analyses the traditional association of women with nature, private spaces, biological cycles and intuitive powers and men with civilization, public spaces, cultural interactions and intellectual reasoning.

dark skin and muscular bodies who are “inocentes... primitivos... niños campesinos ... cándidos ... tiernos...y sumisos” (innocent...primitive...country boys... candid... tender... and submissive) (77). The greatest attraction for her is Nur’s “absoluta ausencia de sentido de culpa en el acto amoroso, y desde luego su disponibilidad y ¿acriticismo?” (total lack of guilt in the act of love and, above all, his willingness and lack of critical judgment) (59). This stance challenges patriarchal, heterosexual superiority of modern Western society, their control of the gaze, and their power to construct the Other as female. The protagonist’s appropriation of Orientalism becomes evident in her following words: “For me you are still a man even though you don’t fight.” In other words, when referring to “a man”, her utterance can be interpreted by Nur as the recognition of male virility; however, Nur actually takes the passive, more feminine position in their relationship. Therefore the protagonist’s words are tinted with sarcasm since she herself takes on the dominate role in their sexual relationship which is evidently homosexuality, a preference that is made evident throughout the novel.

Her sexual ambivalence began as a child when the protagonist had to deal with her confusing fascination with the hypermasculine body of her father. This attraction coincided with the observations of her mother who disliked the way her daughter sought out the company of little girls: “curiosamente no muy descaminada mi madre, contrariada por mi carácter, decía en alguna ocasion: ‘esta muchacha venía para hombre’” (curiously not too off track, my mother, upset by my conduct, would say: ‘this girl was meant to be a man’) (58). Later, when the protagonist discovers young Moroccan men, she realizes that she has found the solution to the conflict between her own desire and the social demands of heterosexual normativity: “encontré en ellos a mi dominada, a mi mujer” (I found in them the one to dominate, my wife) (58). The exchange of gender performance and power positions between the couple becomes clear when the two arrive to the hut. While Nur begins to prepare dinner, the protagonist gets comfortable on a blanket and thinks, with a certain dose of irony, about the useless conduct of men who put their honor on public display like “dos cabras [que] hacían encontrar sus cabezas, chocándolas en una corta lucha” (two goats that looked for each other’s head, knocking them in a short fight) (107). The protagonist, by exhibiting a feminist gaze that rejects the social imposition of

idealized masculinity and manhood, is engaging in the “task to ‘unweave the web of oppression and reweave the web of life’” (MacMullan 3).

La cazadora exhibits what David W. Foster calls “queering the patriarchy” (71). Each character embodies the contradictions of fixed hegemonic heterosexual normative discourse that dominates modern Western society. As Bucholtz explains “...such normative categories are constructed in relation to difference” (44). Nur, a dark skinned immigrant, is actually engaging in a homosexual relationship with a Spanish lady, identified as a white middle-class woman, but ideologically indexed as man. The protagonist’s ambivalence is underlined with her juxtaposition to Nur, identified as a black, marginal, Moroccan man, but ideologically indexed as a woman. Like the protagonist who is unable to place her sexuality in a single category, Nur also has trouble defining their sexuality, especially because “what their society was calling homosexuality or a gay sensibility fail[s] to match the business of their own lives” (Foster 7). With this ambiguity his performance validates the bonding with other men in the family and his homosexual relation with a butch lover. In turn, her performance combines the patriarchal protection of a vulnerable immigrant community with a homosexual relationship with an effeminate lover. For Foster, this controversial combination of performance and identities represents the “queer potential of popular-cultural production” or “queering the patriarchy” (71). Gayle Rubin comments to this effect that “... categories invariably leak and can never contain all the relevant ‘existing things’, [but this] does not render them useless, only limited. [...] We use them to construct meaningful lives, and they mold us into historically specific forms of personhood” (479). By reaching across the fixed categories of hetero and homosexuality, middle class and lower class, whiteness and blackness, the relationship between Nur and his Spanish protagonist highlights the inadequacy of modern hegemonic normativity which fails to see the freedom and solidarity of non-modern lifestyles.

The transgression of the novel lies in the depiction of a pluralistic community that constructs an effective resistance to the intolerance of difference. The construction of the black male body linked to the white female body, the middle class to the lower class, and the effeminate male to the masculine female, represent Cabello’s desire to blur categories

and soften the edges of normativity. The alienated hero inhabiting a marginal Moroccan community is sheltered from the violence of patriarchal hegemony by the ambiguous sexuality of a Spanish woman who idealizes natural habitats like the marginal space of the shacks, “asediados por los cardos, y dominando un amplio valle que sólo sosiego podía darnos” (besieged by thistles, and dominating an ample valley that could only give us peace) (105), a space that isn’t appreciated in the modern urban city.³⁸ The rebellion of the protagonist also transgresses the social traditions that ignore the values of the feminization of men and the empowerment of women who favor a voluntary embrace of a non-modern lifestyle void of the conveniences of the modern Western middle class. In all, to counter the closed mentality and out-of-date concepts of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and race, the novel celebrates the contribution of women as agents of social change in an idealized environment liberated of the fear of difference and narrow patriarchal normativity. The protagonist, empowered by self-definition and a strong sense of justice, does not search for perfection, but harmony, which is achieved through the agile play with language slippage that resists patriarchal hegemony and foments tolerance in a plural community

Antonio Lozano

The female protagonist in *Donde mueren los ríos* (2003) is also a strong character that appropriates the male gaze and becomes an agent of social change. Displaying a firm resistance to the ideals of modern Western society, Fatiha is a Moroccan female detective who plays the part of a *femme fatale* taken out of a film noir to clarify the disappearances and mysterious crimes of despicable male characters that overpower, humiliate and mistreat innocent victims. Contemplating the struggles of immigration, this novel breaks away from the traditional performance of gender, which, according to Judith Butler, is not an expression of what one is, but what one does (*Gender Trouble* 141). Lozano’s female protagonist takes the gaze away from the privileged position of Spanish men

³⁸ Mohamed Abrighach in *La inmigración marroquí y subsahariana en la narrativa española actual* identifies this space as the shanty town constructed behind the neighborhood called Dehesa de la Villa (255).

involved in human trafficking and refocuses it on her fellow immigrants who are described as intellectually and spiritually superior. Destabilizing Freud's concept of women as the "dark continent", which in the context of immigration could refer to her skin color as well as to her psychological invisibility (Kaplan 100), this African woman communicates her resentment against patriarchal privilege, her anger towards violent traffickers, and her desire for a loving companion that has no need to demonstrate his machismo (Lozano 209-210). Most important of all, her views establish a complicity with the marginalized Other in an effort to free them of stigmas, pejorative labels, and stereotypes.

Fatiha's defiance of the stereotype of Muslim women as victims begins when she decides to leave Morocco, where her life had been decided the moment she was born: "women assume the onerous burden of a largely male-defined tradition and are cast as the embodiment of cultural identity and the custodians of cultural values. Some women [the gatekeepers] regard this as an exalted position, and they welcome it (Islamist women); other women regard it as a form of social control (non-Islamist women)" (Moghadam 10). In spite of her religion, Fatiha belongs to the second group that rebels against the determination of women's lives to satisfy the ambitions of men. When in Granada, Spain, where her father sends her to study in light of her brother's incompetence for academic pursuits, she falls in love with a young man and abandons her studies. Though Fatiha means to free herself from the patriarchal obligations of "chastity (*nejabat*) and authenticity (*esalat*) to her potential husband" (Moghadam 127), this relationship is the beginning of a prolonged torment at the hands of her brutal father and indifferent mother.

Afterwards, traumatic experiences turn her into a tough and cynical woman able to carry out acts of great courage and determination. Her first achievement is her rebellion against Muslim patriarchal hierarchy from the stance of a subjugated female since "the absence of female role models in history, literature, arts, and textbooks even at the university level, had left the contemporary woman [...] with no roots, no culture, no indigenous female role models...That is why she has no option other than to turn to foreign role models" (Moghadam 131). Hoping to find a better life, Fatiha flees from her

home to the Canary Islands where she constantly crosses the bridge from modern to non-modern spaces, around the port of Las Palmas where there is a concentration of immigrants. Besides crossings from one space to another, this female character adopts the simultaneous identities of two classical figures in police novels, the ingenious detective that discovers criminals and the astute femme fatale whose takes vengeance on abusive men. This character of multiple traits represents the ability of immigrants to adapt, transform, and create new spaces on the margins of modern Western urban sites.

Abandoned by her Spanish boyfriend and beaten by her father who tries to force her into a marriage with an abusive cousin, Fatiha escapes from her gatekeepers only to be trapped between her desire for independence and her fear of inanity. In her role as a powerful *femme fatale*, Fatiha “under[stands] that while society had dealt her a low hand from a stacked deck, she did have an ace up her sleeve: her body” (Dimenberg 115): “sin permiso de trabajo, sin conocer a nadie, y encima mujer y marroquí. Bingo. Algún beneficio le tendría que sacar a este cuerpo que Dios me dio” (without a work permit, without knowing anyone, and on top of everything a Moroccan woman. Bingo. I had to get some benefit from this body that God gave me) (51). Although attractive, she never thinks about her own physical attributes in a positive manner, and the reader must discover her beauty from the comments of her lover: “Dejó caer su cabeza hacia atrás, sobre el respaldo de su sillón. La tenía frente a mí, hermosa, salvaje, tierna” (She let her head fall back, over the back of the chair. I had her in front of me, beautiful, savage, tender) (157). Prostitution is not only a means of survival but also a way to take revenge: “A veces imaginaba a mi padre llegando a mi esquina y descubriendo, al volver la cara hacia él, a su hija: -Toma, carbrón, aquí tienes a la puta de tu hija...Tíratela, ya que no la pudiste matar” (Sometimes I imagine my father approaching my corner and discovering, as I turn my face towards him, his daughter: - Here, motherfucker, here’s the slut of your daughter. Fuck her since you couldn’t kill her) (52). Nevertheless, it isn’t her body but rather her intelligence that allows her to escape this degrading lifestyle.

When offered a job as translator at a center for immigrants called “Acogida de Refugiados de Vecindario” (53), Fatiha abandons prostitution though retaining a certain

resentment towards men. However, with Paco, the director of the Vecindario, she shows gratitude and veneration, "...el bonachón de mi jefe no era un experto en broncas. Me arrepentí enseguida de la chulería, por ir dirigida a quien menos se la merecía en este mundo" (The kind soul of my boss wasn't and expert at quarrelling. I immediately regretted my witty sarcasm, since it was directed to the person who least deserved it in the world) (173). This benign, charismatic male character, constructed as a sensitive, intelligent man who struggles to get legal papers for immigrants, is the point of connection between modern and non-modern communities. Working with Paco, Fatiha restores her faith in the generosity of men and concentrates her efforts in saving many other immigrants from the abuse of modern society.

Taking advantage of the contacts that the NGO offers, Fatiha takes up the fight against the human traffickers who bring immigrants into Spain to force them into prostitution or slavery. This ingenious female character, that gives voice to Antonio Lozano's position against the unjust treatment of immigrants, adopts a non-modern stance of an ethnic *femme fatale* who is neither Western nor white. She belongs to the marginalized lower class that, in spite of her sophistication, is more interested in helping others than in accumulating wealth or personal gain (Conrad 168). In words of John Nelson, "...the mark of noir is realism, in a strongly stylized sense. This realism encompasses seedy settings, grainy colors, and many shadows. It also means moral malaise, political hardball, and rhetorical savvy in social systems that ensnare people left and right" (189). Moving through the nocturnal urban scenarios of Las Palmas lit by neon signs, Fatiha conforms to the patterns of neo noir films in which the character descend into the underworld to try to discover truths about crimes hidden in the shadows. She weaves her way through a series of suspects after receiving an alarming phone call in the middle of the night telling her of the assassination of her close friend Aida. Her investigation oscillates between Truddy's bar and the dark allies of the port. Edward Dimenberg, in *Film Noir and the Spaces of Modernity*, considers the city itself a character that pushes protagonists away from the scene of crime or pulls them in towards the center of danger (13-14). In this novel, the city impels the *femme fatale* to be in

perpetual motion through the streets, in and out of bars, to and from converging points of conflict and crime (Conrad 171).³⁹

While solving crimes against immigrants, Fatiha sees with her own ethnic eyes her friends in the extremely poor multiethnic section of town where the abuse of white Europeans goes unchecked. In control of the gaze, this Moroccan *femme fatale* registers the exceptional beauty of her black Senegalese friend, Aida, forced into prostitution by her own parents. Her contempt for rich men and their expensive cars is linked to the pimps that she describes as, “Los cabrones rodando en Mercedes comprados con las lágrimas de las Aidas...” (The ones that drive around in Mercedes bought with the tears of all the Aidas...) (84). Dissimilar to this display of luxury, Fatiha’s non-modern life style, supported by a limited income, pays the rent, her classes at the local technical college, and the few “cubatas” which she enjoys at *Truddy’s* after a long night’s work. Her lack of pretensions for self gain or power contrasts with those of Ernesto, the typical villain of film noir that believes in the myth of the American dream that promises happiness, stability and wealth in exchange for hard work. Unfortunately, for this representative of atrophied modern Western society, the means justify the end.

Through Fatiha’s eyes, an array of other foreign immigrants appear. A fellow Moroccan, Tierno, who makes a perilous journey to find a way out of poverty, ends up working without pay in the greenhouses in the south of Gran Canaria; Umán, a fourteen year old sub-Saharan orphan who searches for his adoptive parents, discovers the indifference of the European society that lives in unnecessary abundance; the African family that picks him up off the streets explains that: “Aquí muchos tienen más de lo que necesitan, y lo quieren proteger como si fuera lo más valioso del mundo” (Here many people have more than what they need, and they protect it as if it were the most valuable thing in the world) (77); a university teacher from Sierra Leona, Amadú, flees from his country for speaking of democracy in his classroom. These characters of multiple races and nationalities live in huts next to greenhouses or in dismal apartment buildings, constructed exclusively for African immigrants, with paper-thin walls which filter the

³⁹ In his book *The Philosophy of Neo-Noir* Conrad offers an interesting study about the centrifugal and centripetal force of the city as if it were a character that influences the action of its occupants.

screams of beaten women and the squeaks of bed springs that acknowledge the long hours of prostitutes (85). Fatiha describes these buildings as: “la colmena Africana en pleno centro de la Europa de bienestar” (the African beehive in the very center of a Europe that professes wellbeing) (117). Thinking of her lost friend, Fatiha compares life with a floating ice cube in her glass that “flotaban los restos del hielo, a punto de desaparecer en la oscuridad del cubata. Como desapareció Aida, engullida por la noche.” (floated, about to disappear in the darkness of the drink. Like Aida disappeared, engulfed by the night) (146). This powerful metaphor of the ethnic faces swallowed by the indifference of the Western world reflects her resentment towards the violence of modern society.

The wide range of characters also multiplies the voices that speak out against the abuse of modern lifestyles. Fatiha’s is just one of several that are combed together in a braid of social criticism that is amplified by the murder of an innocent immigrant. Identifying with the victim, Fatiha rebels against the widespread female passivity when confronted with abusive power: “Pero lo que no tiene justificación alguna es la injusticia, el abuso de poder, la sumisión de todos nosotros a la hipocresía institucionalizada, a la mentira disfrazada de moral, de religión, de buenas costumbres” (What has no justification is the injustice, the abuse of power, the submission of all of us to institutionalized hypocrisy, the lie disguised as morality, as religion, as good social practices) (56). The noir aesthetics of slums and ghettos where immigrants are forced to live increase the public’s sensitivity towards abuse and corruption and contribute to the demand for social justice.

Comparing her life in Morocco under the repression of a strong patriarchal system and her life in Las Canarias as a single woman able to support herself, this ethnic *femme fatale* is grateful for the opportunities that the Western world offers women, but she questions its biased constructions of race, class and gender roles. Her feminine ethnic gaze bitterly denounces the social inequality and the abuse of immigrants. Rebelling against the role of victim, Fatiha vituperates about excessive modern passivity toward the marginalized community. Fatiha, just one of several narrative voices united by the

murder of an innocent immigrant, is empowered by her ability to adapt to shifting lifestyles, cross physical and psychological boundaries of modern and non-modern lifestyles, and help immigrants survive the injustice of social inequalities.

2. Film

Fernando León de Aranoa

The director of *Princesas* (2005), Fernando León de Aranoa, has directed several films about the miserable and invisible lives of adolescents (*Barrio* 1998), head of families (*Familia* 1996), and retirees (*Los lunes al sol* 2002) trapped in urban scenarios with little hope for the future. The oppressive urban structures also supply a background for the film *Princesas* in which the Spanish female characters, Caye, “a homophone of the Spanish word for ‘Street’” (Bowman), and Pilar, the English word for “Column”, share the weight of female grief, in particular immigrant women who turn to prostitution to survive. Chema Castiello specifies that the presence of female immigrants is increasing, a circumstance that is reflected in Spanish film: “Los datos sociológicos desvelan la feminización creciente de la inmigración. Los flujos migratorios de mujeres en situación irregular favorecen la existencia de redes mafiosas dedicadas al tráfico de personas y a su extorsión. Las que se dedican a la prostitución proceden, en su mayoría, del ámbito latinoamericano, en segundo lugar de África...” (The sociological data reveal the increasing feminization of immigration. The migratory flows of women in an illegal situation favor the existence of mafias engaged in the traffic of people and their extortion. Those that practice prostitution mostly come from Latin America, and in second place from Africa...) (103-104). Fernando Leon, after participating in charity work with the prostitutes of the Casa de Campo, offers a film that provides a human face to the grief of prostitution (Castiello 104).

According to Michelle Medina, film is a storytelling mechanism that contextualizes bodies in terms of gender and converts them into metaphors (32). In the

film *Princesas* (2005), the director Fernando León de Aranoa creates metaphors of modern and non-modern lifestyles that undergo a transformation when they come into contact with each other. Some female characters are metaphors of Western society whose drive for material progress is obstructed by power struggles and physical violence. Other female characters are metaphors of spiritual growth and compassion linked to the backwardness and poverty of immigrants. The metonymical signs that accompany the female characters of the film also have ambiguous messages that at some times indicate a modern life of liberation and opportunity and, at others, a channel through which women fall into the timeless practice of prostitution. Other signs, which at the beginning index self deception and fantasy, at the end become platforms for solidarity. With a collection of controversial metaphors and metonymical images, León de Aranoa addresses the dilemma of female entrapment in modern society aggravated by patriarchal normativity guarded by its gatekeepers.

The film's metaphors are placed in juxtaposition like different mirrors, placed in such a way that they reflect each other's images while maintaining their own identity. On the one hand they depict the marginal lifestyles of women in the *Plaza de Providencia*, a neighborhood in the center of Madrid where Candela Peña plays the part of Caye, a white, middle class, Spanish prostitute, and Micaela Nevárez plays the one of Zulema, a *mulata* prostitute who recently migrated from the Dominican Republic. In opposition to these young women is Caye's mother, a member of the respectable old-fashioned Spanish society that invites the family once a week to eat a three course meal complete with table cloth and flowers. The rundown, historical neighborhood and the middle class dining room are the settings that give plasticity to Debra Satz's "asymmetry thesis" in her article "Market in Women's Sexual Labor." In it she denounces the discrimination against women based on their constructed inferiority, a concept that is reinforced by the criminalization of female prostitution (282). Satz explains that the plight of women is compound since, as an integrated member of society, she is a victim of "income inequality, job segregation, and unequal division of labor in the family" (289-90), and, as a prostitute, she must grapple with physical abuse, disease, and guilt for being the object of proscription.

In the film, referential indexicality of race, class and gender inequality is achieved with techniques similar to those of the famous photographer, Charles Peirce. Implementing Peirce's technique León de Aranoa communicates his metaphorical messages by paying close attention to relationships of objects and their context: "To understand the role of the photograph in legitimating natural signs, making them credible in modern society, it is important to consider the general context of Peirce's concept of indexical meaning ...[which]...depends upon association by contiguity and not upon association by resemblance or upon intellectual operations" (Kibbey 147). In *Princesas* indexical meanings are constructed by carefully placing material objects in the proximity of people and places. An object that stands out in the film and weaves together the lives of the female characters is the cell phone, portrayed as a symbol of progress as well as the means by which prostitutes earn their income. This object of modern lifestyles converts prostitutes into professionals with budgets and marketing projects that connect them with their clients. In spite of its connotations of evolution, for Caye's mother a cell phone is a bothersome mechanism that annoys her with its constant ringing. Yet, overcoming her initial exasperation with its constant badgering, the mother is allured by what she perceives as the magical powers of cell phones that eventually connect the old generation with the young, the isolated world with the outside, the protected world of the mother with the rough reality of the daughter involved in prostitution. At the end, cell phones become a bridge that brings the modern and non-modern worlds into an embrace of solidarity. The older generation located in the center of the city recuperates bonds with the younger generation that moves on the outskirts. The character representative of the modern Western world bonds with the one that represents the old colonial world.

There are other recurring images of objects that unite the women in the film. One is the bouquet of flowers that adorns Caye's mother's dining room. The mother, living in a world of fantasy, sends herself flowers trying to convince the rest of her family, and herself, that they are from her belated husband whom she imagines is a prince charming that wishes to communicate from his tomb the love he never gave her in life. Caye, unaware of her own fantasies, tries to make her mother acknowledge the absurdity of her pretensions by recalling the endless tears her mother shed during her marriage. At that

moment of the film, using Peirce's technique of association by contiguity, León jumps from a close up of the emblematic bouquet of flowers to zoom in on the captivating image of a colorful wind chime swaying on the ceiling of Caye's apartment. Though very different, both of these decorations, one typical of the older generation and the other very modern, possess the power of seduction with their perfume and music. The flowers are natural but perishable like the love between the two spouses. The crystals recall the fragile shards of Caye's unstable relationships with men. The juxtaposition of these images transmits the underlining message that both of these women, regardless of their age, share the same longing for love and dread of solitude.

There are more examples of underlying sentiments that connect the female characters in the film even though they are initially presented as rivals. Caye, metaphor of the disorientation of post modernity, is convinced that her personal appearance is a means of success and that any method of enhancement is valid. Unable to find a job due to the high rate of unemployment, she decides to become a prostitute and compete with the other women in the Plaza for the best clients.⁴⁰ Cristina Sánchez-Cornejero in "Hooking for Spanishness: Immigration and Prostitution in León de Aranos's *Princesas*" points out that unemployment is a mark of identification for Spaniards, especially for younger generations that have suffered from a jobless market for decades (194). The opening shots of the film present her as an ordinary Spanish girl in a taxi on her way to a hospital where she negotiates the price for a sex job. The next scene displays Caye's untidy apartment filled with trinkets and teddy bears, where she has two main occupations: entertain clients and count the money that she stows away in a coffee can to pay for breast implants. Pasting pictures of her face onto the images of women with large breasts, this poorly educated woman nurtures the fantasy of landing a kind and considerate husband who will pick her up in an office after work every day. Convinced

⁴⁰ In a society where unemployment in the first trimester of 2009 is 17.36% of which women represent more than half (www.INE.es), prostitution is for some the only alternative to poverty. Not totally legalized, the underground economy of prostitution is a very lucrative business. In 2009, 90% of the prostitutes in Spain are foreigners of which only 10% work independently, which means that the majority are tied to a contract that forces them to work with an organization until a debt is repaid.

by marketing strategies, she employs a great deal of her time nurturing the dream of a successful relationship that will materialize thanks to the increase in her breast size.

The artificial beauty that Caye covets contrasts sharply with the natural beauty of Caye's next door neighbor, Zulema, a metaphor of the displacement and illegal immigration associated with the erotic Other. An attractive Latin American prostitute, Zulema is presented sitting gracefully in a bar next to a client. Her identity as a foreigner is reinforced by the merengue music that fills the patio of the apartment building and an apartment void of personal objects or decorations that would evoke signs of home. As the two women get to know each other, Zulema explains that she is a mother, tormented by the absence of her son, and that her hard earned money is spent on remittances to alleviate the poverty of her family in the Dominican Republic. This noble and beautiful Latin American woman bonds with Caye who appropriates part of Zulema's foreign identity by having her hair braided in an African style, a fashion considered a perk to her own sexuality. This hair style later becomes a metaphor of the bonding of a lower class foreigner with the Spanish postmodern, middle class.

Nevertheless, this bonding is a difficult lesson to learn for many Spanish women who envy of the sexual attraction of the Other. Revealing their ignorance about the world and their vulnerability to racist and xenophobic propaganda,⁴¹ a few Spanish prostitutes comment about the images of BBC documentaries that transmit programs about animals. While attending to the needs of their own personal image in the neighborhood hairdresser's, Gloria and other female characters associate the mediated rhetoric about animals with the dark skinned prostitutes in the plaza who are accused of never washing and having exaggerated sexual appetites. "Many in the group are upset over the immigrants who charge less for sexual favors and take away their business" (Brussat). One woman resents the decline in her own business since the increase of immigrant prostitutes. Others complain that the simple presence of groups of dark skinned women

⁴¹ For a study of the content of racism in public broadcasts and newspapers in Spain see Mary Nash, *Inmigrantes en nuestro espejo. Inmigración y discurso periodístico en la prensa española*, and for a study of the same type of discourse prevalent in Italy see Heike Raphael-Hernandez, *Blackening Europe*.

on the streets bothers them.⁴² It is evident that the pejorative comments stem from their fear of competition with foreigners. From a privileged position of citizenship, both Caye and her Spanish companions play the role of gatekeepers that establish an imbalance of power by linking immigrant women to exotic animals that have no understanding of Spanish social norms.

In spite of their superior stance, the Spanish prostitutes, and not the black foreigners, are ironically portrayed as animals behaving like chickens that establish a pecking order to mark the different categories. Debra Satz explains that “While all contemporary prostitutes are stigmatized as outsiders, prostitution itself has an internal hierarchy based on class, race, and gender” (283). At the summit of the hierarchy is Rosa, a sophisticated white call girl who works for politicians. She represents prostitution as a form of empowerment for women who use their young bodies to maximize their capital. The highlight of the women in the hairdresser’s is the day Rosa arrives with a magnificent limousine and chauffeur at her disposal for the afternoon. When she offers her fellow prostitutes a ride around the neighborhood they all pile in on top of each and share a momentary illusion of upper class luxury. One step down from the top are the lesser educated Spanish women whose status depends first of all on their age, the youngest considered the best, and then on their social class. The next group on the hierarchical scale corresponds to the racially marked foreigners. Within this group those who are lighter skinned and speak Spanish, like Zulema, enjoy a better status. The lowest level is reserved for the drug addict, “Miss Methadone,” who, even though a Spanish citizen, is never allowed to sit down or use the bathroom. Her perpetual movement is a sign that she is not fully accepted into the pecking order.

After overhearing the xenophobic discourse in the hairdresser’s, Caye repeats the same arguments when she responds to Zulema’s comments about a black man who stares at her from across the room. Zooming in on Caye’s face, the camera captures her expression of disgust.

⁴² The Asociación de Mujeres Dominicanas en España <http://www.eurosur.org/AMDE> and the article by Gina Gallardo give details of the difficulties for Dominican women in Madrid as well as an account of the assassination of a Dominican woman in a public park in Madrid in 2001, a few years before Fernando de León made the film *Princesas*.

ZULEMA-Al negro le gustas

CAYE- Yo paso. No me gustan los negros. Digo para follar. Si es trabajo me da igual, pero así de gratis no me sale. Prefiero los blancos.

ZULEMA -Si es igual.

CAYE-No es igual. No es igual. Cómo va a ser igual. Hay diferencias de pigmentos y movidas.... Salen en los documentales.

ZULEMA-Al principio me pasaba también. Me daba cosa. ¡Tan blanquito! Ahora me da igual.

(ZULEMA-The black man likes you

CAYE- I'm not interested. I don't like black men. I mean for screwing. If it's for work, I don't mind, but for free I can't. I prefer white men.

ZULEMA –But it's the same.

CAYE-It's not the same. It's not the same. How in the world is it going to be the same? There are differences of pigmentation and things... It comes out on the documentaries.

ZULEMA-At first I had the same reaction. I was a little queazy. So white! Now I don't care.)

In this dialogue, there is an inversion of modern and non-modern mentalities. Zulema, who comes from a less developed country, displays a calm control over her emotions and an open mentality towards race that disarms Caye's arguments in favor of prejudice. It could be interpreted that Zulema's openness to other races comes from travelling to other parts of the world. At the beginning of the film Caye is unaware of her narrowed-minded attitude towards foreigners when she blurts out at Zulema in the cafeteria: "Hay normas aquí! No estás en la selva. En tu país haces lo que te sale de los huevos" (There are norms here. You aren't in the jungle. In your country you can do what you want). After befriending Zulema, Caye sheds her inherited prejudice towards foreigners. Giving evidence of acquiring some of the worldliness of a member of a non-modern plural community, Caye scolds her mother for asking Zulema if there are chickens, cinemas, and shopping centers in the Dominican Republic. Her retort, "Pues que viene de Santo Domingo, no de Marte!" (Well, she comes from Santo Domingo not Mars!), is evidence of the evolution of Caye who has come to value foreigners as individual human beings.

Unfortunately, Caye's advance in humanitarianism and increased respect for non-modern lifestyles are not an impenetrable shield against modern patriarchal aggressions. Both Caye and Zulema are victims of modern gatekeepers, whose function is to maintain a beneficial imbalance of power by publically stigmatizing those who dare to step beyond

the moral boundaries of normativity. One example of gatekeeping is the business of the classified section in the newspapers where Caye and Zulema publish ads for prostitution. This business thrives on the vice of male clients consistently depicted as impatient predators with newspapers in one hand and cell phones in the other, anxious to spend their money on a moment of sexual satisfaction. However, most major newspapers that offer these classified sections also condemn the practice of prostitution as immoral. Other sites, where gatekeepers benefit from prostitution while simultaneously penalizing it, are the plazas, cafes, and bars where policemen arrest prostitutes unless given a tip by the clients. A third stratagem that leaves ample profits to gatekeepers is the business of renting apartments to foreigners and/or prostitutes who have little choice as to where to live. Foreigners often move to the lowest income areas of the city like the Plaza of Providencia in *Princesas*, or to the areas close to the harbor as in *Donde mueren los ríos*, or to the shanty towns constructed on the margins of the city as in *La cazadora*. Most foreigners solve the housing problem by sharing a small apartment with other people who pay a rent that corresponds to over half the salary of an unskilled worker (Parreno Castellano 9, Vega 2, Hernández- Plaza 289). In the film, Zulema finds a family with whom she shares a one bedroom apartment. By agreeing to occupy it for only eight hours, Zulema is able to pay only a third of the total rent. Newspapers, cell phones, cafes, tips, and run-down apartments all contribute to the indirect benefits of prostitution controlled by ambitious gatekeepers.

The bodies of the two prostitutes are metaphors of the passivity and feebleness of some non-modern communities abused by powerful modern societies. Caye's verbal admonishment is useless before the demands of an undesirable client who enforces his right over her body simply because he can pay. Zulema lives another pitiful situation with a violent client who beats her. The image of the foreign immigrant left with little recourse to battle against the abuse of an insensitive patriarchy becomes pathetic when she contracts AIDS, a contagious illness of modern society that eventually causes her ruin. Her only revenge is to try to contaminate her aggressor with the same illness. The weakness of the two protagonists is augmented by their intimate fear of rejection and lack of a personal commitment with a stable partner. Listening to Caye talk about her new

boyfriend, Zulema asks her: “Se lo has dicho? (Did you tell him about yourself?)”. The negative response prompts Zulema to confess her own lies to her family about working in a cafeteria. The anxiety caused by the need to conceal their profession is conveyed by the expression of Caye’s face on the verge of tears when her boyfriend discovers the truth. This image clearly depicts the two protagonists as victims unable to defend themselves in a modern world.

The indexical meanings attached to the prostitutes in the film *Princesas* confirm the stereotypes of prostitutes trapped by categories of race, class, and gender without the protection of a family or a legal system. Poor foreign women like Zulema are forced to find jobs in modern Western countries where they receive little compensation for the sacrifice of migration, and Spanish women like Caye turn to prostitution to escape a faulty economic situation that leaves defenseless those who have little education and few job opportunities. Older women like Caye’s mother, though not in the world of prostitution, are also abandoned by modern societies into a stifling solitude. And yet, as the women begin to communicate their fantasies and dreams to each other, the frontiers that divide them begin to soften and their common non-modern positionalities begin to unite. Just like Caye’s mother, who dreams of having a secret lover, the women in the hairdresser’s dream of finding a prince charming to lift them out of their miserable lives. Caye’s dreams of having a life worth remembering which she describes as: “nostalgia de cosas buenas para echar de menos” (nostalgia of something good in her life worth missing), is similar to Zulema’s dream of having her son in Spain and providing a dignified life for her family. Even though the barriers that divide these women are malleable, these women continue to bear a social stigma that doesn’t allow them to climb the social ladder. In any case, without racial barriers, they are able to share their existence with one another.

At the end, the images and discourses in León de Aranoa’s film suggest that, instead of dreaming of a life of princesses, women should abandon modern stereotypes and impossible fantasies to participate in the encounter of modern and non-modern worlds. During a family dinner when Caye is trying to confess her profession by drawing

a link to Zulema as a prostitute, the camera sustains the image of the mother searching her daughter's face for answers. At that moment, Caye's mother crosses the bridge from her privileged modern lifestyle into the reality of a non-modern world. She stops sending herself flowers and focuses on nurturing her daughter. The women in the hairdresser's overcome their racism to learn from a foreigner, Zulema, the technique of the ethnic hairdo of multiple fine braids. Caye forfeits her breast implants to pay for Zulema's trip home. None of them is saved by the prince charming of their dreams, but all of them become princesses of non-modernity with acts of mutual solidarity, human bonding, and family values.

D. Concluding Remarks

The two novels and film discussed speak of a deliberate gender, class, race and ethnicity imbalance of power created to favor an established patriarchal order. The women in the selected works, whites and blacks, Moroccans, Dominicans, and Sub-Saharan that come into contact throughout the experience of migration, create a personal non-Western space on the margins of modern Spanish urban sites where material gain is sacrificed for the benefits of freedom of movement and identity construction. The struggle against the "entrapment" of modernity mentioned by Frisby (34) generates the imaginary of anti-capitalist, non-bourgeois spaces created in these works. There are common elements that contribute to the success of their female characters: the distancing from their previous home, resistance to patriarchal domination by means of cynical humor and language slipperage, and the adaptation of a more optimistic perspective of immigrants who flee from the manipulation of capitalism and fixed negative identities. Another common factor shared by the characters is the absence of "numbness" (Giddens135) or indifference towards the suffering of others produced by the constant bombarding of capitalistic ideologies onto members of modern society.

Several characters suffer the psychological effects of a modern lifestyle in urban spaces addressed in *The Consequences of Modernity* by Anthony Giddens who identifies a tendency towards isolation and loss of agency which foments what the author refers to as primitivism, a conduct that awards face-to-face personal relationships established on the premises of trust (113-115). This personalized interaction circumvents the media's control over public opinion and favors a reduction of institutionalized prejudice towards the Other. Thus this evasion of modern ideologies and the transfer of authority to the Other could only occur on the margins of society where a non-modern alternative to Western lifestyles subsists. Members of this space of resistance are distinguishable for their rejection of binaries that refer to the "civilized" and "uncivilized", the "native" and the "foreign", and other forms of reductionism that nullify the value of individual worth. The liminal non-modern spaces in the works are scenes of constant cultural crossings where the individual is open to the other and where the pursuit of happiness is not in alignment with modernist hypocrisy. Fatima Mernissi, a strong supporter of resistance to patriarchal domination, summarizes the disparity of human relations in modern and non-modern spaces in terms of power struggles: "The link between boundaries and power is particularly salient in a society's sexual patterns. [...] The spatial division according to sex reflects the division between those who hold authority and those who do not, those who hold spiritual powers and those who do not. [...] these two universes of social interaction are regulated according to antithetical concepts of human relations, one based on community, the other on conflict" (*Beyond the Veil* 81). To escape the violence of modernity the protagonists of each work construct what Frisby describes as an "elsewhere" (*Spaces* 34).

In Encarna Cabello's novel the protagonist describes her anti-capitalistic space as "El aislado y olvidado valle otorgaba generosamente a sus inesperados huéspedes el pacífico, sublime olvido, que se escoge frente a ser un mal recuerdo en la cabeza de aquellos que no nos quieren, y nos hostigan" (The isolated and forgotten valley generously yielded its unexpected guests the pacific, sublime oblivion, chosen over being a bad memory in the head of those that don't love us and persecute us) (51-2). In *Donde duermen los ríos*, Fatiha crafts a space on the margins of a city in Las Canarias from

where she carries out her quest for liberation from Western mentalities including the control of women's racialized sexuality. In *Princesas* Caye and Zulema create a life in the marginal space of the modern city of Madrid, the backdrop of a relationship of mutual solidarity between nationalities, classes, and races. These works portray interesting outlets for both Spanish and immigrant women who struggle to become more independent of patriarchal hegemony. This struggle requires a space where it is possible to disregard the divisions of territory, gender, and class to promote a peaceful coexistence without practices of domination or oppression.

Brendan Sweetman contributes the failure of modernism to the collapse of Enlightenment brought about by rampant individualism favored over “the common good, pluralism, liberalism, and secularism” (7). According to Giovanni Sartori, it is possible to foment in modern plural communities where solidarity overrides the pursuit of wealth. He offers a definition of pluralism as the substance that: “sostiene y alimenta una sociedad abierta que refleja un ‘orden espontáneo’... [U]n contexto pluralista postula un reconocimiento recíproco... [E]stá ‘llamado’ a desconocer una intolerancia que es, en resumidas cuentas, un odio cultural que reivindica una superioridad cultural alternativa (sustains and nurtures an open society that reflects a ‘spontaneous order’...A pluralistic context postulates a reciprocal recognition... It is called to ignore intolerance that is, in a few words, a cultural hatred that claims the superiority of an alternative culture) (33). This tolerant, plural community free of socially constructed prejudice and fear of difference is the trademark of the non-modern societies where the female protagonists strive to create alternatives against the pressures of modern Western normativity.

CHAPTER 4: ASSIMILATION OR THE ART OF SELF INVENTION

...la fluidez y el dinamismo de los procesos de transnacionalismo no significa que las diferencias-localizaciones desaparezcan; más bien se reinventan (... the fluidity and the dynamism of the processes of transnationalism does not mean that the differences-localizations disappear; rather, they reinvent themselves) (Rodríguez García, *Inmigración y mestizaje hoy* 50)

The women must embark on a quest for meaning in the face of dislocations which disrupt prior assumptions of commonality and difference (Yuval-David, *Women, Citizenship and Difference* 22)

Linguistic dispossession is...close to the dispossession of one's self...this language is beginning to invent another me... Hoffman, *Lost in Translation*, in Espín, *Women Crossing Boundaries* 33)

Passing from a modern to a non-modern lifestyle, discussed in Chapter 3, involves crossing both geographical and psychological borders. To lead non-modern lifestyles inside a Western nation, it is necessary to leave sophisticated urban settings and go to marginal spaces where physical appearance, language, and material expectations can be reinvented. This voluntary change in physical surroundings reflects a change in values and priorities that condemn violence, competition, and the accumulation of wealth and reward solidarity and austerity. In Spanish migration narrative and film, many characters cross back and forth the bridge that connects modern and non-modern lifestyles while performing in such a way that they go unnoticed, in other words, they become invisible to the aggressive gaze of the examiner who patrols the frontier. According to Schlossberg,

Theories and practices of identity and subject formation in Western culture are largely structured around a logic of visibility, whether in the service of science (Victorian physiognomy), psychoanalysis (Lacan's mirror stage), or philosophy (Foucault's reading of the Panopticon). [...] Because of this seemingly intimate relationship between the visual and the known, passing becomes a highly charged

site for anxieties regarding visibility, invisibility, classification, and social demarcation. (1)

For immigrants who wish to achieve a defensive invisibility it is necessary to forge an identity coherent with the norms of the surrounding community. This adaptation, which includes the compliance with the expectations of gender performance dictated by prevalent patriarchal normativity, is often referred to as assimilation, a survival tactic that greatly limits immigrants' actions.

When the migration experience is approached from the perspective of self-invention, both immigrants and members of the host society are freed from ascribed, fixed identities and become visible, dynamic components of the changes taking place in their community. The focus is on themselves rather than on the expectations of their families or societies. Self-invention gives female characters, in particular, the ability to see themselves outside the prism of patriarchy. An important part of this independence entails economic autonomy which gives women immigrants a freedom of choice unconditioned by social or family expectations. For this reason it is important to notice that those characters that are more successful in the art of self invention obtain a certain academic and economic autonomy in spite of the objections from family members and/or the host society. Until self invention takes place, the opinions of others condition the choices of the characters whose tendency towards invisibility becomes a barrier to the adaptation to a satisfying lifestyle.

A. Documenting Visibility/ Invisibility

One of the important contributions of the novels and films of this chapter is that they reveal the mechanisms of visibility and invisibility used by the protagonists while documenting the characters' experience. The novels, *De Nador a Vic* (From Nador to Vic) (2004) by Laila Karrouch and *Jo també sóc catalane* (I'm Catalan Too) (2004) by Najat El Hachmi, are autobiographical fictions that document the experience of two young girls that migrate to Spain with their Moroccan families. Azade Seyhan's *Writing*

outside the Nation analyses the characteristics of autobiographies written from the vulnerable position of exile. Similar to the recipes for self-invention of Smith, Maguire, and Sennett, Seyhan, which will be analyzed below, Seyhan's description of a "self portraiture" (69) emphasizes the need of separation from the ideologies, customs, and families of the place of origin to attain perspective and consciousness of the self. This is problematic for the protagonists because of the distrust that Moroccan culture has for individualism. The female characters that forge their own way, whether this requires a definite separation from or a tenuous negotiation with the Muslim family, are considered rebels, or "nushuz," guilty of "the disintegration of traditional society, and the invasion of Western, capitalistic, consumerist individualism" (Mernissi *Women's Rebellion* 110). Seyhan also addresses the need to assimilate the language and social identities of the host country which are important steps for immigrants to achieve a desired image. Seyhan also comments on the "testimonial, confessional, biographical dimensions of exilic writing" (69), which would correspond to the qualitative evaluation of the migration experience on behalf of the protagonists. These concepts give insight into the tendencies of the female characters in the novels towards visibility or invisibility.

The films of this chapter, *Extranjeras* (Foreign Women) (2002) by Helena Taberna and *El Próximo Oriente* (The Near East) (2008) by Fernando Colomo, also reveal the mechanisms of invisibility or visibility in the process of immigration. Ángel Quintana, a Spanish film critic, calls the testimonial element in recent Spanish films "realism tímido" (timid realism) since it avoids the discomfiting realities of marginal spaces while addressing different aspects of migration (254). Both Taberna and Colomo make ambiguous statements about communities abounding in ethnic plurality without addressing specific manifestations of discrimination or xenophobia. Bill Nichols in *Introduction to Documentary* offers a justification for these absences by drawing attention to the impossibility of total objectivity since any depiction of space is more an interpretation than a representation. Stella Bruzzi also stresses the fact that "the 'document' at its heart is open to reassessment, reappropriation and even manipulation without these processes necessarily obscuring or rendering irretrievable the document's original meaning, context or content" (420). In spite of the limitations of objectivity,

Fernando Colomo enhances realism in his film by using a hidden camera with which he travels through the streets unnoticed while observing from a voyeuristic position the lives of passers-by. This invisible camera captures spontaneous reactions of non-actors that happen onto the scene unaware of their contribution to the film. Taberna uses a more traditional approach to testimonial documentaries which place the subject in front of a camera and allows her/him to speak relatively freely.

Bill Nichols places documentaries in two categories: “documentaries of wish-fulfillment” and “documentaries of social representation” (1). The first category reveals personal perspectives on a reality presented as a fiction that “call[s] on us to interpret them” (2). The second one presents a collection of events and ideologies presented as verifiable facts that “call[s] on us to believe them” (2). Though El Hachmi’s and Karrouch novels have little pretense of objectivity, since the authors’ memories of the experience of immigration are clearly subjective and must be interpreted by the reader, the authors make references to true life experiences and historical facts that evoke a realistic context. For example El Hachmi recreates the neighborhood festivals and Karrouch describes in detail a Muslim wedding. Colomo’s film, though a purely fictional account of immigration, also includes realistic scenes of the multicultural interaction in Madrid that draw on everyday urban scenes. Taberna’s documentary is the only work discussed in this chapter that attempts to create a purely objective representation of a sector of society, even though the facts she presents must also be subject to scrutiny because the women films seem to follow a script that indicates what they must talk about. In any case, whether the process of immigration is presented as fiction or fact, mechanisms of visibility or invisibility used by the characters are highlighted.

Taking the settings of these works as representative of the environment that envelops the process of assimilation, I consider the visibility of immigrants and members of the host society symptomatic of the social movement towards integration. More than assimilation which refers to the adaption of a culture and linguistic codes to “pass” as a citizen of a nation, integration is concerned with the construction of a plural community. The recent political debate about an “integration contract” in Spain offers a chance for immigrants to manifest their cultural diversity as long as there is a commitment to learn

the language, abide by the law, and contribute to the economy. In return, the Spanish government promises to supply them with professional training to enhance their possibilities of success. However, if the immigrant fails to learn the language or sustain a job, or if s/he breaks the law, the government will not allow that person to stay (“An ‘Integration Contract’”). This contract eliminates the dehumanizing discourse that tends to convert immigrants into invisible “aliens” or “illegals.” At the same time, it makes immigrants’s personal commitment with the host society very visible. The key to the proposition is that the Spanish government endows the immigrant with a responsibility to improve Spain’s economy. Though this contract could become a “catch 22” situation, it can be seen as an opportunity. If immigrants make themselves indispensable, they can construct a future for themselves in the host country, which brings us to the art of self-invention.

B. Theories of Self-Invention

The art of self invention is less a survival tactic for immigrants and more an instrument to exhibit an identity applauded by the host society. This adjustment of identity, which can be reversed or altered when necessary, is contingent to momentary circumstances. The objective, instead of adaptation to become invisible, is the exposition of qualities made as visible as possible with the intention of sparking the interest and appreciation of the host country. Contrary to becoming the same as members of the host community, the goal is to create a respected and valued difference that co-exists with the host society. The change that the characters in the novels and films undergo offers a commercial edge for both immigrants and Spanish citizens interested in surviving the waning job market.

In addition to the commercial advantages of self-invention, self-invention permits the characters to construct new identities and dismantle deeply ingrained assumptions about gender roles. More congruent with their personal ideology, characters are able to disregard the social pressures that demand the fulfillment of a certain profile or

stereotype. When in contact with other cultures, most Spanish and immigrant characters, interested in establishing a new lifestyle, benefit from self-invention while others, more concerned with the dangers of disrupting good family relationships, abandon self-invention and succumb to the pressures that demand a commitment with a traditional way of life. What is more, the absence of self-invention hinders the achievement of personal goals as well as fixates gender roles inside patriarchal normativity.

The experience of immigration and the process of self-invention share a common characteristic: an open disposition towards change that requires the courage to confront the unknown. In the words of Walker Smith and Ann Clurman in *Generation Ageless*, “Diversity of lifestyle fosters self-invention... [for which]... learning, openness, and unrelenting evolution are the cornerstones of success” (68). While Smith and Clurman identify the generation of baby boomers as one sector of society that readily questions the status quo and that is generally unsatisfied with its present lifestyle, I would like to add that immigrants share many of the characteristics of baby boomers like the proclivity for innovation, flexibility, an inclination for continuous flux, youthful dexterity and adaptability. For Smith and Clurman self-invention is the essence of modern post-welfare societies in which brave individuals are learning to establish new identities and benefit from new lifestyles.

Joanne Morreale adds to the concept of self-invention identifying “the therapeutic ethos by promising fulfillment through becoming a commodity rather than having one” (97). This concept from her article “Faking It, and the Transformation of Personal Identity” in *Makeover Television Realities Remodeled* affirms that the objective for individuals that live in the twenty first century is changing from favoring the accumulation of valuable products, to valuing his/her persona as a possible product or commodity demanded by the market. In the first case, the role of individuals is reduced to acquiring objects of value in an attempt to demonstrate one’s own value. In other words, the worth of an individual is equivalent to what s/he consumes. A person’s expectations of self fulfillment are limited to what the market offers and her/his level of income. By becoming a commodity the individual is empowered with making decisions and incurring in the responsibilities of designing her/his own identity to fulfill the demands of the

market. If a person improves her/himself by learning computer skills, for example, and updating her/his image to acquire the profile demanded by a company where s/he would like to work, this person takes control of her/his identity and acquires a personal value that is independent of the products s/he possesses. “Initially the therapeutic ethos was promoted as a means to heal the wounds inflicted by a newly impersonal, bureaucratic, urbanized society, but it quickly became a means of social control, used to help people adjust to a developing corporate system” (Morreale 105). In order to be successful in a competitive society, it is necessary for everyone, the Spanish citizen and the immigrant, to acquire a fluid identity, to become a flexible commodity⁴³, to constantly update her/his attributes, and to construct an image that adjusts to the ever changing demands of society.

The element of personal agency in the construction of the self coincides with Judith Butler’s theory of performativity, which she describes as a series of repeated actions that produce and reproduce a consciously selected identity (“Performative Acts” 402). The notion of performance also recalls Baudrillard’s theory in *Impossible Exchange* in which the representation of an existing reality, after being repeated many times, acquires an individual, autonomous identity (129).⁴⁴ Simulacra and a repetitive performance of changed identities are acts of self-invention that empower individuals because they consolidate a new reality by becoming a new product that takes an active role in society.

Jennifer Maguire and Kim Stanway, in “Looking Good, Consumption and the Problems of Self-Production,” also describe self invention as an exercise of free choice that regenerates undesirable aspects of the self which, for an immigrant, could be the anguish of poverty, the abjection from political pursuit and family rejection, or the frustration from difficulties that impel a person to look for a better life. According to

⁴³ There could be a reluctance to accept the term commodity as if an individual could be in danger of becoming an object. The difference lies in the fact that a persona is able to reverse or modify her/his characteristics. This agency is not a characteristic of a passive object.

⁴⁴ David Clark in *Jean Baudrillard, Fatal Theories*, explains simulacra as a simulation or reproduction that escapes the binding limits of the original: “Simulation offers a parodic Cartesian world – there is no more subject, but there is a world or real that is constructed not only as if subjects existed independently, autonomously, but on the model of subjectness. [...] But Baudrillard’s claims about the status of simulated reality as reality mean that he has to presume that the world of representations, of mentation, is capable of overwhelming all else, and this applies even in symbolic exchange” (138).

Maguire and Stanway, the change from the unwanted self to the desired one is achieved by following a series of steps (63). First of all, the individual needs to acquire a state of consciousness: “The problem of self-production involves the individual recognizing and acknowledging the body and self as flawed, inadequate or at least incomplete, and identifying areas for transformation ...” (65). This step provides a clear picture of her/his strengths and weaknesses. Secondly the individual must produce specific objectives for improvement followed by a detailed plan of action to achieve the desired results. During these phases it is imperative to develop a strong sense of self-esteem, to keep up to date with the tendencies and expectations of the surrounding society, and to learn to overcome dependency on the acceptance of others. Finally, it is important to evaluate the changes achieved by the individual and the implications that the changes produce.

In addition to these steps, there are skills that individuals should acquire to be successful at the process of self-invention, especially in a plural society. According to Richard Sennett in “Makeover TV: Labors of Reinvention”, it is necessary to be able to implement strategies for “managing short-term relationships while migrating from task to task, job to job, place to place” (128). The ability to connect with people of other ethnicities as well as members of the host society while adjusting to a new life style is an essential tool to improve the probabilities of a successful integration. Sennett also suggests acquiring a capacity to multitask to “remain marketable in an economy that values potential ability ...” (in Ouellette 128). Multitasking for most immigrants refers to the ability to go from one country to another assimilating different cultures and adopting multiple identities simultaneously. The third indispensable skill for Sennett is the ability to “let go of the past” (in Ouellette 128) which, for members of both the host society and the immigrant community, implies abandoning traditions that hinder the possibility of change. If immigrants cling to the ways of their country of origin, they are less open to constructing a new lifestyle. Equally, if members of the host society use their notions of the past as a point of reference to measure the present, they are less equipped to adapt to the changes taking place in their society.

Most of all, I sustain that in the selected works self invention fosters an acceptance of difference in the Spanish communities portrayed, in spite of the prevalent

xenophobic tendencies that may coexist in the fictional representation or in the actual society that serves as referent. Pulling back from the brink of harsh economic marginality, many immigrant characters evolve towards a self sufficiency that encourages a display of difference and challenges the attempts of some Spanish citizens to keep their veil of invisibility in place. Even so, it is necessary to recognize that these works also reflect the existence of a movement to resist the progressive attitudes of some characters that must struggle with both Western and Moroccan patriarchal models. In all, I argue that the self invention for immigrants and members of Spanish society is positive since it provides an exit from the stalemate of poverty and reinforces the belief in the individual's ability to control his own destiny.

B. Analysis

1. Novels

Laila Karrouch and Najat El Hachmi

Two Spanish female authors of Moroccan descent, Laila Karrouch and Najat El Hachmi, have picked up the banner of resistance to Islamic fundamentalism that insists on pressing Muslim women into a silent invisibility. In words of Meryem Ouedghiri in reference to Fatima Mernissi and Assia Djebar, "Because they [women writers and female activists] are considered to be 'western agents' and 'imperialist tools' whose mission is to help the West's project of destroying Islam and dismantling the Islamic community, it becomes the Muslim's holy mission to erase these women's bodies and mute their voices" (43). With their narratives, Karrouch and El Hachmi unwrite the words of the fundamentalists that pretend to fixate women in a position of subjugation. In spite of the feared contact with Western ideologies, the self invention that the characters undergo in the novels is achieved by selecting portions of both the Muslim and the Spanish societies and molding them into a unique identity. María-Àngels Roque affirms that "En este marco es donde se realice uno de los debates más apasionantes de la emigración contemporánea; los derechos de las mujeres y el derecho a la diferencia...." (It is in this frame where one of the most passionate debates about contemporary

immigration is carried out; the rights of women and the right to difference... (23). Based on the experience of migration portrayed as an opportunity to participate in options unavailable to women in Morocco, these novels reveal how self invention is an essential element in the happiness of each protagonist.

Both authors, citizens of Spain after migrating from Morocco with their families at a very young age, write from the ambiguous position of “Neither here/Nor there: The Culture of Exile” expressed by Seyhan who describes the construction of testimony of a country from exile a question of selective memory “that recuperate(s) losses incurred in migration, dislocation, and translation, those deeply felt signs and markers of our age” (4). What is more interesting is the fact that both authors write in a second language that has become their own, an ability that can be considered a tool for integration in Spanish society. However fluency in a second language does not necessarily guarantee that a person is able to acquire a sense of belonging:

I understand transnational literature as a genre of writing that operates outside the national canon, addresses issues facing deterritorialized cultures, and speaks for those in what I call ‘paranational’ communities and alliances. These are communities that exist within national borders or alongside the citizens of the host country but remain culturally or linguistically distanced from them and, in some instances, are estranged from both the home and the host culture. (Seyhan 10)

This sense of estrangement, in spite of their success at self-invention, is constantly present in both novels.

This explains why the search for a sense of belonging is a complementary theme to self-invention in these autobiographical fictions. Gurminder Bhambra in “Culture, Identity and Rights: Challenging Contemporary Discourses of Belonging” believes that the concept of belonging is a question of gender:

There is the dimension of how we feel about our location in the social world. This is generated partly through experiences of exclusion rather than being about inclusion per se; ...It is also about the social places constructed by such identifications and memberships, and the ways in which social place has resonances with stability of the self, or with feelings of being part of a larger whole... (21). Belonging is also about rights and obligations related to citizenship... [It is] about boundaries but it is also about hierarchies which exist both within and across boundaries. Moreover, there is much evidence that belonging is a gendered process and that gender itself is central to the boundary

formation which characterizes ethnic, national and state formation and transformation. (22)

Like Pérez-Firmat who claims to live “on the hyphen”, both the female protagonists in *De Nador a Vic* and *Jo també sóc catalana* are daughters of first generation immigrants, a circumstance that allows them to identify with both and yet neither of the cultures, Moroccan and Catalan. Their initial contact with the Catalan community enhances their idealization of their home in Morocco. However, after becoming integrated into the Catalan school system, their attitudes change, and they begin to construct an identity that favors the Catalan culture more. Giving a firsthand account of the difficulties of balancing two very different national and personal identities, these female protagonists analyze their options and, “Aparece entonces el problema de la integración y la salvaguarda de la identidad del país de origen” (Then the problem of the integration and protection of the identity of the country of origin appears) (Belarbi 41). El Hachmi searches for a sense of belonging outside her country of origin which she eventually fails to consider her homeland. The conflict arises when neither of these societies recognizes her as a full member. Karrouch takes a less rebellious approach than El Hachmi in her autobiographical account of immigration in Catalonia which she never quite considers her homeland even though she feels at home.

The difference with Pérez-Firmat’s autobiographical “I” is that he speaks of “freedom to mix and match pieces from each culture” (7), but the characters in these novels seem to have difficulty enjoying such freedom. Less agile than Pérez-Firmat, who sees life as a permanent transition from one culture to the other without maintaining a commitment to either, Karrouch constructs a protagonist held down by the norms of Moroccan traditions. She dreams of becoming an important figure in her Catalan school, but in order to do this she must separate from her family, a sacrifice which she is not willing to make. The other protagonist that integrates completely with the Catalan culture also finds a series of obstacles.

The analysis of these two novels traces the development of the characters as they go through the steps of self-invention and develop a sense of belonging in the Catalan community. The different outcomes of the two novels are due to a diversion from the

steps of self-invention, and to a difference in priorities. Since this discussion deals with self-invention during the process of migration, I will dedicate more space to the analysis of *Jo també sóc catalane* (2004), whose protagonist follows the process specified above and less space to *De Nador a Vic* (2004), whose protagonist renounces the benefits of self-invention to give priority to a peaceful relationship with patriarchal authority.

De Nador a Vic

Let us begin with Karrouch's novel, which has become required reading in Spanish high schools (Alart i Guasch). At the beginning of *De Nador a Vic*, Laila, a five year old accompanied by her three sisters and brother say goodbye forever to their cousins and friends before immigrating to Vic, Catalonia: "Potser no tornaré mai més. Allà a Hispània hi estaré molt bé. Tindrè tot allò que jo vulgui: joguines, roba nova, sabates, faldilles...Allà tothom té molts diners, saps?" (Perhaps I won't ever come back. There, in Spain, I will be just fine. I will have everything I want: toys, new clothes, shoes, skirts... There everyone has a lot of money, you know?" (10). Unfortunately, her dreams of wealth do not adjust precisely to the reality.

Her first experience with self evaluation, the initial step to self-invention, begins when she compares the Catalan school Jaume Balmes in Vic with her school in the town of Karrouch (39). Besides the fact that children start school at the age of four instead of six, as in Morocco, Laila encounters a challenge with the language. The teachers are very helpful with their Catalan instruction, but they forbid immigrant students to speak Arabic or Berber, which puts Laila in danger of forgetting her native language (40-41). Another challenge is the adjustment to Christian customs like Christmas with gifts brought by the Three Kings, and the obliteration of Muslim customs like the celebration of Ramadan and the drawings of henna on girls' hands that are never recognized or accepted (42-3). Even though Laila enjoys learning the Catalan language, she has difficulty hiding her enthusiasm at home.

After achieving a good level of assimilation, Laila discovers her ability to play sports, which becomes an opportunity to construct a new identity that aligns with the

expectations of the two cultures. Because of her good reputation playing basketball for her Catalan school, she is invited to be a member of the athletic team. However, she cannot participate during Ramadan, and she is forced to make an agreement with her mother, who allows her to train at least one out of four days. Her teammates, though resentfully suspicious, also tolerate her absences. After a few months, in spite of the effort to negotiate her obligations with the two sides, her mother presents a strong argument against her daughter practicing in sports:

Jo em feia dona i el fet de portar les cames al descobert suposaria un problema. Fins i tot existiria el perill d'haver de deixar definitivament l'atletisme, allò que m'agradava tant i em feia sentir tan bé...El fet de pensar que el meu futur esportiu depenia del comentaris que la gent pogués fe rem posaba malalta. (I was becoming a woman and showing my bare legs was a problem. After all there was a danger of having to abandon athletics altogether, even though I liked it so much, and it made me feel so good...It made me sick to think that my future in sports depended on the comments of the people). (57-8)

At this moment, Laila chooses to follow her ambitions and sacrifice her loyalty to her Muslim traditions and her mother.

Another moment of self analysis comes when Laila returns to her home town, where she gains a self awareness similar to the experience of Najat, the protagonist of *Jo també sóc catalana*. During the trip to Morocco, Laila recognizes the differences in lifestyles that make her favor her Catalan identity. One custom that calls her attention is how the women walk behind their husbands, sons, and grandson. Her mother doesn't seem to mind this gender segregation since she is able to practice nursing which gives her a sense of purpose and belonging. However, Laila is very disappointed in what they see as the consequences of the Moroccan way of life. Hakima, her childhood friend, looks very old and worn out. The single girls are never allowed to go out, except when they sell fish from door to door. One day, to her astonishment, her mother announces that her fourteen year old sister, Hayat, has been engaged to marry her cousin, Mohamed. In general, women have no decision over their own lives, something that worries Laila.

The determination of this female character to become an independent Catalan girl takes a new turn when she turns 15. Her father, influenced by the commentaries of friends and family in Morocco, joins her mother's battle against their daughter playing

sports. In the face of such formidable opposition, Laila examines her options and begins to make adjustments: “A partir de llavors, el meu character es va començar a definir i vaig començar a mostrar-me tal come sóc..i sabia que hi haia coses que no m’agradaven però que jo no podia canviar” (From then on, my personality begins to define itself, and I begin to show myself just as I am...I knew that there were things that I didn’t like, but that I couldn’t change) (111-2). Avoiding direct confrontation with her Muslim parents, a tactic described in *Weapons of the Weak* by Scott (349), she looks for new ways to manifest her repressed identity by taking up drawing, a hobby that becomes a shelter where she can express her feelings and desires without disappointing her parents.

At this point, Laila slowly abandons her efforts towards self-invention and becomes another member of the homogenous Muslim society in Catalonia. Shortly afterwards, during a trip to Morocco, she meets her future husband, Omar. When they move to Vic, they confront innumerable difficulties finding a job and an apartment. Omar, forced to drop out of law school due to prejudice against Moroccans, eventually finds a way to support his wife and new born child. The end of the novel quickly resolves the protagonist’s struggle with Moroccan traditions that deny women economic independence. While living in Vic with her husband and daughter, and away from her Moroccan family, Laila renews her interest in self-invention, gets a job, and begins a nursing career. This initiative testifies foreign women’s contribution to the family economy as well as their ability to overcome Spaniards’ resistance to employing immigrant workers. Satisfying the ‘Integration Contract’, Laila succeeds in filling a nich in the market that is not occupied by domestic workers. Laila also fulfills the expectations of traditional gender roles that posit women as the moral support of the family. Nevertheless, with this ending, the author avoids mentioning the conflict that emerges from the double life of women who must sustain positions outside and inside the home with little consideration for their efforts. This struggle is addressed by Fatima Mernissi mentions in “Mujeres del Magreb: Interlocutoras insoslayables del equilibrio mediterráneo” in *Las culturas del Magreb* (1996), by María-Ángeles Roque, ed., that describes the condition of women as “uno de los puntos de desequilibrio entre las dos orillas” (one of the points of instability between the two shores) (145).

Jo també sóc catalana,

Najat el Hachmi⁴⁵, author of *Jo també sóc catalana*, was also born in Morocco in 1979 and raised in Catalonia. Recognizing her dual heritage, she is a novelist who challenges the concept of an author representing a single country or nationality by honoring the two worlds that contribute to her multiple identities. After earning a degree in Arabic language and culture, “Licenciada in Filología Árabe,” at the University of Barcelona, in 2008 she became the first Moroccan born writer to win the Ramon Llull prize for best novel in the Catalan language with the novel *L'últim patriarca* (The Last Patriarch). Prior to this novel, she wrote *Jo també sóc catalana* in 2004, an autobiographical fiction⁴⁶ which she describes as, “un relato de ficción, con hechos que les ha sucedido a personas cercanas y otros que surgen de[] yo como escritora” (a fiction with facts that happened to people close to me and others that emerge from the narrative “I”) (Dalmases).

In *Jo també sóc catalana* the recollection of her life as an immigrant woman who indulges in “introspection and retrospection” (Everett 61-73) is communicated in a series of soliloquies that takes the form of a dialogue dominated by the protagonist that addresses another character in second person. Keppler in *The Literature of the Second Self* explains that the interaction with the interlocutor, which at times is totally silent, serves as a catalyst for self analysis. In this novel, the interlocutor, which is very normally emotionally linked to the protagonist, is the son, Rida, a member of El Hachmi’s own family in real life, which lends a note of reality to the autobiographical fiction.⁴⁷ Recalling her trip with her son back to her Moroccan home, she addresses her

⁴⁵ For clarity, to distinguish the author from the protagonist, I will refer to the author as Najat El Hachmi and to the protagonist simply as Najat.

⁴⁶ Seyhan explains that “The term ‘autobiographical voices’ [or autobiographical fiction] defines the nature of life stories composed in diaspora more accurately than autobiography or memoir, since it suggests an explicit or implicit dialogue between the writer and the community, ancestors, or family. Anthropologist Michael M. J. Fischer maintains that this term prevents the problem of defining autobiography as an unambiguous genre by addressing the question of ‘subject positioning’ in personal narratives and autobiographical fictions” (*Writing Outside the Nation* 66).

⁴⁷ For information about soliloquies and their appearance in autobiographical fiction see Keppler, *The Literature of the Second Self* and Genette, *Narrative Discourse*.

son who listens without saying a word: “El teus cabells porten olor de desert, de poble remot, i en els teus ulls, la incertesa. Què dues pensar de mi? La llengua que parlo és mateixa que et van ensenyar els teus pares, però en la teva expressió hi ha el dubte” (Your hair has the smell of the desert, of a remote town, and in your eyes, uncertainty. What could you think of me? The language I speak is the same as that your parents teach you, but in your expression there is a doubt) (59). When Rida does speak he asks the most significant question of the novel: “Jo sóc català, mama?” (Am I Catalan, mama?) (89). This question leads to a soul searching analysis of identity and belonging of the protagonist and/or author.

For Jennifer Willging the ambivalence between the textual narrator and the biological author is reasonable:

The narrating ‘I’ is intended to be read as a textual representation of the author herself [...] Still narrators are the offspring of authors, and the fact that the narrators [...] all grapple with anxiety while producing their narratives suggests at the very minimum that the topic intrigues their authors [...]. It is therefore not unreasonable to think that their creators have experienced some of the same anxieties and desires that they display. (*Telling Anxiety* 4)

It is, therefore, natural to suppose that the emotions and uncertainties that are communicated by the narrator to her son are shared by the author. One of the most common preoccupations in women’s autobiographical narratives, according to Connie Griffin, is the longing for a sense of belonging. Griffin defines a contemporary protagonist of an autobiography as a character that “lives in a state of flux, a self that is fluid even as it retains integration, a self that exists as an individual but is always relational. In this way feminist self-representational writings represent a subject who is in a constant state of being and becoming, of fragmentation and re-integration, and a subject who seeks individual integrity in relation” (5). El Hachmi expresses in the introduction to her novel how the experience of migrating augments this diversity and fluidity:

Amb el viatge migratori es pot fer el mateix: ser inflexible i jutjar negative la decisió del pare, les condicions de l’entorn, etc., o bé observar atentament l’itinerari que anem traçant amb els anys i com aquest va marcant una nova manera de fer, pensar en cada passa, en cada esbós traçat en el mapa del destí per tal de madurar un pensament que ja no és el dels nostres pares, però que no és del tot el de les persones que ens envloten, el autòctons. Un pensament de frontera

que serveix per entendre dues realitats diferenciades, una manera de fer, d'actuar, de ser, de sentir, d'estimar, una manera de buscar la felicitat a cavall entre dos mons. (With the migratory trip it is possible to do the same thing: be inflexible and judge negatively the father's decision, the conditions of the environment, etc., or closely observe the itinerary that is drawn with the years and with it a new way of acting is determined, think of each step, in each sketch drawn on the map of destiny just to mature a thought that is no longer that of our parents, but that isn't completely that of the people that surround us, the natives. A thought of the frontier that serves to understand two different realities, a way of doing, of acting, of being, of feeling of valuing, a way to look for happiness halfway between two worlds. (14)

El Hachmi's autobiographical novel is made up of short, fast moving chapters that skip from one incident to another synchronizing with a diversity of lifestyles and the perpetual movement characteristic of the life of immigrants who travel back and forth from their place of origin. The chapters construct the image of a woman of the twenty first century that crossed the strait of Gibraltar from Morocco to Vic when she was eight years old. The following seventeen years in Catalonia are full of major events: she attends public schools, searches for jobs, receives a university degree, gets married, looks for a home, becomes a mother, and loses her father. Isolina Ballesteros considers this technique of recuperating memories as a way to interpret the present: "El pasado no puede ser evocado excepto con relación al presente; por ello la autobiografía se constituye en la auto interpretación de ese pasado. En el proceso de auto interpretación, pasado y presente se confunden; la experiencia pasada determina el presente, el cual a su vez ordena y modifica el recuerdo de los hechos" (The past can't be evoked unless it is in relation to the present; for that reason the autobiography is constituted in the self interpretation of the past. In the process of self interpretation, past and present are blurred; the past experience determines the present, which at the same time orders and modifies the memory of the events) (27).

Recalling significant moments of her childhood in Riff, Morocco, the protagonist, Najat , initiates Maguire's first step in the process self invention with an appraisal of her place in the world. During the first few years in Catalonia with her father, who had previously migrated to Spain, her mother, her brothers and sisters, Najat constructs, "el mit del fals retorn: un refuge permanent dels desenganys d'un país fred, un racó al sofa

un diumenge en qué sabies que tots els nens anaven a visitar els avis, un amagatall per evitar la por de fondre's amb els alters, d'endevenir invisible” (the myth of false return: a permanent refuge from the disappointments in a cold country, a moment on the sofa on Sundays when you knew that all the children were going to visit their grandparents, a concoction to avoid the fear of mixing with the others, of becoming invisible) (188).⁴⁸ After spending eight years of her youth in Catalonia, she returns to Morocco where she is surprised by her estrangement due to the changes in her Amazigh family during her absence. The younger members are unrecognizable, and her beloved grandmother has aged considerably. She too is different for she can no longer sleep comfortably on a hard floor or walk nimbly through muddy streets (74). Her native language has inadvertently become Catalan, a revelation that came to her during an English class in which the teacher asked the students to identify their internal language, the one they think in or use to speak to themselves. To Najat's surprise it was Catalan and not Amazigh (47).

To cope with the sensation of being an outsider, Najat tries to include herself in the daily routine of the women, but she is a disappointment to her grandmother who criticizes her for not pulling her own weight in the housework, as well as for her loss of fluency in her mother tongue. Eventually, her initial “especulacions d'un retorn triomfal” (speculations of a triumphal return) (190) are replaced by the awareness that she will never be able to return to the Morocco she knew when she was eight years old.

The constant frustration makes Najat begin to contemplate the lifestyle of Moroccan women with a more critical eye. Recognizing the useless pretence of perfection in the role of housekeepers, she finds it meaningless for Moroccan women to spend their days occupied with endless hours of backbreaking work (73). Najat also notices their mechanisms of mutual control when observing her sisters and aunts criticizing other women. The constant vigilance and gossiping convert women into gatekeepers as well as victims of gatekeeping that upholds implacable moral standards and norms of conduct. At the same time, Najat sees that, far from appearing oppressed, the Amazigh women seem happy with their lives: “ningú els havia parlat de la revolució

⁴⁸ Gina Buijs explains in *Migrant Women. Crossing Boundaries and Changing Identities* that avoidance of contact with members of the host community is a habitual reaction for women immigrants (3).

feminist occidental I que s'havien d'alliberar de la seva suposada esclavitud, de tanta opressió. I tot i així eren relativament felices en el seu racó de món fet de petites alegries, como aquella de poder-se retrobar amb les germanes sempre que volguessin” (No one talked about the Western feminist revolution or the need for freedom from the supposed slavery, from so much oppression. After all they were relatively happy in their corner of the world made of small joys and being able to meet with their brothers and sisters whenever they wanted) (146-7).

The contact with her place of origin brings about the abandonment of her past identity and, in terms of Maguire, a state of consciousness. Although Najat comprehends that the conformity of women stems from blinding traditions that ignore other ways,⁴⁹ she rejects their submission to the authority of boys and men who enjoy times of leisure while women constantly work (151). Their lack of openness makes Najat feel unwelcome in her own home where, “no trob`avem el lloc que havíem deixat set anys enrere” (I didn't find the place I had left seven years ago) (75). After a time, Najat catches herself longing to be in Catalonia with her friends enjoying the comforts of Catalan homes, the ease of transportation, the abundance of stores and, above all, the accessibility of books in the public libraries (35-6). Moreover, the longer she lives in Catalonia, the less urgent it becomes to visit her childhood home again (192). She understands that a life dedicated solely to raising children and maintaining a household is no longer acceptable. Living in Catalonia, the alternatives for her gender have multiplied. In order to reify them the next step in the process of self-invention for Najat is to establish concrete objectives for self-improvement. One of the protagonist's principle objectives is to find a sense of belonging for herself and her son in the Catalan community.

One of the difficulties in establishing a sense of belonging is the lack of boundaries, both physical and psychological, which contributes to this sensation (Bhabra 22). No longer restricted by national frontiers, linguistic boundaries, or gender roles, Najat must construct her own habitat, her own identity. Explicitly recognizing Mercè Rodoreda as “el espejo donde me miro” (the mirror where I see myself) (Ernest

⁴⁹ Roy Miki refers to this loyalty to tradition as “a tautological folly” in which a person pretends to construct identity by repeating the past, the previously established, and the historically accepted (94).

Alós), Najat El Hachmi uses her feminine voice to challenge traditional patriarchal hegemony and find a place for herself in Catalan society. In her conversation with Alós, El Hachmi places importance on the fact that values are changing in both Orient and the Western world “especialmente en lo referente a las mujeres, lo que tiene que ver ‘con la manera de verse a sí mismas y con el hecho de contar con más herramientas’” [(pecially in reference to women, which has to do with ‘the way they see themselves and the fact that we have more tools’) (Alós). As an immigrant, El Hachmi places great attention on avoiding the gatekeepers of different discourses which closely control identity construction and gender roles (Espin 179). The tools acquired through the experience of immigration help women break away from patriarchal traditions and construct a new home that often falls under the beneficial direction of women.

In the same interview with Alós, El Hachmi describes the concept of belonging as a question of overcoming rejection by the host country. She is particularly concerned about two groups of immigrants: those, like herself, who identify with Catalonia even though they were born in another place and those who were born in Catalonia from immigrant parents, like her son Rida. Her main complaint is against the host country’s tendency to label all these people as immigrants:

Hay un volumen bastante importante de chicos y chicas que han nacido aquí. Este es su mundo y los referentes ancestrales les quedan muy lejos. Sólo quieren vivir como uno más. Y que se deje tanto de estigmatizar su origen como de darle una importancia capital. No se puede ni condenar a una persona por el origen ni anclarla en ese y remarcar continuamente su condición de joven marroquí. Esta generación de chicos y chicas no son ni inmigrantes. La mayoría lo que quieren es sentirse uno más. (There is an important volume of girls and boys who were born here. This is their world and the ancestral references are far away. All they want is to live like the rest. And to be rid of so much stigmatization due to their origin as if it were of capital importance. A person shouldn’t be condemned for his origin nor fixed to it and continuously marked as a young Moroccan. This generation of boys and girls are not immigrants. What the majority want is to feel as though they were one of the group). (Alós)

This is the case of Rida who has only known Catalonia. For him, belonging has to do with the present and not with the past. It is a question of coexistence and not geographical displacement. Even though he inherited the physical characteristics of a Moroccan, he identifies with the people and language of Catalonia which constitute important elements

of his home. Nevertheless, Doreen Massey in “A Place Called Home” states that it is a mistake to believe that there exists a place where we belong or that we belong to a specific place because a person’s identity and his/her condition of belonging is always determined by others (in Saunders 21). So even though Rida feels at home in Catalonia, the Catalans are who will ultimately grant him this recognition.

Considering Rida and Najat’s situation, and that of many people with different origins who come to identify with the place of residence, I feel it is important to distinguish between a person’s identity and a person’s home. The former can be self proclaimed, but the latter is a question of politics. The normative to establish the status of a person as a foreigner in contrast with that of a citizen is explained in Patrick Weil’s article “Access to Citizenship.” In it he that analyses the tradition called *jus sanguinis* (right by blood) which depicts citizenship through bloodlines whereby a child gains the nationality of the father regardless of where the birth takes place. This tradition, accepted by many patriarchal societies like Catalonia and Morocco, considers nationality a permanent possession. Floya Anthias calls this perspective “positionality” for [it] “assumes a fixed and given location...” (27) as the basis of identity. The reason for privileging citizenship through bloodline, or *jus sanguinis*, is to construct an exclusive national culture and identity based on a homogeneous race, ethnicity and religion. In opposition to this tradition is *jus soli* (right by soil) which attributes citizenship to those born within a national territory (Anthias 17-18).⁵⁰ This tradition defends the concept of an earned nationality by living in the country and mastering the language. This perspective recognizes citizenship as a provisional and transitional state. Therefore, the *jus soli* tradition defends the notion of acquired privileges of people born in the national territory. These concepts are essential parts of the *Ley de Extranjería* [Laws of Foreignness] that establish the right to residency and work, and they will be important points of conflict in the evolution of Najat.⁵¹

⁵² These traditions are incorporated into the immigration laws in Spain that determine the right of residency. For more information see Joppke, *Challenge to the Nation-State*.

⁵¹ *Ley orgánica de Extranjería 4/2000, de 11 de enero, sobre derechos y libertades de los extranjeros en España y su integración social*. Since these norms abandon hundreds of thousands of foreigners in an illegal situation for years, a new law to regulate the status of foreigners was passed in 2000 that gives

This dilemma over the choice of residence and/or identity is not so acute for Pérez-Firmat who uses the term “one and a half generation”, coined by the sociologist Rubern G. Rumbant, to describe the generation that falls between those who immigrate, first generation, and those who are born in a foreign country, second generation. In *Life on the Hyphen: The Cuban-American Way* Pérez-Firmat affirms that being born of foreign parents is an advantage for,

having two cultures, you belong wholly to neither one. You are both, you are neither...What is more, you can actually *choose* the language you want to work, live, love, and pun in [...]. Nonetheless, the equipment that comes with the option creates the conditions for distinctive cultural achievement. One-and-a-halfers gain in translation. One-and-a-halfers feed on what they lack. Their position as equilibrists give them the freedom to mix and match pieces from each culture: they are ‘equi-libre. (7)

The privileged position allows the in-between generation to enjoy an intentionally transitory condition and to find a momentary balance between the two cultures. Eliminating the burden of fixation, this lifestyle endures only one permanent feature, the possibility of change (Pérez-Firmat “Vivir en la cerca” 21).

Though apparently very easy for Pérez-Firmat, it is more difficult for Najat to skip from one side of the fence to the other. Consciously positioned as a foreigner and a perpetual member of a minority group by members of both her Moroccan family and the Spanish society, the protagonist Najat encounters endless obstacles to her quest for belonging. Being a legitimate resident of the Catalan community, Najat claims her right to be considered a lawful citizen: “No podien rebutjar-nos ara, era massa tard, habíem tornat al país que ens va veure néixer i ja no ens hi reconeixíem, quin dret tenia tota aquella gent a fer-nos sentir exclòs del nostre propi país? O és que les arrels no es claven all`a on un té els amics, els records més intensos, les pors I les alegries?” (They can’t reject us, now it is too late, we have turned to the country that saw us born and now

permission of residency and work to all those who can verify having lived in Spain between 1996 and 1999. The most usual form of verification is the Town Halls’ registration of residents. The immigrants that entered Spain before or after must wait five years to apply for a permit of residency. Meanwhile, all immigrants must acquire a work contract which will serve to apply for a work permit. This requirement creates a situation in Spanish called “the fish that bites its tail” because without a contract an immigrant cannot receive a work permit and without a work permit the companies do not offer contracts, partly because they avoid, in this way, paying the social security fees of their workers.

they don't recognize us, what right do all those people have to make us feel excluded from our own country? Or is it possible that the roots don't sink in where one has his friends, his most intense memories, his fears and happiness?) (79). Since she does not want her Moroccan family and her Catalan neighbors and friends to consider her a foreigner, Najat constructs a plan of actuation to give her a sense of belonging, the next step in the process of self-invention.

Language is the most important tool in her plan of action to establish where she belongs. It is Najat's means of negotiation between her designated Moroccan identity and her self-invention. Amazigh is the language that links her to her past, especially the women's group in her village where she learns the Arabic alphabet by copying the lessons of the Koran called *sunna* (101) and sings religious songs. However gratifying the memories associated to her mother tongue,⁵² Najat willfully abandons them during her first years in Catalonia when she gradually loses fluency in the Amazigh language and gains competence in Catalan. She is encouraged by her neighbors to master Catalan: "era obrir-se les portes a un nou món, tenir les claus per accedir a la intimitat del habitants d'aquell país de boira" (it opened the doors to a new world, hands over the key to reach the hearts of the inhabitants of that fog covered country) (38).

Catalonia is where Najat becomes conscious of her dual identity intersected by two languages that entwine uniting and separating the world of her grandparents and Moroccan family and the modern world of Catalonia. At one point a friend who, after hearing Najat speak Catalan so fluently, asks Najat to abandon her Moroccan identity and become exclusively a Catalan. At that moment the pangs of guilt make her doubt: "Jo deia que sí, mig avergonyida de perdre les arrels, deia que sí que era catalana, no volia decebre el nostre veí amable, els ulls de mar se m'enduien" (I said yes, half ashamed of losing my roots, yes that I was Catalan, I didn't want to disappoint our kind neighbor, my eyes of sea hardened) (65). The main argument that her friend makes is that she cannot

⁵² Naoki Sakai deconstructs this position with her theory of the mother tongue as a product of the imagination which tries to recall the voice of the mother, the contact with her body, and the sensation of security. She explains that "... the mother tongue is a notion, and, as a notion, it does not preserve actual memories, but gathers random memories, [...] including fabricated memories of things that never existed" (*Nationality* 19).

belong to two places at the same time: “No es pot ser de dos llocs alhora” (64). However this demand to choose only one language and one identity makes no sense to Najat, who is haunted by the fear of losing her Moroccan heritage.⁵³

There is a particularly difficult moment in the novel when a native born Catalan resists recognizing her as a Catalan citizen in spite of her mastery of the language. The conflict begins when her friend Cati refuses to allow Najat to correct her use of the language. “–Si, home, m’ho dir`as a mi que sóc catalana... –No cal, tota la vida que he dit incens i no vindr`as tu, de fora, a dir-me com haig de parlar la meva llengua” (Really? You’re not going to correct me, a true Catalan... –No way, all my life pronouncing the word *incens*, and you, an outsider, are not going to tell me how to speak my own language) (53). The Catalan lady, speaking from the stance of the “natural I”, in words of Katarzyna Marciniak in *Alienhood* (88), is unable to accept the fact that Catalan has become Najat’s native language. Marciniak explains that, “The close reading of a ‘natural I’ reveals that the notion of citizenship rests on a natural order that the alien I threatens to disturb precisely because she comes from the outside of this presupposed orderly social coherence” (88). The presumption of an exclusive Catalan identity based on language is questioned by Naoki Sakai, who deems the myth of the mother tongue an imaginary notion of bonding more than a medium that transmits an exclusive, homogeneous identity⁵⁴: “Nobody can be at home within a mother tongue, a national mother tongue, or national language. If it were in fact possible to be so at home, we would have to abandon the basic human rules of sociality in the sense of being open to the Other” (21). According to Arif Dirlik, the strength of the autonomies and the visibility of their multiple languages contribute to the deconstruction of the concept of language as national identity: “[l]anguage does not serve as a marker of belonging either in the place of departure or the place of arrival, but becomes an object of investigation itself” (*Literature/Identity* 225). Jan Hill believes that the confrontation about language competence between native speakers and non-natives is actually a question of concealed

⁵³ The rebellion against the demands to choose a single place of origin or ethnic affiliation to determine where one belongs is dealt with by Lourdes López-Roperó in “Roots and Routs: Diaspora, Travel Writing”.

⁵⁴ See Sakai for more information about the myth of a homogenous, uniform society which she esteems to be a product of the imagination (Sakai *Nationality* 24).

racism manifested by natives who draw attention to the slips of linguistic normativity of non-natives while ignoring their own blatant infractions: “[Natives] will hear ‘accent’ even when, objectively, none is present, if they can detect any other signs of a racialized identity” (681). In the light of this observation, Najat’s correction of the native Catalan speaker can actually be considered an effort to counter racist attitudes and to demonstrate that she belongs to the Catalan community.

Najat relates her struggle with language and identity to the experience of her son Rida, who also gains notions of belonging by speaking Catalan. On the trip to Morocco, Najat realizes that neither her son nor she fits into a traditional Moroccan life style mostly due to the language that has become an invisible barrier that separates the two worlds (59). Najat is painfully aware that her unintentional loss of fluency thanks to her grandmother’s comments: “Us esteu malmetent en aquest país de riquesa, ja no us sé reconèixer” (You are not so well off in that country of riches; I no longer recognize you) (46). The uncomfortable adjustment to the Amazigh language is even more evident in her son, Rida, who feels excluded hearing his mother speak in “the other” language. He can’t understand the linguistic mix that this strange woman he knows to be his mother uses to communicate with others. As a little boy, Rida occasionally used words in the Amazigh language which he incorporated into sentences in Catalan (23). However, a few months after starting school, he refuses to speak anything but Catalan, a determination that helps Najat understand that he too will grasp the Catalan language as his own to secure his sense of belonging.

In addition to language assimilation, Najat’s plan to achieve a sense of belonging through self invention entails learning to read the gestures of the Catalan people and adjust to their expectations by multitasking, managing short term relationships, and keeping up with the tendencies of the market. In the novel these difficult times of adaptation coincide with the trials of adolescence and with the tribulations of motherhood. In spite of the controversies, her self esteem grows and her dependency on others shrinks.

In response to the social pressure of the Catalan society that rejects foreign customs, Najat learns to shed some of her Moroccan traditions like eating with her

fingers, a technique learned from her cherished grandmother who taught her to pick up food with her hands without dropping anything. In a cafeteria, when Najat breaks off a morsel of bread to scoop up some food from the platter, she feels intimidated by the attention she draws. The cook in the cafeteria rushes to her rescue to show her how to eat with a fork: “No vaig trigar gairre a aprendre’n, ja podia anar tranquilla pel món” (It won’t take long to learn, then you can go with confidence out into the world) (69). Najat silently understands that this person was referring to the Western world that would make demands on her etiquette. Feeling ridiculous and ashamed of her lack of urbanity, Najat begins to place her grandmother’s authority under scrutiny.

Another moment of negotiation between her Moroccan traditions and the demands of the Catalan society occurs when Najat takes pleasure in decorating her hands with blue drawings called *henna*, a custom that Moroccan women use to celebrate special occasions⁵⁵. The ignorance of this custom causes a Catalan woman to point at her hands in disgust: “Renta’t les mans, nena, les portes brutes” (Wash your hands, child, they’re dirty) (66). Again a venerated custom is transformed into a shameful experience that causes Najat to feel out of place: “En algun racó, novament, un alter fil t’enue es trencava” (In a corner of my heart, once again, another thread was broken) (66). After this unfortunate encounter, Najat starts to keep her Moroccan identity on the inside, while she displays the Catalan one on the outside for everyone to see.

This “Catalanization” is very useful at school where she fears disappointing her Catalan friends and school teachers who are unwilling to accept Moroccan religious customs. They not only ignore her requests for recess for pray and days of absence to celebrate Ramadan, but at the same time they encourage her to participate in Christian customs like singing Christmas carols, constructing miniature *belenes* (Christian Nativity scenes), and exchanging gifts previously placed under a decorated tree. Although meaningless to Najat during the first few years, the sharing of Catalan culture as well as “values, networks and practices” become irreplaceable signs of belonging (Floya Anthias 21-22). By mimicking Catalan conduct, Najat earns group recognition and a coveted

⁵⁵ Henna is a natural dye that leaves a reddish stain on the skin similar to that of blood. Women usually decorate their hands with this dye to celebrate special occasions like weddings or Ramadan. For more information about the practice of *henna* see Combs-Schilling, M.E. *Sacred Performances* (211-212).

membership to the Catalan community which renders a necessary stability to her life.

Once adjusted to a Catalan lifestyle, Najat differentiates between feminine values determined by Western markets and those that actually benefit women. While studying in a Catalan high school she undergoes many social demands to take off her veil. Though she complies with the demands, she silences the fact that Moroccan women wear scarves not as an imposition but as an act of free will (155). She is also pressured to fulfill another Western custom in order to take swimming classes. Out of sheer embarrassment, she insists on shaving her legs ignoring the advice of her mother who tries to make her see that a compliance with such norms is actually a life-long obligation: “...no ho entenc: has de treure’t una cosa del cos per poder ser com les altres? ... estaràs lligada a la cer per sempre, és això el que vol dir estar alliberada?” (don’t understand: you have to take off something from your body to be like the others? [...] You’ll be tied to the wax forever, is that the way you want to be free?) (157). In spite of her mother’s advice, Najat accepts the burden to avoid the embarrassment of being different from her Catalan friends.

These are not the only changes that contribute to her self-invention during her adolescence. She also becomes interested in sports, especially the local soccer team, el Barça, symbol of the Catalan spirit of rivalry with Castile Defying her mother’s request for moderation, she goes to the games with her face painted in the “blaugrana” (blue and red) colors of the team and enjoys being part of the multitude of Catalans: “Era sentir-se un, sentir que no importava res, ni on havíem nascut, ni on havien nascut els nostres pares, ... (It was like being one, feeling as though nothing mattered, not where you were born or where your parents were born ...) (77). She enjoyed for an instant being considered a Catalan, like everyone else.

New obstacles to her effort to become a Catalan arise when Rida is born since the protagonist tries to fulfill the role of the perfect mother of Western society without the help of an extended Moroccan family. No matter how annoying the demands are, she does her best to comply. After getting up early to take her son to school on time, she makes sure that every school uniform is impeccable and her son’s diet is balanced and nutritious (131-2). At the same time, she feels pressured to comply with the social

expectations of mothers to continue to have the appearance of young girls: “ per ser una dona d’avui, has de depillar-te, exfoliar-te, hidratar-te, etc. ... recordes els anys d’observació analítica del teu cos per tal de percebre si la línia de l’abdomen havia sofert algun canvi, si els teus músculs havien disminuït per efecte de l’última dieta hipocalòrica que t’havien recomanat” (in order to be a woman of today, you must shave, exfoliate, hydrate yourself... You remember the years of analytical observation of your body to find out if the line of your abdomen had suffered any change, if your muscles had reduced with the last hipocaloric diet that they had recommended you) (133-4). Najat is quite conscious of the negative influence of the media that makes Western women want to reach inaccessible standards of perfection: “...a woman must look fourteen years old... The Western man uses images and spotlights to freeze female beauty within an idealized childhood, and forces women to perceive ageing – that normal unfolding of the years – as a shameful devaluation” (213-14).⁵⁶

The struggle to care for her image also includes the way she dresses. While satisfying the norms of a decent Muslim woman, she needs to avoid looking like a poor repressed girl. After detailing all the trouble she goes through to maintain the image of a modern Catalan woman, Najat concludes with a touch of sarcasm: “Perqu`e la imatge, ja se sap, és molt important en aquesta societat. ...sort en tenim que som dones alliberades i no pas esclaves del home” (Because the image, as you know, is very important in this society. [...] It is lucky that we are liberated women and no longer slaves of men) (135). However, even though she recognizes that most women are exhausted by keeping up with the demands of image building, which leaves no time for themselves, she still confirms the belief that Catalan women are, after all, free (137).

In spite of the effort to construct the style of woman that is demanded by the Catalan society, Najat has many difficulties finding a job and an apartment. She becomes very discouraged when the interviews by phone go very well, but in the personal interviews she is not allowed to go past the door. Even with several years of university studies and a work permit in order, she still has to earn a salary at cleaning jobs, the only ones opened to Moroccan women. Her mother tries to make her desist by saying that

⁵⁶ This opinion is similar to the one expressed by Fátima Mernissi’s in *Scheherazade Goes West. Different Cultures, different harems*.

there is no point in trying to find a job in the Catalan society because she will always be considered a second class citizen regardless of her qualifications (87).⁵⁷

The efforts to find an apartment are equally frustrating due to the habitual prejudice of the Catalans who “manifesten que la seva presencia implica una degradació de les vivendes i dels barris on habiten. En molts casos les vivendes que poden llogar estan en condicions molt precaries i són compartides per varies persones” (manifest that their presence implies a degradation of the homes and the neighborhood where they live. In many cases the homes that they can rent are in very precarious conditions and are shared by various people) (Alonso 65).⁵⁸ Thinking of these impediments, Najat confesses her deception with a “país que creia meu i que encara ara em creu de fora, ciutadana de segona categoria” (a country that I thought was mine and that still sees me as a foreigner, a second class citizen) (87). She is wearied of being considered an immigrant before she is seen as a person: “el meu és poder deixar de parlar d’immigració algun dia, no haber de donar més voltes a les etiquettes...” (my dream is to be able to stop talking about immigration one day and not to give more thought to labels) (12).

To her indignation, Najat is at times treated as a victim that needs to be saved from her own Muslim society: “Les senyores a Occident, a l’Occident Nord, vull dir, tenen una predilecció malaltissa per salvar les pobres dones de la resta del món” (The ladies of the West, of the North West, I mean to say, have an unhealthy predilection for saving the poor women of the rest of the world) (162). Annie Phizachlea comments that “It is an important consideration in moving away from a tendency, particularly in the case of migrant women, to portray them as victims being tossed around in the turbulent seas of international capitalism” (129). By raising the status of women from victims to social agents, those who fight against the concept of plural societies have no choice but to recognize the strength and contribution of immigrant women. The irony discovered by

⁵⁷ Francisco Checa in *Mujeres en el camino* comments on the difficulties for women immigrants to find and/or create jobs in Spanish cities. Also Saskia Sassen in “Women’s Burden: Counter-geographies of Globalization and the Feminization of Survival” addresses the difficulties of immigrant women who become the key actors in family support.

⁵⁸ Problems of immigrants with finding an apartment in decent conditions are also addressed by Zontini, “Immigrant Women in Barcelona: coping with the Consequences of Transnational Lies”. The unhealthy conditions and the provisional status of residences are discussed by Lacomba, *El Islam inmigrado* (67-68).

Najat is that the Catalan women themselves are tied to worse labels and obligations devised by a ruthless consumer society.

The awareness of the stereotypes and labels that mark her as different fills Najat with anxiety, confusion, and disillusionment which she often shares with her Moroccan university friends who arrived to Vic about the same time. They place themselves at a distance from the reality of being foreigner by recalling common experiences that helps, them recuperate a sense of Moroccan sisterhood: “hem viscut les mateixes contradiccions, les mateixes incerteses, hem trobat a faltar una part de nosaltres mateixos, aquella que vam deixar al Marroc” (we have seen the same contradictions, the same uncertainties, we have found a missing part of ourselves, the one that was left in Morocco) (26). They often laugh at their infatuation with European modernity and feminine emancipation, a deceptive lure for many women immigrants:

creia cegament en les virtuds de la modernitat occidental i acceptava la visió etnocèntrica de aquella senyora com acceptava la de motes alters. Vaig a prendre a sentir vergonya de la pròpia procedència, a menystenir la imatge de la mare, del`àvia, només perquè no s`adeien al model de vida que jo volia: una dona lliure, independent, com creia que era la dona occidental. (I believed blindly in the virtues of Western modernity and accepted the ethnocentric vision of that woman like I accepted those of many others. I learned to feel ashamed of my own background, to underrate the image of my mother, and grandmother, just to fulfill the model of life that I wanted: a liberated woman, independent, the way I thought Western women were). (155)

This revision of past beliefs and behaviors in an attempt to reveal the false premises of certain myths recalls Adrienne Rich’s statement about women’s need of recollection “an act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction is for women more than a chapter in cultural history; it is an act of survival” (210). Her unfulfilled expectations make Najat abandon her pursuit of a pseudo liberation: “on tinc prou amb estudiar una carrera, fer malabarismes per compaginar feina i maternitat, escriure i aquestes coses que no són gaire simp`oblifques, però que, tant hi fa, son les importants” (I have enough with studying for a degree, carrying out arabesques in order to juggle work and motherhood, writing and those things that are not symbolic, but, all the same, important) (162).

For Patricia Collins, resistance to discrimination due to the stereotyping of

gender, class or race requires permanent vigilance of the oppressor and a conscious, though secret, reaffirmation of the self (91). A successful self invention becomes a powerful tool for Najat's self reaffirmation in the novel. She learns to overcome the unpleasant experience of rejection by mastering the Catalan language and the ways of life of the host country, but the most significant adjustment made during her process of her self-invention is her perspective on religion to which El Hachmi dedicates a full chapter titled "Mesquites i esglésies" (Mosques and churches) (93-128). Her initial submission to the norms and traditions learned in her home is later confronted by deceptions and disenchantment, and finally seems to be the platform for her renewed self image.

As mentioned previously, her first contact with the Muslim religion comes through her mother and other women of her family. She recalls how entertaining it was to learn about the Muslim religion: "Era francament divertit aprendre religió d'aquella manera, paraules sense significat, màgiques com conjurs de bruixeria" (It was great fun to learn religion in that way, words without meaning, magic like conjures of witches) (101). She is charmed by the mysterious aura of the women's sector of the mosque and the personal recognition received from her grandmother for memorizing the *sunnas*⁵⁹ correctly. In Catalonia Najat misses the cordial gatherings of women in the religious environment.⁶⁰ In an attempt to prolong this sense of shelter, Najat makes the Muslim religion a symbol of her identity: "Recuperé la religión como símbolo de identidad" (interview with Nuria Navarro). Najat's patriotic defense of her religion confirms Pérez-Firmat's concept of having the freedom to combine elements from both cultures: "és un dels elements centrals entorn al qual s'estructura la vida relacional de bona part de la comunitat marroquin (is one of the central elements around which the relationships of a good part of the Moroccan community are structured) (Alonso 62).

At the beginning of her stay in Vic, Najat persists in her religious practices even though she is uncomfortable with the noisy shrill of church bells that replace the call of

⁵⁹ Lacomba explains that the *sunna*, are specific words, teachings, and deeds of the prophet Mahoma (332).

⁶⁰ Zontini comments on the lack of help from other women with the chores and obligations which is the norm in Muslim communities. There are also few opportunities for women to gather and keep each other company in Barcelona (1127).

the human voice to prayer. She keeps track of the hour to pray five times a day after washing her hands and feet three times, her mouth three times, her face and nose three times, her arms up to her elbows three times, and her lower parts three times. The rituals of the Islamic religion become, “una brúixola que els permite orientar-se en aquesta societat desconeguda” (a compass that helps them get their bearings in that unknown society) (Alonso 63). Other Moroccan women, mothers at her son’s school, support her attempt to maintain a Moroccan identity by initiating “una autentica revolució” (153). They walk around Vic together displaying their “gelabas and mocadores” (long robes and face scarves) and ignoring the pejorative comments while they criticize the “modernitat escandalosament indecent” (the scandalously indecent modernity) (154). Najat also participates in the collective indignation of the Muslims about the new mosque in Vic. Having fabricated visions of a splendid building with painted windows and chandeliers, everyone is disillusioned with the old commercial site on an abandoned street.⁶¹ This debasement of having been given a second class site for their religious ceremonies provokes indignation in the Muslim community in Vic that publically denounces the discrimination of the conservative Catalan politicians who try to keep Muslim immigrants invisible.⁶²

Unfortunately, after a time the fulfillment of the strict Muslim normative gives her little satisfaction. She misses the gratification of sharing a fabulous dinner at dusk after waiting all day without eating or drinking anything during the month of Ramadan, a celebration which turns out to be very disappointing in Catalonia (105). The imam of her mosque, who insists on raising the standards of the social and religious conduct for Muslims women, also contributes to her disenchantment. Najat recalls how one day she gets dressed up as any Catalan girl to go to church only to discover that she is not allowed to go into the mosque because her skirt is too short, like one an “infidel” would wear (107). Evoking memories of her home town where no one ever forbid her from wearing

⁶¹ Jordi Moreras explains in *Musulmanes en Barcelona* the importance of the mosque as a center for social gatherings as well as a place for prayer, (181-200). Also see Lacomba, (82-3). Gema Martín Muños reviews the precarious situation of the mosque in Spain in *Marroquíes en España*, (119-127).

⁶² For more information see Moreras, (252-4, 297-304). Pasqual Moreno Torregosa and Mohamed El Gheryb also give an account of protests situated in the mosques against the discrimination against Moroccan immigrants in *Dormir al raso*, (146).

pants or short skirts, the severe discipline of the Muslim religion in Catalonia becomes an insufferable deception that precipitates Najat's religious crisis. Her doubts deepen with the influence of her Christian friends at school, especially a boy friend whom she admires for his rebellious attitude against his friends' constant deliberations on transcendental topics. Her doubts and deceptions lead Najat to consider converting to Christianity, which creates great tension in her home.

A decisive moment of self-invention comes with the loss of her father. While walking through the quiet cemetery after her father's burial, she contemplates an important difference between the Muslim and Christian faith. For her, the former emphasizes the transition from life to death by placing bodies directly into the earth, and the latter celebrates death by displaying expensive coffins decorated with flowers. Emerging from her meditation on the two religions, Najat confesses her loss of faith to the father that is no longer with her: "No saps, pare, encara no, que dins d'una catedral d'encens, vaig sentir l'últim ofec, somort, l'últim al·le d'aquell Déu que tant havia venerat, i amb la seva mort, la mort de tots els Déus" (You don't know, father, not yet, that in a cathedral of incense, you felt the last choking, dying, the last breath of the God that you so venerate, and with your death, the death of all the Gods) (115). Demonstrating Pérez-Firmat's theory of the advantages of living between two cultures, Najat is able to disesteem the Christian and the Muslim religion and build her own individual space where she can speak more comfortably with a personal voice.

However her religious independence also leaves her with a sense of insecurity about her personal identity: "¿Tot el que componia la meva identitat marroquina, el que m'havia diferenciat del infidels, era perversament fals?" (Was everything that made up my Moroccan identity, what distinguished me from the unfaithful, perversely false?) (113). Her father's death represents a moment of catharsis, the end of the struggle to choose between Christianity and Islam, the culture of her present home and that of her homeland. This testimonial confession, which Sehyan defines as the necessary negotiation between the past and the present in the process of self invention, frees Najat of the weight of both religions allowing her to let go of the past and construct her own identity. She realizes that she is not attached exclusively to one culture and that her

transnational identity with a Moroccan legacy allows her to think in both languages and write in Catalan. Instead of blind loyalty to her place of origin, her identity embraces both her Moroccan roots and the Catalan culture.

Approaching the culmination of the process of self-invention, this female protagonist, who does not belong to either nation, feels free to establish her own identity. She is not representative of a traditional Moroccan lifestyle in which girls are women before they reach puberty; nor is she the obedient daughter of a Moroccan female gatekeeper who defends the patriarchal expectations of an immigrant woman, silent and isolated from Catalan society; neither is she the loyal daughter of a Muslim father who accepts without question the laws of Islam. She has become a Catalan citizen of her own right with Muslim heritage and a second generation immigrant son who is more Catalan than Moroccan. She can also consider herself a “one-and-a-halfers” that lives between her Amazigh-Catalan world. After overcoming much resistance to having a fluid identity, at the end she adopts Pérez-Firmat’s position on the hyphen which is, “not a minus sign but a plus” (16).

As an author and a mother, El Hachmi faces the need to explain the different concepts of a multiple identity to her son Rida with a discourse of acceptance and integration. She wants to help him understand the home space of a minority within Catalonia, a province which is also marginalized. She is the nurturing mother who transmits positive feelings about transition, the use of a minority language along with the socially dominant one. In the opinion of Kathleen McNerney and Cristina Enríquez de Salamanca, “The position of woman in this discourse clearly contrasts with that of the *other*, to which the standard literary discourse tends to relegate things feminine” (8). Najat addresses her own Catalan citizenship and Moroccan heritage: “Sóc un esgraó intermedi, formo part del que jo anomenaria generació de frontera, altrament mal dita ‘segona generaci’” (I occupy an intermediate level, I form part of what I call the generation of the frontier, quiet wrongly called ‘second generation’) (13). She recommends Rida reach a balance with those who surround him while constructing a sense of belonging to both his place of origin and his homeland, which, as in the case of his mother, one day may not necessarily be the same. Najat expresses the same position

as Floya Anthias who affirms that the determination about where a person belongs should contemplate lifelong developments: "...[O]ur locations are multiple and span a number of terrains, such as those of gender and class as well as ethnicity and nation, political and value systems" (27-28). This position coincides with what Rodríguez García calls "multi-positional senses of belonging" (425), which is the vital message that she wishes to transmit to her son who also inherits both cultures:

"tu ets catal`a, per`o sempre tingues present les antigues arrels dels teus pares, que t'enriquiran. [...] Per`o quan et sentis rebutjat, fill meu, pensa en tots els amics i amigues que tens i veur`as el pes del rebuig contraposat, no sempre s'ha de ser acceptat per tothom, un és como és, sap d'on ve i tot el que porta al darrere, no ens calen etiquetes, no val la pena donar-hi més voltes. Al cap i a la fi, ningú té dret a preguntar-te: i tu como et sents, més catal`a o més marroquí?" (You are Catalan, but you should always remember the old roots of your parents that enrich you. [...] But when you feel rejected, my son, think of all the friends you have and consider the importance of a counter exclusion, you don't always have to be accepted by everyone, you are who you are, know where you come from and all that is behind you, don't let labels sink in, it is worth the trouble to give it a thought. At the end, no one has the right to ask you: how do you feel, more Catalan or more Moroccan?) (92).

In essence, Rida's bi-cultural existence will represent on the one hand a wide range of opportunities and on the other an obligation to negotiate, choose, and incorporate different identities into his permanently fluctuating self-image.

As Pérez-Firmat suggests, for Najat there is no need to crisscross from one side of the hyphen to the other because she carries both identities with her. She inhabits the space in-between described by Gloria Anzaldúa in *Borderland / La Frontera* as a personal homeland, a personal identity. This wink to Anzaldúa appears in the second part of the autobiography, "Identitat Fronterera," which analyzes the many characteristic that are included in the "I" of *Jo també sóc catalana*. For me, the most important word of the title is "també" for it transmits plurality.⁶³ At first glance it seems that the title is describing the author as a Catalan just like the rest of the citizens from Catalonia, or perhaps as a Moroccan as well as a Catalan. Some other multiple identities come from her diverse and

⁶³ The plurality of the protagonist and author are detailed in the study by Ana Rueda in *El retorno/El reencuentro: La inmigración en la literatura hispano-marroquí*, (21-30).

simultaneous roles as mother, daughter, and granddaughter; or both student and teacher of the Arabic culture; or both apprentice and master of the Catalan language. Katarzyna Marciniak in *Alienhood* describes with exceptional precision this space in-between as, “resistance to a traditional notion of assimilation that works to accept, but also to absorb and flatten, the exile; resistance to smoothing out the foreigner’s otherness; and a defiance against the creation of a new, proper subject that erases her past so that she can successfully function in a new community” (79).

For El Hachmi, the title is a way to oblige the reader to question the stereotypes of immigration. In Navarro’s interview she says that the question is directed, “A los que se llenan la boca con la inmigración y sólo han visto al inmigrante de lejos. Pero también a los que están preocupados por el tema de la identidad catalana” (To those who fill their mouths with immigration [even though] they have only seen immigration from a distance. But also to those who are worried about the topic of Catalan identity) (Navarro). Immigration has undoubtedly brought about meaningful changes in the Moroccan-Catalan population. From her personal space in the autobiographical fiction of Najat, El Hachmi uncovers the xenophobic perspectives of both worlds that consider national and personal identity to be a permanent quality fixed to a specific location. As Miriam Cooke explains, “[w]omen who write their experiences [...] expose such manipulative patterns because they have no stake in preserving a myth that must exclude them to survive” (298). For this reason Najat has no interest in returning to the “imagined homelands and purities” (Rattansi 71) of her youth. More consistent with the cosmopolitan world of the twenty first century she prefers to don her identity with a brooch of transnationality which, “involves dealing with multiple localizations and cultural backgrounds (here and there)” (Rodríguez García 424).

At the summit of her self-invention, Najat evaluates her evolution and finds that her self-esteem has soared after achieving her main objective of earning a sense of belonging. She has gained a personal freedom to choose, accumulate and multiply identities. In sum, she has become a product in high demand instead of a consumer. In words of Christian Ricci “[El Hachmi} rechaza identificarse con unos pocos rasgos culturales definidos y determinantes, para considerarse producto de influencias múltiples

y de múltiples pertenencias” ([El Hachmi] rejects identifying herself with a few defined and determining cultural characteristics, to consider herself a product of multiple influences and multiple belongings) (*L'últim* 3). Her success has led the Catalan society to claim her as a distinguished member with the 2008 “Premi de les Lletres Catalanes Ramon Llull”. At the end, Najat has achieved her goals thanks to the positive effects of the process of self-invention.

2. Film

Helena Taberna and Fernando Colomo

The beneficial effects of the process of self-invention is also very evident in Helena Taberna’s documentary *Extranjeras* (2002) and Fernando Colomo’s film *Próximo Oriente* (2006) which address immigration from the view point of a Spanish citizen in Lavapiés, a neighborhood in the center of Madrid where there is a large population of diverse ethnicity. Like El Hachmi’s fictional autobiography, Taberna and Colomo insert in their film an authentic social background that blurs the boundaries between fact and fiction. As mentioned in the introduction, Ángel Quintana views this setting as a “timid realism” that avoids voicing the disenchantment of its inhabitants with the difficulties that inform their lives: “en el cine español continúa siendo más importante equilibrar las emociones del espectador, dosificando el drama y la comedia, que discutir sobre el propio presente” (in Spanish film it continues to be more important to balance the emotions of the spectator, dosing drama and comedy rather than discussing the real present) (Quintana 56). Bill Nichols’ point of view is that all films reflect a personal perspective of realistic scenarios: “We may think we hear history or reality speaking to us through a film, but what we actually hear is the voice of the text, even when that voice tries to efface itself” (*The Voice of Documentary* 21). Both Taberna and Colomo offer their version of the multiethnic neighborhood with non-professional actors who lend authenticity to their work. Taberna, with a visible camera that films subjects speaking of their lives, and Colomo, with a hidden camera that captures subjects in the spontaneity of

everyday actions, focus on the efforts of individuals involved in the process of self-invention.

One of the main achievements of Colomo and Taberna is the demonstration of how the self-invention of immigrant women takes place in the professional world. Though the majority of immigrant women work in domestic service, an increasing number creates businesses with traces of ethnicity like pastry shops and clothing stores. Francisco Chueca describes the businesses of several self-made immigrant women who support a family without the help of men in *Mujeres en el camino*. Pilar García del Pozo, in *Algo más que historias*, recognizes the effort of women immigrants who contribute to the development of small businesses thanks to the availability of “microcréditos” from local banks and feminist institutions like El Banco Mundial de la Mujer en España [The World Bank of Women in Spain] (219). The president of this bank esteems that business women, of which 25% are immigrants, are the ones who will create more than one third of the jobs of the labor market (221). With the voices of immigrant women that participate in the neighborhood economy, the political and economic positions for all the women in the films improve.

Extranjeras

Helen Taberna’s documentary, *Extranjeras*, portrays bars, stores, and hair-dresser’s where immigrant women speak of their struggles to adjust to a new culture and their efforts to reinvent themselves. Erased the intermediate space of the camera, “las mujeres extranjeras nos hablan directamente y se establece de este modo un vínculo que plantea a nivel formal lo que se transmite igualmente en el contenido: la implicación de la audiencia a través de diversos procesos de reflexión y de identificación” (the foreign women speak to us directly and establish in this way a bond that addresses in a formal way what is transmitted just the same as in the content: the implication of the audience through diverse process of reflection and identification) (“El nuevo documental”). With the freedom to speak directly to an audience, the immigrant women captured on her film

dismantle assumptions of victimization and subordination of foreign women to patriarchal authority for all of them have developed a means of income that not only allows them financial autonomy but also permits them to send remittances to their country of origin.

In spite of Taberna's search for a realistic representation of women immigrants, there are doubts about the authenticity of her documentary raised by Cristina Martínez-Carazo who points out that Taberna seems to give the women in the film a script turning the supposedly spontaneous speech into a guided performance (270-1). According to Stella Bruzzi in *New Challenges for Documentary*, "The crux of the problem when considering the potential differences between film as record and as representation, is the relationship between the human and the mechanical eye" (419). María Pilar Rodríguez offers other interesting observations that underline Taberna's deviation from the traditional documentaries by avoiding the identity of the film maker who loses the status of holder of the truth and neglecting to present the interviewees who escape the control of the camera.

Afterwards, Martínez-Carazo recognizes the fact that this performance is endemic to the process of immigration in which individuals must create a new image to survive, "La necesidad de reinventarse a sí mismas que experimentan estas mujeres al insertarse en una nueva cultura es fundamental para captar esta señalada dimensión de 'performance' y este punto de fricción entre la realidad y la ficción" (The need to reinvent one's self that these women experiment when they insert themselves in a new culture is fundamental in order to capture this marked dimension of 'performance' and this point of friction between reality and fiction) (272).

While Helena Taberna weaves together the interviews and scenes that portray immigrant women occupied with their daily tasks, she also highlights their integration with the Spanish society. A Moroccan woman called Alla Ben Casen explains her self-invention as the manager of a food store called "Yaouhara – Especialidades árabes" after marrying her husband Yusuf. She went from being a sheltered Muslim daughter under the constant vigilance of her mother to being the director of a store in charge of the

merchandise and public relations, “Vienen Musulmanes, marroquíes, españoles, polacos, de todo el mundo, vienen de todo el mundo” (Muslims, Moroccans, Spaniards, Polish, they come from the whole world). An example of her effort to improve relationships by catering to the Muslim neighbors are the signs on the window announcing Arabic food, “pinchos morunos - ternera and cordero” (briskets - veal and lamb) and “pastelería marroquí” (Moroccan pastry). One of the clients in the store comments on how an immigrant woman with a good education and knowledge of other parts of the world is normally well treated, “No te temen, ni te desprecian, ni te dejan aparte ni te discriminan como mujer” (They don’t fear you, nor do they spurn you, or leave you out or discriminate against you as a woman). Alla, on the contrary, recalls encounters with xenophobic attitudes in which she uses self-invention to achieve approval by taking off her head scarf to avoid the reprimanding look of Spanish citizens who recall the bombing of Atocha by the Muslim faction Al Qaeda.

Alla’s professionalism and change in her personal image affect the gender roles of the spouses. Since both of them work, they also share the household chores, “trabajamos allí en casa igual los dos. O sea, nos ayudamos mutuamente”, a conduct that dismantles the traditional role of Muslim women. The role of motherhood has also changed since Alla combines her duties in the store with nurturing and caring for her two children. There is no sense of abnegation, self sacrifice, or victimization in her voice as she states with a bit of triumphalism that “Tienes un montón de derechos. Dime tú si no hay igualdad entre el hombre y la mujer en España mismo” (There are many rights. You tell me if there isn’t equality between men and women in this Spain.) These images of a successful immigrant woman who attends her professional and personal spheres with flexibility and agency corroborate the importance of self-invention in the process of assimilation.

El Próximo Oriente

Colomo also portrays in *El Próximo Oriente* the incipient presence of professional immigrant women who self-invent a new image surrounded by multi-ethnic public spaces in Lavapiés where foreigners fill the streets with clothes and languages from different countries. Camera in hand, Colomo records many ethnic groups in the central neighborhood of Madrid where he captures women with long oriental dresses and men with ample beards and small white hats walking through the streets unconscious of being filmed. This technique is also used while the main characters walk through the streets immersed in a conversation about religion. One outstanding scene with non-professional actors captures the moment in which the main character lets out a scream of rage in the middle of a busy sidewalk startling a passerby. This participation of non-actors that make up part of the urban population gives the film an unquestionable tone of reality. Colomo adds to his depiction of urban sites a healthy dose of humor that conveys affection with those who claim a right to difference⁶⁴ like the Peruvian squatters who accompany the protagonists throughout the film.⁶⁵ There are also images of the colorful wedding of Cain and Aisha, a neighborhood mosque, and the family restaurant converted into an oriental music bar overflowing with clients of the younger generation of Spaniards. This ethnic scenario, where a wide diversity of people share humble apartments, litter the narrow streets, drive aging cars, sustain small businesses, and have long histories of unemployment, serves as the background of this fiction.

The action of the film revolves around a story of two brothers, Caín and Abel, who rival over a beautiful Muslim girl, Aisha, who lives with her immigrant family across the street. The biblical names of the male characters anticipate Caín's role as the jealous brother who despises his sibling Abel, but Colomo gives the story an interesting

⁶⁴ For a more in depth theorization of the right to manifest difference associated with the right to the city see Mary Nash "Diferencias e identidades en los espacios urbanos" in *Migraciones, género y espacios urbanos*, (79) and Lefebvre's *El derecho a la ciudad*.

⁶⁵ Cristina Vega describes Lavapiés as an urban scenario that tends to be "a culturally comprehensible habitat." In an article "Un paseo (guiado) por Lavapiés" about the right of squatters to occupy a building in Lavapiés, the author comments on the project to reconstruct a new identity for their neighborhood where many people of different origins come together in an act of solidarity.

twist. Abel, who is married and has children, leaves Aisha pregnant, and Caín comes to the rescue by offering to marry her. The single brother, Caín, despite his lack of charm with the opposite sex, is kind and shows empathy with others; the second brother, Abel, though very handsome and seductive, is egocentric and manipulative. Even though considered by some a “summer fluff” (Katarzyna Marciniak 7), the film reveals some interesting perspectives on the integration of a plural community and the evolution of personal lifestyles that follow many of the steps in the art of self invention. Due to a series of unexpected events, Caín gradually creates a new identity that enables him to achieve a lifestyle that is congruent with his goals. He also becomes the mediator between two cultures that shows the way to a successful integration. In the meantime, Abel, who resists change and makes no attempt to incorporate ethnic difference in his life, is eventually trapped by the consequences of his invariable behavior.

The evolution begins when the characters become aware of their new situation, or in words of Maguire, gain “the acquisition of consciousness.” The immigrant family, accustomed to the Muslim culture of Bangladesh, is immersed in a Western environment that is feared and scorned. The father, representative of a failing patriarchal power, demands obedience and silence from the women of the family, but he is detached from his dominant role due to a coma that leaves the women on their own. The protagonist, Caín, also experiences a change in his habitual family structure since his parents are absent and his overpowering brother moves to the Canary Islands with his wife and children. This independence makes Caín aware of his solitude and his inability to connect with Spanish women, something that encourages him to dream about his neighbor Aisha. After experiencing several disappointments in his relationships, Cain becomes involved with Aisha who attempts suicide after Abel’s decision to abandon her and their unborn child. The Muslim family, misled by circumstantial evidence, accuses Caín, who gladly assumes the role of the father and future husband of Aisha.

Like Najat in *Jo també sóc catalana*, Cain’s principal objective is to gain a sense of belonging, which for him means constructing his own family. The difference in *Próximo Oriente* is that the position of the protagonist is inverted since Caín, a Spanish

citizen, lives surrounded by many foreigners while the most habitual circumstance is the immigrant surrounded by Spanish society. Another difference is the fact that self invention is undertaken by Caín, a significant step for it places the responsibility for a successful integration contract in Spanish hands and not just in the immigrants'. Parting from a privileged position as a Spanish citizen who can get bank loans, and negotiate fines with authorities without having to overcome the prejudice of his fellow Spaniards, Caín is also responsible for assimilating the culture of the immigrant family if he is to achieve the affection of his loved one. To do so, it is necessary to learn about their culture, religion, and language in order to construct a new identity. Therefore, Caín initiates a process of self-invention by implementing several of Sennett's strategies.

First of all, in order to be able to marry Aisha, Caín converts to Islam and begins classes to learn about the customs and beliefs of the Muslim community. This performance allows him to become familiar with the expectations that others have of him. It also brings him closer to his future father-in-law and to a childhood friend, Cristóbal, who also converted to Islam. The interaction with these men strengthens the relationship with his new Muslim family and gives him the self confidence he needs to adjust to his new reality. Caín also maintains what Sennett calls good short-term relationships. His open personality and consideration for others allows him to maintain a good rapport with many people. He looks in on his previous boss, Milagros, to see how she is handling the business on her own and to ask about the events of her personal life. He also connects with the Peruvian squatters settled on the stairs of his apartment. Abel allows them to stay in his apartment while looking for a more permanent situation.

Another skill that Caín acquires is the ability to multi-task as father, contractor, and businessman. Seeing his Muslim family faced with the threat of foreclosure due to structural deficiencies, Cain takes out a loan on his apartment to finance the reforms of the restaurant. In the absence of the father, he assumes the role of the sole provider who carries out an assessment of the urgent economic and family situation. While in charge of the construction work, he convokes a family reunion to set down the goals of each individual and provides the funds to carry them out. He encourages his mother and sister-

in-laws to pursue their own careers which will contribute to the development of a dying family business into a thriving ethnic attraction that changes its name from “Bangladesh” to “Taj Masala”, and finally to “Music Bar”, coinciding with the evolution of the Muslim family.

Caín’s decisions have very positive effects on the women that surround him. By taking the role of mediator between liberal Spanish lifestyles and conservative foreign normativity, Caín inverts the Muslim patriarchal order and empowers the women to display initiative and agency after shedding their identity as helpless victims. They educate themselves, and in general make decisions that once pertained to the men of the family. Aisha follows Cain’s steps towards self-invention as she learns to respect herself as a mother and the wife of a worthy husband whom she defends against his deceitful brother. Aisha’s mother learns to read, write, and administer money. Her sisters begin to express their artistic abilities, painting and singing in public in spite of the prohibitions of the Muslim religion. With their newly found agency, they begin to believe in themselves and are able to defend their positions against the reprimands of their concerned father. Becoming productive members of their community, these immigrant women successfully cope with prejudice and dismantle the inherited beliefs about gender roles.

The Spanish women in the film also undergo important changes thanks to the influence of Cain. When Abel’s wife discovers that her husband was cheating on her, she stops conforming to the role of victim and throws him out of the house. Milagros, the owner of an exclusively Spanish butcher shop, overcomes her apprehension about the invasion of immigrants that seem to be overtaking the neighborhood. With the help of a Spanish friend converted to Islam, she tunes into the needs of the Muslim community and caters to their demands by placing a sign on the door announcing a certain cut of meat the Muslims require.⁶⁶ As a result, her business grows, and she is more comfortable with the foreigners in the neighborhood. The conversion of the out-dated restaurant into a modern music bar and the typical Spanish butcher shop into an international commerce helps both

⁶⁶ Jordi Moreras explains the importance of the Muslim custom of *Halal*, (211). Lacomba explains how the sacrifice of the animal must be carried out (245).

Milagros and the women of the Muslim family become “marketable” as managers of businesses in the center of Madrid.

With the examples of female initiatives, this film celebrates the agency of women workers who gracefully cross boundaries of race, class and ethnicity. Colomo’s film seems to suggest that the self-invention of women is an essential element for the transformation of Spanish economy. Although referring specifically to women from Morocco, Marta Alonso confirms the importance of women in the development of the economy of Catalonia in *L’atra Riba. Trajectories de vida i migració de dones d’origen marroquí al Camp de Tarragona* (The other shore. The course of life and migration of Moroccan women en Camp de Tarragona). Though Alonso refers to Catalonia specifically, her comments also apply to Lavapiés and the film *Próximo Oriente*. She says that:

s’est`a produït un canvi important en la situació de la dona que est`a directament relacinat amb el seu accés a la instrucció i al món laboral i que est`a donant lloc a importants transformacions de les qual les dones en són alhora els motors ... (an important change is taking place in the situation of the women that is directly related with their access to instruction and the working world and this situation has important transformations of which women are now the motors ...). (39)

Sira Garcia and Marta de la Serna in *A Cara Descuberta* speak of feminist groups of immigrant women in Catalonia who challenge sexist attitudes about female rebellion, referred to in Arabic as *fitna*.⁶⁷ This word describes the acts of women that rebel against their traditional subordination to men as: “rebel·lió, conspiració o anarquia que contraria l’ordre establert per Al·là” (rebellion, conspiracy, or anarchy that goes against the order established by Ala) (116). Ignoring the prejudice against liberated women, these feminist groups demand freedom of sexual expression as a component of economic independence. García and Serna applaud the effort of women who: “adquireix valor i agafa un paper social més fort amb l’emigració. Coses que són feina d’homes al Marroc passen a les seves mans en establir-se en terra aliena” (acquire value and take on stronger social roles with immigration. Things that were considered men’s work in Morocco are passed over

⁶⁷ The rebellion of women also called *Nushuz* is addressed by Fátima Mernissi in *Women’s Rebellion & Islamic Memory*, (111-115).

to their hands when they settle in foreign countries) (129). Saskia Sassen believes that female immigration represents “the feminization of survival” for the greatest burden to find resources for the family very often falls on women (506).⁶⁸

Though these positive aspects of female immigration stand out in Colomo’s film, there are some difficulties that are not acknowledged. Maria-Ángels Roque in “Mujer y migración, una doble mirada en el Mediterráneo occidental” draws attention to many inequalities that women immigrants must overcome, “esta responsabilidad de la mujer en el espacio público, no ha sido paralela a la de otros miembros de la familia, y no la ha liberado de la mayoría de las áreas domésticas” (the responsibility of women in public spaces has not been parallel to that of other members of the family, and it hasn’t freed her of the greater part of domestic areas) (22). It seems that Muslim women who work outside the home are expected to incur a double and even triple work load by being in charge of the domestic chores and the children as well.⁶⁹ Furthermore, the liberalization of women in public spaces is often accompanied by parental scrutiny that puts extreme pressure on them to avoid contact with unrelated men: “Women are the public face of the collectivity and custodians of its cultural and religious values. This makes women both the ‘guardian’ and the ‘guarded’ and legitimizes the imposition of physical and spatial constraints” (Falah 196). For many, Muslim women become heroines when they are successful at breaking out of their choking patriarchal impositions to act with determination and agency to construct a more favorable family and community.

Colomo celebrates the achievements of women in the professional world with images that can be interpreted as a glorification of the “protagonism” of female workers (Nash 23-5). Pessar and Mahler support this view by speaking of the need for a “global female proletariat” (20) which could organize new labor unions that challenge existing pacts “between patriarchy and the labor aristocracy, organized labor and nation-states,

⁶⁸ See in *Women’s Burden* Sassen’s ideas on the feminization of the proletariat in which women and immigrants come together to “prevent[s] existing, largely male ‘labor aristocracies’ from becoming stronger” (510).

⁶⁹ This complaint is also voiced by the protagonist Najat in *Jo també sóc catalana* when she describes the work load of her friend Isabel.

and first-world workers and global capitalists” (23). Nicola Piper in “Gendering the Politics of Migration” also speaks of the feminization of the work force as a positive influence: “The feminization of labor and migration has resulted in women being particularly influential in championing migrant workers’ rights” (151). Saskia Sassen also approves of “feminizing this proletariat” for it dismantles the dominance of men in the workforce (510). The prime example of a successful female worker in Colomo’s film is Milagros, who amplifies her business to a multiethnic clientele. She takes pride in having built a successful business on her own by saying, “nadie me echó una mano” (no one gave me a hand). This effort to create a niche for women in the labor market also involves immigrant women like the young daughters who create a successful music bar. Annie Phizacklea writes of the feminization of labor migration based on the fact that the majority of women immigrants, “... do constitute a significant proportion of the labor market in transnational movements” (122).

Can’s self-invention also earns him a respectable position in the neighborhood. However, before he can reap the laurels of success, Caín must face the greatest challenge to his new lifestyle, his brother Abel. The myth of Caín, which underlines the action of the film, draws attention to the opposition between irreconcilable fractions that have separated Spain throughout its history. In this film, it becomes evident that the two brothers represent opposing ideologies about immigration: Caín is the liberal voice of Spanish society that is open to integration with immigrants, and Abel is the conservative voice that continues to view immigrants as commodities over whom he claims a certain entitlement but towards whom he feels no obligation. Just before the confrontation, Caín undergoes a moment of anguish and doubt about his identity and evolution. Nevertheless, a rapid recognition of his own values gives him the power to shatter the stratagems of his brother. Clutching a ham bone from the trash, Cain runs up the stairs prepared to strike down the brother that threatens to undermine all his work and effort. At that moment Aisha’s baby cries, and Cain drops his weapon to assist the child consolidating in this way his identification with his self invented image as father and husband. The following embrace of Cain and Aisha marginalizes Abel from the family reunion that unites around the child born of an immigrant mother and a native father. This image is a statement of

solidarity with open Spanish mentalities towards mixed marriages, the reality of a multicultural society:

Así, la tendencia de futuro es hacia un multiculturalismo transnacional o cosmopolita global-local (glocal) [⁷⁰] adaptado a cada país según sus particularidades, poblacionales e históricas, que concilie la diversidad cultural e identitaria con la cohesión social y política, y que reconozca la superposición o coexistencia de diversas afiliaciones identitarias y políticas (Thus, the future tendency is towards a transnational or cosmopolitan multiculturalism or a global-local (glocal) adapted to each country according to the particularities of the population and histories, which reconcile the cultural diversity and identities with the social and political cohesion and which recognize the superposition and coexistence of diverse identity and political affiliations). (Rodríguez García 53)

With the support of Aisha and her family, the insecure liberal Caín defeats his powerful conservative enemy. Picking up the fish tank, which at the beginning of the film Abel empties over his brother who feebly accepts being drenched, Caín forces his brother to take it back to his own wife and children. The link of Abel to the fish tank turns him into a passive consumer and symbol of the postmodern society that lacks personal identity or agency. Caín, however, demonstrates that he is no longer interested in consuming commodities offered on the market. His self invention enables him to defend himself and his loved ones from prefabricated identities. After becoming a self made product that meets the demand of a plural society, Caín reaches the final step of self invention that Ouellette refers to as “letting go of the past” (128), the conflict between brothers that poisoned their relationship for so long. After constructing their new identities, Caín and the women that surround him take control of their lives and favor a successful integration of Spanish and foreign communities.

⁷⁰ Arlif Dirlík in his article “Place-Based Imagination: Globalism and the Politics of Place” suggests that individuals combine their knowledge of the local with their imagination of the global producing the “glocal”, a habitat where concepts of class, gender, and ethnicity are negotiated.

D. Concluding Remarks

Michelle Medina in her dissertation *Our bodies are covered in stories* points out the words of a female Moroccan film director who understands the volatile condition of a person's identity in the twenty first century: "Identity...Is it your name and date?...huh? Is it your feelings? Is it your job, your family? What is your identity? Is it your language? Now, today, this is a very, very big question. One of the big questions we have in the world today" (39). Self-invention seems to give an answer to that big question: Your identity is what you construct. The novels and films demonstrate Smith and Clurman's observation that a diversity of lifestyles fosters self-invention. Moreover, these works defend Morreale's optimistic position on self invention as both the male and female characters become highly marketable products for a demanding market. At the end, the protagonists of the multiethnic autobiographies are greatly respected and solicited, the women of the documentary are confident in their professional careers, and Caín is a successful businessman of a multiethnic restaurant and music bar and head of a multiethnic family.

In each work there is a moment of truth in which the characters' choices, influenced by their self-invention, change their lives. In *De Nador a Vic* Laila Karrouch portrays a young Moroccan girl whose intelligence and athletic ability open opportunities for her to become a valued member of Catalan society. However, burdened by the inability of her parents to change their ways, the protagonist chooses to comply with Moroccan traditions and abandon her dreams. The moral obligation with her family is an obstacle to her success but a stabilizing factor in her family relationships. Self invention and autonomy simply aren't her priorities. Eventually this decision pays off, for it gives her the personal gratification of being able to care for those she loves. At the end, she is able to carry out a self-invention that caters to both her own interests and those of her family.

In the novel *Jo també sóc catalana*, Najat grows up in Catalonia during the instauration of Catalan as the official language, which favored the use of Catalan

language over Spanish. Michael Newman, in “Normalizing Bilingualism”, analyzes the effects of the linguistic liberation from Castellano and finds that not only the competition between Spanish and Catalan language speakers was minimized but also that the disappearance of a mutual denial gave way to the support of other minority languages like Arabic which “favor[ed] linguistic cosmopolitanism and, therefore, a diversity of identities coexisting in one single society” (330). In “Denationalizing citizenship,” Linda Bosniak joins other scholars “to argue that citizenship is, in fact, taking increasingly non-national forms, and political activists have likewise articulated and promoted conceptions of citizenship that locate it beyond the state” (238). Bosniak also argues that the multiethnic community is stepping beyond citizenship, helping to erase fixed territory as markers of belonging. Aihwa Ong, in *Flexible Citizenship*, believes that, “Yet if we consider state power as a positive agency, the issue is no longer one of the state ‘losing control’ but rather one of the state taking an active role in refashioning sovereignty to meet the challenges of global market and supranational organizations” (215). This tendency coincides with Maguire and Stanway’s perception that, “Identity has shifted over the course of modernity from a fixed set of characteristics determined by birth and ascription, to a reflexive, ongoing project shaped by appearance and performance” (63).

The narrative voice in *Jo també sóc catalana* registers the evolution of immigrant women who have proven to be agents of change. While enduring a triple marginality due to her origin which gives her a non-Spanish physical appearance, her gender which limits her access to certain professions, and her use of the learned language, this protagonist places herself in the interstices where it is possible to negotiate with the autonomous society and her immigrant community.⁷¹ Najat’s ability to invent a new self creates a better future for herself, her son, and her community. After the death of her father, Najat leaves her past behind to step into her self-invented role of a successful multiethnic Catalan. In this position she is able to free herself of her gatekeepers, the unsupportive

⁷¹ Kathleen McNerney and Cristina Enríquez de Salamanca describe a “doubly marginalized” voice subjected to prejudice due to her sex and her choice of a marginal language with which to speak: “Catalonia and the Basque country, despite their economic development, have long existed on the fringes of the central power based in Castile” (1).

members of her Moroccan family and the Catalan society that had little faith in her ability.

The women in Taberna's *Extranjeras* take control over their economic situation by finding jobs and developing businesses that thrive on the host country's thirst for knowledge of the Other. Portraying the ever increasing feminization of immigration, Taberna shows solidarity with the foreign women who dismantle out-dated assumptions of gender roles by demonstrating their courage and personal worth with the construction of businesses that allow them to support themselves in Madrid as well as their families in their countries of origin. Erasing the mediated image of victimized immigrant women, each interviewee demonstrates her ability to invent a new self that coalesces into a successful commercial activity.

In *Próximo Oriente* the Pakistani family is involved in the exponential growth of Madrid due to immigration. The film documents and interprets the changes in the neighborhood as positive and progressive. These changes educate the older patriarchal, ethnic generation, represented by the Pakistan father, who "learns" to see the activity of women and mixed marital relationships in a new way. They eliminate the thoughtless Spanish brother who can no longer pose a threat to women or the stability of marital relations. They produce an inviting home for the mestizo child named Adam that represents the beginning of a new generation, a new race, the future of the cosmopolitan, multiethnic population of Madrid. When Caín enters his home and hears the baby cry, he becomes aware of his priorities and his commitment with the new generation of Spaniards. This recognition empowers him to take control over Abel and consolidate his self-invented place in a multiethnic family.

This self-invention has significant implications for members of the twenty first century multiethnic community that demand control over their lives. Smith and Clurman clarify that "Top down push-style traditional marketing cannot be effective in a marketplace in which consumers want to invent for themselves, because if denied that opportunity, consumers have the tools, the smarts, and the willpower to reject and block traditional marketing altogether" (66). Therefore, self invention does not only regenerate

a favorable personal image but it also brings about a change in commercial markets and societies in general.

Sebastian Balfour in *The Reinvention of Spain*, observes the change of Spain's identity from a nation of one race, one religion, one language, with a single dominant political voice to one of a pluralistic nation strengthened by voices from autonomous and immigrant communities. The incorporation of multiple identities has made the vision of a homogenous national society become obsolete: "The concern among many of the political parties to define or set in stone the national character of country or region goes against the more complex identities of the people that inhabit them, identities that are not static and can shift according to the context" (Balfour 196). A change of identity is taking place in Spain which is shifting towards a pluralistic state with the combined effort of Spaniards and immigrants who are reinventing a modern image:

A new generation of Hispano-Muslims and Hispano-Americans, among others, is forging new perceptions of Spain. Interdependence is increasingly replacing independence in a global process that is sweeping aside cultural, ethnic, political, and economic frontiers. The spread of new multinational and multiethnic identities is gradually undermining old perennials' narratives, weakening nation and national identity and strengthening the potential of cosmopolitanism. [...] The widespread acceptance of triple identities, which encompass identification with the region, Spain, and Europe, show that plurality is a reality. (Balfour 203)

Nevertheless, it has yet to be seen if Spain's self-invention will transform into a political power capable of confronting the conservative backlash of Europe. A new balance of power depends on: "whether we approach a question from the perspective of the individual or from that of society as a whole; but nonetheless it is in the interrelationship between the individual and society where questions of power and hierarchy, ideology and politics reveal themselves most forcefully" (Nichols 165).⁷² In

⁷² The multi-ethnic population of Catalonia has drawn away from the Catalan nationalist movement that fights for the homogenization of the region, to defend a new non-nationalist political voice that gained popularity in 2006 campaigning for a multinational and bilingual Catalonia (Balfour 149). In spite of the intention of previous central governments to suppress the use of Catalan, Spain offers a linguistic pluralism evident in the autonomous communities where immigrant communities compete with the hegemonic position of the central government that tries to profess a uniform national identity (Silverstone 438).

fact, Catalonia, Galicia, and the País Vasco together with the communities of immigrants are closer to a pluralistic modernity than the nation-state that projects an image of a homogeneous, single ethnic and single language society.

The selected works give evidence to how self-invention can give immigrants a sense of belonging and Spaniards a renovated cosmopolitan image. According to Marta Alonso the recognition of immigrants as new members of a society is, “Un process de transigència que no ha de partir, evident, d’una ‘tolerancia paternalista’ i jerarquica sinó de la simple acceptació que vivim en una societat plural” (a process of tolerance that should not come from, evidently, a ‘paternalist and hierarchical tolerance’ but from the simple acceptance that we live in a plural society) (69). Keeping in mind this notion of personal agency in a peaceful coexistence with immigrants, it is necessary to recognize the responsibility of each individual, immigrant and Spanish, to follow through with the contract of integration. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the increase of immigration has increased the resistance to change in the social fabric of many Western states. Ali Rattansi warns us of the recent tendency to shun immigrants and multiculturalism in search of a “simpler and more secure times past, both real and imagined [in reaction to the] mediated driven panic about...potentially millions of *legal* ‘invaders’...” (65-6). In spite of some sectors of host countries that are in a state of denial caused by the demand to recognize elements that were previously considered foreign, Rattansi affirms that, “There is no going back to imagined homelands and purities” (71).

Migration narratives and films offer powerful voices that defend self-invention, especially that of immigrant women allied, at times, by Spaniards, as a tool for integration. Above all, the practice of self-invention favors the nation as a whole for it provides an exit from the stalemate of unemployment and poverty and reinforces the belief in the individual’s ability to improve her/his own destiny.

CONCLUSIONS

In this dissertation I have focused my analysis of narratives and film on works that reflect a significant evolution for women, both immigrants and Spanish citizens, due to the process of immigration. Though there are several interesting works that discuss the representation of immigration in literature: those of Mohamed Abrighach, Irene Andres-Suárez and Marco Kunz, and Richart Rodríguez to name just a few, none of them center their studies on the question of gender relationships and the dynamic role of women as key to Spanish migration literature. My perspective gives insight into the changes that women have brought about in contemporary Spain society which is becoming more gender-sensitive while expanding its multiethnic, multinational, multilingual frontiers. What is more, I consider the influence of immigrant women part of a new feminist movement that Rosa María Rodríguez Magda affirms is “acquiring visibility and power, accepting the proliferation of differences as spaces for liberation and the invention of self” (70). Precisely the inclusion of immigrant women into the feminist movement gives strength to all women’s struggle for economic equality and political representation in the twenty-first century Spain.

Most of the works analyzed establish a dialogue between patriarchal powers and women who develop agency. In some works there is a strong sense of dichotomy that offers few alternatives to women: submission to patriarchal normativity, isolation, or death. I have argued that this dichotomy is produced by the movement of male characters whose actions are stimulated by personal interests. In the short stories of Andrés Sorel and García Benito and the film by Imaol Uribe, the female characters display a futile rebellion against a violent patriarchal hegemony while they try to escape a situation of subordination to male figures in the family. Nadiva rebels against her husband and brother-in-law but ends up drowning; Al-Yaza’ir rebels against her father but also dies; and Dori rebels against her husband but later returns to her habitual role of subordination. These female characters, excluded from public life, have no control over important life-changing decisions. The lack of personal control is emphasized in other works by the imprisonment of the protagonists like the mother in *El último patriarca* and the young

girl in “Alyaza’ir”. As long as patriarchal authority is placed in control of female characters, they are victims of sexual harassment and physical aggressions like the mother in “Las Voces del Estrecho,” the children in “Alí y Loi, Ángeles de Ceuta,” and the women in *Ramito de hierbabuena*. Besides suffering physical isolation, the female characters that venture outside the control of the patriarch face poverty and social degradation as in “Mujer sin cabeza,” “La gran ramera,” and “Parir en el mar.” What is prevalent in these works is the inability of the female protagonists to invent a valid solution to escape from oppression.

The fixation of women in a subordinated space to men is not only achieved by physical force but also through psychological manipulation. By turning female defiance into a public spectacle, mostly by stigmatizing the women who have no choice but to prostitute themselves to survive, the dominant patriarchal voice discriminates against single, independent women. This kind of repression puts pressure on many heroines to take special measures to comply with social morality in order to maintain a degree of self-esteem. In “Parir en el mar” the older sister makes sure her virginity stays intact even though she prostitutes her body in other ways. It also makes the “princesas” of Fernando de León hide their practice of prostitution from their families.

The other side of the dialogue emerges when female characters challenge patriarchal control and rebel against the role of victims by disarming the movement of the male characters. The mother of Nadiva in “Mujer sin cabeza” vituperates about the pretensions of her daughter’s brother-in-law who demands obedience in the name of Aláh. The protagonist in “Al-yaza’ir” decides to kill her newborn child before handing it over to her brutal father. Zulema, destroyed by the male character in the film *Princesas*, takes vengeance by contaminating him with AIDS. The protagonist of *El último patriarca*, after spending half her life calculating a way to escape her violent and authoritative father, takes her vengeance by shaming him before his family. The protagonist of *La cazadora* criticizes the police and the other aggressive men in the community for their violence while she constructs a peaceful coexistence with her partner. The protagonist of *Jo també sóc catalana* defies the authority of the imam and

frees herself of his control. In these works, the female characters are strong individuals that deconstruct patriarchal normativity with strategies of mobility.

There are other voices that reach beyond a confrontational dialogue. The protagonist of *El último patriarca* reads the dictionary which improves her verbal skills and feminine discourse to overcome the emotional handicap of having to live with her father's physical violence and her mother's resignation. Fatiha, in *Donde mueren los ríos*, uses dark humor and cynicism to counter the abuse and abandonment of her family and the brutality of human traffickers. Dori in the film *Bwana* takes a dip in the sea with an attractive stranger to escape from the tedium of the monotonous relationship with her husband. With these tactics, the female characters lessen their sense of solitude and encounter allies who help in their struggle to survive.

No all male characters are abusive patriarchs. A few authors and film directors do produce male characters that renounce patriarchal privileges in gender relationships and manifest a preference for non-violence. Words of male entitlement become expressions of negotiation and cooperation. The male characters in "Fatima de los naufragos" lose their initial reproach for "la loca" (the crazy woman) and become respectful of the opinions of the women in the town who venerate the mysterious Moroccan woman. The male protagonist in *La cazadora* abandons his macho behavior and negotiates with the female character the household responsibilities. The husband in *De Nador a Vic* also learns to share household responsibilities and child care. The kind and considerate director of the NGO in *Donde mueren los ríos* prefers dialogue and prudence to physical force. Caín in *El Próximo Oriente* changes from being a peeping-tom that objectifies the female body to being a respectful husband and business manager that collaborates with his female co-workers. These Spanish male characters are open to change and provide positive models for a more tolerant coexistence with both immigrants and Spanish female characters.

The most efficient means of escape from the control of patriarchal authority is the development of a female cosmopolitanism that enhances gender relationships between different cultures and ethnic backgrounds through the art of self-invention. The female

characters that practice self-invention take control over their sexuality and gain the necessary agency to determine their own lives. García Benito's character, Al-Yaza'ir, leaves her adolescence behind to make a tacit agreement with a stranger in order to survive. Muñoz's protagonist, Maimona, after fruitlessly negotiating with her brother over the inheritance of the family, unites with her friend Yazmina in *Ramita de hierbabuena* to become independent prostitutes with an unyielding determination to migrate. Lozano's protagonist, Fatiha, who also struggles with the oppression of patriarchal customs, escapes to the Canary Islands where she becomes first of all a prostitute and later a translator for social services. Fernando de Leon portrays female characters that abandon a previous life to become prostitutes in order to support themselves and send remittances home.

Other works do not place female characters in roles of prostitution to demonstrate their solidarity. The protagonists in *De Nador a Vic* and *El último patriarca* find jobs free of social stigma like nursing and dish-washing. Laila, in *De Nador a Vic*, concerned with the happiness of her parents, deconstructs her identity as an athlete to return to the traditional role of Moroccan women surrounded by her family. In *La cazadora*, the sole provider of the household, consoles her partner by reiterating the negative consequences of masculine vanity. In the film *El Próximo Oriente*, the female characters also take over dominant roles in their families and communities. Milagros owns her own butcher shop and the female characters of the Muslim family run a successful music bar. Aisha, with the help of Caín releases herself from a degrading relationship with Abel to enjoy a more fulfilling family life. The protagonist of *Jo també sóc catalana* becomes a successful writer that wins literary recognition above other male competitors. Najat, having become a Spanish citizen from Morocco, educates her son about the difficulties of being a second generation immigrant. Zulema in *Princesas* and the protagonists of *Extranjeras* contribute to prosperous shops, cafeterias, and other businesses. These protagonists have lost their hues of passivity to re-invent themselves as women of strong female agency. The goal is not to enhance personal value through economic gain and consumption, but rather to survive in a competitive market through self-invention and solidarity.

It is significant that descriptions of self-invention are constructed with tropes of inclusion that change the perspective from the initial stance of “them” versus “us,” to “we.” The awareness of similarities within differences and inequalities points to the characters’ ability to express solidarity, or “complicity” in words of Brad Epps (99), with others. Their facility to bond establishes models of conduct that destabilize patriarchal patterns of exclusion. Shedding her identity as a victim and constructing one as a member of common female insurgence, Alyaza’ir recuperates her mother and grandmother by recalling moments of rebellion against the men in the family. Nadiva and her mother bond when they are forced to adapt to life in the city and use their bodies in the face of severe poverty. Maimona and Yazmina discard their rivalry and develop an indissoluble union when devastation and death become real threats. A similar gesture is found in “Parir en el mar” in which the female characters become fearless strategists that help each other escape their imprisonment and their abusive parents. Caye in *Princesas* re-invents herself as a loving friend and daughter who sacrifices her personal improvement for the welfare of Zulema. These female characters demonstrate a keen commitment towards others.

Ángeles Ramírez sums up the most important changes in the lives of immigrant women as “Incorporación de las mujeres...al Mercado de trabajo. Los cambios que produce son autonomía económica respecto de los demás y relación con el mundo exterior y con la actividad pública (con lo público) sin la mediación de un hombre” (The incorporation of women into the labor market. The changes that this produces are economic autonomy in relation with others and a relationship with the outside world and public activity (with the public) without the mediation of a man) (187). Besides economic autonomy which liberates women from the control of men, Ramírez also recognizes the new family setting as life-changing since women are no longer subject to the control of patriarchal authorities that dictate women’s conduct, marriage and movement. Unfortunately, this freedom is accompanied by a few disadvantages, such as a lack of an extensive family that serves as a permanent support net, especially among women. In all the narratives seem to highlight the compensations of autonomy more than the shortcomings.

Gillian Rose suggests that the best option to bring about a change is “to articulate a sense of an elsewhere beyond the territories of the master subject” (151). As prevailing models have become acutely inadequate, women count on migration to make a difference. As suggested by Appadurai (4-5), once imagined an elsewhere, it is possible to create it. In other words, if it is possible to visualize the desired spaces, it is possible to bring them into being. This action enables women to change from “being the bearer of meaning to the maker of meaning” (Mulvey 7). After mentally visualizing a new life in Spain, many characters are able to construct a complex reality that multiplies the possibilities for women. This new reality combines the ideas of a Western paradise imagined before migration and a non-Western reality of immigrant communities constructed after negotiating a space with Spanish citizens. It is not a coincidence that this transformation occurs after a significant change of geographical settings. After exercising the agency to abandon a home and family, the female characters find the necessary agency to construct a more gender-oriented lifestyle. “So, a geographical imagination is emerging in feminism which, in order to indicate the complexity of the subject of feminism, articulates a ‘pluralilocality’” (Rose 151). The multilayered combination of Western and non-Western cultures, relationships between immigrant and Spanish characters, traditional and contemporary female and male gender roles in these narratives and film are an encouraging model for a plural, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic Spanish society that is developing a tolerance towards difference and overcoming a resistance to change. This complicity, especially among women, is the platform for integration and multiculturalism.

In this dissertation I have argued that migration narratives give insight into the intricacies of the twenty-first century Spanish society. Once embarked on the adventure of immigration, the characters find that they no longer belong to a specific place. Their lives become the epitome of a perpetual transition. This sensation of provisionality is increased by the awareness of the loss of possessions and unstable or frequently broken relationships. The job market is just as volatile, as it frequently offers only temporal positions with no future security. The lack of stability forces citizens and non-citizens of Spain to prepare for change and practice the art of self-invention as a mechanism of

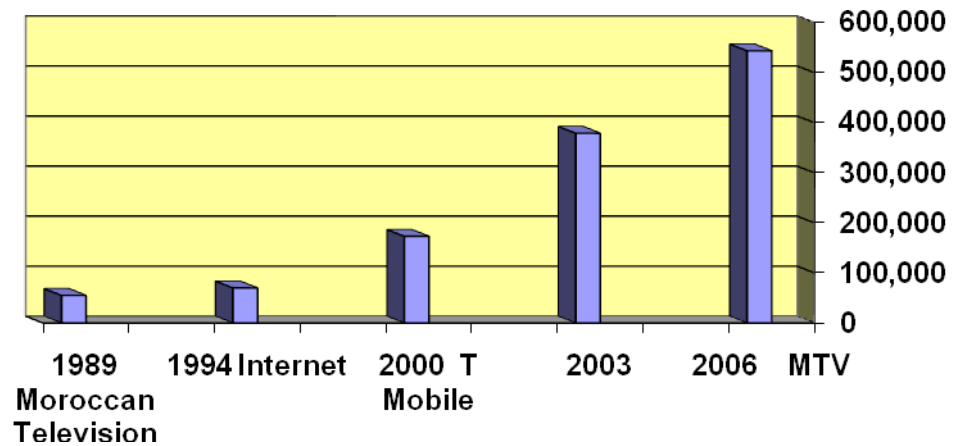
survival. With this chronic temporality dominating the migrant communities as well as Spanish citizens, there is a waning loyalty to roots, history, or family while novelty and replacement become cherished values.

This dissertation also raises a number of questions which call for further investigation in narrative and film. To corroborate my postulations concerning Spanish narratives I would like to continue my investigation on foreign-born authors that write in Spanish about their experience of migration and integration, such as Ahmed Daoudi, author of *El Diablo de Yudis* (the Devil of Yudis), *Diario de un ilegal* (Diary of an Illegal) (2002) by Rachid Nini, I would also like to follow the tendencies of Spanish feminism that seems to be an ally to members of immigrant communities. Another focus of future studies is the work of second- generation immigrants and how their new reality is reflected in an inherited language, a learned second language, and/or newly constructed language. For that reason, I would be interested in pursuing a comparative analysis of Spanish migration narratives and film with those of Mexico and the Caribbean to discover the similarities of losses and gains, causes and effects, and the evolution of the characters in questions of gender, displacement, and adjustment to foreign societies. I would also concentrate on issues of bilingualism and dual or travesti national identities that appear in works such as Sandra Cisneros' *House on Mango Street* and Cristina Garcia's *Dreaming in Cuban*. Given the importance of immigration as an endless source of creativity that often reflects the direction of social changes, I hope to continue this line of investigation and follow its evolution during the first part of the twenty-first century.

APPENDICES

Appendix I

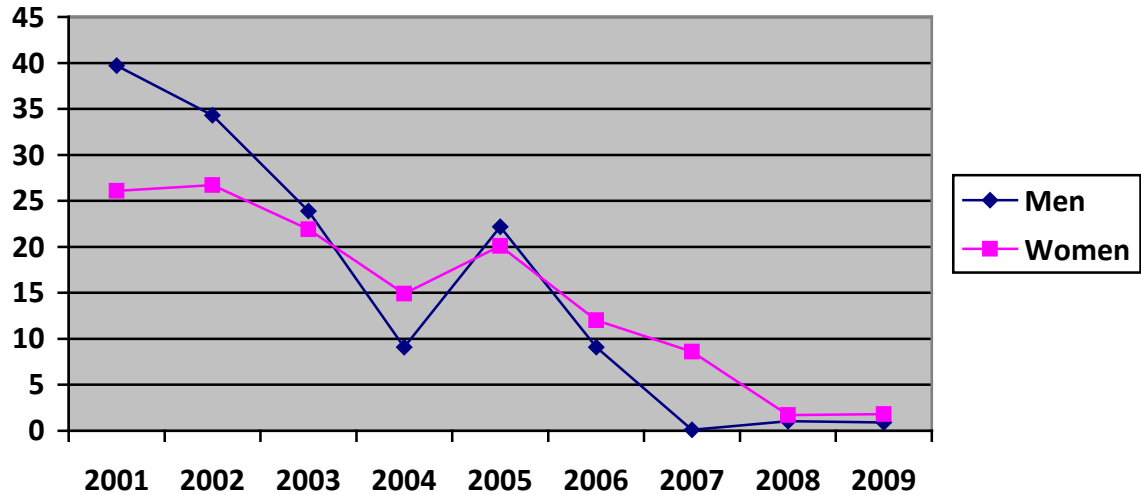
Coexistence of Television, Internet and Mobil Phones
with the flows of Moroccan Immigration to Spain



In the last decade, the use of the mobile phone has multiplied to such a point that it has become an essential part of communication not only in the city but especially in isolated rural areas. However, it is notable that women do not usually have access to mobile phones. Foreign television broadcasts, though censored by national government, are readily available in both rural and urban sites, less in individual homes and more in public cafeterias and meeting places. The increase of immigration, as seen in the above chart, clearly coincides with the increase of communication systems.

Appendix II

Variations in Moroccan Immigration to Spain 2001 to 2009: Men vs. Women



A significant decline in the flow of immigrants began about 2001 caused by the dissuasion of government restrictions that include the installation of a system of coastlines vigilance, SIVE. Men's migration decreased drastically with the installation of the automated vigilance system along the coast of Andalucía initiated in 2004. It surged again with migration towards the Canary Islands in 2005 until the system was installed along those coasts as well (Carling 8). On the other hand, the reduction of female migration was less accentuated, and even excelled the level of male migration in the years 2004 and 2007. In the last two years female immigration is maintaining a slightly higher pace than the male.

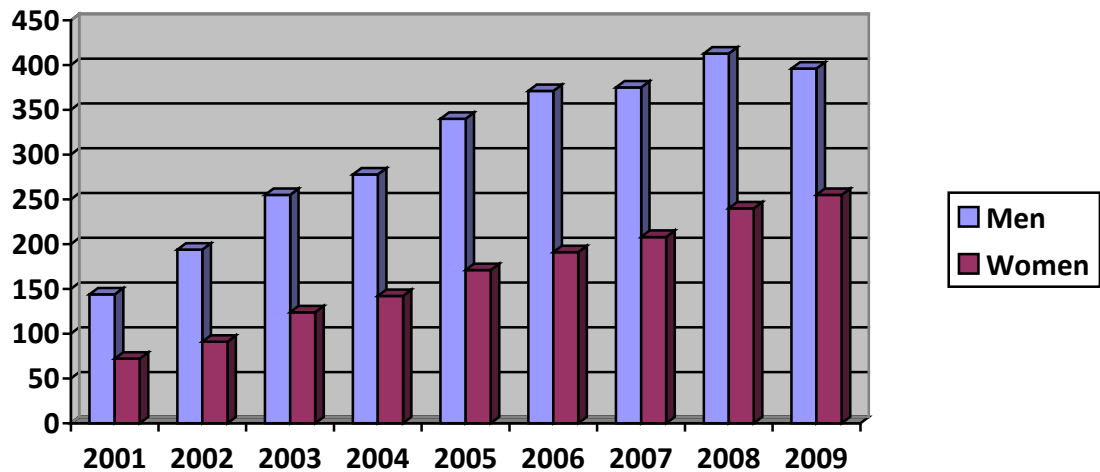
The data in the figures come from
Anuario Estadístico de Extranjería (<http://extranjeros.mtas.es/es/general/indice.html>)
Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas (<http://ine.es>)

Appendix III

Since the 1990s female immigration from Morocco to Spain has grown 30% to 36% more than the male migration; however, a variety of unofficial statistics concerning missing people as a result of ship wrecks during the crossing of the Gibraltar Straits¹ suggests that female immigration has grown at a slightly higher annual rate. In the graph below it is possible to see a steady increase of Moroccan female immigrants and the stagnation of Moroccan male immigrants.

The Evolution of Moroccan Migration to Spain since 2001

Men vs. Women



For a detailed study of the evolution of Moroccan women immigration to Spain see Ángeles Ramírez, *Migraciones, Género e Islam. Mujeres marroquíes en España*. There are also official web sites such as (<http://extranjeros.mtas.es/es/general/indice.html>)

Appendix IV

The Spanish towns of Ceuta and Melilla (the green points on the coast of Africa) are situated on the Mediterranean and surrounded by Moroccan territory. They are defended against illegal immigration with high walls and cameras.



www.theguiridespatches.wordpress.com/2008/0



www.nospeedbumps.com/wp-images/Morocco_Spain_

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1.11.1946

University of Kentucky
Department of Hispanic Studies
Lexington, Kentucky, 40508

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Candidate at University of Kentucky (Anticipated graduation May 2010)
Major Field: Twenty-First Century Peninsular Spanish Literature
Minor Field: Twentieth Century Latin American Literature

Dissertation: *Overcoming the Resistance to Change: Women and Immigration in Spanish*

Migration Narrative and Film (1995-2008)

Director of Thesis: Professor Ana Rueda

Women's Studies Graduate Certificate, University of Kentucky, 2008

M.A. St. Louis University, Madrid Campus, 2003

Spanish Peninsular and Latin American Literature

B.A. Colorado Woman's College, 1968

Modern Foreign Languages and Art History

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2010 Part Time Teaching Instructor, University of Kentucky

2008-2009 Senior Teaching Assistant, University of Kentucky

2004-2008 Teaching Assistant, University of Kentucky

1975-1988 ESL Foreign Language Instructor, Madrid

ACADEMIC SERVICE

2008 Syllabus design, SPA 310, 2008, University of Kentucky

2005-2009 Moderator for presentations at the Kentucky Foreign Language Conferences

2005-2009 Judge at the Foreign Language Festival for High Schools in Kentucky

2006 Teacher Assistants Coordinator for SPA 201 sections, University of Kentucky

2003 Assistant editor of *Abanico*, literary journal, St. Louis University,

Madrid
1988-2000 General Director of *Sat & Stickle* Executive English Courses, Madrid
(Current name *Sat & Steekle* Executive English Courses)

PUBLICATIONS

- Jan. 2010 *El retorno/El reencuentro: La inmigración en la literatura hispano-marroquí*
Ana Rueda with the collaboration of Sandra Martin. Madrid,
Cátedra Miguel Delibes, Iberoamericana Editorial Vervuert.
- Dec. 2009 “La convivencia con los inmigrantes marroquíes: Violencia, alianzas y
transgresiones en *La Cazadora* de Encarna Cabello,” *Escritoras y
compromiso. Literatura española e hispanoamericana de los siglos XX y XXI*,
Ángeles Encinar and Carmen Valcárcel, eds. Madrid, Visor.

CONFERENCE PAPERS

- 2009 “Softening the Edges of Normativity in Encarna Cabello’s *La Cazadora*”,
MACHL Mid- America Conference on Hispanic Literature, University of
Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas.
- “Cell Phones and Flowers for Fernando de Leon’s *Princesas*”, Redefining
Border Studies and Cultural Crossings, Cleveland State University, Cleveland,
Ohio.
- “Immigration and the Art of Self Invention in Fernando Colomo’s *El
Próximo Oriente*”, Thirty-Third Colloquium on Literature and Film, West
Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia.
- “The New Femme Fatale in Antonio Lozano’s *Donde mueren los ríos*”, 2009
Graduate Student Conference, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.
- 2008 “Viaje sin retorno: las identidades de Najat El-Hachmi”, South Atlantic
Modern Language Association, University of Louisville, Louisville,
Kentucky.
- “Displacement in Andrés Sorel’s *Las voces del Estrecho*”, 2008 GLCA
Conference on Transnational Feminism, Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio.
- “El moro, la dama y el patriarca en *La Cazadora* de Encarna Cabello”,
Congreso Internacional II, *Escritoras y compromiso*, St. Louis University,
Madrid, Spain.

- 2007 “*Mano de obra* de Diamela Eltit: Una denuncia contra la pobreza y su efecto devastador en las mujeres”, MACHL Mid-America Conference on Hispanic Literature, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.
- “Sherezade, a Cure for Postmodern Society”, Graduate Student Interdisciplinary Conference, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.
- “El triunfo de la mentalidad multidimensional de la mujer inmigrante en *La tumba de Argumosa* de Rocío Silva-Santisteban”, Cincinnati Conference on Romance Languages and Literatures, Cincinnati University, Cincinnati, Ohio.
- 2004 “Retrato de personajes femeninos a través del soliloquio”, Congreso Internacional I, *Género y géneros*, St. Louis University, Madrid, Spain.

HONORS AND AWARDS

- 2008-2009 Senior Teaching Assistantship, University of Kentucky
- 2004 Fellowship for the Graduate School Academic Year, University of Kentucky

LANGUAGES

- English and Spanish – native fluency (bilingual)
- Portuguese, French, Catalan – good reading knowledge

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Modern Language Associations
 The American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese
 Femenistas Unidas
 AAUW American Association of University Women

CITIZENSHIP

- Dual nationality: US/ Spanish citizen
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