

Skin Deep: Race, Desire, and Contemporary African Immigration in Spain

by

Kathleen Honora Connolly

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This dissertation is approved by the following members of the Final Oral Committee:

Katarzyna O. Beilin, Associate Professor, Spanish

Juan F. Egea, Professor, Spanish

Steven Hutchinson, Professor, Spanish

Luis Madureira, Professor, Portuguese

Alicia Cerezo Paredes, Assistant Professor, Spanish

I dedicate this dissertation to my grandmothers: Alice Shea and Margaret Connolly.

Both were teachers who pursued as much education as they could.

Given the opportunity, they might have gotten a PhD.

I feel fortunate that they paved the way for me.

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## Abstract

This dissertation analyzes continuity and change in discourses of race and national identity in twentieth and twenty-first century Spain. The study examines colonial interventions in Africa during Francisco Franco's dictatorship, as well as in the context of contemporary immigration. It reevaluates the notion that contemporary Spanish society rejects immigrants wholeheartedly, by integrating the discussion of mixed couples into the broader topic of immigration in Spain. This project demonstrates that dialogue and cultural negotiation are also an integral part of Spanish society's reaction to immigration. Examining mixed couples in film, narrative, and online, provides a way in which to observe these negotiations and compromises.

Chapter One considers the concept of *raza*, or the Spanish race, through Francisco Franco's *Raza*, as well as the representation of *mestizaje* and mixed-race desire in Liberata Masoliver's award-winning romance novel *Efún* (1955), set in Equatorial Guinea. Chapter Two discusses the continuity of these discourses in the late twentieth century, as well as how they have adapted or changed in the contemporary era, analyzing African-Spanish couples in the film *Susanna* (Antonio Chavarrías, 1996), the novel *La cazadora* (Encarna Cabello, 1995), the short story "La belleza del ébano," (Marina Mayoral, 1998) and Juan Goytisolo's *Makbara* (1980).

Chapter Three examines the web forum *Parejas mixtas*. The forum is a textual space that is driven by user-generated content, in which personal narratives create an interactive dialog. These virtual texts allow an engagement and variety of opinions, resulting in a more nuanced articulation of racial and national subjectivity. *Parejas mixtas*, as a public text, serves as a window into how African immigration has impacted the national conversation about race and national identity in Spain. By juxtaposing colonial and post-colonial texts, as well as fiction with

online narratives, this dissertation speaks to the complexity of the national discourse on immigration in Spain today.

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## Introduction

Since the late 1970s Spain has experienced a phenomenon of ever-increasing mass immigration. The economic boom that began in the 1960s, coupled with the end of the Franco dictatorship in 1975, and entrance into the European Community in 1986, opened Spain to tourists and retirees from Northern Europe and a highly-skilled labor force. A growth in the construction, agriculture, and service sectors also made it attractive to migrants from Latin America and Africa, among other regions. The influx of immigrants and the changing social and cultural landscape has made migration an essential and controversial topic in contemporary Spanish society. As of 2012, over 14% of Spain's population is foreign-born; if one counts undocumented laborers, the figure is much greater ("La crisis"). The global economic crisis has only intensified the focus on migration, as Spaniards themselves have begun leaving Spain for countries with stronger economies.<sup>1</sup> While in-migration seems to be, at least in 2013, on the wane, the "problem" of the immigrant is still a salient and palpable one. In particular, the topic of integration is a main concern, as well as varying perceptions regarding migrants' legitimacy to access services and invoke their rights within Spanish society.

Spanish responses to the immigration phenomenon have been complex and ever-changing. However, most of the recent research in literary and cultural studies has focused almost solely on the reactionary responses. While a rejection of immigrants may be quite prevalent in some political discourse and fictional representations, the social, political, and cultural responses have, in reality, been varied and multifaceted. The study of mixed couples is one way to access processes of acceptance and interculturalism in the changing landscape of

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<sup>1</sup> A recent report by Juan Gómez in *El País* showed that Spanish migration to Germany is now at the same level as it was forty years ago.

Spanish society. This dissertation, “Skin Deep: Race, Desire and Contemporary African Immigration in Spain” analyzes the representations of African–Spanish couples during twentieth-century colonialism in Africa as well as the present day. This project aims to integrate the discussion of mixed couples to the broader topic of immigration in Spain. It seeks to reevaluate the notion that contemporary Spanish society rejects immigrants wholeheartedly. Rather, dialogue and cultural negotiation are also an integral part of Spanish society’s reaction to the reality of immigration. While racism and rejection of colonial subjects and contemporary immigrants are still discourses that thrive in Spanish film and literature, these representations alone are not able to provide an absolute vision of the immigration debate in Spain today. The study of mixed couples in both fiction and non-fiction provides a way in which to observe these negotiations and compromises, while still interrogating the legacy of racism that was cultivated in colonial relationships.

### **Race, “New” Racism and Immigration**

The construction of race is a part of the formation of national identity, intimately tied to expressions of culture, history, and claims of modernity. The concept of race is popularly thought of as a series of classifications and exclusionary practices based on phenotype or notions of “blood.” In fact, race encompasses a much broader discursive category than merely a classification of different skin tones: *race* is “a process, a mode of thought, a system of (il)logic, rather than a fixed and clear idea” (Goode 5). Etienne Balibar, in *Race, Nation, Class*, defines racism as “a true ‘total social phenomenon’ that inscribes itself in practices (forms of violence, contempt, intolerance, humiliation and exploitation), in discourses of representations which are so many intellectual elaborations of the phantasm of prophylaxis or segregation (the need to purify the social body, to preserve ‘one’s own’ or ‘our’ identity from all forms of mixing,

interbreeding or invasion) and which are articulated around stigmata of otherness (name, skin color, religious practices)” (17-18).

In contemporary society, the language of biological race has been widely replaced with a discourse on culture, which Martin Barker called a “new racism,” or cultural racism in his 1982 book, aptly named *The New Racism*. This “culturalist” or “differentialist” racism shies away from openly articulating race-based hierarchies. Rather, it ascribes to “cultures” supposedly natural differences, and claims that a desire to maintain those differences is normal and proper: this stance is popular in the “clash of civilizations” theories of Samuel Huntington and Bernard Lewis. Barker explains that these arguments seek to authorize the hostile emotions of xenophobia as natural, common-sense, and therefore logical. Barker states quite clearly: “This is a form of racism. It is a racism because it sees as biological, or pseudo-biological, groupings that are the result of social and historical processes” (4). Writing during Thatcherism, Barker viewed the cultural turn in racism as arising as a reaction to the influx of immigrants. Claiming the right and duty to protect “cultural differences” was a ploy to normalize the idea of “defending our way of life” against a supposedly encroaching horde, thus establishing migrants as a threat (18). The “logic” that underpins culturalist arguments is revealed to be nonsensical when one acknowledges that within any culture or group, there lies great heterogeneity. Cultures are indeed valid and deeply real ways of being; however, the boundaries between them are porous, not fixed. Benhabib explains that “we should view human cultures as constant creations, recreations, and negotiations of imaginary boundaries between ‘we’ and the ‘other(s).’ The ‘other is always also within us and is one of us” (8). To hunker down on reified notions of discrete, impermeable and never-changing notions of national, cultural identity avoids the diversity of all cultural

groups and prevents constructive dialog. In *The Claims of Culture* (2002), Benhabib offers us a more coherent, critical way out of complacency and xenophobia:

As soon as we produce rich, contextually informed accounts...we see that their understandings of social goods permit multiple and conflicting evaluations and that this hermeneutic complexity permits us to enter into some kind of dialogue...It is not just 'us' versus 'them'; there are those with whom we agree, who inhabit other cultures and worlds, but whose evaluations we find plausible and comprehensible, and still others whose ways of life as well as systems of belief will be abhorrent to us. But who are 'we'? Isn't the 'we' attempting this evaluation just as much a subject of cultural multiplicity, diversity, and rifts as the others whom the 'we' is studying? (Benhabib 42)

A more measured evaluation of the "us" and "them" may allow us to see the similarities before difference, and cease trying to deny "them" rights based on purported differences. Perhaps more importantly, it may enable us to discuss the rights of migrants and refugees as fundamental human rights.

In Spain, cultural racism is manifested in the representation of migrants as incompatible or threatening to the nation: particularly Muslims (Flesler 131). These discourses may be traced to earlier, colonial frameworks, and are part of a legacy of racism and unease about the "closeness" of the Other. Paul Gilroy has critiqued the tendency to treat the conflicts that arise in encounters between immigrants and citizens as though they were completely new phenomena: he asks us to "step back audaciously into the past" and interrogate the colonial histories of European nations in order to understand the roots of contemporary xenophobia (*Postcolonial* 141-143). The discourse of racism that exists in contemporary Spain is rooted in and continues from colonialism, though it may be disguised in other forms. What were known as *colonial* discourses

of racism now form part of a nationalist discourse that differentiates the “we” of the national culture against the Other who is now an immigrant. We can trace the legacy of these discourses by examining both colonial representations of mixed couples, and contemporary ones.

### **Eros and Polis: The Metaphor of Mixed Couples**

Mixed marriages are on the rise in Spain: in the last ten years, the incidence of marriage between a Spaniard and a foreigner has more than tripled (Morán). However, until recently the formation of the couple and of the family was a less-studied aspect of immigration in Spain, in spite of its social and political significance. The study of bi-national, intercultural, or mixed-race relationships is a fruitful standpoint through which to examine societal constructions of identity. In sociology, the study of mixed couples has been used to analyze which groups are framed as different or even antagonistic within a given society. So, too, have rates of intermarriage been one way of considering societal acceptance of populations deemed minorities or even outsiders, such as immigrants:

Interaction between social groups provides a fundamental way to describe the group boundaries that make up the social structure. Because marriage is an intimate and often long-term relationship, intermarriage or heterogamy not only reveals the existence of interaction across group boundaries, it also shows that members of different groups accept each other as social equals. Intermarriage can thus be regarded as an intimate link between social groups (Kalmijn 396).

Intermarriage, however, is not merely a “reflection of boundaries” in a society; it also may indicate societal change or be a force in fomenting that change by weakening prejudices or stereotypes, keeping in mind that a mixed couple also impacts their larger, extended family

(Kalmijn 397). While the definition of a “mixed” union varies with context, typically it is defined as one which brings together partners who are considered culturally or racially different, although currently the term may be extended to describe same-sex couples as well. Truly, “mixed” couples or “mixed” marriages are concepts and practices that are not fixed, and even within the same small community may change, as Jackie Waldren’s anthropological study of mixed marriage in Mallorca demonstrates.<sup>2</sup>

Fictional accounts abound of desire and romance between lovers of different religions, races, and nationalities. The genre of the interracial or intercultural romance is extremely popular, and commercially viable—as is Romance in general (Pearce and Stacey 11). Kathryn Perry, in writing about interracial romance, claims that the theme adds “excitement,” which makes it more marketable, due to the fact that it is a type of “forbidden love” (173). The literary scholar Jolie Sheffer addresses the ways in which interracial romance produces interest and excitement in the readers: “They feature melodramatic plot twists: surprising revelations, shocking betrayals, madness, and death. They are titillating and sexually provocative, with their depictions of forbidden romances and taboo desires” (*Romance* 4). Constructions of racial and national identity are often foregrounded in film and narrative that represent mixed couples, particularly in works that characterize interracial romance. The tensions present in these relationships, in both colonial and contemporary texts, demonstrate some of the deep-seated anxieties Spaniards bear towards the presence of African immigrants. The study of mixed-race

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<sup>2</sup> Waldren’s study explains that the notion of a “mixed” marriage, for many generations, was defined in Biblical terms, meaning one partner was originally not a Catholic, but converted in order to marry-in. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, outsiders were defined as coming from a different socioeconomic class, or even a neighboring town. Due to the tourism boom in the late twentieth century, nowadays in Mallorca, “mixed” or “cross-cultural” marriage is more common, usually defined as a union between a local and a partner from outside of Spain.

relationships is fundamental to illuminating both the Spanish colonial project in Africa in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, as well as the contemporary status of African immigrants in Spain.

Both Mary Louise Pratt and Doris Sommer discuss the ways in which it is “characteristic of sentimental fiction to cast the political as erotic and to seek to resolve political uncertainties in the sphere of family and reproduction” (Pratt 101). Naomi Zack, a philosopher of race, also suggests that the narrative portrayal of mixed relationships, and the challenges faced by the individuals involved, illustrate in significant ways the manner in which race and racial discourse underlie and connect national, family and personal identity.<sup>3</sup> Through allegory, the romance is able to show a domination of the Other and their absorption into, in this case, Spanish identity.

Juan Goytisolo, in his *Crónicas sarracinas*, attacks the Spanish literary canon on the score, particularly in representations of *moros*. Goytisolo addresses the Maurophilia in works such as the *Cancionero de Baena*, and their tendency to idealize and eroticize a conquered Moorish subject. “El romance amoroso de tema árabe inspira a los mejores poetas del *Cancionero de Baena*...bellísimos versos en los que un amor ideal suprime las barreras culturales y sociales entre ambas comunidades, barreras crudamente reveladas en cambio por las crónicas y documentos” (12). In these erotic or romantic narratives, the Other is dominated twofold: once in the political sphere, and again in romantic liaisons, which end with the subject’s conversion to Christianity. Further, the idealization of the Other, in this case, the Muslim, painted in an exotic, Orientalist fashion, allows an avoidance of the reality of a subjugated people (the *moros* and Moriscos, for example) in favor a mythical fantasy. Goytisolo himself attacks this rhetoric of idealization in his own fiction. In *Makbara* (1980), the central plot of the love of a fallen angel for a Moroccan migrant, is in part a severe critique of Western (and

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<sup>3</sup> *Race and Mixed Race*, 1994.

Spanish) stereotypes of Muslims, *moros* and Africans in general (*Crónicas* 45). The “meteco” in *Makbara* is “un *moro* esperpéntico, deformado por la imaginación <<blanca>>...Únicamente el ángel caído, al invertir la escala de valores al uso, será capaz de amar y correr en pos de este puro sexo sin voz ni orejas, desde las guarniciones coloniales de la Legión extranjera a las alcantarillas de una metrópolis futurista y deshumanizada” (*Crónicas* 44-45). Goytisolo hopes that *Makbara* can point to “una liberación del ser humano a través del amor,” but states that we must challenge and dismantle those barriers erected through language and stereotypes, if we are to see that ultimately we have more in common than not (*Crónicas* 44, 46).

The narrative convention of love as a force that can conquer difference is also employed in what Doris Sommer calls the “national romances of Latin America.”<sup>4</sup> Sommer argues that the mixed-race romances of nineteenth-century Latin American novels use desire and love to elide other dividing factors present within the nation, such as racial or regional differences: anything that might hinder the consolidation of the new nation. “After all, these novels were part of a general bourgeois project to hegemonize a culture in formation” (29). According to Sommer, *mestizaje* “...was the way of redemption in Latin America, a way of annihilating difference and constructing a deeply horizontal, fraternal dream of national identity” (39). In these novels, the societal taboos that impede the lovers not only serve to “excite” the reader, but also signify political and social obstacles to national unification. Overcoming these complications to achieve marriage and children, is an allegory of political triumph and national fusion. Jolie A. Sheffer finds a similar occurrence in some North American romances. In *The Romance of Race: Incest, Miscegenation, and Multiculturalism in the United States, 1880-1930*, Sheffer argues that unification of lovers from different racial or cultural backgrounds can resolve, on a metaphorical

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<sup>4</sup> *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America*, 1993.

level, “intractable social conflict through the inviolable language of shared blood—to transform exogamy into endogamy, Them into Us, the Other into Self” (21):

All share the central conceit that the nation is like a family, one that is racially, culturally, and biologically mixed. These stories allegorize the nation through depictions of queer or “deviant” families representing the hope for (and sometimes fear of) a more egalitarian racial and political order. Merging anxieties about racial mixing and the nation’s changing demographics, racial romances offer a model of the nation as always already multiracial and multicultural. (4)

Sheffer focuses on fictional texts because they “capture the fantasies of the population” and “allow a space of possibility often not realizable in the contemporary world” (4). The deviant romances analyzed by Sheffer present an early “multicultural” alternative to the segregated and difficult reality that her minority authors inhabited, providing a safe space in which to challenge current social issues. *A Happily Ever After*, while unrealistic during the era, is an “aesthetic strategy” that imagines an ideal world, and, Sheffer argues, plants a seed that may result in actual beliefs being challenged or changed in time (5).

The fate of mixed couples in Spanish narratives is unfortunately not quite as felicitous as the texts studied by Sommer and Sheffer. While a romance may frame a fiction of unification, just as often desire for the other is represented as degrading or disastrous. Some works do indeed imagine mixed-race romance as part of an idealized nation; others depict these desires as deviant and destructive behavior that jeopardizes the social order and leads to chaos and unhappiness, and thus the ruin of modern, “white” European identity. Political and cultural dangers, allegorized as desire of the Other, occur even in early texts, such as the tale of the Muslim invasion of Hispania in 711, which, as legend has it, was provoked by the Visigoth King

Rodrigo's rape of Florinda, the daughter of don Julián, Count of Ceuta. Fray Luís de León, in his well-known *Oda VII: Profecía del Tajo*, states that Rodrigo's actions condemned Spain to "bárbara cadena," or 800 years of Al-Andalus and the Muslim presence on the Iberian Peninsula. In twentieth-century Spanish colonial novels as well, moments of desire or sexual and romantic engagement with Africans provokes a loss of control and ultimately a loss of the civilized, "European" self, expressed almost as a descent into madness. African colonial novels and contemporary Spanish migration narratives confirm the argument that romance often allegorizes politics. Novels and films depicting Spanish interventions in Africa portray a "domestic" colonialism, in which military officers seduce and dominate native women at the same time as Spain takes over the women's country. Daniela Flesler, in her study *The Return of the Moor*, explains that in Spain, happy relationships between Spaniards and migrants are generally "impossible romances" (214). These stories present "an imaginary hegemonizing picture of contemporary Spain, in which difference is always something that is outside the self and that can easily be broken with" (Flesler 214). It is no accident, then, that in the vast majority of Spanish narratives that feature African-Spanish couples, the African immigrant is either deported or killed, effectively ending any hopes of political or social "unification" through marriage and/or children.

Fiction, in this case, tends to prioritize more conservative, even, in some texts, racist discourses, and it is true that racism still operates in Spanish society. However, it is inadvisable to make sweeping generalizations about Spanish responses to immigration based on a small handful of narratives, especially because the issue is so recent. Furthermore, the presence of immigrants and the increase in mixed couples have also encouraged the cultivation of cultural pluralism. These representations are often media-specific; while film and novels overwhelmingly

express a deeply pessimistic view, nonfiction, such as web forums and even autobiography, present a much more ambiguous and at times quite optimistic vision of mixed couples. By juxtaposing colonial and post-colonial texts, as well as fiction with online testimonials, this dissertation speaks to the complexity of the national discourse on immigration in Spain today. A cultural studies approach is particularly useful in this endeavor, as discourses of race and national identity in film, narrative, and digital media will be analyzed. *Culture* constitutes the lived practices of a society, and Cultural Studies is open as to what artifacts constitute those “lived practices,” be they written texts, film, performances or daily activities such as hobbies or “lifestyle.” All form part of a broad social system, within which individuals and societies make meaning, interact, and produce identities.

By examining a wide range of texts, including canonical works and those of mass culture and popular culture, we may place them in concert within a broader web of cultural dialogue. This process is particularly necessary when examining the construction of racial, national, and cultural identities. As Stuart Hall would remind us, identity is formed within and by representational practices. It is a “meeting point,” or a “point of suture,” in which webs of discourses are entwined. These practices “attempt to interpellate, speak to us or hail us into place as the social subjects of particular discourses and on the other hand, the processes which produce subjectivities, which construct us as subjects” (“Introduction” 5). Narrative is particularly important in forming and articulating identity, and in the process of interpellation, as the philosopher Seyla Benhabib emphasizes in *The Claims of Culture*. Benhabib reminds us that “culture presents itself through narratively contested accounts...we identify *what* we do through an *account* of what we do” (6). The “web of narratives” of human accounts is how we construct and evaluate ourselves and others.

The web of narratives is identified by Homi Bhabha in his essay “DissemiNation” as the “pedagogical narrative,” or the discursive vehicle that has carried the national traditions and foundational fictions of the nation-state. The “pedagogical” discourses are transferred through literature, history, legends and myths, literally and figuratively educating a populace as to its national identity. Bhabha emphasizes the constructed nature, or “metaphoricity” of national discourse and its propagation in history and literature: what he describes as “the nation as narration.” In the pedagogical national narrative, “the people” are constructed as “the historical ‘objects’ of a nationalist pedagogy,” the living embodiment of national culture, produced from the founding of the nation up to the present day (*Nation* 297). Benhabib correlates this with the notion of “Kultur” that the German Romantics, such as Herder, held: “the shared values, meanings, linguistic signs and symbols of a people, itself considered a unified and homogenous entity. *Kultur* refers to forms of expression through which the ‘spirit’ of one people, as distinct from others, is voiced” (2). This pedagogy identifies a “people” not only with a nation-state, but further with its systems of cultural production.

How, then, has Spanish identity been defined against an African Other, in both colonial and contemporary texts? What discourses and practices continue from colonial representations, and which are contested and destabilized in contemporary narratives? The construction of a homogenous Spanish national identity is disrupted with the presence of African immigrants in Spain. So, too, does the reality of mixed couples threaten the construction of a homogenous racial subject, key aspects of the ideological discourse of Spanish national identity. Spain is far from homogenous, and the existence of strong Basque, Catalanian, and Galician national identities (out of 17 autonomous communities), with correlating linguistic and cultural markers, attest to that fact. However, when confronted with the presence of African immigrants, these

“peripheral” or “internal” nationalisms are still closely aligned with a more singular Spanish identity that is further demarcated as “European.”<sup>5</sup> Spain has struggled historically with its identity vis-à-vis Europe, viewed as Oriental or African in the eyes of her northern European neighbors. Spain, since the time of the *Reconquista*, has often constructed a homogenized national identity against its (colonial) subjects: the *moros* and the *moriscos*; the *indigenas*, *criollos*, and *mestizos* in the Americas, and against sub-Saharan Africans. In these encounters of self and other, the Spaniard is European while the American or African is not.

It is true that Spanish identity cannot be conceptualized in racially dualist terms, i.e., black-white, and it is recognized in Spanish society that the Iberian Peninsula was at one time a space of cultural, racial, and religious *convivencia*. Yet, while Spaniards may recognize, even romanticize the medieval past, contemporary Spanish society as a whole is conceived of as white and European. Flesler, in her study of the reception and representation of Moroccan immigrants in Spain, argues that the conceptualization of supposed cultural mixing of the Middle Ages is today imagined as part of a romanticized Spanish past, one in which the Catholic Spaniard dominated and triumphed, as seen in the reenactments and festivals of Moors and Christians that occur in contemporary Spain today (*Return* 99). The linguistic slippage between identifying the Moroccan migrants as *moros* or Moors, a term from the Middle Ages and Reconquest, points to the conceptualization of them as the previous, invading Moorish “Other.” Moroccans are cast as the invading Moors again, which threaten the coherence of a stable, European identity. Flesler asserts that Moroccan immigrants especially are a sore spot due to their historical closeness to Spanish identity: Moroccans are “not only the return of the colonized but also, especially and more threateningly, the return of the colonizers or ‘invaders’ of Spain” (*Return* 9). Thus, Spanish

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<sup>5</sup> See Désirée Kleiner-Liebau, *Migration and the Construction of National Identity in Spain* for a discussion of identity and immigration on a national level and within the autonomous community of Catalonia.

identity, just like any national identity, is constructed along racial and cultural lines which overlap, and the presence of the colonial or racial “others” in Spanish society shakes the foundation of the pedagogical discourses of Spanish national identity as a homogenous, white and European entity by being a living reminder of those “other” antecedents on the Iberian peninsula.

### **African Migrants in Spain**

Spain has found itself designated the gatekeeper of Fortress Europe, as the first point of contact in the EU for many Africans migrating north. Overall immigration into Spain has stagnated and even declined slightly; but due to increasing instability in many African nations, the rate of migration to Melilla and attempts to cross the Strait have almost doubled since 2011 (Espinosa, Paone). At present, African immigrants make up roughly fifteen percent of all migrants in Spain, and constitute a diverse body of individuals from many different nations of the African continent (Mullor 25). While Moroccans are the largest nationality represented, a smaller but steadily increasing number are continuing to arrive from countries of origin in Central and West Africa, particularly Senegal and the Gambia.

African migrants, particularly Sub-Saharan, constitute a particularly vulnerable and visible migrant population within Spain. Due to the increased security controls employed in order to police the Strait, and as an attempt to avoid the mafia networks, many have now begun to make the fourteen kilometer voyage across the Strait of Gibraltar in inflatable boats, normally used for recreational purposes. The stories of shipwreck, mass deaths, and the images of migrants that appear on the Spanish coast, are a regular and morbid presence in the news.

Africans in Spain experience a unique and particular migration experience: over fifty percent of Sub-Saharan arrive without identifying documents of any kind, being encouraged by the mafias

to destroy their papers so as not to be deported (Mullor 8, 43). This creates a “bureaucratic limbo” that unfolds in future difficulties for them to obtain access to basic services, work and residency permits (Mullor 43). Due to questions about the age claimed on some African passports, some have also recently been subjected to invasive forensic tests so as to determine whether or not they are minors, a factor that may determine asylum status or deportation (“El inmigrante”). As of 2009, 42.4% of Subsaharans lived in *paro*, the highest number of any migrant group, and over 32% did not have residency (Mullor 43). Once they arrive in Spain many need immediate medical attention and assistance from the Red Cross, due to the dangerous and difficult journey, not only across the Strait but also across the Sahara to arrive in North Africa.

The treatment of immigrants and refugees within national borders problematizes the very claims to democracy and civilization that are made by European and Spanish society. To quote Agamben: “In the system of the nation-state, the so-called sacred and inalienable rights of man show themselves to lack every protection and reality at the moment in which they can no longer take the form of the rights belonging to citizens of a state” (126). One of the issues for African migrants has been the incongruence, or tension, between their rights on paper and their actual situation in Spain, as María Mullor concludes in her study of Sub-Saharan migrants:

[Hay] una regulación contradictoria entre la legalidad y la situación de irregularidad administrativa de los inmigrantes que conlleva el derecho de prestaciones básicas *universales*, con las políticas de inmigración. Esta incongruencia de la regulación, permite dejar a ciertos inmigrantes en una situación de entre medias, es decir, que no son claramente legales pero terminantemente ilegales. (74)

The recent austerity measures and impediments to nonresidents to access the Spanish healthcare system, are illustrative of the vulnerability of African migrants, particularly Sub-Saharan. The

death of Alpha Pam, a Senegalese migrant in the Balearic Islands, by an undiagnosed case of tuberculosis, is the most vivid consequence of the 2012 law that left many immigrants without a *tarjeta sanitaria*.<sup>6</sup> Yet the law does not necessarily reflect Spanish society's responses to the economic downturn or to migrants. The law has, in fact, been opposed by 64% of the population; citizens have staged protests to oppose the PP's policies, and doctors have refused to comply with the measure, simply continuing to see patients without documentation in their free time, and creating nonprofit organizations to further attend to the healthcare needs of undocumented workers (Prats).

In Spain, immigrants, in particular Moroccans and Romanians, are portrayed as incompatible with Spanish culture. Moroccans, for example, are often referred to as *moros*, evoking medieval Al-Andalus and the violent conflicts and expulsions of the *Reconquista*. Flesler uses Derrida's theories of historical haunting and ghosts to analyze how this slippage between *moro* and Moroccan is a symptom of a deeper anxiety, in which Moroccans are transformed into "ghosts" of the past, violent invaders against which the nation must protect itself (Flesler 84). This was evident in the 1999 attacks in Ca n' Anglada, a neighborhood in Terrassa, in which some 50 skinheads attacked immigrants' homes, and the residents of the neighborhood asked that the government expel some forty North African immigrants. The violence in Ca n' Anglada were experienced quite intensely by Moroccan-Spanish couples (Rodríguez-García, *Inmigración* 57). Participants in the February 2000 attacks in El Ejido portrayed migrants as invaders responsible for danger, social ills, and perceived decline in the neighborhoods. As in Ca n' Anglada, immigrants were protested against, violently, for three days, in which the police and authorities did little to stop the hostilities. Some protesters declared a

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<sup>6</sup> El Real Decreto Ley 16/2012, excludes irregular (undocumented) migrants from healthcare access, unless they pay between 710-1,800 Euros, depending on age, prior to receiving treatment. (Anabel Díez, Emilio de Benito).

“moor-hunt,” shouting: “¡fuera moros!” or: “¡muerte al moro!”. Moroccans were beaten, their homes, businesses, and mosques destroyed, and after the violence was over: “Between 500-700 Moroccans lost their homes, 49 people were injured, and 158 people were arrested by police, 92 of whom were immigrants” (Caro 894). Flesler has astutely analyzed the incident in El Ejido as one which lays bare the figurative “transformation” of Moroccans into Moorish ghosts (84).

If Moroccans are the least welcome or “strangest” of immigrants, the most welcome seem to have been those from northern Europe.<sup>7</sup> The latter, often tourists, retirees or highly educated workers, are perceived as contributing not only money, but as being more compatible. The *guiris* (foreigners) are imagined as a positive presence because, according to Goytisolo, they represent culturally what Spaniards aspire to be: the image of a modern, white European nation. Northern Europeans, argues Goytisolo, generally do not attempt to assimilate into Spanish society, instead maintaining their own language and customs and creating their own radio stations, TV programs and magazines (Goytisolo and Nair 131-133). While European investment certainly aided the Spanish economic boom, regions like Almeria have used the cheap labor of immigrants to fuel the construction boom and agriculture, the major sources of wealth in the region. However, the two groups of immigrants are treated distinctly, and northern Europeans generally are not seen as a threat to the Nation nor as a physical or moral danger to citizens. To quote Goytisolo: “El ser-de-Europa aparece como una identidad buscada... en la negación de la memoria (Renan). Los europeos...cristianos...se les ve como un aporte y a veces como un complemento natural. Son portadores de prosperidad económica, de modernidad cultural” (Goytisolo and Nair 132). There has been a lack of acknowledgement that, rather than a danger to Spanish society, immigrants have been a key part of its economic growth. Spain, like much of Europe, has had a very low

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<sup>7</sup> Flesler 4.

birth rate, while at the same time the current population is aging. “According to a recent United Nations report, Spain needs roughly 240,000 immigrants a year to maintain its current living standards and to keep its pension system going” (Caro 899).

The 90s and early 2000s saw an increasing demand for low-wage jobs, particularly in areas such as Almeria, in which the economy grew exponentially due to greenhouses. Living conditions among undocumented immigrants have typically been worse than the average Spanish citizen: in 1998 statistics showed that only 33% of immigrants lived in “viviendas urbanas” or housing that was comparable to that of Spaniards, and 31% of these homes lacked electricity (Goytisoló and Nair 125). A study of living conditions in El Ejido revealed that 75% were living scattered throughout the countryside, and in the educational system of the region, 68% of the children of immigrants were segregated into five schools (Goytisoló 126). Further, many homes in Poniente lacked running water, due to the fact that they tended to be plastic huts, shacks or former storage units, often rented to the workers by their employers (Caro 903). Undocumented immigrants work in very hard conditions for a fraction of what Spanish citizens would make, and the working conditions can be brutal in the greenhouses, with temperatures in the summer reaching 113 degrees Fahrenheit (Caro 893).

Controlling African migration has been framed as a security issue, and immigrants are often portrayed as a threat to the safety and sovereignty of the nation. The result of this discourse has been a series of policies since the 90s that increasingly focus on securing borders through the use of technology and weapons, “fighting” immigration as though it were a war (White 704). For example, in 1998 the Spanish government completed the electronic fortifications around Ceuta and Melilla, an endeavor funded largely by the European Union. The fences did not deter immigrants completely, but they did increase fatalities: in 2005 and 2006 violence occurred

when migrants attempted to scale the walls, resulting in 14 dead and others wounded or detained (White 705). According to a report done by Amnesty International, the Spanish Civil Guard used rubber bullets to shoot people who attempt to cross the border fences (“Spain”). Other measures undertaken include the implementation of the electronic surveillance system SIVE in 2003; as well as Operation Ulysses: “a seaborne flotilla of warships designed to stop migration. In this endeavor, the Aznar government cast fighting migration as a matter of war!” (White 704). In the deployment of arms and use of violence against immigrants, and further denying them basic services such as healthcare, one sees the consequences of viewing immigrants as an invading Other and keeping them at the margins. By portraying immigrants as a threat to the sovereignty, safety, and well-being of the nation, and by extension a threat to the well-being of its citizens, the response has been a self-justification of the use of violence and suppression to destroy the threat, or “enemy.” These reactionary discourses are repeated in much of the literature and film of the 90s that features African–Spanish couples.

Spain’s acceptance into the European Community in 1986, during the same era as it became a popular immigration destination, is quite fortuitous: in 1985 the first immigration legislation was passed: the *Ley de Extranjería (Ley Orgánica sobre Derechos y Libertades de los Extranjeros residentes en España)*. This law framed migrants as explicitly “foreign,” and conceived of the phenomenon as a temporary one, viewing migrants as guest-workers and not allowing them rights to family reunification. The restrictive nature of the law was a result of the fear that Spain might become a “gateway” for the rest of Europe, a fact that the law did little to abate. The main priority was on border control, and the measure placed strict limitations on migrants, including their right to assembly; it also left the regulation of migrants’ access to social services at the hands of individual autonomous communities, creating drastic disparities between

regions (Moreno 14). The lines were drawn between Europeans and non-Europeans throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

However, it is important to note that Spain has not merely rejected undocumented workers, but has continued to evolve in the political and juridical sphere. For example, the government recognized that the 1985 act and subsequent actions did not adequately deal with the situation of immigrants nor did it stem the tide of new arrivals. The law was reformed in 1999 by the Socialist government and modified to extend many rights to legal foreign residents; it also gave undocumented migrants the right to access the health care system and public education (Moreno 31). The law was subsequently modified and pared down considerably by the PP government (La Ley Orgánica 8/2000), but did maintain the rights of all migrants to healthcare and education (Relaño Pastor 3). Further, the Spanish government has, since the 1980s, created opportunities to apply for residency: in 1986, 1991, 1996, and 2005. Immigrants, at least on paper, are currently recognized as having human rights equal to those of Spaniards; “on paper” because, as demonstrated by the reactionary measures taken to prevent immigrants from arriving to Spanish soil, they are not, in every context, treated as though they have the same rights.

### **Mixed Couples and Intercultural Dialog**

One of the greatest contemporary challenges, as both Sami Nair, the French political philosopher, and Goytisolo have indicated, is to create policies to help immigrants integrate socially and culturally. Examining mixed couples can be a way to view processes of intercultural contact, in which multiple cultural and national affiliations are negotiated. This opposes a more xenophobic position that views migrants’ only option as that of relinquishing their cultural identity and language completely in order to successfully assimilate.

How to promote a productive and effective social integration of new migrants and their descendents into Spanish society is not an easy issue. A series of ethical questions arises with each proposed integration model, and raises the subject of democracy, human rights, and respect for diversity. In general, one may broadly characterize the various integration models in Western Europe as aligning themselves with (and between): Assimilation, Multiculturalism, and Segregation. The assimilation model subordinates aspects of individual, cultural, or personal identity to a centralized, national identity. “The assimilationist model, from the French liberal tradition, is based on the need to respect common legal values and principles that are shared by all in order to foster a cohesive, inclusive society” (Rodríguez-García, “Beyond” 253). However, Benhabib reminds us that human cultures are constant creations and re-creations, a fact that a nationalist or purely assimilationist stance fails to account for. Nationalist ideologies, according to Benhabib, “create a forced unity out of diversity, coherence out of inconsistencies, and homogeneity out of narrative dissonance” (*Claims* 8). Forcing immigrants to renounce their language and important aspects of their culture may be seen as a form of internal colonization, in which minority groups must cede their language, religion, and cultural values to the dominant power group. Furthermore, the notion of a homogenous national identity and monolithic national values is a questionable construction—certainly problematic when one examines Spain and the various identities and languages within its borders. An assimilationist stance such as the one practiced in France denies the influences that immigrants have and will have on the dominant culture and language.

National and racial identity, as constructions, must necessarily change and be re-negotiated, a fact that is not acknowledged when one claims and enforces a single overriding

identity for a nation. Jordi Pujol, the former president of Catalonia, echoed former view when he stated in a 2001 speech at the Universidad de Pompeu Fabra:

¡Es muy importante que la gente se mezcle! Puede que con algunas de las migraciones que ahora tenemos sea más difícil la mezcla... En Cataluña nosotros siempre hemos optado por la mezcla; que la gente se trate, que la gente se case, que la gente, pues... cree una realidad nueva a base de todos los componentes que hay en la sociedad. (Rodríguez-García, *Inmigración* 56-57, author's translation)

Yet Pujol, only two years later, modified his position somewhat, calling for an increase in the birth rate in order to save Catalonia from being “un país acabado” (Rodríguez-García, *Inmigración* 57). Pujol's statements highlight the anxiety in Spain from those who feel a tension or even an incompatibility between maintaining what they view as national (or autonomous community) ethnic characteristics, and accommodating foreign nationals.

The multicultural model purports to maintain and respect different cultural expressions within a unified political area. Ideally, it recognizes and appreciates diversity, working to keep unique languages and communities alive, while uniting them into one nation. As generations progress, the hope is that cultures will become more mixed, creating a hybrid national culture. Canada, the United States, Australia, the Netherlands, and Britain all practice variations of multiculturalism, with greater or lesser success. Sami Nair is critical of a strong multiculturalist approach because he argues that it marginalizes immigrants from mainstream society. He uses what he views as the Netherlands' strict (multi)culturalist policies towards immigrants as an example of failure, which increases social and economic divisions between immigrants and citizens. Nair explains that immigrants should be integrated through the teaching of the nation's history and official language, the paths to assimilating the common values of the nation

(“Educar”). Benhabib concurs with Nair in her critique of “mosaic,” or strong multiculturalism because it is based on the faulty premise that “human groups and cultures are clearly delineated and identifiable entities that coexist, while maintaining firm boundaries” (*Claims* 8). Indeed, one of the greatest problems with a multiculturalist approach is the notion that “culture” is a uniform and fixed concept. At its extreme, this approach can swing towards a more conservative ideology that posits a “clash” of cultures, and hence advocate the enforcement of distances, even apartheid. According to Dan Rodríguez-García, Austria and Switzerland practice a segregationist or “exclusion” model. This practice consists of “separation between, or fragmentation of, ethnic-cultural communities...distinguished particularly by its restrictive legal framework regarding access to citizenship, based on the ethno-racial criterion of *jus sanguinis*” (“Beyond” 253). In Western Europe there is a current sense of disillusionment, even a backlash, against the term “multiculturalism,” perhaps most succinctly articulated by Angela Merkel when she said in 2010, that “multikulti” had “utterly failed” in Germany (Clark). The challenge for many countries is to not only give minorities rights, or to pay lip service to respecting differences, but to involve communities in local government and policy-making.

The perceived failure of a strong multiculturalism has fomented a renewed approach to integration in some sectors. *Interculturalism* is a form of multicultural practice that has the goal of ensuring civic rights to minority groups, and preventing “balkanization” or segregation through political and social dialog regarding national policies. It has been defined as:

the *interactive* process of living together in diversity, with the full participation and civic engagement of, and social exchange between, all members of society beyond that of mere recognition and coexistence, in turn forming a cohesive and plural civic community.

Interculturalism has the merit of focusing on the negotiation and conflict-resolution

*process*, rather than solely on the problem, and of emphasizing the changing nature of cultures and societies. (Rodríguez-García, “Beyond” 260-261).

Spanish policies seem to be moving somewhat towards an intercultural model, although it has not been achieved. As has been seen with the continuous evolution of Spanish migration law, the efforts on the part of Spanish society to adjust to immigrants is an ongoing process. The PISI, the first plan for the integration of migrants in Spain, was approved in 1994 and focused more on cultural differences, but also permitted the development of the Observatorio Permanente de la Inmigración and the Foro para la Integración de los Inmigrantes (Iglesias de Ussel 118). El Programa GRECO replaced the PISI in 2001; while it prioritized the integration of documented residents, it also viewed, in line with the European Union, immigration as a problem and prioritized the necessity to control flows (Iglesias de Ussel 118-119). The current initiative, PECCI (Plan Estratégico de Ciudadanía e Integración), is much more focused on mutual adaptation. It establishes that integration is “un proceso bidireccional, de adaptación mutua... porque afecta tanto a las personas inmigrantes, como a la sociedad receptora, a sus miembros y a sus instituciones” (Cachón Rodríguez 222). This perspective establishes a level of respect towards migrants, but also necessitates looking for a way to engage in critical dialog.

An analysis of mixed couples is essential to understanding and confronting intercultural dialog in plural societies (Rodríguez-García, “Mixed” 15). So, too, does the sociologist Jill Bystydzienski view mixed couples as relationships that can educate greater society on strategies for conflict resolution:

Accommodation strategies among intergroup couples bear implications for intercultural understanding and accommodation more generally. The study of achievement of cross-cultural understanding within domestic partnerships sheds light on how successful

accommodation may occur between different (potentially hostile and unequal) groups... Similarly, effective conflict resolution between groups may take place when each of the parties recognizes the boundaries between what is and is not negotiable, what each group can retain, and what each needs to relinquish in order to co-exist peacefully. (Bystydzienski 168)

The metaphor of a successful mixed couple can prioritize resolution of differences by way of interaction and dialog. Fortunately, there are some contemporary nonfiction works that demonstrate a more nuanced perspective, and also suggest that attitudes and practices in Spain are varied. For example, *Princesa de África*, the Spanish dancer Sonia Sampayo's 2009 autobiography, recounts her relationship and eventual marriage to a polygamous, Senegalese musician. Other perspectives are available through blogs and web forums, which will be analyzed in Chapter Three. These texts tell us about the struggles and successes of actual relationships, and narrate the experiences of individuals affected by current attitudes and policies regarding race, immigration, and interracial relationships. Narratives such as these can offer a positive and hopeful take on the future, and are less dualistic and polarizing than what a rigid assimilationist or multiculturalist stance may offer.

### **Chapter Summaries**

In Chapter One, "*Franquismo's Education of Desire: Interracial Couples in Spanish Guinea*," I analyze the conflicting racial discourses during *el primer franquismo*, with a focus on Liberata Masoliver's bestselling romance novel *Efín* (1955). I consider the concept of *raza*, or the Spanish race, through the representation of *mestizaje* and mixed-race desire in Masoliver's novel, which is set during Spain's mid-twentieth century occupation of Equatorial Guinea. I

contrast the representations of race and desire that frame the novel, with the satirical treatment featured in Juan Goytisolo's writings, in particular *Juan sin tierra* (1975). While a "mystical" racial hybridity was asserted as the foundation of the Spanish race and used to justify interventions in North Africa, this is not the case in Equatorial Guinea. Instead, positive conceptualizations of racial hybridity were often rejected. Instead of using notions of racial mixture or historical and cultural heritage, in Guinea the Spanish framed themselves as the natives' "spiritual" brothers, but racial, cultural and moral superiors.

Film and literary productions set in Spanish Guinea portrayed the Spanish as unquestionably white, European, and cosmopolitan—and therefore bearers of a Christian modernity in Africa. I argue that the concept of race during the Franco regime was multifaceted and altered to suit the ideological needs of the individual wielding the discourse. In the novel *Efún*, the failed romance between Ana and Carlos serves as a warning that the colonial venture endangers the Spanish race if it is undertaken without the proper guidance of the values of National Catholicism, which serve to protect the very "whiteness" and moral integrity of the Spanish nation. The novel's preoccupations with transgressive sex and miscegenation, in my estimation, demonstrate an anxiety regarding the "racial consequences" of the colonial project, and the fear of a destruction of European, white, identity. By pathologizing uncontained female sexuality in both the Spanish woman Isabel and the African *mestiza* Obama, Liberata Masoliver "educates" the female, bourgeois readers on a broad level about the consequences of female sexuality and the necessity of proper gender roles. In *Efún*, anxiety of the internal and colonial other is manifested simultaneously.

In Chapter Two, "Catastrophic Love: Contemporary Representations of Spanish Couples," I consider the continuity of these racial discourses in the late twentieth and twenty-

first centuries, as well as how they have adapted or changed. I analyze African–Spanish couples in the film *Susanna* (Antonio Chavarrías, 1996), the novel *La cazadora* (Encarna Cabello, 1995), and the shot story “La belleza del ébano” (Marina Mayoral, 1998). In the contemporary immigration context, narratives feature African migrants and Spanish women. In particular the narratives which are written by women are focused on a feminine point of view and female desire, a significant change from colonial or Franco-era romances. The works betray a fascination with the taboo and forbidden love. However, the dominating role of the female protagonists is not unproblematic. The women’s domination in many ways reiterates or reaffirms the discourses of power that occur in colonial texts, by placing a Spanish female subject of a higher social class and status, in a position of power over a younger African migrant.

While the works explore the possibilities of intercultural relationships, their conclusions herald a return to orthodox constructions of Spanish identity, closing the national and personal realm off from migrants. The boundaries of the female body, and the borders of the nation, are “protected” from the Other. In spite of the possibilities suggested in contemporary narrative and film, the notion of a permanent presence of Africans in Spain is an outcome that is avoided.

In Chapter Three, “*Parejas mixtas: African–Spanish couples in Cyberspace*” I examine personal narratives about African–Spanish couples online. Contemporary film and narrative overall communicate a more conservative and reactionary message about African migration in Spain. However, as mass migration into Spain is, historically speaking, a relatively recent phenomenon, it is difficult to make definitive conclusions regarding Spanish society’s response based on a handful of texts. Therefore, looking at a broader spectrum of media representations and narratives is useful in addressing the complexity of the topic of immigration and race in Spain today. Rosalía Cornejo-Parriego and Paul Julian Smith both speak directly to the necessity

of Hispanic Studies to broaden its scope in this regard. Cornejo, in her introduction to *Memoria colonial e inmigración* (2007), urges scholars to examine “las contradicciones entre las narrativas oficiales homogeneizadoras y la experiencia concreta de la vida urbana donde hace tiempo que imperan la heterogeneidad y el hibridismo” (17). Paul Julian Smith, in *Spanish Practices* (2012), acknowledges the importance of analyses of the canonical, “social-realist” immigration films of the 1990s and 2000s, but suggests that, “while widely studied abroad, it is hardly representative of the Spanish audiovisual field as a whole” (80). Cyberspace is one medium in which we may begin to broaden our analysis of the topic of migration in Spain.

In Chapter Three, I study the mixed couples’ forum *Parejas mixtas*, on the popular website *EnFemenino.com*. This forum is a textual space that is driven by user-generated content, and in which personal narratives create an interactive dialog. Mixed couples and migrants are generally a minority group, with little control over their representation in traditional media. Online, however, their discussions give these individuals a level of discursive power in a public space. Although reactionary and racist opinions are also voiced, the forum is a space in which individuals may challenge and critique stereotypes and racism. These virtual texts have linked the various participants in support networks and allowed them to engage in ways not possible in other media. As a result, the representations of African–Spanish couples that emerge reveal a more nuanced articulation of racial and national subjectivity, one that emphasizes the negotiations and compromises needed in the process of fashioning a transcultural identity. *Parejas mixtas*, as a public text, serves as a window into how African immigration has impacted the national conversation about race and identity in Spain.

## Chapter One

### *Franquismo's Education of Desire: Interracial Couples in Spanish Guinea*

The image of Africa signified an important space for the Franco regime, as it was intimately connected with the imperial rhetoric that aimed to recuperate the mythical past and the “correct” history of Spain. Official discourse during Franco posited the Spanish as a people uniquely suited to colonizing Africa, claiming a lack of racism on the part of Spaniards due to their supposed penchant for racial mixing, as well as the benevolent desire to convert the natives to Catholicism. Franco, in a speech given on June 3, 1961, proclaimed:

No puede confundirse la noble empresa de colonización, la elevada tarea de alumbrar pueblos nuevos, entregándoles generosamente- en una verdadera transmutación espiritual- toda la propia herencia de cultura, con este concepto peyorativo y actual, encarnado en dolorosas realidades de hoy que se ha llamado colonialismo o coloniaje.  
(García Fernández 1976, 443, qtd in Nerín 11)

Franco's sentiment makes good use of the imperial rhetoric that was popular during the time period, which couched the process of Spanish interventions as “mystical,” or metaphysical: sublime acts that transcended materialism or physicality. This rhetoric works to effectively erase references to the more violent process of colonialism, as it simultaneously avoids medical or scientific reference to the concept of race. Miscegenation becomes a part of that rhetoric, cast as a metaphor of an ecstatic cultural transference between the Spanish *raza* and other peoples. In this way, colonial interventions were neatly legitimized on both a political and ethical-moral level.

While a “mystical” racial hybridity was asserted as the foundation of the Spanish race and used to justify interventions in North Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this racial discourse is altered in the context of Equatorial Guinea (called Spanish Guinea during the Franco regime), and positive conceptualizations of racial hybridity rejected. Instead of calling upon notions of racial mixture or historical and cultural heritage, as in the case of North Africa, in Guinea the Spanish framed themselves as the natives’ “spiritual” brothers, but racial, cultural and moral superiors. Film and literary productions set in Spanish Guinea portrayed the Spanish as unquestionably white, European and cosmopolitan—and therefore bearers of a Christian modernity in Africa. One salient example of this racial and cultural discourse, and the focus of my analysis in this chapter, is the award-winning and bestselling novel *Efún* (1955), written by the popular Catalan author Liberata Masoliver. The novel, a romance in the colonial setting, stages an idealized Spanish identity the form of the protagonists Ana Ribera and Carlos Isart. Colonization of the natives in Guinea is portrayed as a messianic duty and a “white man’s burden,” but representation of mixed-race characters and desire between Spaniards and natives betrays a strong anxiety regarding the colonial project in Equatorial Guinea as a morally and racially dangerous undertaking.

By examining the representation of the Spanish as perpetually white in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa, the relationship of “whiteness” to modernity and morality can be brought to the fore. In this chapter, I argue that the concept of race during the Franco regime was multifaceted and altered to suit the ideological needs of the individual wielding the discourse. In the novel *Efún*, the failed romance between Ana and Carlos serves as a warning that the colonial venture places the integrity of the Spanish race and that of the nation in danger if it is undertaken without the proper guidance of the values of National Catholicism, which serve to protect the very

“whiteness” and moral integrity of the Spanish nation. In *Efún*, a lack of white women and priests translates into a lack of regulation of colonialists’ sexuality and spiritual health, producing disastrous results. Further, the novel’s preoccupations with transgressive sex and miscegenation, in my estimation, demonstrate an anxiety regarding the “racial consequences” of the colonial project, and the fear of a destruction of European, white, identity (and therefore modernity). By pathologizing uncontained female sexuality in both the Spanish woman Isabel and the African *mestiza* Obama, Liberata Masoliver “educates” the female, bourgeois readers on a broad level about the consequences of female sexuality and the necessity of proper gender roles. In *Efún*, anxiety of the internal and colonial other is manifested simultaneously.

### **Race during Franco**

The construction of national identity within the peninsula was intimately tied to the construction of the nation as an imperial power: racial discourse proved an important cornerstone to that national-imperial identity. As a concept employed to unify the (supposedly) heterogeneous Spanish nation, *raza* corresponded with the ideal of the *patria*, signifying this ideal in both a historical, religious and cultural sense, as well as a biological, or racial one. In Francisco Franco’s 1942 novel *Raza*, written under the pen name Jaime de Andrade (and later made into a film), the conceptualization of a hegemonic national identity was a spiritual unification of the various historical groups into one homogenous, Catholic, race-nation. References are made to men who physically and spiritually embody the exemplary Spanish race: one new recruit is called “un gran ejemplar de la raza” (161). In one dialogue, the main characters pass by the ancient synagogue *Santa María la Blanca* in Toledo:

Isabel.--- ¿Qué puede evocar una iglesia de judíos?

José.--- ¿De judíos?... ¡quién sabe! Sinagogas, mezquitas e iglesias pasaron de unas a otras manos. Judíos, moros y cristianos aquí estuvieron y al contacto con España se purificaron. (71)

This dialogue, although it contains a rather absurd statement, is indicative of the ways in which notions of hybridity (cultural, religious, and racial) were framed both before and during the Franco regime. The Spanish *raza* was revered as a mystical fusion of peoples, formed by centuries of contact on the Iberian peninsula, and whose phenotype and moral and cultural qualities had been “cleansed” by the *Reconquista*, the Inquisition and imperial conquest. Above, José states that the diverse religious-cultural groups were “purified” by contact with Spain; “España” in this exchange is not merely a place, but an ethos. Another telling example from the 1930s that demonstrates the use of both cultural-historical and biological notions of race is taken from the 1939 *Catecismo Patriótico Español*:

The Spanish people is not a pure race but rather a unified product of races and bloods, highly blended and decanted in its heroic and glorious secular life. ...The main ethnic elements of the Spanish people are the ancient Celtiberians, Romans and Visigoths, which some mixture of Suevos, Alanos and Vandals and finally the Arabs and Berbers. (Menéndez Reigada 2003, qtd. in Medina-Doménech 92)

The Spanish, in the above quote, are cast as a stable fusion of peoples, whose blood has been well-blended, strained (purified), and aerated as though it were a fine wine that has achieved maturity. This concept, the Spanish as a stable racial fusion, was harnessed to fulfill and justify the imperial goals of the Franco regime both within Spain and abroad.

Proposing religious incorporation and miscegenation as uniquely “Spanish” was a technique to at once define and subjugate internal others (the Roma, the lower classes, and peripheral nationalisms), as well as colonial others, such as Africans and Latin Americans, as Jo Labanyi has demonstrated in her analysis of the early Francoist missionary films and *folklóricas* (“Internalisations,” “Race”). While the notion of racial fusion and the incorporation of Others was wielded when such discourse was useful, the idea of the Spanish as racially hybrid or non-white was not accepted by everyone. As Eva Woods Perió argues in *White Gypsies*, her book-length study of folkloric films, Spanish cultural production and political discourse during the Franco regime was preoccupied with Spain’s “place in global modernity: to be modern meant manipulating hybridity by assimilating racial difference or by excluding it from the definition of Spanishness” (24). Thus, the concept of the *raza* was quite flexible. As Woods Peiró explains, the phenotypic whiteness foregrounded by film representations of gypsies allowed manipulation of stereotypical gypsy and orientalist elements ascribed to Spanish society (24). Stars such as Raquel Meller, while performing a gypsy identity, ultimately underscored the “whiteness” of Spaniards by presenting gypsy culture and identity as performance art, and thus not inherent or immutable characteristics of “true” Spanish society. *Efún* goes even further: the Spanish characters are presented as unequivocally *white*, their racial superiority all the more dazzling before the African colonial subjects. Contrary to representations that foreground practices of miscegenation and racial fusion as a foundation of a benevolent empire, in *Efún*, race mixing is presented not only as immoral, but as a threat to the colonial project and the authentic white identity of the Spanish.

## Race: A Prismatic Concept

Racial discourse in Spain was not formed in a vacuum. Catholic ideology and the rhetoric of racial-cultural incorporation certainly played a role in defining the *raza*. However, the construction of Spanish national identity also employed biological (or pseudo-biological) notions of health, heredity, and blood. Spanish and international scientific investigations influenced the concept of race in Spain, as demonstrated by the twentieth-century Spanish eugenics movement and discourses of race during the Franco regime.<sup>1</sup> While fully elaborating the specificity of Spanish concepts of race during Franco and recognizing the influence of National Catholicism, it is still necessary to acknowledge the importance of a biological concept of race, and recognize the engagement of Spanish scientists and doctors with the international debates around eugenics and race that occurred in the twentieth century.<sup>8</sup> The discussion of race in this chapter is focused and deals with “scientific” race and eugenics and its impact in early to mid-twentieth century Spain.

Since the end of the Second World War the Western scientific community has concurred that there is no ontological or biological basis for racial classifications, the most paradigmatic document of which is the UNESCO *Statement on Race*, published in 1950, which asserted that “the concept of ‘race’ was scientifically untenable” (MacMaster 171). In the fields of genetics and evolutionary biology, the concept of race is ambiguous and invalid as applied to humans, as Alan R. Templeton elucidates in his article “Human Races: A Genetic and Evolutionary Perspective.” For some individuals, skin color and skeletal structure may aid in identifying their geographic origin or that of *some* of their recent ancestors. However, these characteristics, as

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<sup>8</sup> Gómez & Canales 2009, Huertas & Ortiz García 1998.

Templeton explains, are inadequate to classify humans in terms of any type of “subspecies” or to judge levels of more or less sophisticated evolutionary progress (647).<sup>9</sup>

Outside of the hard sciences, the concept of race is popularly thought of as a series of classifications and exclusionary practices based on phenotype or notions of heredity and “blood.” The concept of race encompasses a much broader discursive category than merely a categorization of different skin tones; *race* is a set of practices and a system of thought, in which phenotype is made to represent or embody supposedly intrinsic intellectual, emotional and cultural capacities of a group of people: “Although the concept of race appeals to biologically based human features (so-called phenotypes), selection of these particular human features for purposes of racial signification is always and necessarily a social and historical process” (Omi and Winant 1994). As such, race is a rather flexible concept, which may alter and adapt to particular historical and social contexts. Zygmunt Bauman, in *Modernity and the Holocaust*, states: “Race was a prismatic category—an idea through which myriad political, social, and cultural attitudes and positions were reflected” (qtd. in Goode 11). Bauman’s metaphor of the prism, through which light is refracted to produce a range of colors, is particularly applicable to how the concept of race was wielded in different historical moments in Spain.

Although “race” is no longer considered to be an authentic scientific measurement, the racialization of individuals and the practices of racism are still very much alive. This is due to the fact that the notion of race involves not only “biological” concepts, but cultural ones as well. Race is inscribed in Western modernity in practices such as slavery and colonialism.<sup>10</sup> While the modern concept of race did not fully mature until the nineteenth century, it was cultivated throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in naturalist taxonomies of “barbaric”

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<sup>9</sup> It is important to note that “race” is still a sociologically and medically relevant term depending on context.

<sup>10</sup> S. Gilman 1985, Winant 2001, Appiah 1990, Hannaford 1996, Fredrickson 2002.

peoples and travel accounts, as European maritime empires expanded to encounter new peoples in the Americas, Africa and Asia; and as a further justification for often violent subjection of indigenous Americans and of Africans in the slave trade (Winant 28). As Foucault states, “racism first develops with colonization, or in other words, with colonizing genocide” (*Society* 257). The exact definition of *racism* is contested among scholars due to the complexity of cultural, social and historical factors involved. I will be using the definitions that the sociologist and race theorist Howard Winant delineates: *Racism* is a “signifying practice that essentializes or naturalizes human identities based on racial categories or concepts; social action that produces unjust allocation of socially valued resources, based on such significations; social structure that reproduces such allocations” (*World*, 317).<sup>11</sup> While the term “racism” is a relatively recent word, what it signifies has been in practice in many historical contexts.<sup>12</sup> Foucault, for example, argues that racism is inscribed in the workings of state power: “a way of establishing a biological-type caesura within a population that appears to be a biological domain” (*Society* 255). Foucault goes further in his biopower thesis, arguing that racism fundamentally serves to define who may live or die, and that eliminating those defined as inferior or degenerate, or allowing them to die, subsequently enhances the strength and quality of the species as a whole. The Holocaust is one recent and chilling example that illustrates Foucault’s explanation. Spain’s model of religious conversion and incorporation, particularly of the female Other, has been lauded as differentiating their racial practices from the exterminatory practices such as the Nazi’s.<sup>13</sup> However, in reality both rhetoric and practice were shifting and often contradictory, as illustrated by Francisco Franco’s own policies regarding the Jews in Spain, which ran from lukewarm acceptance

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<sup>11</sup> Due to the various contexts in which racism operates, scholars such as Neil MacMaster, prefer to say “racisms,” plural.

<sup>12</sup> “Racism” first appeared in the English language in the 1930s.

<sup>13</sup> Goode 2009, Labanyi, “Internalisations.”

(allowing Jews to pass through Spain during the Holocaust) to finally collaborating with the Nazis in a plan “to eliminate the six thousand Jews that were known to reside in Spain in 1941” (J. Reverte, qtd. in Woods Peiró 9).

The development of the modern concept of race, as it was articulated in the mid-twentieth century, was in full force by the mid to late nineteenth century. These scientific and anthropological developments coincided with the rise of eugenics and a preoccupation with the “fitness” or degeneration of nations. The combined forces of social Darwinism, nationalism and philology contributed to what Laura Otis calls “organic memory:” the belief that an individual was the embodiment of their blood (race), or ancestral heritage, including psychological tendencies and life experiences (*Organic* 3). These ‘racial’ features were not only written on the body but also manifested themselves in individual behaviors (especially vice), family dynamics, and subsequently the national community. The Romantic appeal of the *Volkgeist* attributed national culture as the organic outcome of each nation’s history; or Unamuno’s famous *intrahistoria*, described in *En torno al casticismo* (1895). While naturalists had previously created taxonomies of flora and fauna, they now set about creating one of mankind, applying the notion of teleological historical progress and development to humans. Taxonomies of human development, or racial “family trees” depicted the white European male as the highest evolved form, and the African as an intermediary being who existed between white progress and barbarity (apes) (McClintock 39). The prevailing mode of thought linked phenotype, geographical location and climate with cultural, moral, and physical characteristics.

These racial theories proved “scientifically” the superiority of white Europeans, and attested to their legitimacy as imperial rulers and even their duty to colonize less civilized, more barbaric races. As Labanyi states: “the ‘naturalness’ of the *Volkgeist* gives it the right to colonize the

‘naturalness’ of the non-European world” (*Myth* 8). The superior races were, according to the Count of Gobineau, of Aryan or Teutonic extraction. In his now infamous *Essai sur l’inégalité des races humaines*, Gobineau classifies the “darker” races as the most inferior and animalistic; the “yellow” (“sensual, violent, cruel, practical, and unimaginative”) as intermediate, and the “white” races as the most advanced, possessing “the highest mental faculties, a keen sense of order and justice, liberty, patriotism” (Charnon-Deutsch 46). Mixing, or *miscegenation* was considered a positive activity for lesser, more barbaric peoples, but produced a decline of superior races that eventually provoked the destruction of civilizations. For this reason, in the minds of some European scientists, “Spain was the prime example of racial decay” due to its geographical location and climate, centuries of contact between different groups on peoples on the Iberian Peninsula and its historical relationship with North Africa (Goode 48).

By the nineteenth century, Spain had become characterized as an exotic, Orientalized space as European travelers and artists were fascinated with the traces of the Moorish past and the presence of “Gypsy” culture. Spain was seen as a destination to which the Romantics could escape the confines of modern existence, believing that Spaniards were “linked by a mysterious and passionate force that contrasted with the North’s love and respect for reason, law and principles” (Charnon-Deutsch 59). European writers and artists were inspired by this exotic, gypsy Spain, such as Prosper Mérimée, who wrote the famous 1845 novella *Carmen*, which Georges Bizet later adapted as an opera in 1875. Washington Irving and Eugène Delacroix were just two of the many writers and artists who were also fascinated by the legacy of Al-Andalus; Victor Hugo wrote, “Spain is still the Orient; Spain is half African” (Martin-Márquez, *Disorientations* 22). Spain’s “indolent,” and “passionate” character, idealized especially in representations of Andalusia, also had a dark side: that of a hybrid, or tainted racial mixture: “the

mixing of Spanish, Jewish, and Arab peoples was imagined as detrimental to the modern-day Spanish stock, producing a bad “blood” that impeded enlightened progress because it too closely tied Spain to North Africa” (Charnon-Deutsch 51). While academic Arabists, and even Spanish artists romanticized their own Moorish past to varying degrees, the notion of tainted blood or a degenerate national character plagued Spain in its search to achieve a modern and European status throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Due to the inescapable “stain” of Jewish and African blood on their history, Spanish anthropologists and scientists sought to rehabilitate the concept of racial hybridity and mixture. Some looked to French anthropologists such as Paul Topinard, who in 1879 argued that “no races remained pure,” and that “the search for racial types was the only possible method for finding the composite races that made up each racial type” (Goode 51). As it was impossible to disavow centuries of ethnic contact on the Iberian Peninsula, racial and cultural fusion was framed as a positive or fortifying element in the formation of the “Spanish race.” (Goode 41). The importance of uncovering the nation’s racial composition was key, as this was thought to unlock the secrets to endemic weaknesses in national character (“organic memory”) considered the root causes of “backwardness” and political problems, like the loss of the remaining American colonies. The doctor Federico Olóriz y Aguilera, for example, felt that Spanish Anthropology would “contribute effective solutions to a variety of ethnological, sociological and physiological problems that afflict the individual and collective life of our *patria*” (Goode 57). Olóriz, presenting his cephalic index in 1892, concluded that the Spanish race was the best example of a stable, and hence superior, racial fusion. His work was favorably received within Spain, even by more orthodox Catholics, in particular Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, who in the second edition of *La historia de los heterodoxos españoles*, praised Olóriz for “portraying in

biological form what he himself was attempting to show in the history of Spanish Catholicism”(Goode 62) The notion that the Spanish were, as Joshua Goode has called it, a “racial alloy,” or an amalgamation of racial (biological) and cultural characteristics, was a fundamental notion shared throughout Spanish anthropological investigations, and was appealing to both liberals and conservatives in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a biological way to both diagnose and treat Spain’s problems.

Framing racial admixture as a positive force was a way not only to disprove hypotheses of the Spanish as a “degenerate” race, but also to further imperial political agendas. Spain’s racial-historical relationship with North Africa was taken up enthusiastically both before and after the Moroccan War of 1859-1860 to justify Spanish interventions in Morocco. During the war, a case was made for Spanish-Moroccan “brotherhood” through geographical determinism, in the form of the claim that Spain stretched from the Pyrenees to the Atlas Mountains (Pedraz Marcos 145). While initially there was broad support for the war, the unfavorable outcome for Spain soured public opinion on the topic of African interventions; however, among the military and scholarly Arabists, the fervor for Africa remained strong and would be taken up again in the latter part of the nineteenth century. In 1883, the *Sociedad de Africanistas y Colonistas* was formed, and in an 1884 inaugural speech for the society, Joaquin Costa proposed a fervent Africanist agenda. Costa favored conquest of North Africa and the Gulf of Guinea, again using notions of geographical determinism and biological heritage to justify the connection between Spain and Africa:

España y Marruecos son como las dos mitades de una unidad geográfica, forman a modo de una cuenca hidrográfica, cuyas divisorias extremas son las cordilleras paralelas de Atlas as Sur y del Pirineo al Norte, entrambas coronadas de nieves perpetuas, y cuya corriente central es el Estrecho de Gibraltar, a la cual afluyen, de un lado, en sus pesadas

caravanas, los tesoros del interior del continente europeo. Lo repito. El Estrecho de Gibraltar no es un tabique que separa una casa de otra casa; es, al contrario, una puerta abierta por la Naturaleza para poner en comunicación las dos habitaciones de una misma casa. (*Intereses*, qtd. in Perdras Marcos 145)

The Spanish, Costa asserted, had a duty to civilize Morocco, just as Morocco had brought civilization to Spain in the Middle Ages (Pedraz Marcos 245). Costa was not the only scholar to propose this relationship: the notion of the Spanish as a race at the “crossroads between Africa and Europe” was further promoted by the anthropologist Manuel Antón y Ferrándiz, who conducted research in Spain and Morocco. In *Razas y tribus de Marruecos*, published in 1903, he proposed that the Spanish were a Mediterranean Race,” which had been formed through the mixture of a Libyan-Iberian and a Syrian-Arab race, and “had provided the true racial patrimony of European civilization’ (Goode 72). Hence, the Spanish were the key to understanding the formation of European civilization. Unlike Antón y Ferrándiz, however, Joaquín Costa did not accept any type of Libyan or Syrian influence in the Spanish racial makeup. Instead, he advocated an Iberian-Berber (“white”) race, from which the Spanish descended (Nerín 12). These notions of racial fusion and geographical connections later influenced Africanists and imperialists during the Franco regime.

It is important to note that after the “Disaster” of 1898, Costa abandoned his Africanist rhetoric and began to argue that the Spanish must turn to Europe and chase out the African qualities within. Instead of extolling the racial relationship between North Africa and Spain, Costa instead began to assert Spanish whiteness and demanded a complete “Europeanization” of the nation (Martin-Márquez, *Disorientations* 60). This conflicted attitude towards Spanish national identity vis-à-vis Africa and Europe is telling, and not uncommon among intellectuals of

the era. José Ortega y Gasset, for example, in *Meditaciones del Quijote* (1914) and *España invertebrada* (1921), attributes much of Spain's decline to Mediterranean or Latin blood. While engagement with a relationship with "Africa," and a revindication of it served Africanist and imperialist designs, it could come back to haunt its proponents.

### **Catalan racial identity**

Joaquín Costa was not the only writer and intellectual who wished to construct a closer relationship with Europe in order to divorce Spanish identity from Africa. Catalan nationalism also formed a racial identity upon which to stake its claims, and the concept of race was used as a discursive weapon to distinguish Catalan identity from Spanish. It must be said that evidence that Liberata Masoliver was even a covert Catalan nationalist is lacking. However, the racial components of Catalan identity, as constructed by Catalan nationalists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are relevant to *Efún*. Although the novel is supportive of the ideology of National Catholicism and the Franco dictatorship, it focuses on the heroism of Catalan characters, obsessively asserting their "whiteness." In the nineteenth century, Catalan nationalists constructed a racial identity that distinguished itself from a "Spanish" essence by declaring a whiter, more European origin and a cosmopolitan attitude, casting Spaniards as "Semitic," "Moors," or "Bedouins," (Marfany, qtd. in Martin-Márquez, *Disorientations* 44). The Catalan nationalist and writer Pompeu Gener's 1887 *Heregias: Estudios de crítica inductiva sobre asuntos españoles*, for example, accused the Spanish (Castilians) of being "paralyzed" and in a state of "necrosis" due to the blood of inferior races like "la Semítica, la Bereber y la Mongólica" (Gener, qtd. in Caja 96-97). Gener felt that the "race" of men in the north of the Peninsula was more "virile." These ideas were echoed by other proponents of Catalan nationalism, such as Joaquim Casas i Carbó, a lawyer and writer whose 1891 "Estudis

d'etnografia catalana” echoed Gener’s claims that “Catalans had quickly regained their territory from the Muslim invaders and had enjoyed close ties with northern Europe throughout the Middle Ages,” retaining a “superior and essentially Aryan Gothic character” (Martin-Márquez, *Disorientations* 43).

Brad Epps, in his article “Between Europe and Africa: Modernity, Race and Nationality in the Correspondence between Miguel de Unamuno and Joan Margall,” also notes the racial identity of Catalans as a means to distinguish Catalonia from Spain. In Epps’ analysis of the letters exchanged between Unamuno and Maragall, he notes Maragall’s depiction of Spain as a “cemetery,” “primitive,” “savage,” and African (104). Maragall articulates a hope for revitalization and regeneration through a future infusion of Basque and Catalan elements in the Peninsula and a simultaneous European internationalism (104, 106). In the 1897 “La independència de Catalunya,” Maragall claims that central Spain is dominated by “flamenquisme” and “xulisme,” spectacles that brought to mind an African tribe (Epps 116). The status of civilized people (Catalans), upon contemplating such degenerate excesses, was seriously imperiled, hence it would be better to cut oneself off from Spain than witness the spectacle of a decrepit race “que no es la nostra” (Epps 116). The fear of racial degeneration, or the loss of a “European” identity, is a tension prevalent in *Efún* as a possible consequence of African colonialism. As we shall see, it may reflect Masoliver’s own identification as a Catalan.

### **Hispanotropicalism: Africanist Discourse During Franco**

It is evident that Spain’s relationship vis-a-vis Africa in the nineteenth and early twentieth century had a profound impact on the Africanist discourse during the Franco regime.

“Hispanotropicalism” is the term that the anthropologist Gustau Nerín aptly coined to describe the various, sometimes contradictory discourses deployed under Franco to justify interventions in

Africa. The neologism references *lusotropicalismo*, a theory developed by the Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre in the 1930s and seized upon by the Salazar regime as a way to justify and frame their imperial identity and continuing colonial possessions in Africa and Asia. Lusotropicalism depicts the Portuguese as uniquely suited to empire, due to their geographical position and historical contact with different peoples, including Arabs, throughout history. The Salazar regime employed lusotropicalism to assert that the Portuguese, as opposed to other imperial powers like England, were not racist. Rather, because of their supposed gift, or natural affinity for miscegenation and multiculturalism, the Portuguese historically respected and embraced all races throughout the history of their empire. The different discourses that informed the Africanist rhetoric under Franco were quite similar to lusotropicalism, especially by the early 1960s. At its core, Hispanotropicalism portrayed the Spanish as a people uniquely suited to colonizing Africa; theirs was a civilizing project legitimized by racial theories, geographical determinism, and Catholic evangelism. Hispanotropicalism invoked Spain and Morocco's "blood brotherhood" and geographical determinism. In *La España completa: estudio colonial* (1950) Tomás Borrás, the Falangist intellectual and author, argues that the conquest of North Africa, the Sahara and Equatorial Guinea is Spain's manifest destiny. Geography is invoked as a "natural" and legitimate justification. Borrás asserts that Spain and Morocco are geographic mirror images, thus ordained by God to form one geopolitical unity (11). For Borrás, the unification of the Hispano-Berber race was also part of God's plan:

Esa nebulosa, la prehistoria, registra con datos hoy irrefutables un solo grupo étnico, extendido por los hoy España y Marruecos; un pueblo camita, protosemita que indistintamente llaman antropólogos y arqueólogos bereber o ibero. Es el mismo el hombre del lado de acá y del lado de allá del Estrecho, y esa comunidad de vida y de

cultura se consagran en los siglos, ¡centenares de siglos! Es el substrato racial, la biología que empieza a ser nacional, del mismo pueblo establecido en el recinto ordenado por la Natualeza. Unidad de sangre, pues, como unidad de territorio. (12)

In *La España completa*, Borrás invokes the nineteenth and early twentieth-century theories of anthropologists as well as Joaquín Costa's theory of the Hispano-Berber, *white*, race. According to Nerín, these Hispanotropicalist fantasies pinnacled in the early sixties, when the Spanish government sought a way to protect itself from international scrutiny of organizations like the United Nations, who became critical of Spain's continued colonial presence in Africa (17). Spain imitated Portugal and, in 1961, made Equatorial Guinea an overseas province.<sup>14</sup>

While allusions to ancient racial ties to North Africans were popular when speaking of conquest of the Maghreb, this was not the case when speaking of Equatorial Guinea. Instead, religious duty and *La Hispanidad* became potent justifications, although racial discourse did not disappear. Association with Guineans, for example, took the form of a Catholic "brotherhood" of equality in the eyes of God, rather than any type of shared racial heritage. As Susan Martín-Márquez explains:

Spaniards emphasized brotherhood with all their ex-colonial subjects, grounded in a shared language and religion, while the phrase 'spirit of the race' began to gain purchase. In this way, the concept of *Hispanidad* neatly elided with the question of 'biological' race while exalting the profound 'family ties' that bound all inhabitants of the former overseas possessions to Spain. (*Disorientations* 49)

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<sup>14</sup> Again, this echoes similar tactics undertaken by the Portuguese during Salazar, who maintained overseas provinces in Africa, India and Southeast Asia.

*Hispanidad* then became a way to unite former and current colonies under a cultural and linguistic hegemony. The framework built for imagining race was that of a mystical transference, national history, and spiritual or intangible qualities, as the earlier quote from Francisco Franco's *Raza* illustrates. The Spanish coronel Luis Sáez de Govantes, in *El africanismo español* (which won the Premio "África" de Literatura in 1970) claimed: "La idea africanista ha estado en los españoles desde las primeras páginas de la historia, porque África es como una prolongación de España" (20). For Sáez, the Spanish, due to their sincerity and Catholic piety, had a special predilection for Africa.

According to Africanists during Franco, Spain, due to its Catholic nature, took a purely evangelical and ethical position towards colonization (Nerín 17). The language of spiritual, mystical, or metaphysical union with Africans was also used by the avant-garde, Falangist writer Ernesto Giménez Caballero. Labanyi analyzes Giménez Caballero's *Genio de España* (1932), in which he explicitly figures Spain as Don Juan, and imagines both the conquest of empire and the unification of all of Spain (specifically Catalonia) as heterosexual rape ("Women" 383). Giménez Caballero asserted that the "genio," or genius of Spain was their capacity to be "race-makers, Don Juans, magnificent virile studs," who, in doing so, form a "new race" (105, qtd. in Labanyi, "Internalisations" 29). For Giménez Caballero, *Hispanidad* was "un mestizaje místico" (*Genio* 130). The paradox of the "mestizaje místico," a mixing of souls or metaphysical essences, but *not* of flesh and blood, is particularly applicable to Spain's conquest of Equatorial Guinea and the desire to maintain a distance from the natives.

The contradictions in Giménez Caballero's rhetoric were also present in the clash between official government policies and actual practices in the colony of Spanish Guinea. The Franco government discouraged sexual and romantic activities with Africans as degenerative. To

that end strict punishment, such as fines and expulsion, was instituted for men found guilty of having a sexual relationship with an indigenous Guinean woman, or *mininga*. In spite of the rhetoric condemning mixed relationships, Spaniards were legally allowed to marry Guinean women: however between 1936 and 1960 only one case of mixed marriage was documented, that of the governor Mariano Alonso who contracted marriage with a Bubi noblewoman as a ploy to eventually crown himself King of the Bubi people (Nerín 116). Mixed marriage was not against the law, but societal pressure against mixed-race relationships was too great: Nerín cites the case of a Guardia Civil who attempted to marry an indigenous woman in Annobón, and as a result was forced to return to Spain by authorities (116). In order to discourage racial mixing, the Spanish government eventually allowed more white women to immigrate to Equatorial Guinea during the mid-twentieth century. African–Spanish relationships, much less matrimony, remained a rather taboo subject. However, one late colonial novel, Josep María Vilá’s 1967 *Los que no se van*, depicts the struggle of Pedro, a Spanish colonial, who tries to justify his love for a native African (not mixed-race) woman, María. Although she was born into a tribe, María was educated by nuns and is a successful “product” of the civilizing process of Spanish colonization. *Los que no se van* was published right before Equatorial Guinea’s independence from Spain in 1968. However, the marriage between Pedro and María and their eventual children is a heavy-handed dose of imperialist nostalgia on the part of Vilá, as Equatorial Guinea ceased to be a Spanish colony soon after the novel was published. *Los que no se van* optimistically views the future of Guinea as a collaboration of colonial, African subjects who are ultimately subservient to the patriarchal white, Spanish father/husband. However, miscegenation was never actually viewed in a positive light during the colonial period. Within the context of Spanish colonialism,

Guineans were portrayed as Spain's spiritual, but not racial brothers. By maintaining this race-based distance, Spaniards affirmed their claims to whiteness and modernity

### **Modernity, Race, and the Romance**

In Liberata Masoliver's novel *Efún* one sees the production of Spanish (modern) vs. African (primitive) identities. The Spanish are represented as the ultimate white, cosmopolitan and modern identity, which, if guided by a strong Catholic devotion, may avoid the vices of materialism and depravity. This is a classic construction of modernity typical of the Franco regime, espoused by conservative political groups such as Acción Española, which did not reject a "modernity" that promoted corporate and industrial interests, but rather conceptualized it as "cleansed" and morally appropriate if it was shaped by strongly conservative and Catholic values (Richards 58). This "reactionary modernism" of the Franco regime is evident in *Efún*, where whiteness is the sign of modernity, morality, and a cosmopolitanism tempered by Catholicism.<sup>15</sup>

*Efún*, a romance in the colonial setting, was the first book published by Liberata Masoliver (1911-2001), a popular fiction writer from Sant Cugat. In an interview with journalist Roser Amills Bibiloni, Masoliver admits that she had always been a voracious reader and was fascinated with Equatorial Guinea from a young age. During and after the Civil War, she wrote in order to escape from her personal problems and the difficulties of life that resulted from wartime conditions; she also claims that writing was a way for her to improve her Spanish-language proficiency. While by no means a canonical author, Masoliver had a successful career as a writer of popular fiction. *Efún* won the Elisenda de Montcada prize in 1954, and other novels also achieved recognition: *Los Galiano* (1957), published by Editorial Janés, was a

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<sup>15</sup> Mark Neocleous coined the term "reactionary modernism" in his 1997 study *Fascism*.

finalist for the Premio Planeta, and *Barcelona en llamas* (1960) a finalist for the Premio Seix Barral. Other awards for which Masoliver's work was considered include the Premio Ateneo de Valladolid and the Premio Café Gijón (Amills Bibiloni).

Masoliver's novels often deal with the repercussions of the Spanish Civil War and the lives of the Catalan upper class, but she also wrote at least one children's book in Catalan (*La bruixa*, 1961) and three novels set in Equatorial Guinea: *Efin* (1955), *Selva negra, selva verde* (1959), and *La mujer del Colonial* (1962), the latter of which was broadcast on Radio Nacional Española (Amills Bibiloni). Her novels deal with what would have been considered racy or scandalous themes; an editor's preface to *La mujer del colonial* cautioned readers: "Esta novela, como todas las de Liberata Masoliver, está escrita para lectores adultos y para jóvenes lectores que acostumbran a leer lo que no les está destinado."

*The Feminist Encyclopedia of Spanish Literature* sums up Masoliver's ideology without mincing words: "her view point is conservative, conformist, and supportive of the patriarchal establishment. Similarly, she treats several other potentially controversial topics—infidelity, impotence, sterility, divorce, rape, venereal disease, homosexuality, and surrogate paternity—but presents none as serious social problems" (392). It is true that the moral tone of her works supports the ideology of National Catholicism, but it is perhaps excessive to claim that Masoliver treats controversial issues lightly. Rather, the difficult challenges that face her female protagonists are resolved, or endured, with a strong faith in God and dedication to traditional gender roles, such as marriage and motherhood. Certainly, the fates of the women in Masoliver's novels are likely unacceptable from a contemporary, feminist standpoint. However, as Tania Modleski has demonstrated in *Loving with a Vengeance*, even the most "orthodox" or conservative plots can contain "elements of protest or resistance" (25). Masoliver's works, as

well as other romance novels written during the dictatorship, may show acceptance of a conservative, authoritarian ideology while simultaneously articulating positions that, when examined critically, go against the status quo. *Efín* adheres to the Catholic, conservative modernity espoused by the regime and is also unambiguously racist. At the same time, the heroine Ana Ribera is extremely independent and courageous, particularly for 1950s Spain. The novel also harnesses racial and regional identity in a manner that, while subtle, highly values Catalan characters and expresses a strong ambivalence towards, if not an outright critique of, the colonial project in Guinea.

The multi-faceted ideologies evident in the popular fiction and film of the Franco era have been analyzed by Labanyi, in her study “Romancing the Early Franco Regime.” In Labanyi’s analysis of romance novels and their film adaptations, several key plot and character elements are shown to be commonplace. Indeed, most romance novels, whether British, French, American, or Spanish, are written to a standard plot formula, evident in earlier archetypes such as Samuel Richardson’s 1740 novel *Pamela*, through contemporary Harlequin Romances and beyond. The romance’s basic structure is as follows:

A young, inexperienced, poor to moderately well-to-do woman encounters and becomes involved with a handsome, strong, experienced, wealthy man, older than herself by ten or fifteen years. The heroine is confused by the hero’s behavior since, though he is obviously interested in her, he is mocking, cynical, contemptuous, often hostile and even somewhat brutal. By the end, however, all misunderstandings are cleared away, and the hero reveals his love for the heroine, who reciprocates. (Modleski 36)

The romance novels of the *primer franquismo* are faithful to the conventions of the genre in large part, but also feature independent, often orphaned young women who bravely seek out

adventure, success, and fame. Often they are “on the move,” travelling to exotic and far-flung settings, or even just the capital Madrid (Labanyi, “Romancing” 5). Although the heroines fall in love and assume traditional roles in the domestic sphere, Labanyi emphasizes that the women’s “capitulation” is seen as just that; at the same time, the sacrifices the women make for love are also presented as *choices* they are free to make, as opposed to a life into which they are forced (“Romancing,” 4). The freedoms afforded to the female protagonists serve, on one level, as an escapist distraction for the reader, but also manage to value women’s capacities and social role in an era that presented tremendous hardships for many.

*Efún* alters several aspects of the standard formula. Significantly, the focus of the first part of the narrative is not Ana, but rather the male hero, Carlos. The novel details the trials and tribulations of Carlos Isart, a physician and member of the Catalan bourgeoisie, as he roughs out a life in Spanish Guinea, trying to simultaneously civilize the natives and work a plantation effectively. While confronted with disease, heat, insects, and indolent natives, his most challenging obstacles stem from a dangerous *mestiza*, named Obama, and later, an innocent Spanish girl Ana. True to genre, Ana is an orphan who bravely sets off to Spanish Guinea after her godmother dies; once there, she does end up falling in love with Isart in spite of herself. However, Ana does not “capitulate” in the end. Rather, *Efún*, a tragic romance, concludes with Ana leaving Isart to do his duty in the colony, while she returns to Spain. Masoliver denies the reader the ultimate unification of the couple, underscoring the representation of Guinea as a wild and savage space not suitable for Spanish women or a “white” Spanish family. Ana’s departure and Isart’s dedication to duty leave him vulnerable to Obama’s machinations. The final scene of the novel finds the white colonial having ultimately lost control and succumbed to the vicissitudes of Africa and the dangers of the racial other, Obama. The novel’s tragic end, for the

time period, shocking conclusion, far from promoting empire as a mystical incorporation of the African Other, instead presents the colonial project as a descent into degeneration and hopelessness. While the Spanish are represented as a necessary, civilizing presence in the colony, the narrative suggests that permanent residence would provoke dire consequences.

### ***Efún: A Postwar Education of Desire***

Masoliver enjoins race, class, and desire to create ambivalence between the duty of the Spanish in Guinea versus the “racial” and moral consequences of the colonial project. The novel is set in the imaginary colonial outpost of Efún, where an unhealthy tropical environment and the scarcity of white women and priests place the physical, spiritual, and racial health of the colonizers in jeopardy. These conflicts are paralleled with flashback scenes of Isart’s life in Spain, as Masoliver educates the reader on the dangers of muddling social-class boundaries, racial mixing, uncontrolled female sexuality, and materialism. Indeed, calling this novel an “education of desire” is quite accurate, as Masoliver wrote the novel for her daughter during a 3-month convalescence from an illness; her daughter would “grab the pages out of her hands the minute she wrote them” (Amills Bibiloni, my translation). The eventual corruption of Carlos Isart is the consequence of a colonial project undertaken without the strong guidance of Catholic morality. In *Efún*, this leaves Spanish men vulnerable to their superficial desires and weaknesses for vice.

The small colonial backwater of Efún is a space in which ideal Spanish colonizers are also presented as modern, ideal Westerners: Catholic, bourgeois, educated, cosmopolitan, and, obsessively, white. Masoliver produces a taxonomy of characters that is reminiscent of the racial taxonomies of the nineteenth century. The evolutionary “tree” evidenced in *Efún* entwines race and class, with the native Africans being the least racially and culturally evolved. Lower-class

and weak, undisciplined Spaniards (and Catalans), such as the alcoholic García and the sexually deviant Juan Esteve, are depicted as more evolved than Africans. But, these unsavory Spaniards are ultimately portrayed as degenerates, whose incompetence disrupts work in the *serrería* and eventually leads to Esteve's accidental death. Bourgeois, well-educated Catalans are posited as the ideal national subjects, and are embodied by Carlos Isart and Ana Ribera. The narrative's veneration of Catalan identity is subtle, and significant cultural and linguistic cues are absent, most especially the Catalan language, public use of which was banned at the time of the novel's publication (Balcells 127). Ana and Isart's exact origins are somewhat ambiguous. Still, the narrative manages to reveal that Ana's mother was from Barcelona and Ana and Isart were both living in or near Barcelona during the Civil War. Ana was brought up in San Ignacio, which in the narrative is described as a *pueblo* close to Barcelona. The most prominent clues are given in the surnames of the characters: Carlos Carmona Isart and Ana Ribera, *apellidos* significantly more prevalent in Catalonia and the Levant.<sup>16</sup> The covert manner in which Masoliver asserts a Catalan identity for her main characters is far from a bold political statement. However, it is a presence in the novel that reads contrary to an assertion of a single hegemonic "Spanish" identity. It also corresponds with the racial discourse of Catalan nationalism, in which Catalans were "whiter" and more modern than other Spanish subjects, as we have seen earlier in writings by Pompeu Gener and Joan Maragall.

Contrasting with Ana and Isart are Obama, the dangerous *mestiza*, and Isabel Escudero, a lower-class Spanish woman who is psychologically disturbed and sexually promiscuous. Both Obama and Isabel are responsible for violently unhinging the order of their respective societies. The story of Isabel Escudero is related by Carlos to Ana one day, as Ana seeks to understand

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<sup>16</sup> *Miparentela.com*, mapas de apellidos.

both the rumors she has heard about his troubled past, and his seeming disinterest and dislike of women. The frame tale, with its depiction of Isabel and the havoc she wreaks, serves as a lesson to the reader about the dangers of modern, liberal women. Isabel, by studying at the university, transgresses the public-private division of gendered work and woman's "proper" place in society, leading her to be sexually promiscuous, too independent, and materialistic. She rejects her respectable but humble background and "ensnares" Santiago, Carlos' best friend and a professor in order to gain social status and access to the bourgeoisie. But once Isabel meets Carlos she attempts, successfully, to seduce him as well. Both Santiago and Carlos fall in love with her because of what is described as her potency. Isabel's sexual precocity is soon revealed to be pathological, when she kills Santiago as a ploy to be with Carlos. When foul play is suspected and the police investigate, she accuses Carlos of orchestrating the whole event. During the trial, Carlos is almost found guilty until Isabel's rampant promiscuity comes to light and Carlos's housekeeper steps forward as a witness. Although Carlos is exonerated, the incident provokes a *mundo al revés*: his father marries the "rata sabia" of a housekeeper to ensure her silence, and the social standing and the good name of Carlos' family is ruined. Carlos becomes estranged from his father, fleeing to Equatorial Guinea (and taking his mother's name, Isart). Isabel later commits suicide in prison.

The association of Isabel with the *mestiza* Obama is clear in the novel. Both women are possessed by an uncontrolled, dangerous sexuality that wreaks havoc on the social order. Obama disrupts the control of the whites in Efún; Isabel, morality and the bounds of social class in the Peninsula. Entwining issues of social class and race with sexuality is a critical commonplace in colonial literature. In *Race and the Education of Desire*, Ann Laura Stoler concludes that "whiteness" and the construction of eighteenth and nineteenth century European bourgeois

identity occurred in both the imperial metropolis as well as the colony, and that social class, sexuality and race were not only entwined, but “coded” by each other (7). “Whiteness” implied the control of sexuality and morals as part of a broader program of racial purity. Race hygiene was also vital under Franco, informed by a strong current of National Catholicism. Population expansion became a significant corollary to the imperial designs of the regime, as “racial heritage, biological patrimony and the belief in the superiority of the Spanish race introduced race hygiene into Francoist discourse” (Nash 746). Importance was placed on decreasing infant mortality and improving the productivity of the race, and the Spanish were seen to be the key to saving Western civilization (Nash 746). Women and their bodies were essential to maintaining and regenerating the health of the race, as expressed in writings by Spanish doctors such as the now notorious psychiatrist Antonio Vallejo-Nájera, in publications such as *Eugenesia de la hispanidad* (1937), and *Política racial del nuevo estado* (1938). Women had the responsibility, as embodied by role models such as St. Teresa, the Virgin Mary, and Queen Isabel, to maintain a “whiteness” and purity of mind and body, as “contamination” of either would be harmful.

It was believed that women had an innate religious devotion: this was a woman’s gift to the family and the race (Richards 64). During Franco, the ideology viewed women as policing the morals of men and society: “Their purity was a brake on men’s moral corruption, but their bodies were the source of dirt and contamination” (Richards 52). Those who did not conform to the highly conservative ideal, especially prostitutes, or those women considered “Marxists,” were considered harmful to society and their behavior was pathologized as overly sexual and mentally ill, like Isabel Escudero. In Spain, the “reds” were also depicted as lower life forms, occasionally even with orientalized features, as Michael Richards has demonstrated in comparisons of photographs in the 1940 *Calendario* of the Sección Femenina (63). Thus, race truly was “coded”

with sexuality, social class and even political persuasions, during and certainly before the Franco regime.

In *Efún*, uncontrolled sexuality, and in the case of Obama, mixed blood, are responsible for pathological behavior. The correlation between an aberrant sexuality and madness was also applied to whites, as in the theories of Cesare Lombroso, which linked atavistic sexuality and mental illness (Gilman 98). Miscegenation was viewed as a threat to colonial hierarchies, which often remained exclusive by invoking a white racial purity as a prerequisite to certain privileges. Representations of mixed race portrayed individuals as resulting from illegitimate or extra-marital affairs, and “the result of European degeneration and moral decay” (Stoler 46). Indeed, Juan Esteve, Ana’s fiancé and Isart’s right-hand man in Guinea, who lives with Obama and with whom he has three *mestizo* children, embodies a working-class, degenerate “type,” who is physically violent, prone to vice and said to be “incapable of real love.” According to the logic of race used in *Efún*, these qualities make Esteve less evolved and closer to the mentality of the African natives. However, he is still considered by Isart to be much superior to a native or, most especially, a *mestizo*. Believing that a *mestizo* or mulatto was worse than a “pure” black was quite common, for being “mixed-race” was a sign of moral and mental instability and degeneracy, due to the mixture and “confusion” of blood (Zack 112). The mulatto was considered to have the bad characteristics ascribed to blacks; while he or she could possess some “positive” white qualities, the mixture often resulted in “flightiness” and instability (Zack 112-126). This stereotype, while common in the North American context, is affirmed in *Efún*, as the most dangerous colonial subjects are the *mestizos*.

Obama’s mixed blood has not made her “flighty,” but rather malevolent, prideful, and power-hungry; beautiful and intelligent, but dangerous. Her father was from Bilbao and her

grandfather a European of unknown origin. Hence, she is perceived as almost white, but with African hair and features: “La mestiza se muestra, con frecuencia, primitiva e inconsciente. No conoce el pudor y, como su madre, como todas las nativas, no le da mucha importancia a la fidelidad conyugal. De esa herencia familia saca ella astucias para retener a Juan, nunca empleadas por una mujer aborígen” (16-17). The mixture of blood has made Obama maladjusted for living with Africans or with Europeans, a fate ascribed to many mixed-race individuals in literature (i.e. the *tragic mulatto* of North American literature) but a destiny that is not represented sympathetically in *Efún*. Obama was sold to Isart as a wife by her tribe’s leader, and Isart accepted because he needed a domestic servant. However, he soon understands that Obama had been rejected by her first husband because she had refused to work and forced the other wives to wait on her, poisoning her husband and almost killing him. A similar scenario occurs with Isart: Obama refuses to work and is indolent and brazen (apparently because of her mixed blood). After Isart beats her, she plants a poisonous snake to kill him, but instead it bites and kills his dog. Obama’s (“white”) pride makes her dangerous; she can’t be disciplined like a native; although she is as lazy and indolent as one, she gets angry like a white woman and seeks revenge (“se enfada como una blanca”).

In her attempt on his life, Isart claims to recognize Obama’s white blood: “Una negra no se habría atrevido a envenenar a un blanco. Los blancos relucimos como brillantes entre la negrura de los nativos y nuestro brillo llega hasta Bata, donde está la policía” (72). Isart, after 10 years in Guinea, claims to “know” the native customs and their tricks, but Obama is a mystery, again, because of her mixed blood: “Sólo Obama escapa a su penetración. La sangre de Obama está mixtificada y no obra como los nativos en muchas cosas, aunque en otras no difiera de ellos” (72). Part of Obama’s dissatisfaction is due to the fact that she is self aware, unlike native

women without white blood, who are described as possessing the self-awareness of animals, with soulless gazes.

Obama rejects her African identity, and of the three children she has with Juan Esteve, she disowns her youngest because the child has darker skin and African features. Isart takes in the infant, naming her, significantly, “Isabel,” which strengthens the symbolic association of Isabel Escudero with the stereotypical lack of “pudor” and supposed lower moral values of Africans. The other two *mestizo* children, Juanillo and Josélin, are accepted by Obama and Juan because they are almost white: they seem to Ana to be “pequeños dioses.” However, they are mischievous (though precocious) troublemakers, causing problems with the Europeans and Africans alike:

Son muchos los conflictos que provocan los dos pequeños de Juan en el poblado.

Cuentan con la fuerte complexión física de los nativos y la superior mentalidad de los blancos. Por descontado, sus travesuras resultan pesadas a veces... Son traviesos los mestizos. El dialecto de Efún no tiene secretos para ellos y caminan, incluso, descalzos y sin hacer ruido, como los morenos. (36-37)

The danger of the *mestizo* is made evident in the above passage. While they possess the superior physical (animalistic) qualities stereotypically ascribed to Africans, such as a light step, superior swimming ability and other physical strength, their white blood has made them intelligent. But the mixture causes problems, because they cannot be controlled and are troublemakers. Other *mestizos* in the novel also are devious and cause chaos in the colony: one, fired previously for stealing, returns and robs a plantation; another *mestizo* foreman causes a serious accident in the forest, injuring a good native worker. And the colonials in Bata seem to take a great interest in

the *mestiza* women, as Isart observes when he goes to the city to meet Ana and take her to Efún.

The narrator sermonizes:

Los parroquianos del <<Chiringuito>> las conocen a todas y saben sus nombres. Hablan de ellas con procacidad, envueltos en el incentivo del deseo. En Bata tampoco se hace mucho caso de las prohibiciones del Gobierno en este sentido. La gran cantidad que hay de mestizos habla por sí sola de la frecuentes relaciones íntimas entre peninsulares y nativas. (56)

The danger of the *mestizo* is apparent for the reader when Ana discovers a book of photographs that Juan Esteve has taken of native women. Several of the photos are of Obama, and even show her posing in a European woman's dress. The visual image, Obama as a European lady, embodies the underlying threat of miscegenation that accompanies the colonial project. The images allude to the constructed, staged, or performative aspects of race, and the fear that the Other may usurp the social boundaries marked by white and black. The "menace" of Obama's mimicry and her pretensions to be white, are made apparent through this visual medium, as the danger of miscegenation and its threat to European power and "purity" is made obvious with her dressed-up in European clothing. Homi Bhabha explains the "menace of mimicry" to colonial authority: "It is a desire that reverses 'in part' the colonial appropriation by now producing a partial vision of the colonizer's presence; a gaze of otherness" (*Location* 88). The articulation of difference between Africans and Spaniards, black and white, and of Obama's incommensurable difference from white, in spite of her mixed heritage, is underscored during scenes in which Nguí, Isart's pet ape, kidnaps the *mestiza*, planning to mate with her. This scene, of an ape attempting to mate with an African woman, appears as well in Masoliver's novel *Selva negra, selva verde*. It signals the supposed difference of Africans at a biological level, their

closeness to animals, as an intermediate “species” and emphasizes Obama’s abnormality as a mixed-race individual.

The portrayal of non *mestizos* in the novel alters between extreme stereotypes of Africans. In different contexts both men and women are portrayed as infantile, almost idiotic, with their lower lip hanging down sullenly. Esono, Carlos Isart’s servant, in particular is represented as childish and debased. In one scene, Ana is disgusted when she comes upon Esono gorging himself on enormous, live snails that, Gollum-like, he retrieves from the water “sin quitarles los verdes excrementos finales” (219). The narrative also emphasizes the hard life of African women. There are frequent references to their premature ageing, evidenced by sagging breasts and aged faces. Native women are said to have babies easily, like animals, and they lack modesty (“no conocen el pudor”), which is why they accept polygamy and walk around half-naked. Men are purported to take advantage of women and use them as slaves or beasts of burden, making them do all of the work, and as such it is to their advantage to have more than one wife so they can work even less. These extreme descriptions implicitly paint a contrast between a fictional “African” way of life, where women are devalued, and a “Spanish” one, where a woman’s domestic role as wife and mother is patriotic and practically sacred.

The other extreme stereotype of Africans in the novel is that of sexual fetish, most clearly seen in Carlos Isart and Juan Esteve’s books of photographs. At various points in the narrative, African men are praised for their physical attributes, even called “dioses de bronce, tiesos y bien musculados,” but their attractiveness is negated by their indolence and foul smell (209). While most of Isart’s photographs are medical in nature, the closing image of his album is that of Endongo Enguema, a native man whom Isart purportedly esteems greatly, and who possesses some sort of hypnotic power over others. He is so unique that Ana can tell him apart from the

other natives (a challenge since initially they all looked the same to her). Enguema is murdered for his salary and then eaten by some of the natives due to superstition, to ward of a malignant spirit. However, in the photo album, Endongo appears as “un joven moreno, musculoso y simpático con una serpiente de dos cabezas enrollada al cuerpo” (94). The image of Endongo Enguema’s naked chest, juxtaposed with the two-headed snake, serves to fetishize his body, yet, true to the trope of the fetish, the snake serves as a disavowal, or an “alibi” for the reader (Hall, *Representation* 267). Here the black man becomes, in Frantz Fanon’s words in *Black Skin, White Masks*, a penis symbol—but the narrative and the reader can claim to be focusing on the snake (159). The presence of photographs serves as a type of evidence within the narrative to “fixate” the Africans as so many stereotypes, cementing the claim of their wretched existence as reality, at the same time as it fetishizes their bodies. The misery of their existence is made real by the photographs and the narrative underscores the “real” need for a white intervention.

### **‘White Love,’ White Medicine**

The use of stereotypes to fix differences in the novel continues with the representation of whiteness. “White” in *Efún* is the sign for modernity, but also for moral purity, chastity and physical and mental cleanliness. When Ana and Carlos go to the movies in Bata, they view a NO-DO short, in which the majesty and beauty of whiteness appears on the screen in a scene of a luminous, snowy Swiss landscape, with skiers passing through pine trees and firs (230). The Africans are in awe, ostensibly because they have never before seen snow. But, they are overwhelmed not only by the image of the sparkling snow, but by the very aura of whiteness itself, the sign of beauty and purity. Juan Goytisolo parodies this fetishizing of “white” and its association with the supposed superiority of European bourgeois society in his novel *Juan sin tierra* (1975), describing a stereotypical Swiss landscape: “todo límpido y albo, irreproachable,

puro : sin ninguno de los vicios y achaques que el clima de los trópicos acarrea en los cuerpos aun más delicados y ebúrneos : manchas, transpiración, calor, polvo, picaduras de insecto : en la apoteosis de su sacarina e irradiante blancor” (39). Goytisoló reproduces virtually the same images as Masoliver in order to ironize and draw attention to the false connections established between purity, modernity, and whiteness, used as discursive weapons of power that are meant to authorize actions that are, in reality, impure, barbaric, and violent, such as slavery.

Ana embodies the ideal of “whiteness,” and “purity” of Spain during the period of autarky. As the ideal Spanish (Catalan) racial “specimen,” Ana is paradigmatic of both European whiteness and the moral integrity of National Catholicism. During the regime, women’s physical health and morality were essential elements towards protecting and creating a flourishing Spanish race. “The manifest destiny of the Spanish race was thus linked inextricably to the biological destiny of women as potential breeders. They were the key to halting national degeneration” (Nash 746). These social-medical discourses were begun before the Civil War with researchers such as Gregorio Marañón and the eugenics projects, which were concerned with issues of racial and mental hygiene. The more liberal or anarchist ideologies that existed in eugenics and social medicine were removed during the Franco regime. However, there still remained an emphasis on mental, “moral,” and physical health, in particular that of women in their role as mothers, as a key to a productive nation (Nash 744). Ana Ribera embodies this ideal womanhood. Even before she arrives in the outpost of Efun, Ana is a presence through material objects; a fetish of whiteness that is transmitted through her letters to Juan Esteve and her photograph. Isart is given charge of all of Juan’s possessions related to Ana, after Juan and Obama begin living together, due to Obama’s jealousy. Isart, after long days toiling in the tropical heat, finds himself gazing at Ana’s photo and reading her letters before he goes to bed.

For four years he reads her letters and gazes at her photo before he goes to sleep at night. Ana's whiteness, virginal beauty, and innocence provide a mental and spiritual relief to Isart, and indicate what is lacking in the colony in both spiritually and physically:

Los ojos del colonial reposan en la contemplación de esta mujer blanca, después de ver durante todo el día rostros negros, embetunados, como se aplicaría su ánimo si pudiera admirar un paisaje invernal de su tierra. La nieve silenciosa y benigna del Pirineo, contemplada tantas veces y surcada, incluso, con sus esquíes, le sacaría de dentro el veneno del verde constante, ofensivo, que reina por doquier. También las cartas de la mujer blanca, destinadas a su amigo, obran como un sedante en su espíritu. (19)

Isart is not the only colonial who is obsessed with white women. The worker Saltor collects pin-ups and portraits of Hollywood movie stars such as Marilyn Monroe, and wallpapers his room with them. When Ana and Isart go to Bata, she creates a stir among the colonials there, who are unaccustomed to seeing white women. They ogle her and, only half jokingly, ask her to marry them.

While Marilyn Monroe's "type" of North American, blonde whiteness is disdained by the narrator for her stupidity and blatant sex appeal, Ana is described as childlike, pure, and virginal (27). Typical of the romance genre, as Rosalynn Voaden has described, Ana "has the needs, dependencies and temperament of a child with the sexual allure and capacity of an adult woman" ("Language" 82). In a not-so-subtle allegory of postwar Spain and the period of autarky, Ana has spent her youth and adolescence isolated from the outside world, living with a wealthy adopted godmother, doña Elvira, who took her in because her father was murdered by the Reds and her mother died in a bombing during the Civil War. Growing up isolated and sheltered at home, she received a proper Catholic education through tutors and did not attend the *pueblo* school. In

order for Ana to be exposed to outside things, her godmother gave her a movie projector and screen, and installed a swimming pool for Ana to maintain her physical health. The combination of a conservative education which also included physical activity and, implausibly, a private movie theatre (another indicator of “modernity”), is quite illustrative of the conservative modernity typical of the romances published during Franco.

The narrative provides many disconcertingly explicit details regarding Ana’s physical education and innocence. Juan Esteve “confirms” Ana’s virginal purity, as he hasn’t been able to do more than occasionally kiss her, in the presence of doña Elvira, of course (27):

No ha salido con ningún amigo del sexo contrario en la Península. Según lo que contó la misma Ana, su protectora la educó a su manera y no quiso que madurara prematuramente su espíritu con el pesimismo de la literatura contemporánea. En cambio, cuando lo juzgó necesario le explicó de una manera natural la importante parte mecánica del amor. (135)

The importance placed on her physical beauty, health, and allure, as well as her innocence and spirituality, is indicative of the narrative’s conformity with the ideals of the female of the *raza*. As an archetype of a conservative modernity, she is independent and resourceful (managing to travel to Equatorial Guinea alone after doña Elvira’s death), but at the same time dedicated to traditional, Catholic values and domesticity. The pointed details also serve the designs of the narrative, and the romance genre, as an education of desire. “Proper” comportment, thoughts, desires, and goals are contrasted with improper ones, the latter of which are punished with sometimes catastrophic consequences: insanity, jail, and suicide are some of the examples offered in *Efún*.

When Ana arrives in Efún she produces great disruptions, not only because her fiancé Juan Esteve’s infidelity and mixed-race children are eventually discovered, but because the

presence of a white woman is threatening to the *mestiza* Obama and her children. In Efún, Ana enforces her own type of colonialism. This domination of the domestic space involves taking control of the dirt, insects, and supposed incompetence of native servants; it is a part of instilling discipline in all spheres of white, bourgeois life (Stoler 110). The historian Vicente Rafael has analyzed the magnitude of the domestic space in the European colonial project, and its connection to the signs of whiteness and femininity: “white women were necessary to protect white men from the dangers of racial corruption... [they were] charged with the patriotic duty of upholding middle-class morality and respectability amid barbarism” (55). Ana, as the *ángel del hogar*, puts order to the small house where Carlos lives, serving as a regulatory presence on his behavior.

Carlos Isart is a highly educated physician from a notable family—his father is considered the finest doctor in Spain. He is in many ways the ideal of a classic, cosmopolitan European. He has travelled widely, studied in New York, and speaks English and French. While the majority of colonizers, even the Spanish ones, are depicted as going to Guinea to get rich, Isart fled there after the scandal with Isabel, and so he is not in the colony for materialistic, capitalist purposes. While he has enough self-discipline to resist the *mestiza* Obama, his lack of a strong faith in God and his time in the colony have made him cynical, and he is bad-tempered and beats the natives, asserting that it is good for them (109). His prickly personality is also standard “masculine” behavior for the love interest in the romance novel.

Isart fulfills the function of doctor in the colony, administering vitamin shots, quinine, and distributing penicillin. In one scene, he saves his native servant’s wife Enfumí and her son during a difficult birth. Masoliver emphasizes the superstitions of natives in relation to childbirth, and their primitive notion of “*medicina*,” a fact which endangers the life of Enfumí.

Isart, with Ana assisting, is completely heroic, wielding medicine, syringes, and water. Bodily fluids and the filthy and difficult process of birth are described in detail and associated with the native woman's body, while the colonial is associated with cleaning and sanitizing the body with water and alcohol. His heroic act distinguishes him from natives such as Enfumí's husband, who are portrayed as lazy and exploitative of their wives. Isart's deployment of medical technologies on the one hand give legitimacy to the Spanish colonial presence at the same time as it depicts the Spanish as possessing modern scientific and medical advances.

This benevolent colonialism, as embodied by Isart and Ana, is described by Vicente Rafael as the trope of "white love," in which the colonial master's often violent "discipline" of colonized subjects is cast a form of parental love and compassion (23, 34). While Rafael's analysis is dedicated primarily to the United States' colonization of the Philippines, Rosa Medina-Doménech's research into Spanish colonial practices in Equatorial Guinea indicates many similarities. Isart, similar to the Spanish state in Equatorial Guinea, observes and surveys through the use of medical technologies and photography. In "Scientific Technologies of National Identity as Colonial Legacies," Medina-Doménech explains the use of medical technologies by Spanish agents and doctors in Equatorial Guinea as a form of surveillance of the native populations, and a way to discipline them as colonial Spanish subjects, "extracting" their various indigenous identities and replacing them with highly regulated "Guinean" ones. In an analysis of NoDo reels of the early 1950s, Medina Doménech found that one of the locations the state "staged" health care advances such as the opening of new clinics and primary care was Equatorial Guinea, as a technique to prove Spain's technological and medical advancements ("Representations" 395). It is certainly plausible that Masoliver viewed some or all of these,

which may be yet another reason why science and medical technologies feature prominently in *Efún*.

These discourses of “white love:” intervention by the Spanish government and Catholic Church, are an integral part of the narrative in *Efún*. The books of photographs that Ana discovers show the natives in extreme representations, making a visual spectacle of their supposedly debased and uncivilized status. Ana’s is the voice of Catholic morality in the novel, and while she praises Isart’s help, she asserts the need to impose a moral authority on both Spaniards and natives, criticizing the lack of good education and infrastructure, and insisting that Juan Esteve marry Obama and recognize his *mestizo* children. The natives in *Efún* need not only medicine, but also religion, education, and infrastructure, all facets of a “white love,” that only the Spanish can provide.

### **Conclusion**

The theme of interracial desire and the romance genre, due to their preoccupations with family, heritage, and blood ties, function brilliantly to frame many national and racial anxieties of the Franco era. *Efún*’s unease about mixed race, the dangers of *mestizos*, and subtle suggestions of Catalan racial purity all form an integral part of Liberata Masoliver’s education of desire.

I suggest that the novel’s obsession with Spanish whiteness, and a rejection of not only racial, but socioeconomic class mixing, betrays a discomfort with the Africanizing or Othering of Spain that occurred in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The rejection of *mestizaje* manifested in works such as *Efún* seems to contradict other racial discourses in Spain, such as the notion of Hispanotropicalism, and the idea of the Spanish as an “alloy” or perfect fusion of races. But, what these seemingly contradictory ideologies indicate is merely the complexity of

race in Spain, and its use as a rhetorical tool to justify imperial expansion or to assert a relationship with modernity. Thus, the concept of race in Spain is not static or solidified, but rather prismatic; ever-shifting to suit the ideology and political designs that employed it.

Mystical cultural-racial mixing were the cornerstones of the rhetoric of benevolent colonialism espoused by Ernesto Giménez Caballero and the enthusiastic Africanists of IDEA.<sup>17</sup> The notion of the Spanish as “race-makers,” and celebratory writings on *Hispanidad* or the Hispano-Berber race had the clear political goal of authorizing Spanish cultural and political control of Latin America and North Africa. Particularly regarding Spanish interventions in North Africa, a discourse of racial brotherhood or notions of mixture were often used to justify Spain’s imperial activities.

However, in Equatorial Guinea the Spanish affirmed their whiteness, and racial mixing was not entertained as a positive outcome. In *Efún* mixing is a terrible consequence of colonialism, not a gift bestowed upon the natives by the Spanish. Desire of the African other is depicted as a sign of degeneration; *mestizos* are a capricious, dangerous, and destabilizing product of interracial desire. To communicate this, Masoliver employs stereotypes and concepts of race that corresponded with scientific and psychological investigations of Africans during the early and mid-twentieth century. The Spanish are shown to be necessary in Africa, not to “mix” with natives, but to bestow upon them moral and scientific superiority. Masoliver’s novel portrays the Spaniards not only as unquestionably white, but also the pinnacle of twentieth-century modernity. The contrast established between the Spanish as cosmopolitan, modern, and white is emphasized with their difference from the Guineans, and the most terrible racial stereotypes are employed to drive this point home for the reader.

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<sup>17</sup> The Instituto de Estudios Africanos

Masoliver does not resolve the anxieties generated by the text, but rather inflames them with the tragic end of Ana and Carlos's relationship, a denouement that proves to be a subtle critique of Spanish colonialism in Guinea. The critique is far from progressive; rather, Masoliver underscores the Catholic, "nonmaterialistic" values that were so dear to the Franco regime's rhetoric of conservative modernity. In the absence of a proper racial and moral environment, caused by a lack of a strong Church presence and a deficiency of white women, baser desires will take hold. The tragic ending of the novel, in which Carlos Isart succumbs to the *mestiza* Obama, echoes his earlier tragedy with the lower-class Spanish woman Isabel, which caused his personal and familial disgrace and his self-imposed exile to Guinea. Masoliver's skillful overlap of race and social class forms an integral part of the novel's education of desire. The boundaries of race and class, the novel suggests, are dangerously weak, and must be protected by Spanish women.

## Chapter 2

### Catastrophic Love: Contemporary Representations of African–Spanish Couples

While the previous chapter analyzed race and national identity through representations of love and desire between Spanish colonials and their “native” African subjects, this chapter will be dedicated to contemporary representations of African–Spanish couples. Roughly forty years have elapsed between the texts discussed in Chapter One and the present chapter, yet many of the same anxieties and discourses around race and national identity prevail. The present analysis is framed by the relatively large body of film and narrative produced since the early ‘90s that treats African migration in Spain. While this study spans a broad discussion of various films and novels, the analysis will focus on three specific works: the novel *La cazadora* (Encarna Cabello, 1995), the film *Susanna* (Antonio Chavarrías 1996), and the short story “La belleza del ébano” (Marina Mayoral, 1998). All three works manifest a strong ambivalence towards the presence of African migrants in Spanish society, and further, tension regarding the changing place of women in contemporary society, in particular their sexual autonomy outside of traditional, heterosexual marriage. While desire for the Other is a prominent theme, these relationships are ultimately framed as a threat to racial, social, and economic status. The works do not resolve the questions raised by these relationships; specifically, they do not depict mixed couples as operating as permanent or long-term. Framing mixed couples as unstable or short-term encounters elides any considerations as to the possible ramifications that migrants, or indeed mixed couples, may have for Spain regarding its own cultural identity.

Contemporary representations, much like their colonial antecedents, entwine race, social class and sexuality in order to distinguish a Spanish identity from an African one, constructing

“Spanish” as aligned with a white, European, modern subjectivity. The reactionary or orthodox discourses that underpin much of the recent fiction portraying African–Spanish couples communicate one of the strong voices in Spanish society today. The sense that the authenticity and progress of society is under attack and threatened, in particular by Muslims, is palpable not only in Spain but throughout Europe. Fiction overall tends to portray interactions as a clash of cultures, and as relationships that threaten gender roles, social class, and the future of the traditional Spanish family. This tension is manifested in the narratives due to the status of women as mediating figures and as metaphorical bearers of the nation. The female protagonists of all three works are sexually assertive, and their relationships with African men are depicted as non-normative and sometimes dangerous: always taboo. While the women manifest, at least initially, a more dominant female desire, the endings of the works herald a return to a more orthodox, status quo subjectivity. Those who attempt to establish a more permanent relationship with an African migrant are destroyed: Susanna is murdered by her Spanish lover; “la cazadora” loses her Spanish identity, becoming indistinguishable from a *moro* by her countrymen. In “La belleza del ébano,” order is restored at the end when Teresa rekindles her marriage with her ex-husband Javier, and her African lover returns to his native country.

### **Immigration and Conflict in Southern Europe**

The end of the 1960s saw a decline in film and literature dedicated to the African colonies and their relationship to Spanish racial identity.<sup>18</sup> As discussed in the Introduction, Spanish society has experienced dramatic changes since that time period, one of the most notable being mass immigration. Since the ‘80s the presence of migrants in Spain has been a topic of public interest,

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<sup>18</sup> Juan Goytisolo’s novels: *Reivindicación del conde don Julián* (1970), *Juan sin tierra* (1975), and *Makbara* (1981) are notable exceptions, as they deal directly with national and racial constructions of identity, and the legacy of colonialism in a postcolonial context.

manifested in increased cultural production and political discourse. Immigration law in Spain has evolved significantly since the 1985 *Ley de Extranjería*, which framed migrants primarily as temporary guest-workers and focused more on the control of flows, restricting family reunification and access to other citizens' rights (Ortega Pérez). However, the 1990s and 2000s have seen amendments and modifications to the original law, enabling more migrants to solicit residency and extending some political and social rights to non-EU citizens. The evolution of Spanish immigration law has been indicative of the differing opinions throughout Spain: while 1998 saw an initiative undertaken to extend more rights to immigrants and include their integration as a goal, the Partido Popular later amended the law (the Ley Orgánica 8/2000), reflecting the broader European Union desire to control flows and protect borders (Ortega Pérez; White 704).

There has been a judicial trend towards treating migrants more equitably and working towards integration. However, this has also corresponded with efforts on the part of both Spain and the EU to employ stricter and more expensive border controls, often in conjunction with other nations such as Morocco and Mauritania. Politically, there has indeed been a marked effort in the late '90s and 2000s to prevent the arrival of African migrants through military and technological means. In 1998 electric fences were constructed around Ceuta and Melilla. In 2000 the SIVE (Sistema integrado de vigilancia del Estrecho) system was implemented to monitor the coast of southern Spain from Algeciras, and in 2003 Operación Ulises was launched: "a seaborne flotilla of warships designed to stop migration" (White 704). As the political scientist Greg White explains, Moroccans have been construed as "catastrophically different," and their migration as a threat to Spanish sovereignty and safety (691). According to White: "For Spain, Morocco represents a picture of Spain's past, a vision of 'what we once were': corrupt, authoritarian, backwards, even Moorish and Islamic...therefore cast as an alleged hazard to

Spanish wellbeing and societal security” (692). In particular, since 9-11 and the March 2004 Atocha train bombings, the rhetorical role of security and protection has acquired a tone of urgency.

The reactionary response towards immigrants has been common throughout Western Europe, and frames European culture and society as incompatible with that of Muslim immigrants. The political scientist Samuel Huntington’s 1996 book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (translated into Spanish in 1997) is one popular example of the current culturalist ideology. Huntington’s book is a longer elaboration of the thesis he outlined in his 1993 article “The Clash of Civilizations,” which appeared in *Foreign Affairs*.<sup>19</sup> The general argument in both the book and article is that, in a post-Cold War world, future conflicts will be generated between civilizations, especially between “Islam” and “The West.” Huntington subsumes ethnicity and culture into broad “civilizations,” falling back on a nineteenth-century concept of the Volk to define a civilization as “a culture writ large” (41). Huntington defines “The West” as Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand. He defines Latin America as distinct or more of a “subset” of the West, due to its so-called “corporatist, authoritarian culture” (46). This simplistic and hierarchical categorization of entire continents privileges Western Europe and the purportedly “whiter” areas of the British Empire. As a taxonomy, it resuscitates the imperial rhetoric of the British Empire, which associates a “white,” Anglo-Saxon, Protestant culture with modernity, progress, and human (racial) evolution.

Edward Said’s critique of Huntington, “The Clash of Ignorance,” appeared in a 2001 issue of *The Nation*. Said notes Huntington’s rush to simplify “hugely complicated matters like

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<sup>19</sup> The title, “Clash of Civilizations,” is taken from a phrase used by Bernard Lewis in his article, “The Roots of Muslim Rage” (1990).

identity and culture,” and paint the greatest future conflict as being between “The West” and “Islam,” as though the two were mutually exclusive entities (12). In Huntington’s schema, “Islamic civilization” is quite separate from Western civilization; Africa is noted as “possibly” having a distinct civilization, with the caveat that such a classification is problematic because North Africa belongs to Islamic civilization, while the rest of Africa had European civilization brought by imperialism, although “tribal identities” continue to be “pervasive and intense” (Huntington, *Clash* 47). The distinctions that Huntington attempts to make between “Europe,” “Islamic Civilization,” and “Africa,” when viewed from the Iberian Peninsula, become even more incoherent. Huntington assumes differences as natural and quite intractable: by positing differences as “civilizational,” and interactions as a “clash” destined to provoke conflict, his paradigm denies the heterogeneity not only of nations, but entire continents.

The “clash of cultures” argument manifested in Huntington’s work has been severely critiqued by Etienne Balibar, Martin Barker, Paul Gilroy, and Pierre Taguieff. Barker, in *The New Racism: Conservatives and the Ideology of the Tribe* (1982), identified what he viewed as a new trend in contemporary British political and media discourse, which replaced the language of race with a discourse on culture, which Barker termed a “new racism,” or “cultural” racism. Barker notes that immigrants were framed as a threat to the integrity of British culture and civilization, and therefore it was Britain’s “right” to protect itself from the foreign onslaught. Conservatives, in Barker’s estimation, had appropriated the discourse of multiculturalism to argue that they must protect and insulate their autochthonous culture, language, and way of life from foreigners, who were seeking to undo the purportedly more modern, democratic lives of the British people. Balibar also argues that this “new” or “cultural” racism was taking over more traditional articulations of prejudice. In his 1988 *Race, Nation, Class*, Balibar explains that

although the word “race” may not be uttered, it is incorporated into the conceptualization of national culture. Immigrants are marked as a threat to the culture’s integrity and authenticity. In this variant of racism, cultural arguments are made to explain so-called natural differences between groups and, according to Balibar, to defend the existence of cultural distances and xenophobia:

It is a racism whose dominant theme is not biological heredity but the insurmountability of cultural differences, a racism which, at first sight, does not postulate the superiority of certain groups or peoples in relation to others but ‘only’ the harmfulness of abolishing frontiers, the incompatibility of life-styles and traditions; in short, it is what P.A. Taguieff has rightly called a *differentialist racism*. (Balibar, *Race* 21)

In this context, the immigrant is posited as incommensurable with the national normative culture. Although Balibar and Barker published their studies before Huntington’s article and book, they deconstruct the ideology that feeds his analysis. This culturalist discourse elides, at least superficially, biological explanations for domination and incompatibility between groups of people. But the constructions of culture and difference relies on a depiction of “phenotypical traits, inheritance and different ‘feelings of a soul’ which could be termed race. Differences become naturalized, perceived as static, and ‘rooted’ in what the old racism used to call ‘soil’ and is here reformulated as ‘territorial.’”(Rätzzel 8). This xenophobic stance makes nations into closed ethnic spaces, which must be preserved and protected.

The notion that cultures should remain separate and distinct, and the belief that cultural interaction will provoke unavoidable conflict in society, rely on a reified and false notion of “cultures” and “nations” as fixed, monolithic and homogenous entities. This ideology assumes that each nation or ethnic group organically emits some sort of immutable culture, and that the

lines between cultures are fixed and easily identifiable. According to the philosopher Seyla Benhabib, this “tends to fetishize [cultures] in ways that put them beyond the reach of critical analysis” (4). For Benhabib, what is missing in these reified cultural discussions is a focus on other ways in which groups form alliances and assert political agency: namely, through social class and economic issues. Making “holistic” general claims about cultures prevents one from making reasoned judgments and engaging in dialog (Benhabib 41). Political responses that treat immigrants as catastrophically different, and as a source of societal contamination, draw their justification from culturalist arguments that frame conflicts as natural and unavoidable. These discourses are prevalent in fictional representations of immigrants, particularly mixed couples, as culture is presented as posing an insurmountable obstacle.

### **Romance and the Racial Family: Mixed Couples and Blood Ties**

In 2007 the Spanish filmmaker Fernando León de Aranoa published the story “Náufragos” in *El País*, a vignette that allegorizes the tensions and contradictions unfolding in Europe regarding immigration. In “Náufragos,” a group of thirty Africans board the luxury cruise ship *Europa*, after their boat is destroyed at sea. While initially there was discomfort onboard regarding what the rescued men would wear and where they would sleep (the men had no way of paying), those issues were soon resolved, for the Europeans on board seemed to agree that the migrants were a good thing:

En todo caso, en la mayor parte de las mesas se estuvo de acuerdo en que era la necesidad la que les hacía arriesgarlo todo en el mar, y hubo consenso en cuanto a lo necesaria que era su presencia en nuestros países. A fin de cuentas, se dijo también, alguien tiene que hacer el trabajo de mierda que nadie quiere hacer ya en Europa. Y además elevan nuestro

índice de natalidad, añadió alguien en otra mesa, comentario éste que obtuvo la aprobación de todos.

But problems began when the guests began to eat the “paté de mermelada” that waiters passed out at the tables; serious discomfort arose when a romance began to unfold between a French girl and one of the African *náufragos*:

la hija adolescente de un empresario francés comenzó a mostrarse más atraída de lo que la ley del mar recomienda por la ingenua voracidad de Adewale, un subsahariano musculoso de piel negra, casi azul, al que la camisa Ralph Laurent le sentaba, y en eso hubo también consenso, más que bien. "Me parece bien que eleven nuestro índice de natalidad, pero no a costa de mi hija", debió de pensar la madre de la atractiva joven antes de cambiarla de asiento, alejándola de las aguas territoriales del africano y su poderosa influencia.

Aranoa’s story highlights the anxieties produced in Europe by the presence of African migrants. While there is a sense that Spanish society “needs” migrants as workers, partly due to the falling birth rate, the eventual incorporation of these migrants into the “national family” provokes unease. Further, as Lorenzo Cachón Rodríguez indicates in his own reading of the story, “Náufragos” broaches the question: what rights do migrants have? How should Europe and its institutions adapt themselves to these new arrivals, and how can they be integrated? (207). While some Spaniards may agree, as they do on the ship *Europa*, that the African refugees embarked on a dangerous voyage due to necessity, and that they are entitled to rights; conflict arises when migrants attempt to, metaphorically, eat from the same table. Integration not only into a national

space, but a personal and familial one, disturbs the genealogical narrative of heritage and bloodline that is the essence of racial constructions of culture and nation.<sup>20</sup>

Doris Sommer, in her classic work *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America*, explains how romance reveals the significance of race in family and national identity. According to Sommer, love stories are an allegory of the nation; in romantic novels, the courtship of the couple, and their mutual desire, allegorize national political goals: namely, unification of a (new) nation and the different races and classes joined under one flag (5, 31). Sommer analyzes the mixed-race romances of Latin American novels, whose goal was to “contain the racial, regional, economic, and gender conflicts that threatened the development of new Latin American nations” (29). For Sommer, *mestizaje* “was the way of redemption in Latin America, a way of annihilating difference and constructing a deeply horizontal, fraternal dream of national identity” (39). In these novels, the obstacles that the lovers face, the societal prohibitions of either race or class, not only serve as a hook to animate reader interest, but are also representative of obstacles to national unification. Overcoming these obstacles to achieve romantic unification (marriage and children), is an allegory of political triumph and national unification. Within the context of Latin America, Sommer argues that the novels use desire and romance to elide other dividing factors present within the nation, such as racial or regional differences: anything that might hinder the consolidation of the new nation: “After all, these novels were part of a general bourgeois project to hegemonize a culture in formation” (29).

In many respects, Spanish narratives confirm Sommer’s argument that romantic love can allegorize political desires. Novels and films depicting Spanish interventions in Africa portray a “domestic” colonialism, in which military officers seduce and dominate native women at the

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<sup>20</sup> Naomi Zack, *Race and Mixed Race*, 1997.

same time as Spain takes over the women's country. Still, the case of Spain is less uniform than Sommer's thesis can accommodate, in both colonial and contemporary narratives. Some works do indeed imagine mixed-race romance as part of an idealized nation; others depict interracial desire as deviant and destructive behavior that jeopardizes the social order and leads to chaos and unhappiness, or the destruction of modern, "white" European identity. Daniela Flesler, in her study *The Return of the Moor*, emphasizes that, while in Latin America, allegorical racial mixing was part of a positive unification, in contemporary Spain, it is just the opposite: "The impossible, unhappy romances of Spanish immigration films...[present] an imaginary hegemonizing picture of contemporary Spain, in which difference is always something that is outside the self and that can easily be broken with" (Flesler 214). It is no accident, then, that in many contemporary Spanish narratives, the African immigrant is either deported or killed, effectively ending any hopes of "unification" through marriage and/or mixed children.

The representation of immigrants and mixed couples in contemporary film and literature has overall communicated a strong ambivalence on the part of Spanish society regarding a more established and integrated presence of Africans. Some authors and filmmakers make a conscious effort to portray the plight of migrants in a sympathetic light and show their point of view (*Las cartas de Alou* is a canonical example of this technique). The works also demonstrate an interest in exploring social and cultural taboos, with the popular theme of the mixed couple. However, in spite of efforts to distance themselves from, or even critique, colonial and racist discourses, these works still manage to enforce a more orthodox regime of representation. In particular, portrayals of African-Spanish couples tend to depict the unions as one of two extremes: exotic, erotic fantasies or dangerous and degrading arrangements.

These works demonstrate a level of continuity with novels produced during twentieth-century colonial interventions in Africa, particularly narratives of liaisons between a Spaniard and a Sub-Saharan African. In these earlier works, desire for the black African often degrades the Spaniard, provoking chaos and violence, or a loss of Spanish identity.<sup>21</sup> Alternately, the possibility of sexual desire is anxiously avoided, as in the film *Misión blanca* (Juan de Orduña, 1946), which focuses on “brotherly” or paternalistic interactions between Spanish clergy and Equatorial Guineans.<sup>22</sup> Contemporary works frame interracial and intercultural desire as a threat to Spanish masculinity, cultural harmony, and the integrity of Spanish identity. Although more positive representations exist, they often elide any long-term or “successful” union of the couple. Ultimately, these works preserve a more conservative construction of Spanish identity, which must be protected from the threat of the African Other—whether that Other is Muslim, black, or both.

But, why is the fascination with forbidden love so prevalent in migration narratives? And why, in contemporary works, do these relationships keep occurring between Spanish *women* and African *men*? On the one hand, the choice of placing a Spanish female in a relationship with an African male reflects actual migration patterns: the vast majority of African migrants in Spain are indeed young men. The frequent use of the interracial or intercultural romance could also be said to be a marketing strategy on some level. However, the tensions and ambivalences that are provoked by the theme of mixed couples turn on more complicated motivations. On the one hand, they betray a fear and fascination with the taboo, the unknown, and the marginal. The margins are unpredictable: they are the spaces at the edge of enforced boundaries, where identity

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<sup>21</sup> Liberata Masoliver’s bestselling novels: *Efún*, *Selva negra*, *selva verde*, and *La mujer del colonial*, as well as Guillermo Cabanellas’ *La selva siempre triunfa* (1944), portray the destabilizing and even degrading “consequences” of mixed-race desire in Africa.

<sup>22</sup> For more in-depth studies of Franco-era films set in Equatorial Guinea and Morocco, see Alberto Elena, *La llamada de África* (2010), Susan Martin-Márquez, *Disorientations* (2008), Isabel Santaolalla, *Los <<Otros>>* (2005), and Jo Labanyi, “Internalisations of Empire” (2001).

markers may be blurred or dropped, if only for a time; where differences may be explored. They are spaces where non-normative, even anti-social behaviors, are acted out (McClintock, *Imperial* 25). Thus, in spite of the fact that the conclusions of *La cazadora*, “La belleza del ébano,” and *Susanna* truncate the full realization of difference, they do betray a fascination for and an interest in exploring the taboo and mixed race.

Further, these narratives exploit the status of “woman” as a symbolic figure for the nation, and the ingrained trope of the national and racial “family.” The familial trope arose out of social Darwinism and notions of evolutionary racial and social progress in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the teleological family tree, mankind progressed from apes to the white European male, an image in which: “the world’s discontinuous cultures appear to be marshaled within a single, European Ur-narrative...with the European as the apogee of progress” (McClintock, *Imperial* 37). But, the triumphant narrative of white, European progress had its dark, unshakeable shadow, which was called degeneration. Just as humans could progress, so could they regress, through contamination by degenerates and their “bad blood,” notably the poor and Africans. In the colonial context, racial mixing threatened personal, familial, and national purity and cultural authenticity. The “family of man” trope is also a common metaphor for the modern nation: the “national family” being a concept coded by race as well as gender. As wives and daughters, women have historically been identified, legally and socially, as the property of their husbands and fathers. Women traditionally had to access their citizenship through their relationships with men, as dictated, for example, by the Code Napoleon: “the family offered an indispensable metaphoric figure by which national difference could be shaped into a single historical genesis narrative” (McClintock, *Imperial* 357-358). In the national and

racial family, women's bodies and sexuality are essential components to maintaining the authenticity and modernity of the body politic:

Body boundaries were felt to be dangerously permeable and demanding continual purification, so that sexuality, in particular women's sexuality, was cordoned off as the central transmitter of racial and hence cultural contagion. Increasingly vigilant efforts to control women's bodies, especially in the face of feminist resistance, were suffused with acute anxiety about the desecration of sexual boundaries and the consequences that racial contamination had for white male control of progeny, property and power. (McClintock, *Imperial* 47)

Homosexuals, persons identified as mixed-race or indeed, not white; working-class women and prostitutes: all were deigned possible sources of "contamination" to the imperial and national body. These tropes served to pathologize women's bodies and non-normative sexuality, making control of sexuality and reproduction paramount to the health and status of the nation.<sup>23</sup> The eugenics movement utilized these concepts as well, viewing "the mixed-race body as trapped in a perpetual civil war of the self, as the 'opposites' it contained agitated against each other and undermined the unity of its subject" (Dunning 10). Homosexuality and miscegenation were both coded as aspects of "flawed" bodies, which were "ultimately harmful to the nation. That harm is evidenced by the fact that neither miscegenation nor homosexuality produces the racially homogenous subjects the nation imagines it needs to perpetuate the myth of its purity" (Dunning 10).

The rhetorical and pseudo-scientific ties between "blood," which transmitted racial, familial and national identity is also a particularly gendered phenomenon. Renee C. Romano's

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<sup>23</sup> Sander Gilman, *Difference and Pathology*; Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*.

study of post-World War II black-white marriage in the United States discusses the significance of gender to white family identity and, by extension, racial identity.<sup>24</sup> White men could engage in interracial sex without fear of “racial” consequences because biracial children would be considered black and stay with their mother; and in any case, it was believed that this would perhaps improve the black race (47). However, this did not hold true for relationships between black men and white women:

The language of blood suggested that interracial sex involving white women and black men was far more dangerous than sex between white men and black women. Only men, the assumption went, had the capacity to transfer their blood (through their semen); men were the active spreaders of blood and women the passive receptors...If white women had biracial children, however, it would make the white race less pure; in short, the survival of the white race depended upon its women, who were designated the guardians of white racial purity. (47)

“One drop” of black blood would degrade the purity of the racial quality of the individual, and by extension, their family, making it was necessary to monitor and control female sexuality and ensure subservience to the patriarchy in these traditional gendered and racial relationships.

The film and narratives studied in this chapter portray, even prioritize, an active female sexuality, a fact that greatly distinguishes them from Franco-era colonial texts. Although the works create a space for authentic female pleasure, this is not what they ultimately affirm. In fact, the narrative and film studied insist by their endings that these taboo relationships and desires are non-normative, on the margins, and as such are threat to the nation, by being a threat to the dominance of Spanish men. As we will see in *Susanna* and *La cazadora*, a destruction of

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<sup>24</sup> Although the concept of miscegenation and mixed race in North America contains some distinctions from the Spanish context, Romano’s analysis of this particular facet of racial ideology is instructive across the Atlantic.

the female body or a destruction of her “Spanish” identity is the resolution that ends these dangerous liaisons.

### **Moroccan–Spanish Couples in Contemporary Film and Narrative**

While mass immigration to Spain began in the early 1980s, it was not until the 1990s that artistic representation also responded *en masse*. Isabel Santaolalla signals 1996 as a flashpoint, as that year was the beginning of a veritable explosion of immigration films: *En la puta calle* (Enrique Gabriel), *Menos que cero* (Ernesto Tellería), *Susanna* (Antonio Chavarrís), *La sal de la vida* (Eugenio Martín), *Bwana* (Imanol Uribe), and *Taxi* (Carlos Saura) (*Otros 23*). Santaolalla views the sudden increase in immigration films as no accident, pointing out that in 1994 and 1995, under the PSOE government, initiatives were founded such as the *Plan para la Integración Social de los Inmigrantes*, as well government bodies such as the *Observatorio Permanente de la Inmigración*, and *el Foro para la Inmigración*, which analyze immigration in Spain and publish statistical and sociological findings annually.

North African–Spanish couples are featured in much of the film and narrative that deals with recent African immigration. The novels *Los trenes de marzo* (Angela Reyes, 2008) and *La infiel* (Reyes Monforte, 2011) engage the topic of Moroccan–Spanish couples and incorporate the contemporary preoccupation with Islamic terrorism. *La infiel* has a particularly reactionary plot. Sara, a single mother, becomes fascinated with Najib, who she believes is a sophisticated, “Westernized” Muslim, but who turns out to be part of an Al Qaeda sleeper cell. Her relationship with him unfolds in the abduction of her son, as Najib hopes to force Sara into becoming a suicide bomber. During Sara’s own captivity, Najib metamorphoses into the stereotype of the violent *moro*, and beats and rapes her. The end of the novel sees Sara rescued by her former boyfriend, a Spanish police officer, but she is not saved. She goes to a Madrid mosque, bombs

strapped to her, intending to kill herself and end her pregnancy by Najib. The vivid image of bombs exploding, and the intention of Sara to violently decimate her body and what it carries, personifies the deep rejection of Muslims and mixing in Western Europe. *La infiel*, a bestseller in 2011, plays on the stereotype of the Muslim terrorist and, further, of the Oriental as treacherous and deceitful. It bases itself on the fear that embarking on a relationship with a Muslim and breaking the boundaries of cultural taboo will bring destruction.

The preoccupation, even paranoia, of an “Islamic” takeover, or the figure of the Muslim who “turns out” to be a terrorist is satirized by Juan Goytisolo in *Paisajes después de la batalla* (1985), and Pedro Almodóvar in *Mujeres al borde de un ataque de los nervios* (1988). Goytisolo opens his novel with the chapter “La hecatombe,” in which the protagonist “Juan Goytisolo” unleashes a catastrophe in the Sentier neighborhood of Paris by replacing all the signs and placards with Arabic writing. The writing takes over slowly, and as it becomes more and more present in the neighborhood, so does the inhabitants’ fear: “¡Habrás visto, pronto seremos nosotros los extranjeros y ellos, esa catastrófica marea de negros y morenos, como Samba o Alí por su casa: el acabóse, sí, señor!” (16). The more measured try to invoke a culturalist logic, reassuring the more fearful ones that all would be well, as long as distances were maintained:

Cada cual tenía sus costumbres, si querían comunicar en su lenguaje era asunto suyo, mientras nos dejen a nosotros el nuestro ¿qué más da? Su argumento, razonable, había convencido; los bebedores de calvados, acodados en el cinc del carbonero, asentían con melancólica resignación. Cada uno a lo suyo y Dios con todos, eso es lo que pensaba él: como dice el refrán, juntos, pero no revueltos. (16)

The fear of mixing, so violent in *La infiel*, is here a part of “common sense,” and a reassurance to those who feel under attack. The linguistic invasion, deemed “el mal” by the neighborhood, and

blamed on the migrants, is viewed as an act of terrorism that initiates a *mundo al revés*, in which the European habitants' worst nightmares spring to life: they are confused, unable to function in their own space, and the "metecos" suddenly have a superior understanding.

In *Mujeres al borde de un ataque de los nervios*, Almodóvar treats the subject of terrorism and the "lascivious" *moro* in a lighthearted tone. *Mujeres* satirizes and camps romantic clichés and constructions of femininity, and Candela's fling with a Shiite terrorist is no exception. Almodóvar employs the theme of Islamic terrorism to great effect in the film, creating the sense of danger and urgency as a backdrop to the interpersonal and melodramatic conflicts of the characters. The inclusion of Shiite terrorists to the plot, on the one hand, places the film in the context of the 1980s: post-Iranian revolution, the emergence of the Hezbollah, and the 1985 TWA flight 847 hijacking. In this context, media accounts of the Islamic world utilized a discourse of "Islamic terror" as a threat to the West. The notion of catastrophic love is appropriate here, as Candela's fling with her mysterious lover almost results in the bombing of a flight from Madrid to Stockholm.

Candela's role as victim, as well as her vapidness, her exaggerated Andalusian accent, and hyper feminine weakness, place her as a foil to the indomitable Pepa (Carmen Maura). In one of the most famous dialogues of the movie, Candela (María Barranco), her silver *cafetera* earrings bobbing with emphasis, recounts to Pepa and Carlos (Antonio Banderas) her amazing sexual escapade with a mysterious stranger: "Mira, fue como una revelación, como si hiciera el amor por primera vez." Candela recounts that she vowed that she knew that her lover would return and that when he did, she would do anything for him. And, when he returned to her home months later with two others, she discovered that they were Shiite terrorists planning an attack. In Almodóvar's hands, the "catastrophic love" becomes just one more tale of masculine deceit

responsible for female heartbreak; the terror element is subordinate to the theme of the *engaño*. Candela sums up her situation hyperbolically to Carlos: “Fíjate el mundo árabe como se ha portado conmigo, y yo eso no me lo merezco.” The belief that terrorists represent the “Arab world” continues to be common, and Candela’s comments illustrate the frequent confusion regarding the cultures of origin of Arab and Muslim immigrants. Pepa, Candela, and Carlos’s heroic, if campy antics end up saving the day, and the terrorist plot is thwarted. Instead of a violent destruction, Almodóvar affirms female resourcefulness even under the weight of debilitating societal discourses about motherhood, romance, femininity, and happiness. Both Goytisolo and Almodóvar satirize the veritable hysteria about Muslims, Arabs, and Africans that people seem to allow themselves to be swept up in. Both use humor as a way to provoke the audience to (hopefully) gain some distance from emotional and controversial themes, and perhaps reassess some of the popular cultural narratives.

Other films from the 90s take a more measured standpoint than *La infiel*, such as the gritty film *Saïd* (Llorenç Soler, 1998), which depicts a young Moroccan-Spanish couple, based on the novel *La aventura de Saïd* (Josep Lorman, 1996). True to genre, the young Saïd is eventually caught by authorities and deported, due to his illegal status. *El far* (Manuel Balaguer, 1998), or *El faro* in Spanish, also features a Moroccan-Spanish relationship that is truncated by death (Santaolalla, *Otros* 136).

Spanish “cine de inmigrantes” is generally less popular, reaping less than 10% of the revenue of more well-liked genres (Dijk 13). However, the theme has been of steady interest since the mid-1990s, and in spite of lower sales, there continues to be a “steady trickle” of films focused on the repercussions of migrants in Spain, as both Isabel Santaolalla and Paul Julian Smith affirm (Smith 80). Film, as a visual medium, is able to communicate codes of race and

ethnicity. By representing African immigrants' otherness as phenotypic, and therefore a visual "fact," film may juxtapose that difference with a desirable image of Spanish identity as white, European and normative. The film industry possesses a cultural authority reinforced by the concept of the *auteur*, the movie theatre as a special public space, and the prevalence of awards; yet movies are still a practice only experienced a few times a year (Smith 91). These very aspects contribute to film's elite and authoritative role as a vehicle for culture, yet at the same time, limit its ability to fully represent Spanish society. While many movies attempt to portray African migrants' plight with sympathy, they cannot escape repeating many of the national and racial codes that frame migrants as perpetual outsiders, or even catastrophic threats to national and personal safety. Even when they attempt to portray the experiences of North African migrants empathetically, most works reject the possibility of Moroccan–Spanish unions and a full integration of Moroccans in Spanish society. Instead, mixed couples are portrayed as an undertaking that provokes the loss of identity of the Spanish woman involved, and occasionally ends in her death.

Fiction pursues a constant differentiation between North African and Spanish identity, a fact affirmed by Daniela Flesler, in her 2008 book *The Return of the Moor*. Flesler analyzes the firm split between Spanish/North African identities in film and narrative as symptomatic of a historical anxiety regarding Spain's "African" heritage. This division is underscored linguistically when Moroccans are called *moros* by Spaniards, a term that evokes the *Reconquista* and the image of Moroccans as medieval, Moorish invaders and enemies. For Flesler, the recent wave of Moroccan immigration has provoked fear in Spanish society that, as the El Ejido riots attest to, has occasionally resulted in violent public outbursts. No longer in a position of conquest, but rather viewed as "under attack" by the migrants from Africa, Flesler

asserts that Spanish society's response to Moroccan immigration has been a vehement rejection of its historical-cultural relationship with North Africa and the legacy of Al Andalus (79, 83). The notion of a Moroccan threat, and a tone of criminality and danger, is ever-present in *Susanna*.

### **Catastrophic love: *Susanna* and *La cazadora***

Antonio Chavarrías' 1996 erotic thriller *Susanna* is emblematic of the discourse of cultural racism. The film employs traditional representations of social class and gender roles to solidify Spanish and Moroccan identities as separate and even antagonistic entities. Chavarrías, a director and screenwriter born in Barcelona, is known for his production of thriller and suspense films, such as *Una sombra en el jardín* (1990), *Manila* (1991), *Volverás* (2002), *Las vidas de Celia* (2005), and his most recent, *Dictado* (2012). Although filmed in Catalan, and centered within the distinctive settings of Barcelona and its environs, *Susanna* is typical of many 90s Catalan thrillers in that it focuses less on "Catalan issues," and instead on themes and styles that are more commercially viable in an international film market (Jordan 168). One aspect seen as crucial to the distribution and marketability of Spanish films in the 90s was the inclusion of graphic sex and violence, an integral part of *Susanna*. Chavarrías' strategies appear to have been effective; produced by Oberon Cinematográfica, the film was nominated in 1997 at the Brussels Film Festival for Best European Feature, and also won Special Prize of the Jury at the Verona Love Screens Film Festival.

The film's three central characters: Susanna (Eva Santolaria), Alex (Álex Casanovas), and Said (Said Amel), are caught between various manifestations of "tradition" and "modernity." Alex, a dishonest wine salesman, is conflicted between his most basic desires, versus his future as a husband and father in the comfortable but boring existence of bourgeois domesticity. The

modern city of Barcelona offers him innumerable temptations, specifically, mafia crime and his lover Susanna. When Alex meets Susanna, she is a recovering drug addict who is occasionally pimped out by the owner of the restaurant where she works. These characteristics establish her as a degenerate figure in the film; coupled with her status as a “loner,” who has no family or friends, establish her as existing on the margins of society. Although independent and sexually promiscuous, Susanna reveals that she secretly yearns for love and marriage: a possibility which she eventually finds in Said, her Moroccan boyfriend. Said, an immigrant, is caught between the traditional expectations of his family and community, and his desire to be integrated into Spanish society through his relationship with Susanna. Both Said and Alex are “tempted” away from their culturally prescribed masculine roles by the *femme fatale* Susanna, which tragically leads her and Said to destruction, and Alex (and the audience) to learn a lesson. The film thus functions as cautionary tale, suggesting the consequences unleashed on society if individuals attempt to thwart the boundaries of race, culture, or social class. The film’s message is ultimately pessimistic and reactionary towards anything that may threaten the traditional, patriarchal structure of family and the nation.

Throughout the film, Chavarrías combines techniques of *cine negro* as well as those typical of the thriller to communicate a dark, tawdry, and gritty sense of modern life, thus reflecting a trend in Spanish cinema in the ‘80s and ‘90s that demonstrates a preoccupation with cultural changes occurring in Spain, particularly the belief in the breakdown of the traditional patriarchal family via the consequences of unregulated sexual desire (Jordan 73). Typical of the thriller, *Susanna* focuses on crime and the effects that marginal figures (drug addicts, homosexuals, prostitutes, gangsters, immigrants) have on mainstream society. The modern, urban space of Barcelona is the backdrop for the downward spiral and tragedy of Susanna, Alex,

and Said. Filmed in *flashback*, the movie begins with the police driving to the scene of the crime and arresting a man's whose face the audience doesn't see, but will learn by the end is Said. They then discover Susanna's bloody, inert body and the crime scene. These scenes combine shots of a desolate urban space seen through the window of the police car, accompanied by tense, high-pitched Arabic music. Chavarrías thus establishes a sense of danger and unease for the audience, and via the music, links this danger with the presence of something "Oriental." The investigation of what lead to Susanna's murder is then conducted by the camera, as the audience is taken through the series of events that unfolded in her brutal murder.

The film employs the conventions of film noir to establish Alex's crisis of masculinity, associating immigrants and modern, sexually independent women as contributing factors in that crisis. Film noir (*cine negro*) typically has dealt with frustration and insecurity regarding the changing role of men in society. In the North American context, noir communicated the uncertainties regarding the place of the white male in a post-World War II era. While noir tends to revolve around a search for truth or the solution to a crime, often the search as such is actually a quest to define male identity and assert male dominance; the enigma or problem to be solved is often an assertive female, and the solution is to contain the female and her sexuality (Jordan 88). Alex is trapped between his fiancée Muntsa, who embodies warm and nurturing domesticity, and Susanna, the *femme fatale*. The dichotomy of a domestic "nurturer" and the dangerous *femme fatale* are common female roles in classic noir (Gates 109). While Susanna is presented more as a degenerate, rather than an evil character, she does possess many of the qualities ascribed to a fatal woman, most especially sexual assertiveness. According to James Maxfield, the *femme fatale* serves to embody male fears of a loss of control by linking her with uncontrollable drives and obsession, thus provoking a desire to "reassert" masculine power over her, and over any

competing males (*Fatal 10*). The reassertion of Spanish, masculine control occurs in *Susanna* when Alex murders Susanna, thus simultaneously destroying the source of his frustrating obsession, while preventing her from being with Said, who afterwards is accused of Alex's crime.

The scenes with Alex and Susanna, most of them sexually explicit, serve to establish that their relationship is based on "obsessive passion and sexual desire," which, according to Barry Jordan, is typical of 90's Spanish thrillers (104). Many of the shots of Susanna and Alex are medium close-ups with full-frontal nudity on the part of Eva Santaolaria. The camera angles and extreme close-ups of fragments of Susanna's body, repeat aesthetic conventions of soft-core pornography, done in part to make the film more marketable. Further, many of the scenes incorporate noir conventions such as enclosed, claustrophobic spaces like seedy hotels or storage rooms, and chiaroscuro lighting. The visual and lighting effects contribute to the establishment of Susanna and her body as synonymous with the wicked, dark, and mysterious urban space. As a degenerate figure, she tempts Said and Alex away from their "proper" masculine roles and weakens them as they become obsessed with her. Susanna threatens the fulfillment and happiness of Alex in his proper role of husband and father, as she also leads Said away from his family and cultural identity. Both Alex and Said fight against the forces of tradition in their respective cultures to possess Susanna: Alex's wife and the despotic, patriarchal gangster Fouces work to keep him in line; and Said's family and his community intervene when he proposes marriage to Susanna. By showing Susanna as a subject who disrupts not only the boundaries of class and gender, but also of race and culture, the film "educates" the viewer about the chaos and violence unleashed by such transgressions, which end with the murder of Susanna herself. Her transgressions are punished and she is destroyed, and Said is pinned for her murder, while Alex

returns to his wife and newborn child, thus reinstating “order” to society, albeit tragically. Engaging in a relationship with a Moroccan immigrant is represented as something only a degraded woman would do, and comes with consequences for everyone involved.

The representation of Alex and Said’s masculinity is a key focus of the film. Alex is portrayed as more decisive, powerful and “macho” than Said, who has a higher voice and a gentler demeanor. Alex, on the other hand, is quite forceful and violent with Susanna throughout the film—when they meet for a second time in Barcelona, Alex corners her in a stockroom and forces himself on her, in an act that begins as a rape but ends (it seems) with her consent. This scene seems to demonstrate Susanna’s desire to be dominated by her lover, as this encounter reignites her relationship with Alex. When Said proposes marriage, Susanna begins to distance herself from Alex, convinced that he will never leave Muntsa and his unborn child. Alex, sensing that Susanna is distancing herself from him, becomes enraged, stalking Susanna at her workplace and, when he is escorted out by security, screaming: “You are mine!” Alex’s obsession with Susanna and his jealous rages show him losing control, but at the same time mark him as forceful and dominant, stereotypical “macho” traits, which seem to fascinate and attract Susanna. Said, however, is insecure of himself with her, becoming anxious and worried if she wanders off alone, and treating her with deference and respect and apologizing if he makes advances that she does not seem to want to reciprocate. In fact, while Alex and Susanna’s relationship revolves around obsessive and often violent sexual encounters, her relationship with Said is completely chaste. While this may seem to go against Orientalist stereotypes of the lascivious *moro*, it actually underscores the image of Muslims as more traditional and “old-fashioned” regarding sex and marriage. While Susanna is portrayed as a promiscuous “modern” woman who is sexually liberated, Said seems to be operating within a different paradigm.

In Barcelona, North Africans occupy a visible and powerful space, parallel, but quite distinct and separate from Spaniards. The film implies that the seemingly peaceful coexistence is maintained by keeping the groups separate, again furthering a culturalist ideology. Alex and other characters often refer to Said and Moroccans as *moros*, using a historically-charged term that evokes negative connotations of Moroccans as invaders and enemies. The establishment of Moroccans as a quotidian but still strange group is first achieved through language, which deeply marks Moroccans as Others throughout the film. While most of the characters communicate in Catalan, Said only has dialogue in Arabic or *castellano*, a fact that doubly marks him as an outsider in Barcelona. Susanna and Said's difference is further underscored at a banquet: while he and his friends chatter in Arabic, Susanna eats her dinner in silence, only engaging in the conversation when Said explains the topic in Spanish. In this and other scenes, the racial and cultural divide between Said and Susanna is apparent: her pale skin and bleach-blond hair, as Daniela Flesler has observed, mark her as phenotypically different than Said (141). Her miniskirts, smoking, and heavy makeup mark her as "Other" and indecent within Moroccan culture.

Even when parallelisms between the two cultures are established, it is the differences that are emphasized by Chavarrías. During a Spanish wedding reception at Fouces' restaurant, a guest sings a traditional folk song with a flamenco-inflected melody and erotic lyrics. At the Moroccan banquet in the same restaurant, Said's brother also breaks into song, with a similar Oriental melody, but this time singing about Allah. The significant thematic difference emphasizes the importance of Islam in Moroccan culture, and marks it as "different" from Spanish. These scenes occur in the same space, during family and community events. The parallel scenes suggest that while similarities may exist, the two cultures are ultimately

incompatible, and it is in the best interests of Moroccans and Spaniards to maintain boundaries. Chavarrías himself, in an interview about the film, confirms that culture is a cause of conflict between Said and Susanna: “una cultura es una cosa maravillosa pero en un contexto difícil como es el de la inmigración se convertía en una barrera... que hacía un poco más complicada la relación entre ellos” (“Entrevista,” qtd. in Flesler 142). Chavarrías seems to be referring to the clash of cultures that *Susanna* presents as a consequence of Moroccan–Spanish relationships and intermingling. Susanna, as a liminal figure who moves between the “Spanish” and “Moroccan” spaces of Barcelona, disrupts those cultural boundaries.

The desire to enforce cultural and racial boundaries is also articulated from the Moroccan perspective in the film. Said is portrayed as more tied to domesticity, tradition, and family life than Alex. The audience sees him primarily in spaces that reflect his religious and cultural community, such as the Halal butcher shop where he works, and his family home, where he lives with his brother, little sister Afifa, mother and grandmother. The scenes of domestic life, where the family speaks to each other in Arabic, establish for the audience that Said has a fairly traditional home life and a close-knit family. While Daniela Flesler has interpreted the scenes in Said’s home as presenting Orientalist stereotypes and evidence of incommensurable difference between Spanish and Moroccan culture, I read them as establishing normative family relationships, even parallelisms, with traditional Spanish (or European) life, where it is not uncommon for two or three generations to live under one roof; and where adults may still rely on their mother to do their laundry for them, as Said does. However, the domestic scenes do serve to communicate the anxiety that older generations have with their children adopting non-Muslim cultural behaviors and attitudes. Both Said and Afifa are infatuated with Susanna, which for Said’s mother is a cause for concern. When Said leaves to meet Susanna for a date, his mother

exclaims, “The devil is ruining our home!” She also scolds Afifa for “smelling like a dancer” and being sassy. “God will punish you!” her grandmother warns. Afifa seeks to emulate Susanna, in one scene convincing Susanna to let her have a puff of her cigarette, and switching easily from Arabic, *castellano* and Catalan in order to beg for a drag. While Afifa amuses Susanna, her fascination with the Spanish girl produces rebellious and negative results, and Susanna is portrayed as a corrupting influence by letting the little girl smoke. The ability of Afifa to adapt, and move within designated Moroccan and Spanish (Catalan) spaces seems to only provide her with opportunities for mischief; this fulfills the anxieties of her mother and grandmother.

Said is eager to adopt different customs and assimilate into Spanish society, and frames his desires in terms of domestic goals: getting married, establishing a household and having children in Spain. On a date with Susanna in the hills overlooking Barcelona, he expresses his wish to marry her, have children and integrate more fully into Spanish society. Susanna, who has just rekindled her relationship with Alex, is uncomfortable and tries to break up with Said. In spite of her previous declarations that implied a desire for a stable relationship, Susanna suddenly rejects a future role as wife and mother, asserting family tension and cultural differences as barriers to their happiness: “No soy como vosotros y a ellos no les gusto.” Said disagrees vehemently, and claims to reject the boundaries imposed by familial and cultural traditions in favor of being more independent: “Yo soy como tú,” he argues. Said repeats this argument during Susanna’s visit to his home, when she meets his mother and is interviewed by the family in order to gain their approval for marriage. The interview shows Said’s family’s adherence to tradition and their discomfort with his wish to marry a non-Muslim: before the interview, his mother and grandmother are weeping loudly. Grilling Susanna in Arabic with a neighbor translating, they ask her about her background: they are concerned that she has no

family, lives alone and works to support herself, demonstrating a more conservative and traditional belief in a woman's place. They also tell Susanna that if she wants to marry Said, she will have to become a Muslim. Finally, the women ask her if she has been with any other men before Said, to which Susanna replies, "No." Susanna seems uncomfortable and impatient with the questions, as does Said, who is waiting nervously in another room. Said complains in Arabic to his brother Hassan about the interview, but Hassan responds: "It's tradition," and adds, "I don't like this marriage either. You know nothing about her," ironically echoing Susanna's very words of protest when Said first proposed.

Although Susanna seems uninterested and impatient with Said's family, her interest in him grows after the interview as she realizes his proposal of marriage was serious, a mark that again highlights her desire for love and stability within a traditional framework. She tries to break off her relationship with Alex, but they are discovered by Said, who has been led to their meeting place by his brother and members of the Moroccan mafia. In spite of Said's previous gentle demeanor and claims of difference from traditional values, when he sees Susanna with Alex he undergoes a complete metamorphosis, becoming violent and hitting her, shouting, "¿Quieres ser mi mujer? Mi mujer me espera en casa, no se va con otro hombre." Said's transformation produces a stereotypically violent "moro," as if to emphasize that Said, as a Moroccan, cannot ever escape his (supposed) true nature. After Susanna is carried away by the Moroccan mafia, she becomes Said's concubine, "owned" by the Moroccan mafia but kept especially for Said, furthering the stereotype of the Oriental and the harem.

Susanna is passive and seemingly content in her role as concubine, echoing her situation at the very beginning of the film, when her boss employed her as a cook and prostitute. Alex, torn apart by his obsession and concern, loses control and steals money from Fouces in an

attempt to “save” Susanna and avoid his own responsibilities by escaping with her. However, Susanna resists, revealing that she loves Said and prefers to stay with him as his mistress, rather than run away with Alex. Enraged, Alex stabs her and flees the crime scene, giving Fouces’ minion Xuxo time to recover the money and frame Said for the crime. The final shot of Said shows him rocking back and forth and crying in the police station as he prays to Allah for help. The image of Said, tragic and atavistic, portrays him as having undergone a full regression into a stereotypical *moro*. Meanwhile, Alex reunites with Muntsa, who is in the hospital and has already given birth to their son. The transgressive actions of both Said and Susanna are punished, enabling the traditional patriarchal and national order to be reestablished, with Susanna dead, and Said serving as the scapegoat.

While Alex gets away with his crime by not going to prison, he does not go unpunished. On the contrary, he has no other option than to return to his wife and child, and to assume his proper social role. Furthermore, it is understood that he is now “owned ” by the despotic patriarchal gangster Fouces, who knows of Alex’s crime and covered it up. While the fates of Said, Susanna, and Alex are tragic, they are presented as inevitable consequence of extramarital affairs and intercultural relationships.

### *La cazadora*

*La cazadora* (1995) develops more deeply than *Susanna* the underpinnings of cultural racism, demonstrating more fully the connection between race, class and sexuality. By reading *La cazadora* with *Susanna*, it is possible to explore more deeply the ties of a cultural racism to discourses that were born in a colonial context. The intertwining of race, class, and sexuality as a vehicle to create a legitimate, white European bourgeois identity has been studied in-depth by Ann Laura Stoler, in her study *Race and the Education of Desire*. In Stoler’s application of

Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* to a colonial context, she discusses how European colonialism in the nineteenth century developed middle-class sensibilities. Because it was in the colonies that the “danger” of cultural and racial hybridity arose, the elites of the metropolis began to feel threatened by those creoles and *mestizos* who presumed to lay claim to national (imperial) identity and citizens' rights. Political and social struggles over authority gave rise to a construction of bourgeois identity that was molded by notions of race and proper sexual conduct. According to Stoler:

Discourses of sexuality do more than define the distinctions of the bourgeois self, in identifying marginal members of the body politic, they have mapped the moral parameters of European nations. These deeply sedimented discourses on sexual morality could redraw the ‘interior frontiers’ of national communities, frontiers that were secured through—sometimes in collusion with—the boundaries of race. (8)

Part of being a nineteenth-century European bourgeois was a combination of “breeding,” “taste,” but also what Stoler calls the education of desire: the development of sexual restraint to conform within the boundaries of race and class (130). The discourses of race and sexuality merged to delineate subjects who were legitimately white, European and bourgeois, and those that were not. In fact, in Europe itself lower classes were also often represented as nonwhite, animal-like beings. Women, in particular, were carefully identified as “types” through judgments classifying their race, class, and sexuality. Prostitutes, supposedly promiscuous working-class women, and others who transgressed the carefully prescribed norms of comportment, were depicted in narrative and visual production as “wild,” or like African women (Stoler 128). While Stoler analyzes the Dutch East Indies in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the narrative

strategies employed in *La cazadora* draw heavily on a very similar colonial and Orientalist discourse.

*La cazadora* is narrated in a nonlinear, nostalgic manner, which lends it the tone of an erotic memoir. Encarna Cabello, born in Badajoz, claims that her early interactions with immigrants from the Maghreb fueled her lifelong interest in Arab cultures (“Biografía”). Indeed, the majority of Cabello’s publications, including her thesis, *El concepto de lo femenino a través del hombre y de la mujer árabes* (Universidad de Melilla, 1983), have focused on North Africa; and she has also published Spanish translations of Moroccan narrative. Her most recent work, the romance novel *Alizmur* (2000), is published by the Catalan editorial Meteora, and narrates the love story between two young Moroccans and their family tensions. The anonymous protagonist of *La cazadora* is a Spanish woman of middle-class origins, who seeks erotic adventure and fulfillment by “hunting” her North African lovers. Hence the novel’s title, *La cazadora*, a noun that refers not only to the jacket worn by her Moroccan lover Nur, but also to the narrator herself, as a reference to her activities of *conquista* as she hunts her African “prey.” The author depicts the relationships between the Spanish “huntress” and her North African men as pleasurable but also fraught with conflict, most of which is a result of society’s rejection of them as culturally and racially mixed couple, as well as due to the confrontations and difficulties Nur must face as a Moroccan migrant in Spain.

The novel critiques intolerance of Moroccan immigrants by Spanish society, and portrays some of the privations and difficulties that they must endure, while at the very same time it firmly defines the limits of “Spanish” identity. Ultimately, the parameters of the relationships that are represented rely on a framework rooted in a colonial discourse that reduces and contains North African identity to various Orientalist tropes. By distilling North African identity down, it

becomes defined by its sexual, racial, and intellectual difference from “Spanish.” This representative regime is in line with Homi Bhabha’s theory of the stereotype and “fixity” in colonial discourse, as a technique used in order to produce the identity of the Other as perpetually different (“Other” 23). Unlike many narratives of mixed-race love (such as *Susanna*), the relationship between Nur and the Spanish heroine of *La cazadora* brings a measure of contentment and is portrayed as “successful” or permanent. But, the price of this success is the loss of the “Spanish” identity of the female protagonist and a re-coding of her as Moroccan. While she finds happiness with Nur, the consequence is her eventual “transformation” into the Other, eyed with suspicion by her former countrymen.

Further, while the novel begins with “la cazadora” in a position of dominance over her North Africa lovers, she ends the narrative as more submissive, having assumed, along with her status as “Other,” a more traditional gender role. Just as Susanna accepted her life as Said’s concubine, “la cazadora” is content being what she calls “una esclava en el paraíso” (29). This suggests that, in spite of her independence, the protagonist actually prefers a more traditional role, as did Susanna in Chavarrías’ film. Moreover, it associates North Africans with a traditional way of life, left “outside of” or “behind” Western modernity, a typical association in colonial representations as well. In the case of *La cazadora*, that way of life is portrayed, in true Orientalist fashion, as more sensual and, for the protagonist, more authentic than that of the Western (Spanish) bourgeoisie, similar to the representative conventions of Moroccan–Spanish couples in twentieth-century colonial novels and films set in the protectorate. According to Susan Martin-Márquez, “While a horrifically violent colonial discourse and practice was transferred from the protectorate to the peninsula over the course of the 1930s, Spanish texts set in North Africa during this period became suffused instead with a dreamy Orientalism and exalted and

eroticized fraternal relations between Spaniards and Moroccans” (*Disorientations* 206). Spanish imperial identity was portrayed as incorporating the premodern Moroccans into a more civilized and advanced Spanish culture, thus enacting a civilizing (and therefore legitimate) mission in the Protectorate. Moroccans were portrayed as Spain’s cultural and racial brothers, left outside of modernity.

Yet in spite of the strong rhetoric of racial and cultural similarity used to justify Spanish interventions in North Africa, under Franco, Spanish–Moroccan couples and marriage were not accepted in most fictional representations, nor in colonial government policy (Martin-Márquez, *Disorientations* 269). Indeed, in Florian Rey’s well known film *La canción de Aixa* (1939), the half-Spanish, half-Moroccan Aixa (Imperio Argentina) is portrayed as definitively “Moroccan,” by the end of the film, married to the *moro* Abslam (Manuel Luna) and living contentedly in his harem, dedicating herself to domestic tasks. In Carmen Nonell’s award-winning novel, *Zoco Grande* (1956), the Spanish chemist Isabel, who works in a hospital in Tangier, becomes engaged to the Westernized Moroccan doctor Elhamid Tahar. However, he is murdered by Isabel’s brother and she returns to Spain to raise their son: thus allegorizing the amorous and political relationships as one in which the Spanish incorporates, absorbs, the Moroccan identity, but Islam and other “Arab” values will be in no danger of taking over.

The rhetoric of brotherhood that existed in mid-twentieth century narratives is absent from contemporary representations of Moroccan–Spanish love; instead couples are portrayed as interracial and intercultural, again confirming the influence of “clash of cultures” discourses in the construction of national identity. In *La cazadora*, the relationship between Nur and the anonymous narrator is presented from the beginning as a sexual, racial and social transgression. “La cazadora” is bored with Spaniards and goes to the street to seek out the company of North

African immigrants, with whom she is fascinated. Here, the narrative employs Orientalist stereotypes of Moroccans as more sensual, and Spanish desire of Moroccans is portrayed as sexually and socially transgressive. The relationship between Nur and “la cazadora” is rejected by society at large and they are stigmatized by Spaniards, who openly regard the mixed couple as sexually perverse. In one scene they are harassed by the police, who assume that the narrator is a prostitute and that Nur and his brother are drug addicts. When it is discovered that neither brother has papers, they are taken to the police station and eventually go to jail. But it is intimated that the reason for being stopped by the police, and why they drew attention to themselves, was because the two brothers were with a white woman, a fact that unsettles the officers, who appear to be disturbed and repulsed by the physical displays of affection between the narrator and Nur (47). Both on the street and in the police station, officers and other Spanish men express discomfort and even anger with the female protagonist’s relationship, reflecting the construction of women as male property, whose sexual activities and bodies must be controlled and contained within “appropriate” national and racial limits.

Yet, the narrator-protagonist herself articulates a view of her relationship as “perverse” or “non-normative.” As the reader is permitted access to her stream-of-consciousness narrative, we discover that her *conquista* and her desires of North Africans are compared directly with homosexuality, as a frankly homophobic discourse is used by the author as a mode of comparison. The narrator assumes an explicitly masculine and dominating role in a fantasy of power and desire, in which she likens herself to a homosexual man, not a heterosexual woman, attempting to frame her desire as aggressive, active, and therefore “masculine.” As a young woman, the narrator confesses, she enjoyed dominating lower-class, almost illiterate Spanish

men, but now finds poor, uneducated African men more exciting and better lovers—here entwining race, class, and gender, as she feminizes her Spanish lovers from a lower social class:

Sospecho, desde hace mucho tiempo, que, de haber nacido hombre, me atraerían los hombres, me enamoraría de ellos, sería homosexual. Un hombre amando a los hombres que amo ahora. También me une a no pocos homosexuales la búsqueda de compañero en un medio social inferior. No espero de él que sea joven, mi experiencia amorosa abarca edades muy contrastadas, pero sí—parece ser—que sea casi analfabeto. No sé si es porque yo iba para lesbiana... cierta primavera, adolescente aún, tuve la fantasía de dominar a una chica imaginaria de mi edad y de mi nivel cultural; y que al cruzarse, ese mismo verano, en mi camino jóvenes humildes de origen modesto, encontré en ellos a mi dominado, a mi mujer. (58)

The manner in which the text correlates a dominating, white, female sexuality, with that of homosexuality, is significant, as it seeks to equate the narrator's desire, and domination of North Africans, as an activity outside of so-called normative bourgeois sexuality. The narrator infantilizes Nur, calling him "mi niño," and a police officer critiques her, imprudently asking: "¿No cree que la diferencia intelectual entre usted y él es muy grande?" (77). The narrator's internal response again associates her relationship with a younger Moroccan to that of homosexuality: "Ante la pareja homosexual masculina donde a menudo se da esa clase de amor, parece que no se plantea ese tipo de pregunta, como si en una mujer fuera la inoportuna manifestación de un gusto perverso: ignorante del hombre superior" (78). Stefanie K. Dunning, in *Queer in Black and White*, and Siobhan B. Somerville, in *Queering the Color Line*, discuss the important ways in which tropes of mixed-race and interraciality entwine with queerness. Homosexuality is "akin to being a drug addict, a criminal, and a rolling stone," that is to say;

equated with degenerate, anti-social behavior, and enacted on the margins of society (Dunning 3). If women are responsible for reproducing the nation and the race, and must show a commitment to family, then transgressing their racial, national boundaries is also anti-social, non-productive behavior: “The equation of interracial desire and gay identity connects queer identity to that which is outside, removing them from the national, reproductive community (Dunning 3-4). A female in a position of dominance and in a relationship with a Moroccan is therefore also “non-normative,” which associates uncontrolled female sexuality and homosexuality with degeneracy.

Degeneracy and regression are constructed geographically in the narrative as well. In her relationship with Nur, and with the Algerian Burafa, “la cazadora’s” visits to their homes are a journey from “Spanish” into what the narrator has constructed as “African”: a journey from clean, bourgeois, urban modernity into a poor, dirty, and more primitive space, or what Anne McClintock, in *Imperial Leather*, has identified as “anachronistic space,” a typical facet of colonial discourse, seen often in 19<sup>th</sup> Century travel narratives—a regression in time to the pre-modern (40). And Africans, both immigrants in Spain and within Africa, are portrayed as isolated from modernity in *La cazadora*. The journey or “descent” made by the narrator brings her both sexual gratification and a sense of authenticity. She must literally walk in mud, dirty herself, to get to Burafa’s home, which she describes as bucolic but rustic and equates the geographical surroundings with her sexual activities: “El lugar era bucólico. El amor, indecoroso y sin recato alguno, salvaje” (62). The geographical location corresponds with the mental and physical attributes of her lovers: “Burafa, árabe, no bereber, era un tipo rudo, animal, impulsivo en su deseo, y yo la esclava de éste” (62). She describes herself as a slave, metaphorically, but she is one being waited on: “Las gentes más míseras de la tierra me hacían

sentir en su chabola una esclava en el paraíso.” Buarfa cleans the mud off of her shoes and showers her with domestic attentions, and making his sister wash her socks (65). The narrative idealizes the primitive surroundings, rejecting “Spanish” or modern way of life. David Spurr, analyzing the “practice of idealization” in narrative, notes that:

Idealization may thus be said to provide a *compensation* on the symbolic level for the political and economic processes that have destroyed the traditional fabric of non-Western societies; by representing individual instances of courage, beauty, and spiritual transcendence, Western writing about the Third World offers a kind of substitute gratification for what would otherwise be an overwhelming sense of loss...it presents an image of non-Western society sufficiently idealized in order to ‘manage’ the burden of the Third World on Western consciousness. (132)

Placing North Africa, and North Africans in the realm of fantasy establishes their difference from Spanish and a modern way of being. The disdain articulated by la cazadora for Spanish bourgeois society is part of her desire for Moroccans, and the fulfillment she attains in her relationships with them.

Other instances of alternate idealization with othering of North Africans occur with constructions of race and sexuality in the narrative. Under the predatory gaze of la cazadora, Nur and his brother Muhasan are racialized as non-white and non-Spanish: Muhasan is described as having “musculosos brazos color chocolate;” and Spaniards confuse him with a “Gitano,” the perpetual other within Spanish society. Nur is often assumed to be South American (29, 36). Difference is written on the bodies of North Africans, and in this lies their erotic attraction for “la cazadora.” Both Nur and Burafa literally embody alterity, reflecting what Edward Said has said about the Oriental and the physiological and moral classifications that Western Europe created for

them. For Said, “Theses of Oriental backwardness, degeneracy, and inequality with the West most easily associated themselves early in the nineteenth century with ideas about the biological bases of racial inequality” (*Orientalism* 206). Europeans “distilled” the essence of the Oriental into ideas of its “sensuality, its tendency to despotism, its aberrant mentality, its habits of inaccuracy, its backwardness” (*Orientalism* 205).

While traditionally it is the male gaze turned on a female subject, in *La cazadora* the older female is in a position of racial and cultural authority, because she is a citizen as well as well-educated and independent. While in *Susanna*, the white female body is subject to exhibition, with frequent topless scenes and full-frontal nudity accompanying her mental, physical and emotional domination by her lovers, in *La cazadora*, the female narrator is older than her North African lovers, and asserts sexual independence. In Cabello’s text, the narrator is not subjected to the gaze, on the contrary, she is the one looking at and objectifying the bodies of North African men. The placement of la cazadora in a position of power over her lovers seems, at least initially, to subvert the patriarchal norms of gendered relationships. McClintock, commenting on sadomasochism and its potential to undermine orthodox gender identities, states that:

[it] exposes the possibility that manhood is not naturally synonymous with mastery, nor femininity with passivity. Social identity becomes commutable, and the boundaries of gender and class open to invention and transfiguration...the power dynamics and erotic implications of social ritual are visibly and flagrantly explored. (“Maid” 222)

But the power differentials in *La cazadora* are predicated on Nur and Burafa’s status as North African migrants, from a lower social-class, who are further framed as racially “other” and intellectually inferior to the Spanish female. This dichotomy constructs Moroccans as beings who possess sexually charged bodies and minds different and Other than that of “normative” Spaniards.

Further, as Susan Martin-Márquez has pointed out, the “female appropriation of the gaze” and the objectification or “specularization” of the male have been viewed, by critics such as Mary Ann Doane, Steve Neale, and Kaja Silverman, as, in some instances, merely reinforcing patriarchal logic, continuing to frame sexuality and gender difference “through a subject-object dichotomy” (Martin-Márquez, *Feminist* 258). Nur and his brothers are objects of desire for la cazadora, as she constantly refers to their “belleza;” not only their bodies, but their food and geographical surroundings are all orientalized as “sensual.” The protagonist regards them as the ideal of youthful beauty, but theirs is a beauty that is tragic, as their lives are depicted as rather primitive, poor, and violent.

North African bodies furthermore *embody* their unique difference in culture and lifestyle, while even exhibiting a mental capacity as impoverished. Nur’s lack of education and his more “primitive” lifestyle, have caused him to be unable to think abstractly, to imagine. Edward Said asserts that in Orientalist discourse, the Oriental is represented as irrational and childlike, and indeed, the narrator dominates Nur intellectually: “ocurría que mi compañero estaba dotado de una mente menos necesitada de la fantasía que la mía. Los libros que no había leído, gracias a su analfabestismo, se la habían ahorrado.” (*Orientalism* 36). Nur’s body, like his origins, is not modern. When la cazadora visits his family in the Rif, she recognizes:

el origen inequívocamente tradicional de que estaba modelado no sólo su intelecto sino también mágicamente su cuerpo, que transparentaba, que no escapaba a la mano ancestral modeladora. Su carne, como su conocimiento, surgía de una pasta deliciosamente ingenua, consistente, imperturbable y fatal, extraña a los hombres ciudadanos (86).

This description directly correlates to a colonial discourse, and hearkens back to the scientific racism so popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and so often utilized to justify colonialism. Africans,

supposedly by their very nature, both physically and mentally, were not equipped to participate in modernity, even to govern themselves. Transferred to a modern context, one notes a similar discourse applied to Africans, in particular Muslims, in Europe: that they are entrenched in traditional values and customs, they are *not able* to live in modern European society. Here, the connection with culturalist explanations regarding the incompatibility of immigrants to a colonial and racial discourse becomes apparent.

While “la cazadora” begins her relationships as a dominant figure, she later casts herself as a “slave in paradise,” dominated by her African lover(s). Curiously, the final fate of both Susanna and la cazadora is quite similar, as both female protagonists end up being subordinate to a *moro*. While the protagonist of *La cazadora* begins her narration in a position of authority and dominance, she ultimately is most fulfilled and happy in a more traditional gender role, achieved in part by surrendering her Spanish identity. As the novel and the relationship with Nur progress, the narrator feels less and less connected to Spanish bourgeois society until, at the novel’s close, “la cazadora” has made her final, irreversible, transformation into the Other. Now she is subject to a “different law” and feels the gazes of Spaniards as threatening both to her and Nur when they are in public:

Me descubrí enharinada de su estigma, enharinada de ser una mísera marroquí a las miradas retraídas, ausentes de calor, de aquellos españoles con que me tropezaba en la cafeterías, calles y tiendas del pueblo; como si no perteneciendo ya a su apacible mundo, en mí reconocieran a una intrusa sujeta a las ventiscas de endemoniado carácter de aquellos árabes muertos de hambre. (103)

*La cazadora* critiques the fear of racial and cultural mixing, in the actions of characters such as police officers. Yet the very discursive fabric of the novel replicates that which it claims to

condemn. The mixed couple have, to some extent, their “happily ever after,” but only because the female protagonist has undergone a metamorphosis.

Both *Susanna* and *La cazadora* seem to be haunted by what Urmila Seshagiri has called “imperialism’s unhappy legacy,” one which interferes with or “stymies” racial and cultural hybridity (182). The female protagonists must remove themselves, or be removed, from mainstream Spanish society if they choose to love a Moroccan, and their exile is acute: *Susanna* is murdered, and *la cazadora* is essentially abjured by her countrymen. Spanish society itself is portrayed as quite reactionary and Spanish men in particular are portrayed as rather abusive and insecure in both works. However, any hope of transcendence or, indeed, multicultural hybridity, is eschewed in favor of maintaining the entrenched familial and national identities.

### **Los hombres oscuros: Relationships with Sub-Saharan Africans**

In narratives of desire between a Spaniard and a Sub-Saharan African, the theme of race is much more palpable, as it is treated as a visual “fact,” and explicitly becomes a point of focus. Historically there has not been the same rhetorical gesture of “brotherhood” extended, nor recognition of a shared cultural or even racial heritage between Spaniards and Sub-Saharan Africans. Indeed, in the late-nineteenth century writing of Joaquin Costa, for example, the Regenerationist writer took pains to distinguish North Africans (and their racial-cultural connection with Spaniards) as different, and whiter, than “black” Africans, applying the term “Ibero-Berber;” later, during Franco, Rodolfo Gil Benumeña would use similar rhetoric, stating: “the Iberian type, also called Berber, is still today the essence of the Spanish race in the majority of peninsular regions” (33, qtd. in Martin-Márquez, *Disorientations* 223). Cultural and racial difference is assumed as part of the regime of truth of the texts, in which differences must be maintained. As in the narratives of Moroccan–Spanish love, interracial desires are truncated by

violence (*El metro*, *Bwana*) deportation (*Las cartas de Alou*) or by an eventual drifting apart of the couple as they mutually end a relationship that was never meant to be (*La belleza del ébano*). African–Spanish couples are once again portrayed either an erotic fantasy, or a difficult and treacherous undertaking.

Most recent fictional representations of Sub-Saharan–Spanish couples have focused on desire and love between African men and Spanish women. This is a similar structure that is shared with Moroccan–Spanish couples, and, as in the latter representations, it exploits the status of women as symbols of the Nation and the bearers of “racial” and cultural heredity. *Bwana* (Uribe, 1996), based on Ignacio Morales’s 1992 play *La mirada del hombre oscuro*, is by now a canonical example of ‘90s Spanish immigration films. The fate of the black African, Ombasi (Emilio Buale), turns on his dual role as a stereotype and hence an object of both fear and fascination for Spaniards. While Ombasi becomes the dark object of desire for Dori (María Barranco), her husband fears the African’s “potency” as a potential for violence and a threat to his own masculinity. The solution to this ambivalence is brought by the skinheads, who chase Ombasi and castrate him, thus physically and symbolically exorcising the source of his threat to white society. A similar fate befalls the immigrant protagonist Lambert Obama Ondo in the final scene of Donato Ndongo-Bidyogo’s 2007 novel *El metro*. When skinheads spot Obama giving his Spanish girlfriend Lucía a goodnight kiss in the metro, they attack him and murder him, thus tragically ending the novel and the hopes of Lambert Obama, just as he is beginning the slow process of assimilation into Spanish society.

*Las cartas de Alou* (Armendáriz, 1990) generally presents a more positive view of African–Spanish couples. Early in the film, Alou (Mulie Jarjou) confronts racism on the part of two Spanish girls who take him and his friend back to their apartment, but do not want to be seen

with the two African men, asking the migrants to sneak into the building separately. The film is sympathetic to the experiences of Alou, showing his perspective as he maneuvers the unfamiliar and often hostile linguistic and cultural geographies of southern Spain, Madrid, and Barcelona. Mixed couples are shown to be a reality in the film, as Alou's friend Mulai (Akonio Dolo) has a family with a Spanish woman, and Alou himself begins a relationship with the Spanish girl Carmen (Eulàlia Ramon). However, the relationship is cut short just as Carmen has decided to tell her father, when Alou is caught by the authorities and deported. Although he plans to return, the unification of Alou and Carmen is elided, perhaps forever. In fact, none of the three works narrate the experiences of an African-Spanish that engages in a lasting relationship. These works attempt to frame the experiences of African migrants in an empathetic manner for a Spanish audience, principally by focusing on the point of view of the migrant, and the hardships and humiliations they must endure in Spain. But the stories, like much of the immigration policies of the 80s and early 90s themselves, fail to acknowledge migrants as a long-term presence, and do not address their situation in Spain as more than just transitory. The questions (barely) raised by the films: migrant rights and their place in Spanish society; negotiations and expectations of gender roles across cultures; and the possible impact of migrants on the nationalist identities of the autonomous regions, are all left unanswered.

One narrative from the 1990s does explore the possibilities of an interracial relationship, and suggests that it may provide a measure of satisfaction to the couple, without any tragic consequences. Marina Mayoral's short story "La belleza del ébano" appears in her collection *Recuerda, cuerpo* (1998), an anthology that centers on tales of female desire and eroticism. In "La belleza del ébano," the interracial (and intergenerational) couple Teresa and Pierre do not experience violence, nor are their identities destroyed, as in other tales of mixed couples. On the

contrary, their arrangement brings happiness and, at least to Teresa, a sense of confidence and satisfaction. This is due, in part, to the fact that theirs is a temporary arrangement mediated by money and secrecy. The impermanent nature of the relationship correlates with other narratives of mixed couples, as the ending of the story reinstates the status quo: Teresa returns to her husband and Pierre goes back to his country. In spite of the rather orthodox ending, Mayoral is able to explore, and expose, the tensions in an interracial relationship and the racism that is part of the fabric of modern, white consciousness better than any Spanish narrative to date.

Marina Mayoral, a retired professor of Spanish Literature at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, is known both for her academic publications—critical editions and articles on the works of Rosalía de Castro and Emilia Pardo Bazán—as well as her fiction. Her first novel, *Cándida, otra vez*, was published in 1979; subsequent novels and short stories in Gallego and Castellano have been translated into several languages (Mayoral, “Biografía”). Mayoral’s work has been recognized for incorporating elements of metafiction and pastiche, *la novela negra*, Galicia and Gallego, and a focus on female protagonists (Alborg 144). These techniques are well-displayed in her collection *Recuerda, cuerpo*, many of which are narrated from the female perspective, and feature tales of lost love: some nostalgic, others darkly humorous. Like *La cazadora*, “La belleza del ébano” revolves around the relationship between an older Spanish woman and a younger African immigrant. As in *La cazadora*, the relationships of power and desire are inverted from the traditional scheme outlined by Laura Mulvey in her canonical “Visual Pleasures and Narrative Cinema.” Mulvey argues that Western film conventions place the body of the woman on display for the viewer, a positioning that reinforces traditional structures of patriarchy in which the woman is an object to be gazed at (19). On the

contrary, in both Cabello and Mayoral's narratives, the woman is the one doing the gazing, and, in "La belleza del ébano," the black, male body is on display.

Rosalía Cornejo-Parriego, in an analysis of three short stories from *Recuerda, cuerpo*, argues that Mayoral subverts the typical gender relationships vis-à-vis sexual power, as the "female gaze" and articulations female desire serve as the core axis of the anthology ("Feminismo" 596). Yet, as in *La cazadora*, the inversion of traditional structures of power and desire in "La belleza del ébano" are predicated on racial and class differences. This fact underscores the power gap between immigrants and citizens in Western society, and the historically subordinate, even feminized, position of black men.<sup>25</sup> While Mayoral certainly transgresses the subject/object roles, and creates a narrative space for an active, assertive female desire, in this particular story it cannot escape the racial inequalities born of slavery and colonialism, wherein the black man is subservient. However, Mayoral mediates this dichotomy by establishing a level of equality between Teresa and Pierre as equally subordinate to the patriarchy. This contrasts with, for example, *La cazadora*, where the female protagonist's desire was articulated as either masculine and dominant, or as a subordinate slave, reproducing in many ways patriarchal power relationships.

Teresa is a fifty-something editor and mother who has been lonely since her divorce five years prior from Javier, a famous architect. Her ex-husband, a mediocre lover, average-looking and with lumbago, due to his prestige and money has been able to have a string of younger girlfriends. Finally, in order to make Javier jealous, Teresa hires an escort to accompany her to a party. The escort turns out to be an attractive, thirty-something African man with a degree from the Sorbonne. Although Teresa is initially flustered by, even fearful of, "el negro," the two enter

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<sup>25</sup> Vron Ware argues in *Beyond the Pale: White Women and Racism* that the black male is a feminized subject within Western discourse.

into a mutually beneficial relationship: he pretends to be her boyfriend, and she edits his doctoral thesis. While the relationship between Pierre and Teresa shocks her friends and family, and foments jealousy in her ex-husband, the nature of the relationship is impermanent. Pierre, although he works for an escort service, is married and has several children: after he is awarded his doctorate he returns to his unnamed African country. Teresa, although she enjoys dating Pierre, continues loving her ex-husband, and in the end she and Javier get back together. Thus the “threat” presented by the African immigrant to Spanish masculinity is temporary in Mayoral’s tale. While Mayoral’s story explores, with humor, the transgressions and racial tensions of an interracial couple, she is able to elide a deeper engagement with any long-term political and social ramifications by representing mixed couples as a phenomenon that, though pleasurable, are non-normative and impermanent unions.

During their first date, Teresa and Pierre discover that their personal difficulties with white male patriarchy can be resolved by working together. Teresa complains that Javier, her ex-husband and a man in his fifties, has an infinite selection of women to date, whereas nobody wants to date a woman in her fifties. “El negro” agrees but reminds her that usually only happens if the men are wealthy, famous, or powerful; if one is black and poor, one doesn’t have many options. He then mentions the difficulties he has with finishing his dissertation, as his thesis adviser, “un tipo de Literatura Contemporánea, muy competente y durísimo” will not approve the dissertation in Spanish philology due to the improvements that must be made in grammar and style (178). Teresa and “el negro” decide to strategize and commiserate together against the dominating figures of white patriarchy in their lives: she against her ex-husband, and he against his thesis adviser. So, “el negro” becomes “Pierre” and Teresa’s boyfriend, and she edits his dissertation and helps explain the finer points of Spanish grammar. Thus, Mayoral seeks to

mediate the power differentials between the two, with the idea that both are in a mutually beneficial relationship as opposed to a master-slave relationship.

The economy of Pierre and Teresa's arrangement is a constant preoccupation for Teresa, who initially conceives of their arrangement as a business transaction. She is conscious of the power differential between the two of them: although the narrative establishes a level of equality and commiseration, Teresa is quite wealthy due to a sizeable inheritance left to her by her tía Evangelina. But after Pierre and Teresa sleep together, she stops thinking of their relationship in purely economic terms, although she continues "echando cuentas," of the hours they spend together, a habit the narrator attributes to the influence of her father, who was Catalan. The narrative refers to their relationship several times as a "buen negocio," but Teresa begins to feel guilty when she realizes that the attention Pierre dedicates to her is actually hurting him economically. Not wanting to be a "negra explotadora," and fearful that an acquaintance or someone on his committee might find out about his job as an escort, Teresa decides to give him a significant loan. This allows Pierre to leave the escort service and still support his family in Madrid, while dedicating his time to his dissertation, and to Teresa. The micro-financing is effective, as Pierre defends his thesis and returns, with his wife and children, to his native country, paying back the loan judiciously over time.

The economic and class difference between Pierre and Teresa inverts the standard relationship between the female and male protagonists of romance novels, in which the female is typically younger and of a lower social class and/or economic status than the male love interest (Modleski 17). Teresa is autonomous in the narrative: she is not "caught" between her husband and Pierre, nor is she dependent on either of them. Her position permits her to engage in her relationship with Pierre and control him on some level, as she removes him from the escort

agency and thus, from other clients and potential partners. Their relationship is not conceived in typical terms standard to the romance genre. On the contrary, it is a short-term love affair and good business, in Teresa's estimation. María Suarez Lafuente notes that in Mayoral's short fiction, many of the female protagonists, like Teresa, tend to be older and go against traditional gender and cultural norms:

Los personajes femeninos de los relatos breves...Subvierten, sutilmente, el orden pre/establecido: alteran la institución matrimonial como tal, las formas sociales y hasta se atreven con los poderes fácticos; la subversión fundamental se refleja, como no podía ser de otra manera tratándose de literatura, en un lenguaje comedido, aparentemente inocuo, que esconde una gran ironía desde la primera hasta la última frase. ("Subversión" 48)

Janet Pérez notes similar themes and techniques in other erotic fiction written by Spanish women, especially narratives published in the 90s. Pérez argues that humor and satire are employed in order to subvert standard patriarchal narratives and gender positioning (192). She further explains that female authors of recent erotic fiction are able to question and ridicule myths regarding male and female sexuality: such as the notion that women cannot separate desire from love (192). The authors also alter more traditional narrative structures and sub-plots common to male-authored erotica. Pérez distinguishes the lack of physical descriptions and neglect of the male point of view as another significant and "recent" technique, although it is debatable as to how new the latter technique truly is (192). Mayoral suggests some separation of desire and love in "La belleza del ébano," but does focus on the physique of Pierre, which aligns the story with more traditional narratives of interracial encounters.

Mayoral openly deals with constructions of race, class, gender, and desire through irony, and an intertextual construction of the character of Pierre, through Teresa's references to black

Hollywood icons and the photography of Robert Mapplethorpe. These techniques create a critical distance within the text, as Mayoral's narrator is able to humorously construct Teresa's racist thought process, demonstrating her simultaneous desire for and (initial) fear of Pierre as entwined on the same axis of ambivalence. Kathryn Perry discusses dominance in interracial romance:

Although it does not necessarily mean that this exchange of power is non-consensual or that it is reproduced verbatim outside of a sexual context, fantasy does echo social realities. It is the white partner who potentially drives immense sexual potency from their control of the black partner, whether through dominance or submission. In symbolic terms, where whiteness is the pimp, it is blackness that becomes the whore. The strategy of projection ensures that white people maintain control, bestowing upon black sexuality the secret topography of white desire. ("Heart" 175)

Due to the fact that Pierre and Teresa's relationship is mediated by money, and initially is a business transaction, the relationship of power, money, race, and desire could be codified in very stereotypical terms. Yet, unlike Kathryn Perry's dramatic, even moralizing, dichotomy of "pimp" and "whore," Mayoral is able to ironize the relationship by addressing openly the complex power dynamic.

Unlike *La cazadora*, which was a nostalgic fantasy that unabashedly employed the tropes of Orientalism, the narration in "La belleza del ébano" engages directly with the construction of black masculinity through an acknowledgement of stereotypes, primarily via the ironic narration of Teresa's neurotic internal dialogue. The arrival of a black escort on her doorstep makes Teresa flustered and uncomfortable, and she can only register him as "un negro;" a living embodiment of the stereotypes and cultural images she has accumulated to signify who and what is a "black

man.” Before he can even introduce himself, Teresa sees him “sonriendo como Denzel Washington” (169). Later, her jealous ex-husband Javier ironically asks her what their daughters think of the “Sidney Poitier” who accompanies her everywhere. The references to black Hollywood icons are not done with any pretensions to a camp aesthetic by Mayoral. On the contrary, they serve to address the construction of black masculinity in the imaginary of the Spanish bourgeoisie, influenced by the hegemony of American pop culture via the Hollywood film industry. As the art historian Kobena Mercer argues:

Mass-media stereotypes of black men—as criminals, athletes, and entertainers—bear witness to the limited grid of representations through which black male subjects become publicly visible continues to reproduce certain *idées fixes*, ideological fictions and psychic fixations, about the nature of black sexuality and the ‘otherness’ it is constructed to embody. (177)

The intertextual references to filmic images of famous black men (Sidney Poitier and Denzel Washington), link the collective imaginary of a certain “type” of black masculinity with Pierre, an African immigrant. Sidney Poitier and Denzel Washington represent a certain “type” of black masculinity in Hollywood: cultured, elegant, and non-threatening to the white establishment due to their mainstream appeal. Poitier, a film star who rose to fame in the 1950s, has been called a “model integrationist” hero by film historian Donald Bogle:

In all his films he was educated and intelligent. He spoke proper English, dressed conservatively, and had the best of table manners. For the mass white audience, Sidney Poitier was a black man who had met their standards. His characters were tame; never did they act impulsively, nor were they threats to the system. They were amenable and pliant.

And finally they were non-funky, almost sexless and sterile. In short, they were the perfect dream for white liberals anxious to have a colored man in for lunch or dinner. Poitier was also acceptable for black audiences. He was the paragon of black middle-class values and virtues. He was neither crude nor loud and, most important, he did not carry any ghetto cultural baggage with him. No dialect. No shuffling. No African cultural past. And he was almost totally devoid of rhythm. In short, he was the complete antithesis of all the black buffoons who had appeared before in American movies. (175-176)

Mayoral does not have Teresa and Javier associate Pierre with, for example, Samuel L. Jackson or Richard Roundtree (*Shaft*, 2000 and 1971), actors who tend to play much more volatile characters. And Poitier, significantly, starred in *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (Stanley Kramer, 1967). Denzel Washington, like Poitier, tends to play articulate and complex black male characters, but due to rising to fame in the 1990s, has been able to explore more range as an actor and a star, including being a sex symbol without being seen to endanger the status quo (Donalson 69)<sup>26</sup>. While Pierre is from an unnamed, third-world African country, he does not embody any of the stereotypes of Sub-Saharan immigrants in Spain, and it is this fact that the references to Hollywood icons can communicate. The fact that Pierre is nothing like the stereotype of a Sub-Saharan African immigrant is largely what makes the relationship possible and believable, and also functions to establish another level of equality between him and Teresa.

Although Pierre is suave and cultured, the fact of “fixity” and stereotypes of black sexuality imply that something excessive, uncontrollable and perhaps violent is lurking just beneath the veneer civilization. He may be smiling like Denzel Washington, but Teresa can barely register that through her overwhelming fear. Even before Pierre can fully introduce

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<sup>26</sup> Washington appeared on the cover of *People*'s July 1996 issue as the “Sexiest Man Alive.”

himself, from the minute Teresa opens the door, she already has stereotyped him: “Antes de que él añadiese sin perder la sonrisa: *Me envía la agencia*, Teresa empezó a temerlo sin acabar de creérselo todavía. ¡Un negro! ¡Le habían enviado un negro!” (169). Teresa is shocked because she had asked the agency to send someone who is the antithesis of the stereotypical Sub-Saharan immigrant: “Teresa recordó que había pedido un hombre guapo, con buena facha y culto. Casi seguro en orden inverso: culto, de buena facha y guapo. No se había hablado para nada del color. Ni se le había ocurrido” (170). She didn’t think of color: “culto, de buena facha y guapo” together would only yield a white man by the logic of stereotypes.

Mayoral addresses the fear and desire that accompany Teresa’s judgment of Pierre. After her initial shock, she focuses on his body:

El negro parecía esperar una respuesta y Teresa evaluó la estatura por encima del metro ochenta, la anchura de los hombros, la fortaleza del cuello, la caída perfecta de la americana... Al llegar al bulto que se insinuaba bajo la pernera izquierda del pantalón sintió que enrojecía. Recordó al mismo tiempo las fotos de Mapplethorpe y la advertencia entre risas de Malen: Cobran lo mismo... (171)

Teresa is initially uncomfortable with “el negro,” even afraid, but also fascinated by his body, thinking of Robert Mapplethorpe’s photographs of naked black men in his highly controversial collection *Black Males*, which featured portraits, often nude, of gay black men and often focused on their genitals. Mercer’s essay “Black Masculinity and the Sexual Politics of Race” deconstructs Mapplethorpe’s *Black Males*, linking the images to the tensions inherent in colonial fantasy and stereotypes (Bhabha’s “fixity”) and its relationship with power, gender and desire. The “exaggerated centrality of the phallus” that so often accompanies representation of black masculinity, and which is a particular point of focus in *Black Males*, and in “La belleza del

ébano,” highlights “the dialectics of white fear and fascination underpinning colonial fantasy.” (Mercer, *Welcome* 133). Teresa, although mortified that “un negro” has appeared on her doorstep, is nevertheless fascinated by the possibilities presented in the bulge in his pants. The trappings of bourgeoisie culture (his jacket, *la americana*) and Pierre’s elegance, are juxtaposed in Teresa’s mind with what is presumed to lie underneath.

When Pierre seduces Teresa, he regresses to being a stereotype in her mind: “Pensó: va a follarme un negro. Y después, o quizá antes, o quizá simultáneamente, pensó que aquel negro era lo más bello que había visto en su vida.” (179). The idealization of the black male body, although positive, again “fixes” the black man as a penis symbol, which Fanon deconstructs in *Black Skin, White Masks*: “The Negro is eclipsed by a penis. He is turned into a penis. He *is* a penis” (170). The obsession with the black man’s penis fetishizes it as a sign of a lack of morality, of primitiveness and lust and as posing a threat in the white psyche to the authority and masculinity of the white male (Fanon 177). The voracious potency and fertility of Africans is rehearsed as well in Mayoral’s narrative, as Pierre is idealized as a lover and his wife is affirmed as terribly fertile: “su esposa es católica acérrima y de una fertilidad tan asombrosa como la potencia de él” (176). Teresa uses the anxiety about miscegenation, and stereotypes of black male sexuality to her advantage, in order to make her ex-husband jealous. Her tactics succeed, it is insinuated, in part because she is dating a black man: “pero ella sintió, a pesar de los cinco años de divorcio, que por primera vez le estaba poniendo los cuernos y tuvo el absoluto convencimiento, nacido de un cuarto de siglo en común, de que él lo sentía así también” (180). Teresa’s revenge tactics and Javier’s predicable jealousy all turn on notions of the female as male property and her symbolic embodiment of the nation, although anxieties about miscegenation in “La belleza del ébano” are minimized because Pierre is already married, and Teresa is beyond childbearing age.

The end of “La belleza del ébano” brings a reestablishment of the status quo: Pierre returns to Africa, and Javier and Teresa get back together. In spite of the difficulties of her marriage/divorce, and Javier’s overwhelming averageness in everything except his talent as a famous architect, Teresa still loves Javier and maintains that she wants to spend the rest of her life with him. The thought of a permanent relationship between her and Pierre is not a viable option in her mind, nor in the structure of the narrative. Teresa ultimately adheres to the appropriate, orthodox limits of culture and race. A lasting relationship with Pierre, even loving Pierre, is improbable and outside of the bounds of reality:

Teresa pensaba que lo que sentía por Pierre no era amor. Ella quería a su marido: nunca lo había olvidado y siempre había mantenido la esperanza de que volvería con ella. Así que no era amor. ¡Pero se sintió tan orgullosa de él cuando, puesto en pie, recibió la nota de su tesis doctoral! [...] Era el ideal clásico: la inteligencia, el talento en un cuerpo bello, deseable, y que sabe hacer se desear. Otras veces pensaba que sí era amor lo que sentía por Pierre, aunque un amor imposible que su sentido práctico la llevaba a desechar. (182)

While Teresa occasionally feels that she *might* love Pierre, she decides that her affection and her desire do not encapsulate “love,” and do not extend so far or so deeply. In fact, love between Pierre and Teresa here is literally called “amor imposible,” which is the fate of most mixed couples in Spanish narrative and film. For Teresa, Pierre will always occupy a nostalgic place in her fantasies as a lasting figure of erotic beauty. Pierre’s body continues to be fixed: a work of art, an object of desire, and a memory, but a distant one that never permanently alters or penetrates the emotional structure of Teresa’s world, nor Spanish society.

## Conclusion

By insistently framing desire between Africans and Spaniards as taboo and transgressive, narrative and film on many levels fulfill the convention of the tragic interracial romance, because the “forbidden love” that they portray can never fully blossom as “a socially sanctioned relationship” (Perry 173). Yet, in spite of affirming more orthodox discourses, the narratives are not carbon copies of their colonial counterparts. On the contrary, one could argue that the mere fact that mixed couples are such a prevalent theme demonstrates a reduced resistance to their reality in contemporary society, particularly given more empathetic or positive representations of the experiences of African migrants in Spain. Further, and particularly in works written by female authors, the narratives prioritize a more active and fulfilled female desire, attempting to go beyond entrenched gender roles. However, at the works’ close, they seem to backtrack from attempts at liberation or change, unable to fully realize what their own themes suggest.

It may take a generation for more nuanced or positive representations of African–Spanish couples to make their presence known in art, as immigration is still a relatively recent phenomenon. Spanish identity is not fixed, but constantly evolving and the influx of migrants and their descendants will contribute to this construction. Martin-Márquez suggests that “the increasing presence of immigrants in Spanish life and cultural production is leading to a new form of ‘disorientation,’ as communities in Spain are forced to confront the realities of a modern-day *convivencia*, rather than indulge fantasies of a *convivencia* associated with a remote past (*Disorientations* 355). As the “second generation” comes of age and begins to articulate their own experiences, perspectives may broaden. In some cases this has already happened, notably with the author Najat El Hachmi, whose 2004 novel *Jo també sóc catalana* asserts her linguistic and cultural affiliations with both Morocco (Amazigh) and Catalonia (Catalan), notably in her

“assimilation of the Catalan literature that she has devoured since childhood and her absorption of the narrative traditions of Morocco” (Martin-Márquez 346). Other narrative genres, like autobiography, and media such as television and internet forums are able to go beyond what film and novels have produced. In other mediums, migrants and mixed couples may articulate personal experiences, and express multiple national and cultural affiliations. For example, Charo Lacalle has affirmed that television programs in the 90s strove, during the last half of the decade, to feature “greater assimilation of and identification with immigrants;” and programs such as *Hospital Central* in particular featured more migrant characters” (Smith 90-91). However, there have still not been depictions of interracial or intercultural romance as long-running or stable themes in Spanish television.

To close this chapter, I will return to Goytisolo’s *Makbara*, discussed in the Introduction. The novel’s love affair between a fallen angel and a North African migrant meets an ambiguous ending in Goytisolo’s novel. The Angel rejects the sterile space of a bureaucratic heaven, searching for her true love in what the West has classified as marginal, dirty, and “Arab.” Goytisolo himself calls it “amor imposible” in his commentary on the work, but the novel itself suggests that the pair may find happiness, as several different possibilities are offered for their final fate. (*Crónicas* 44). In spite of the ambiguity, the narrator, “el halaqui nesrani,” closes the story of the Angel and the Immigrant stating: “creo que, efectivamente, disfrutaban los dos de un grato y bien merecido descanso que contrapesa la azarosa vida que llevaron y pondrá momentánea dulzura en el ánimo de los oyentes” (*Makbara* 283). We still must wait for that Happily Ever After in most contemporary texts; but eventually, fiction and film may take Goytisolo’s lead, moving beyond the depiction of mixed couples as catastrophic to, perhaps, *cotidiano*.

### Chapter Three

#### *Parejas Mixtas: African–Spanish Couples in Cyberspace*

As African migrants have become a more visible presence in Spanish society, African–Spanish couples are portrayed with more frequency in literature, film and television programs; they are also the subject of political commentary and media controversy. Much of these representations continue to portray Africans as a fetishized, exotic Other, or a perpetual “token” character, as Isabel Santaolalla has demonstrated occurs in pop culture (62, 64). Representing immigrants in stereotypical ways continues to fix them as outside of the national and cultural norm, and further serves to reinforce notions of ethnic and racial homogeneity, in essence refusing to fully come to terms with the changing demographics of Spanish society. Mixed marriages are on the rise; in just a decade, the number of mixed marriages in Spain more than doubled to 10.4% of all marriages documented in 2005, and African–Spanish couples represented 23.2% of those (Morán).<sup>27</sup>

In mainstream media production, whether broadcast or print, mixed couples wield little to no control over the production of their image. Santaolalla emphasizes this fact, reminding us that “the ‘ethnic Other’—still lacking access to the channels of representation—has so far been the object, not the originator, of representation” (68). It is still true that many African immigrants lack access to forms of cultural production in Spanish society. Fortunately, the Internet has become a space in which both immigrants and Spaniards are active in writing and producing representations. These interactions often produce a counter-discourse to the stereotyping of

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<sup>27</sup> “Mixed marriage” in this context is defined broadly as a Spaniard marrying a foreigner.

Africans, challenging the portrayal that is dominant in other media of mixed couples as people in relationships doomed to fail. For M.I. Franklin, in *Postcolonial Politics, the Internet, and Everyday Life*, the concept of “the practice of everyday life” as elaborated by Michel de Certeau, is a key aspect of the power of online discourse. In particular, the medium of cyberspace presents a way for “nonelite groups” to assert themselves and produce “creative resistance” (51). While mixed couples continue to be a minority group within Spanish society, they use cyberspace as a way to participate in the production of knowledge and argue with or protest against attitudes they view as incorrect or unjust. The web forum *Parejas mixtas (Mixed Couples)* is one relevant space in which to observe these interactions.

### **Textual Communities and the Internet**

Print media has long been a vehicle for identity-building and the creation of communities around those identities. Benedict Anderson, in *Imagined Communities*, details how the novel and the newspaper contributed to the formation of national identity, uniting readers through a common vernacular language and conception of time. Newspapers in particular built the “community in anonymity” that is key to a nation: Anderson, quoting Hegel, describes the reading of the morning paper as a kind of mass ceremony, in which each reader knows that his anonymous countrymen will also be reading, like him, during a period of time on a particular day (35). Michael Warner, in *The Letters of the Republic*, takes Anderson’s thesis further, examining print media’s role in the formation of democracy in the United States. Warner asserts that not only did print produce a reading community; it also created a space in which the public could voice their opinions to each other, not as private individuals, but rather as citizens (Poster 129). By engaging in writing and reading, members of the imagined community not only read, but also produce print media, thereby participating in the community (through mediated interactions) at

the same time as they articulate their identity. The relationship between the medium and the formation of self and identity is discussed in Mark Poster's 2001 study *What's the Matter with the Internet?*. Poster insists on an analysis of the medium, and the specific manner in which subjects are interpellated when individuals interact through it. Poster states:

The difference between the individual as subject and the individual as identity becomes exigent in relation to new media. Individuals are constituted as subjects or identities (as cultural selves) in linguistic practices. In repeated enunciations individuals become interpellated and recognized as coherent selves who function in a social world.

Increasingly the process of interpellation occurs through mediations of information machines in addition to face-to-face interactions. First printed pages, then broadcast media, and now networked computing shift the scene in which the individual becomes and continues to practice selfhood. (9)

The Internet has not (yet) wholly replaced print media, but computer-mediated communication, or CMC, has increasingly become a dominant mode of interaction between individuals, and as Poster asserts, in the creation or interpellation of the self. According to Manuel Castells, what was "the unifying cultural power of mass television" has now been overtaken by "a customized mass media culture and an interactive electronic communication network of self-selected communes" such as virtual communities (402). A *virtual community* is a social network in which participants interact through the internet, defined by Castells as "a self-defined electronic network of interactive communication organized around a shared interest or purpose, although sometimes communication becomes the goal in itself" (386). Computer-mediated communications first took place as far back as the 1960s and the birth of the Internet, but the first

widely-used mass computer networks were invented in the 1980s: the bulletin-board systems (BBS) in the United States, Usenet, and the popular Minitel network in France. In Spain, the personal computer was introduced by IBM in 1983; however it wasn't until the early to mid-1990s that commercial providers such as GOYA and SERVICOM provided access to the internet to the general population. Throughout the 1980s the Internet and CMC developed in Spain via experimental networks such as the RedIRIS, and were utilized primarily in universities, research centers, and businesses, which used email. However, by 1996 the Internet became more mainstream, as products such as Telefonica's Infovía granted access to general users in Spain for the price of telephone service ("Internet").

Today, CMC takes place in a variety of contexts, one of which is the internet forum (or message board), one type of virtual community or social network in which individuals interact by posting asynchronous messages. Forums grew out of the BBS used in the early days of the Internet. Often, as is the case with *Parejas mixtas*, the forum is part of a larger website, which allows for chat, email, and the creation of personal profiles and even blogs by individuals. The posts on forums are usually archived, and the content is regulated by moderators and administrators, who have the ability to edit or delete posts, and who also regulate member activity ("Internet Forum"). The forum, with its multitude of authors and registers, may be more conducive to community-building than a blog: because a blog generally features the narrative of one person or a specific group of individuals, who control the content and any responses that are posted on their website. The discourse on a forum is often more dialogic and communal, as any member may broach a discussion topic.

The validity of the virtual community as an actual “community” is frequently called into question, and just as frequently, defended. Manuel Castells responds to the question of whether or not virtual communities are “real:”

Yes and no. They are communities, but not physical ones, and they do not follow the same patterns of communication and interaction as physical communities do. But they are not ‘unreal,’ they work in a different plane of reality. They are interpersonal social networks, most of them based on weak ties, highly diversified and specialized, still able to generate reciprocity and support by the dynamics of sustained interaction. (389)

The virtual community’s authenticity is staunchly defended by Barry Wellmann, who reminds us that communities are formed by social relationships: they are not places; they are networks. In the article “Net-Surfers Don’t Ride Alone: Virtual Communities as Communities,” Wellmann and Gulia criticize the so-called *Manicheans* who either condemn internet communities or revere them as the solution to modernity’s ills; these arguments are “rehearsing the age-old debates about changing communities and the impact of technology” (331, 333). Wellmann and Gulia assert that this analysis does not examine how the Internet and virtual communities are integrated as one of many aspects of people’s lives. “The Net is only one of many ways in which the same people may interact...emotional support, companionship, information, making arrangements, and providing a sense of belonging” are social benefits that members of virtual communities may reap (334, 338). The authors emphasize that internet socialization is merely one aspect of an individual’s social network, and does not take the place of face-to-face interactions (334).

The Internet and its possibilities for interaction and community-building have been both celebrated and criticized.<sup>28</sup> Cyberspace has been praised as an opportunity that allows for endless possibilities to form fluid and multiple identities, embodying what Poster claims is a postmodern subjectivity. At one extreme, Cyberspace has been hailed as a place where participants are free to be whoever or whatever they wish, with no restrictions or parameters imposed on the self, whether it be their physical body or freedom of speech. The other extreme is skeptical of applying even the term *community* to any online group, viewing it as a danger to society at whole.<sup>29</sup> Race scholars have challenged the notion that a virtual community or the Internet permits complete freedom to construct multiple subjectivities: as Kolko, Nakamura, and Rodman have pointed out in *Race and Cyberspace*, one doesn't just throw off a lifetime of experiences in the physical world the moment one enters Cyberspace (4). Individuals must, at some point, return to their physical body and concrete circumstances. For Poster, the fact that the physical body is, in a sense, removed from online interactions allows the individual to create or "suture" their own identity and construct "characters" on the screen with their words (75). Since it cannot be ascertained if the participants are authentic or deceitful, it is true that race, gender, nationality, ethnicity, and social class may be masked or completely invented. However, as Lori Kendall asserts in "Meaning and Identity in Cyberspace:" "Even online—where performance of identity seems almost unavoidably obvious, where tales abound of multiplicity and fluidity, of deceptions and revelations...people persist in seeking essentialized groundings for the selves they encounter" (130). Discussing gender deception or "play" in online sites, Kendall refers to research that demonstrates that, in fact, in these interactions, authors may strengthen existing

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<sup>28</sup> Turkle 1995, Hayles 1999, and Poster 2001.

<sup>29</sup> Willson 2006, Robins and Webster 1999.

stereotypes or widely held cultural notions of gender identity and discourse in order to perform a particular gender (133). Thus, whether or not participants engage in deception on the forum does not lessen the significance of the discourse, because they are employing culturally and contextually significant cues with which to create their online identity.

A virtual community is not a replacement to society or face-to-face interaction, but another means by which to realize social interaction that may be significant in the participants' lives. These interactions involve "shared practices," and a sense of fellowship and common experiences, as Ananda Mitra acknowledges in his article: "Virtual Commonality: Looking for India on the Internet." Mitra reminds us that, as human technologies have advanced, so have human interactions changed as a result. What is significant about the medium of Cyberspace is that many interactions are textual, and the participants actually author the community and produce discourse. The flexibility and freedom to post on an internet forum and create an identity distinguishes it from other narrative forms. Mitra, a scholar of virtual communities and online communication, has characterized the discursive space of internet forums as "ongoing heteroglossic discourse," drawing on Bakhtin's theories of dialogic language use in the novel ("Virtual" 690). Mitra asserts that this heteroglossia produces an abundance of authors, a cacophony of voices, who engage in textual dialogue and create a narrative that is constantly developing. The heteroglossia that occurs on a forum enables dialog without the presence of an overarching narrative voice or an author who might control or otherwise organize the information. Unlike other texts, an online forum has no narrative scheme or plan: there is no introduction, development or conclusion. The forum is a text that is constantly growing, a fact that reflects the unending, rhizomatic nature of Cyberspace itself. However, it is important to point out that forums do implement controls and rules; the content is usually screened in some

manner by a group of administrators, and if participants violate the rules of conduct, their comments may be removed from a thread or they may even be barred from the forum itself.

What is unique about a forum is that the discourse and dialog are in a state of constant renewal and production, much like the internet itself.

The concepts of heteroglossia and polyphony are useful in an analysis of the textual, virtual community, for as Linda M. Park-Fuller writes:

The writings of Mikhail Bakhtin offer a useful framework for the study of individual texts and their potentials for performance while at the same time acknowledging the social, cultural, and political nature of all texts, and the primacy of context to textual meaning. Indeed, his dialogic theory, based on a perception of the inherent relationship between ideology and utterance, addresses the sociopolitical fact of literary performance and provides analytical tools relevant to the act of performing literature. (“Voices”)

Thus, an analysis of racial representations in online forums is telling as to which racial ideologies born in colonialism are maintained today in Spanish society, as the participants in virtual communities interpellate their own racial identities as well as those of others. Bakhtin defined “authoritative discourse” as that which constructs “the very basis of our ideological interrelations with the world, the very basis of our behavior” (342). The authoritative discourses of race and national identity have caused the *Parejas mixtas* forum authors to be marginalized in society in various ways: due to their status as immigrants; due to their race or religion; or because they are involved in a mixed relationship. A forum in Cyberspace allows the forum members, as authors, to assert themselves and voice their experiences, dialoging with each other in a form of their own “internally persuasive discourse” (Bakhtin 345). Participants can find encouragement and discuss strategies for dealing with their unique circumstances, as well as make new friends and

connections to communities and organizations in the physical world. The author-participants of the online forums are, in their heteroglossia, creating meaning about mixed couples in Spanish society.

### ***Parejas mixtas: The Forum***

Fiction tends to represent only one voice out of the many that are involved in the national debate on immigration in Spain. While fears of terrorism and a loss of national identity are certainly prominent in fiction and the public sphere, there are other opinions and experiences articulated in Spanish society. Looking to other mediums of expression, in particular online discourse such as *Parejas mixtas*, one encounters the multi-faceted range of opinions that characterizes the response to immigration in Spanish society today.

The forum is housed on the popular website *enFemenino.com*, a website that features magazine-style content and marketing, with topics such as fashion and makeup; food and cooking; health; weddings; motherhood and childbirth; celebrity gossip, and the horoscope. The site is owned by the AuFeminin Group, a Paris-based company that has several websites like *enFemenino.com* for other language markets in Europe, North America, Latin America and Asia. What the website offers, that a typical magazine would not, is the possibility for self-publication by users in the form of a personal profile, where they may blog, upload photos and video, and interact with other users. To that end, *enFemenino.com* also contains 24 public forums in which members may participate, with “Pareja” (“Couples”) being one of these. Over 2,000,000 posts have been written on the various “Pareja” sub-forums, with over 7,000 posts in the “Parejas mixtas” (“Mixed Couples”) category as of 2013. Indeed, it is one of the most active Spanish-language forums dedicated to the topic of mixed couples on the Internet.

The forum *Parejas mixtas* is a textual space that is driven by user-generated content, and in which personal narratives create an interactive dialog. These virtual texts have linked the various participants in support networks and allowed them to engage in ways not possible in any other media. As a result, the representations of African–Spanish couples that emerge reveal a more nuanced articulation of racial and national subjectivity, one that emphasizes the negotiations and compromises needed in the process of fashioning a mixed–race or intercultural identity. *Parejas mixtas*, as a public text, serves as a window into how African immigration has impacted the national conversation about race and national identity in Spain.

Because the forum depends on user-generated content, it is a space in which all narratives are given equal importance—anyone can post a question or air an opinion, and others may respond at will. The fact that anyone with a computer, internet access, and knowledge of Spanish can create a profile on *enFemenino.com* and write a post is significant, because on the forum, users (as writers) are not just passive consumers: they are active and creative participants in the process of producing representation. The participants’ dialogue produces a discourse on mixed couples in Spain that is in many ways more nuanced than that which is produced in literature or film, because there are a wide range of opinions, representations, and experiences voiced in the forum over a period of several years. The forum thus becomes an expression of de Certeau’s “everydayness,” or “a proliferation of stories and heterogeneous operations that make up the patchworks of everyday life” (Franklin 51). According to Franklin, the theory of “the practice of everyday life” is a useful framework for “tracing (cyber)spatial practices of nonelite groups:”

Following de Certeau, I argue that online discussions also operate as vibrant practices and cyber-traces of the everyday in their own right, which makes them not immediately reducible to the insidious processes of commodification...like people moving through,

and thereby recreating, cityscapes' intimate and public spaces, these practitioners leave palpable, electronic, and textual traces of their comings and goings in cyberspace. (12)

African–Spanish couples do not have access to more elite forms of production, such as cinema or publishing houses, or any media conglomerates. However, online, their discussions may serve as “vibrant practices” that counter their usual status as silent consumer (Franklin 12). The forum is thus an archive in which hegemonic racial and nationalist discourses are articulated, and in which they are subject to challenges and counter-narratives that are written by mixed couples.

### **Racism and Representations of Mixed Couples On- and Offline**

To speak of “African” migrants, or “African”–Spanish couples, is to speak of peoples who come from many nations. Furthermore, the broad categorization of “Spanish” encompasses a variety of languages and nationalist sentiments. African immigrants in Spain represent widely different cultures, languages and ethnicities, and an investigation into “African–Spanish” couples could come dangerously close to essentializing those individuals and to categorizing them. As James Ferguson, in the Introduction to *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order* reminds us: “Indeed, it has often been suggested that the very category of ‘Sub-Saharan Africa,’ with its conventional separation from a ‘Middle East’ that would include North Africa, is as much a product of modern race thinking as it is an obvious cultural or historical unity” (2). However, Africa as a continent has suffered from European colonial interventions and been historically constructed in European letters and science as the Other: the Dark Continent, the land of savages, the counterpoint to a notion of Western European modernity. While the heterogeneity that exists on the African continent must be recognized, it is still necessary to interrogate how “Africa” continues to function, as Ferguson affirms, as a sort of “category

through which a ‘world’ is structured—a category that (like all categories) is historically and socially constructed (indeed, in some sense arbitrary), but also a category that is ‘real,’ that is imposed with force, that has a mandatory quality; a category within which, and according to which, people must live” (5). While colonial rule may have ended, those discourses continue to inform the representation of Africans and African immigrants in European and Spanish society today. *Parejas mixtas* demonstrates the continuing presence of those discourses in contemporary Spanish society, yet also shows that African immigrants and Spaniards are insisting on an identity that goes beyond those historical, often racist narratives.

While contemporary Spain is an undeniably diverse nation linguistically and culturally, the rhetoric of cultural and ethnic homogeneity is still asserted in response to perceived encroachment by immigrants. The desire to protect notions of cultural or racial integrity is manifested in sociopolitical and artistic rejections of “mixing” on the level of the couple and of the family. Discourses of race and cultural racism are particularly noticeable in fictional representations of African–Spanish couples. The notion of cultural racism is useful and significant in identifying the ways in which African immigrants, in particular Muslims, are cast as incompatible and threatening to a Spanish culture. Mass media and literature often portray Muslim immigrants (from both the Maghreb and Sub-Saharan Africa) as foreign invaders or terrorists. Pedagogic, or hegemonic discourses that continue to organize representations of black Africans also rely on racial stereotypes about their supposedly more “primitive” sexuality, associating it with lesser mental or logical capacity than whites or Europeans. Essentially, these stereotypes further old claims that black Africans are somehow a more barbaric race of people. This is an association that is extended to Muslim migrants as well, but on the basis of stereotyped notions of Islamic culture and belief systems. Discourses of race are particularly noticeable in

representations of African–Spanish couples, and demonstrate in telling ways the force that these pedagogical discourses continue to exert in Spanish society.

The construction of a homogenous Spanish national identity is disrupted with the presence of African immigrants in Spain, and the reality of mixed couples threatens the construction of a homogenous cultural and racial subject. Spain is far from homogenous, and the existence of strong Basque, Catalanian, and Galician national identities with correlating linguistic and cultural markers, attest to that. However, these “peripheral” or “internal” nationalisms are still closely aligned with a notion of European identity.<sup>30</sup> These hegemonic discourses are identified by Homi Bhabha in his essay “DissemiNation” as the “pedagogical narrative,” or the discursive vehicle that has carried the national traditions and foundational fictions of the nation-state. Bhabha emphasizes the constructed nature, or “metaphoricity” of national discourse and its propagation in history and literature: the “nation as narration.” In the pedagogical narrative of the nation, “the people” are constructed as “the historical ‘objects’ of a nationalist pedagogy or the living embodiment of national culture, produced from the founding of the nation up to the present day (“DissemiNation” 297). The pedagogical seeks to maintain and restrict “the people” as a series of historically constructed, even “arbitrary” traditions; tensions are produced, however, when the current experiences of the people of a nation are subjected to those signs and traditions, and incorporated into the pedagogical narrative of the nation. Bhabha references the work of Ernst Gellner when he explains this point, stating: “The scraps, patches and rags of daily life must be turned into national culture, while the very act of the narrative performance interpellates a growing circle of national subjects” (“DissemiNation 297).

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<sup>30</sup> See Désirée Kleiner-Liebau, *Migration and the Construction of National Identity in Spain* for a discussion of national identity and immigration on a national level and within the autonomous community of Catalonia.

The “performative” are those moments of ambivalence, instability or outright challenges to the pedagogical discourses in which the heterogeneity of the nation comes to the fore. The pedagogical seeks to limit, to place boundaries up between what is the national self and what is Other; but the performative are those very “structures of cultural liminality,” or “a kind of social ellipsis,” that flagrantly declare the differences and the “Others” within the modern nation (299). The “split” that occurs between the pedagogical and the performative creates those liminal cultural spaces, spaces of representation where culture is produced (not merely just “reflected”):

Terms of cultural engagement, whether antagonistic or affiliative, are produced performatively. The representation of difference must not be hastily read as the reflection of pre-given ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed tablet of tradition. The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation. (*Location 2*)

The perpetual fluctuation and growth of the discussion prevents any one voice from dominating the forum. In that sense, the *Parejas mixtas* forum reflects Bhabha’s performative discourse: a window into the national conversation about Spanish identity, contemporary immigration and race that is always current. It is, furthermore, an archive of the persistence of hegemonic or pedagogical racial discourses, and at the same time, a space in which individuals may articulate contrary constructions of racial and cultural identity. The construction of identities through the medium of an internet forum, achieves what Bhabha describes as “the intervention of the performative.” By juxtaposing the narratives of Spaniards and African immigrants who are trying to articulate their daily experiences and their own conceptions of identity, with

pedagogical, essentialist constructions of Spanish and African identity, the latter are called into question.

*Enfemenino.com*'s mixed-couples forum is such a space in which the tensions between the pedagogical and performative discourses of race and national identity are juxtaposed constantly. How participants in the forum utilize pedagogical discourses of race, religion or culture in order to construct an identity online draws attention to their ideological nature. What I will investigate in this chapter are the ways in which participants on the *Parejas mixtas* forum call upon those long-standing discourses of race and national identity in the context of African–Spanish couples. Some participants articulate a racial and national identity organized by entrenched pedagogical discourses, based in colonial relationships. Others push the boundaries of “Spanish” or “African” identity by expressing a flexibility and a willingness to accommodate other races, religions and cultures. Participants who are engaged in positive and successful relationships, by writing their own experiences and conceptions of themselves and the negotiations that occur in their relationships, challenge the entrenched racial and cultural notions that appear on the forum.

Negotiation and exchange can occur in an intercultural space in which individuals negotiate and compromise on various social, cultural, and even religious factors. While the term “hybridity” captures well the give and take required for cultural diversity to flourish, it too often essentializes discrete cultures which, in and of themselves, are already heterogeneous. The sociologist Dan Rodríguez-García suggests the notion of *interculturalism* as a more appropriate designation for the give and take that occurs. Interculturalism is a process of “mutual accommodation,” that occurs not only on the part of emigrants, but also citizens and the host society. It is a renewed form of multiculturalism that occurs within a civic context that is

supportive of diversity and encourages cross-cultural interaction, “recognizing the human capacity and need to relate in complex and multidirectional ways” (“Beyond” 268). The efforts on the part of forum participants to construct an intercultural space are the manifestation of performative discourses. *Parejas mixtas* embodies Bhabha’s concept of performative discourse, as it is a vibrant space where daily articulations of identity both call upon and question the pedagogical, hegemonic discourses of race and national identity; in which participants engaged in a *pareja mixta* assert that in many ways Spain is already and intercultural and hybrid society.

### **Race and Cultural Racism**

Race is one of the most significant frameworks in which participants on the forum organize their post and articulate themselves. Indeed, the concept of race is one of the most significant aspects of the pedagogical construction of the nation. As discussed in the Introduction and Chapter Two, a culturalist discourse has replaced much of the previous racial rhetoric. This culturalist stance, also called a “cultural” or “new” racism, was identified by Martin Barker in the 1980s during Thatcherism, and is exemplified in the writings of Samuel Huntington. In Spain, cultural racism is manifested in the view that the homogenous nation is incompatible with immigrants or outsiders who are deemed ethnically or “civilizationally” distinct, in particular, Muslims (Flesler 131). Immigration, in particular the arrival of large numbers of African migrants, is now presented as a national security issue, as a threat to sovereignty and Spanish safety, with subsequent deployment of arms and violence not only by individuals but by the government itself.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> See Gregory White, 2007 for further discussion.

In political propaganda produced by right-wing parties such as the Plataforma per Catalunya (PxC), immigrants (particularly Romanians and Moroccans) are construed as a threat to cultural heritage. One recent example occurred in 2011, when Jaume Torremadé, the mayor of the Catalan town of Salt, proposed to restrict the number of immigrants because the influx was so great that the community was losing its profile as an authentic, twenty-first century Catalan community (Maristany). The “threat” of mixed couples to the supposedly homogenous identity of Catalonia also has caused some scandal within the political party itself: in 2011 Joana Martínez, a member of the PxC who cohabitated with her Cameroonian boyfriend, was ostracized and criticized by party colleagues, who, according to Martínez, commented to her: “That’s disgusting, how can you sleep with a black man?”(Castedo). She and Carles Bonet, whose Dominican boyfriend also became a subject of controversy, eventually left the party. The incidents, bordering on sensationalistic, involved members of a political party that is not considered mainstream. While the events took place in Catalonia, they are illustrative on a broader level of a certain amount of resistance to cultural and racial mixing that still exists in Spanish society at large. The Plataforma per Catalunya has gained more support recently, and their political stance against immigrants is illustrative of the force of discourses of race and national identity in Spanish society today. It is significant that, while autonomous communities’ own languages and cultures are recognized as independent or unique from Castilian Spanish identity, there are still boundaries and resistance to interculturalism. Such resistance is particularly prevalent towards Muslim immigrants, but also is extended towards African migrants in general, due to religious and cultural characteristics that would seem to lie outside of the national narrative. The notion of cultural racism is particularly useful and significant in

identifying the ways in which African immigrants, in particular Muslims, are identified as incompatible and threatening to a Spanish culture.

### **Racialization of Muslims**

With the intimate relationship between discourses of race and culture in mind, I analyze the representation of Africans in terms of racial discourse, and I include religion and the racialization of Muslims in that discourse. Some may wish to separate practices of racism and cultural discrimination, however, in actual discriminatory or racist practices, it is difficult to separate “culturalism” from “racism” per se, as the sociologist and policy researcher Tariq Modood makes clear (*Multicultural* 9). According to Modood, “religion can be the basis of racialization as long as the religion of a group can be linked to physical ancestry and descent...it involves some reference to physical appearance or ancestry but does not require any form of biological determinism, only a physical identification on a group basis, attributable to descent” (*Multicultural* 11-12). Modood uses an example of Northern Ireland to demonstrate his point that religion is more than just an extrinsic practice, it is part of the fabric of the culture and heritage of a community and an individual. In Northern Ireland, even an atheist will be asked if he or she is a “Protestant” or “Catholic” atheist, thereby asking them to which community they pertain and what their heritage is (*Multicultural* 9). For Muslim immigrants, whether they are from Africa, the Middle East, or South Asia, racism is a part of how the West constructs their identity and interpellates them, through a variety of complex characteristics including phenotype, modes of dress, language, nationality, family structure, artistic expression and even cuisine—or what Modood calls “cultural motifs” (*Multicultural* 7).

Placing Muslims in a racial category has been a part of the discourse of imperialism and a manner of sustaining the legitimacy of European empires, according to the scholar Juanid Rana.

In his recent book *Terrifying Muslims* (2011), Rana examines the relationship between Islamophobia and racism, both in a global context as well as that of the American “War on Terror.” Rana “recuperates Islam and the figure of the Muslim in the history of the race concept,” drawing on Howard Winant and Nabil Matar’s studies of fifteenth and sixteenth century Spain and the emergence of biopolitical differences based on religion and culture, which soon became expressed in languages of blood purity and hierarchy, based upon familial and cultural heritage: precursors to the modern concept of race. Historically, The Inquisition required Jews and Moors to convert, a process that also implied giving up and changing various cultural practices (such as bathing regularly); however, the *pureza de sangre* or blood purity norms that were enforced demonstrate that being Jewish or Muslim could contaminate future generations, regardless of what religion they actually practiced, lending a biopolitical cast to religious and cultural practice.

In order to further understand the historical and cultural legacy of racialization of Muslims, we can turn to Edward Said’s groundbreaking study *Orientalism*. According to Said, the dehumanizing representations of “the Oriental” and the discursive construction of the Oriental–African corresponded to the notion that the European, Aryan race was superior. While Europeans were modern and civilized people, the Oriental and the Orient was in a state of perpetual arrested development. To quote Said: “The very possibility of development, transformation, human movement—in the deepest sense of the word—is denied the Orient and the Oriental’ (206, 208). Nowadays, the stereotypical representations of Arabs and Muslims are underpinned by some of the very same conceptions that were so popular in nineteenth-century Orientalism, as Muslims, often regardless of nationality and cultural context, are stereotyped as violent, backwards, and fanatical. “The Muslim” as a racial category in the West today, reduces a very diverse group of people down to one, essentialized category that may be further stigmatized

based on class, gender, and sexuality (Rana 10). To be Muslim in the West, then, signifies more than just a religious practice, but also involves cultural aspects that, as part of a racialization of a body or a group of people is further identified by phenotype and ancestry. The presence of a Muslim community, and incorporation of that community into Spanish or European society is perceived as a threatening process, as it is a process of incorporating the colonial and racial “other” associated with illegality and criminality.

Muslims are often equated with fanaticism and terrorism, as well as with the oppression of women. These are often the reasons given, implicitly or explicitly, for why they are presumed to be incompatible with a modern, European, or Western culture. The African Studies and Political Science scholar Mahmood Mamdani, in a 2005 review essay in *Foreign Affairs*, argues that Samuel Huntington and Bernard Lewis, among other scholars and pundits, reify Islam as though it were a singular, closed, and monolithic entity; and frame the violence in Islamic countries as though it were solely motivated by religious fundamentalism, conveniently ignoring issues of imperialism and poverty (“Whither”). Mamdani also reminds his readers that Islam and secularism are not mutually exclusive (Taras, *Xenophobia*). However, one of the strongest symbols for the purportedly irreconcilable differences between an “Islamic” culture and “Western” culture is that of the hijab and other manners of head coverings worn by some Muslim women. These have unfolded in the 2004 French law that banned “conspicuous” religious symbols in schools, and the 2011 French law that banned the face covering in public places.

The public practice of Islam in Spain has also become a topic of debate and controversy, specifically regarding women who choose to cover their hair or faces in public. Conflicts have occurred in schools with adolescents who choose to don the hijab. A recent case involved Najwa Malha, a Spanish-born Muslim who was forced to change schools in 2010 as a result of her

decision to wear a head scarf. Perhaps the most well-known is the 2002 controversy of Fátima Eldrisi, which was the first widely publicized conflict in Spanish schools regarding the hijab. These events illustrate some of the misinformed notions of Islamic practices that exist in Europe. For example, the Spanish media as well as politicians seemed confused as to what is a *chador*, versus a *hiyab*, or a *niquab*; and repeatedly mis-identified Eldrisi's head scarf; the PP politician Juan Carlos Aparicio compared the headscarf to female genital mutilation (Flesler 157-158). The polemic issue of clothing choices of some Muslim women highlights the prevalent idea that cultures that practice Islam are incompatible with that of Spanish culture. Head coverings have often become a symbol of the West's view of the oppression of Muslim women, and "can be traced to colonialist discourses that characterized Arab societies as inferior because of their treatment of women" (Flesler 158). This is, as Junaid Rana argues in *Terrifying Muslims*, a part of the racialized masculinity in creating the stereotype of "the Muslim," in which Muslim men are stereotyped as violently patriarchal and women are portrayed as the victims of this patriarchy—and must be saved by Western intervention (168). While the serious human rights situation of, for example, women in Afghanistan is not a Western media myth, the fear and hysteria regarding the presence of Islam in Western Europe trades in generalities that conflate religious and cultural practices from extremely different nations and geographical regions.

### **Mixed Couples**

Societal acceptance or rejection of mixed couples, such as the tensions and scandals referenced previously, have been used in sociology as a way to gauge levels of assimilation of a minority group (be that a racial minority or a group perceived as marginal or foreign), as well as a way to understand broad issues of identity (Meintel 3). In fictional narratives, such as romance novels, mixed couples are common subject material, in part because their exploration of taboo

relationships make them quite marketable. In general, films, novels, political propaganda, and mass culture portray African–Spanish couples and mixed-race desire as a dangerous, or as impossible. One common technique used in fictional narrative is the demise of one member of the couple, often as a result of violence by a jealous or angry Spanish male, as Flesler demonstrates in *The Return of the Moor*, and as I show in my second chapter.

The metaphorical rejection of “mixedness” appears to be severe in the case of African–Spanish couples, particularly when the African in question is male and Muslim. This outcome is also typical of colonial love stories in Latin America and Africa, as Mary Louise Pratt concludes: “the lovers are separated, the European is reabsorbed by Europe, and the non-European dies an early death” (97). Failed romance indicates tensions within Spanish society regarding Spain’s historical placement “between” Europe and Africa, and a desire to mark Spanish identity as solidly European and therefore incompatible with a Muslim or black African Other. In the movie *Susanna* (Antonio Chavarrías, 1996), the eponymous female protagonist, portrayed as promiscuous and degenerate, is eventually murdered by her Spanish lover after he becomes aware of her sexual transgressions with a Moroccan man. In the novels *La cazadora* (1995), by Encarna Cabello, and *La infiel* (2011), by Reyes Monforte, Spanish women are “destroyed” as a result of their relationships with Muslims. In *La cazadora*, the anonymous Spanish protagonist metamorphoses into the Other after marrying a Moroccan man; in *La infiel*, Sara tries to literally blow herself up inside of a Madrid mosque, as a way to simultaneously retaliate against an abusive Moroccan boyfriend, and also in order to end her pregnancy by him. The allegory of a destruction of Spanish identity and a loss of self is quite marked in these novels and films, and indicative of a current of cultural racism. The borders of the nation and the boundaries of the self, in particular, the female body, are portrayed as under attack by those arriving from Africa.

## Methodology

Forums and other “spaces” for online interactions are typically analyzed ethnographically as cultural communities, discursively as social texts, or as both (Milner 17). For the purposes of this dissertation, I study *Parejas mixtas* as a public archive of texts that have been produced using culturally relevant discourses and that, in turn, are dialoging with or responding to other cultural texts, some of which I analyze in Chapters One and Two. My research did not involve intervention in the discussions or interaction with the forum participants, in order to avoid influencing the forum’s content and changing the way in which discussions might unfold. Therefore, my participation in the forum could be described as “lurking:” visiting the forum and reading posts anonymously. Keeping in mind that *Parejas mixtas* is a public forum, the texts produced are considered a part of “public discourse” (Milner 23). Anyone may read the posts; however, in order to write a comment or respond to another participant’s post, one must register with *enFemenino.com* and create an online profile.

Although the forum is public, as a researcher it is necessary to take into account privacy concerns on the Internet, and protect the anonymity of the forum participants. Currently, to speak of privacy online is to invoke “an eroding and ambiguous concept,” in the words of Annette Markham, a scholar of social media and Internet research ethics (“Fabrication” 336). The debate on whether social media sites constitute public or private space/discourse rages on: “People may operate in public spaces but maintain strong expectations of privacy. Or, they may acknowledge that the substance of their communication is public, but that the context defines it more than the technology” (Markham 337). In other words, while an individual may knowingly post on a public site, they may still desire to maintain a level of control over their content. And certainly, the traditional mores and practices of assigning anonymity, adhered to by journalists and social

scientists, are being reevaluated in a medium in which research data may be stored in archivable and searchable spaces, and where data-mining technologies easily connect internet users' identity with online activities (Markham 336).

All *Parejas mixtas* forum members use a screen name (also called a handle, or, on *enFemenino.com*, a “nick”) to construct their online identity. However, to maintain a further level of privacy, I assigned forum participants a pseudonym for the purposes of this study, in this way de-identifying them. Their pseudonym will appear in quotes the first time they are referenced. In addition, the posts have been paraphrased, as informed consent was not sought from forum members, and extensive direct quotes could otherwise reveal their online identities through a simple Google search. It is unknown if the writer is female or male, but in the interests of flow and ease of understanding, the pseudonym assigned to the writer corresponds to the gender that they claim to have. Although the forum is indeed public, individuals may not truly understand the personal and future ramifications of that fact. Indeed, some forum members have created online profiles with extensive personal information, or appear to use their real name as a “nick.” Furthermore, in online interactions, individuals tend to reveal personally identifiable information, or may even use the same pseudonym on other websites.

Marianne Franklin considers open, public Internet forums to be a form of “public (cyber)domain,” and, as written texts, able to be cited in a similar manner as, for example, literary texts (71). For Franklin, the necessity to comply with bibliographical research conventions (direct citations) is an “academic citation decorum” that takes priority over anonymity (71). This contrasts dramatically with an approach such as that of Markham, who has recently written about the ethical necessity of “embracing fabrication as a methodological framework” (341). For Markham, fabrication as an ethical practice includes creating composite

accounts, writing fictional narratives, and turning to a variety of other strategies in order to remove individual identifiers in qualitative research. In my own research, I am seeking a middle path between the two approaches. Franklin was conducting ethnographic research, and established relationships with her subjects, interacting with individuals and forum moderators over an extended period of several years. I was not engaging with the forum participants nor establishing a relationship with them, as I did not want to manipulate the forum content. In order to reproduce participants' direct words, consent would need to be given by each and every individual who posted to a forum thread; a difficult undertaking in an ephemeral and fluctuating medium, where one may post a comment and never return. Participants in a forum may also delete their account, identity-switch, or even forget their login information, re-entering the forum under a completely different pseudonym, as one individual claimed they had done when they re-joined a forum thread under a different identity. With these ethical and methodological concerns in mind, I place anonymity over transparency: I cite the forum in my bibliography, but ethically, cannot directly cite the participants' forum posts nor provide the URL. For the field of literary and cultural studies, this creates a certain level of tension due to a perceived lack of transparency; further, it feels unsatisfying as a researcher and writer to not be able to simply reproduce the forum participants' own posts in their entirety. While this may provoke a certain level of dissatisfaction for writer and reader alike, in my interactions with the IRB, it was clear that this is the most ethical route to pursue for this study.

### **Forum Analysis: *Parejas mixtas***

On *Parejas mixtas*, racially charged language emerges in the personal conflicts that are related by members looking for advice, or who simply wish to unburden themselves and alleviate frustrations with family, friends, and society at large to a more supportive online community. But

racism is also manifested in the opinions and reactions voiced by some members of the forum themselves. In one thread, “Elisa” asks other forum participants for advice on how to manage her family’s vehement opposition to her relationship with her boyfriend, who is black. She discusses the fact that her boyfriend, who is about to graduate from college, comes from a well-educated and integrated family (“*tienen un nivel alto cultural*”). In describing her boyfriend and their relationship dynamic, Elisa emphasizes their similarities, stating that they both were born in Spain and share the same religion and socioeconomic status; according to her, their only difference is the color of their skin, a factor that doesn’t affect their relationship, only society and her family’s rejection of them as a couple. In particular, her mother is a source of conflict: she is ashamed of her daughter’s relationship, opposes their plans to get married, and has threatened to shun any children Elisa and her boyfriend might have. The conflict between Elisa and her family members, in particular her mother, to a certain extent reflects generational differences in acceptance of mixed-race couples. However, it also highlights the conflicts and difficulties that interracial couples encounter, even if both are citizens.

While almost every response in the thread either lends support and solidarity with Elisa’s struggle, or offers advice on how to deal with her parents, one response, written by “Manuel,” is particularly confrontational, explicitly demonstrating anxiety about mixed couples and mixed race. Manuel communicates his approval of Elisa’s family, arguing that her parents are doing the right thing by opposing the relationship. He further accuses Elisa, and anyone who married “*un negro o un musulmán*” of disrespecting their homeland and heritage: “*insultas a los tuyos es así de simple.*” In his condemnation of mixed relationships, Manuel associates notions of kinship and family (racial) lineage to a concept of national and ethnic heritage. This reflects a homogeneous view of Spanish society and marshals a “clash of cultures” argument. It links a

historical construction of national and familial identity (“su patria, su gente y su historia”) with a racial identity that is never Black, Muslim, or Asian, tellingly rendering “Muslim” as a racial/ethnic category along with “Black” and “Asian.” Manuel further emphasizes that his opinions are not racist, that he even has friends who are Muslims or Asians, but that he doesn’t mix with them, because that would provoke a disappearance of ethnicities and races and cultures, something that he anticipates may occur in the future. He seems to be afraid of being “under attack” by other races and ethnicities, and is concerned by the notion that racial and cultural (and religious) mixing would provoke a loss of identity: a fear palpable in contemporary Spanish novels and films that deal with mixed couples and immigration. The cultural racism is quite evident in Manuel’s comments, endowing religious, racial, and cultural Others with threatening values and implying that mixing would degrade the integrity of a people (the Spanish).

Manuel’s post is not the only one on *enFemenino* that uses racist or stereotypical language. Representations of Africans on the forum and in literature have continued aspects of a racist discourse based in a nineteenth century “scientific” racism to characterize Africans as more bestial and less civilized than Europeans. In particular, representations of African sexuality have continued to stereotype them as obscenely voracious and perverted. For example, “Penelope” discusses the fact that people stare at her and her Ghanaian boyfriend in public, and bystanders have made rude comments or off-color jokes. Worse, even her best friend has expressed skepticism about the authenticity of Penelope’s feelings for her partner, suggesting that she is with him just to try something different, or because he’s well endowed, and that she should be careful because he might give her a disease. The comments rehearse long-held stereotypes about African men and women’s sexuality and genitalia, that Africans are degenerate or diseased, thereby harming the white person who has relations with them, either physically or

mentally. While Penelope is reporting comments said to her, some of the forum participants appear to hold these views themselves, as in the case of “Marcela,” who describes her Senegalese boyfriend as obedient, physically formidable and “well endowed.” She claims that she is on the forum in order to hear from other women who are also with a black man and “enjoying them” without worrying about what others might say. Marcela’s depiction of her relationship positions the female subject in as an agent of power over a subordinate male, an inversion of traditional gender roles.

Marcela’s post sparks argument and debate on the forum, as some maintain that she is repeating relationships based in slavery, in which an African slave’s role is to be obedient and serve an owner. Five responses in the thread critiqued the discourse, first pointing out the tendency to generalize about black men’s physique as antiquated. Other posts severely criticize the racist discourse embedded in the praise that Marcela has for her boyfriend, such as “Celia,” who objects that Marcela sounds like a slave-owner. Both “Rosa” and “Natalia” respond heatedly to the comments on the thread. Rosa says it shameful for forum participants to speak of their African partners as though they were “trophy,” and objects to the debasement of Africans and black men that she says reduces them to a sexual object. Natalia is offended enough to question the authenticity of Marcela and other’s comments: she argues that stating that one is in a happy relationship and then writing comments that would seriously humiliate one’s partner, are just designed to give the impression that women who have a black partner are “perverts” who are only interested in sex. Natalia is provoked to challenge whether or not Marcela truly is in a relationship, implying that the comments could be written merely to start a flame war or stir up controversy on the forum. Intervening and questioning the authenticity of stereotypes and racism indicates that it is no longer completely valid in Spanish society, and that, in fact, it is recognized

as being a racist and unacceptable way of thinking. Natalia is also troubled because she thinks that “false” stories hurt those who actually come to the forum for advice and support, creating a melodramatic and negative atmosphere, indicating that some forum members would like to establish a community and gain support from their interactions online. The sense of community and support is violated by those who post racist comments which she perceives are only written to provoke strife.

The forum thread begun by Elisa is further imbricated with pedagogical discourses of race and national identity by the intersection of these discourses with those of socio-economic class and sexuality. It is significant that Elisa makes certain to explain that her boyfriend was born in Spain, is well-educated and comes from an educated family. In a different thread she states that his family has “un buen nivel económico.” The assertion that a partner’s “nivel cultural” or socio-economic class and education play a significant role indicates the importance of social class and status in the concept of race as well. In one post, “Teresa” remarks that socio-economic class makes a great difference in how an African or a black man is judged in Spanish society, making a comparison between a penniless migrant and a someone who comes from a wealthy oil family, or a celebrity. She uses the examples of Michael Jordan and Denzel Washington to illustrate her point. In these posts, the participants reveal some of the disjunctures and tensions between the discourses of race, class and national identity in Spanish society. In fact, Dan Rodriguez-Garcia’s research into mixed-race couples in Cataluña demonstrates that similarities in socio-economic class are a more reliable predictor of the success of a Spanish-African relationship than race (“Mixed” 426). For some, socio-economic class is something that nullifies or transcends rac

### Muslims and Spaniards on the Forum

Muslims are often posited as being culturally incompatible with “The West” and secular society. Some of the stereotypes are elucidated by Raymond Taras in *Xenophobia and Islamophobia in Europe*: Islam is characterized as “monolithic and static...irrational, primitive and inferior...aggressive and violent” (4). Religion has been intimately linked with the development of the concept of race in the Western world, and historically, a key underpinning of Spanish national and racial identity has been Catholicism. In Spain today, as well as on the *parejas mixtas* forum, racialization of Muslims weaves between interpellating Muslim and non-Muslim bodies with cultural and physical characteristics. The rejection or acceptance of Muslims in Spanish society today is complicated in ways unique to Spain due to the historical ties with Al Andalus and the close proximity to North Africa, as Spain has had a relationship with Muslim societies different than those of other European countries. The overlap of biological and cultural notions of Muslim identity and Moroccan identity posited as distinct from Spanish occurs with the slippage between *moro* and *marroquí*, as detailed by Flesler in *The Return of the Moor*, as an invading group that has “returned,” like so many ghosts, to Spain. But it also occurs on the forum itself in discussions of mixed couples and cultural and racial conflict, as Muslims and non-Muslims alike reference notions of *mestizaje*, religion, and civilization in relationship to Spain, Europe, and religious identity.

A series of posts between “Sandra” and “Pablo” reveal complexities in the negotiation of “Spanish” or “Moroccan” identity: both have one parent who is Moroccan, and one who is European. Sandra views herself as no different than any Spaniard or European, stating that she is from both French and Arab cultures, as her mother is French and her father Moroccan. She posts on the forum to inform another Spanish participant that any future marriage to a Moroccan will

never work out, and in her comment, claims that it will be a failure not because of any cultural or racial differences, but because “vosotros” (Spaniards) have an overinflated and undeserved sense of superiority towards Moroccans. Sandra says that her own marriage to a Spaniard did not work out, not because of cultural differences but because her husband and his family stereotyped her, and his friends looked down on her as “marroquí.” She found the constant comments and assumptions about her Moroccan heritage offensive and nonsensical because, according to her, “we come from the same civilization,” expressing a similarity of cultural and historic heritage between Spain (Europe) and Morocco, intensified by her French background. Pablo’s response refutes her claim that “Spaniards” are proud, arguing that it’s really Moroccans who create problems because they don’t respect the way other people (non-Muslims) live.

While the two seem at some points to be merely bickering or engaging in one-upmanship, it is telling that Pablo, unlike Sandra, identifies as a “mestizo,” as *racially* mixed. He later makes a specific reference to “nuestra raza,” to speak about Moroccans; he says that his mother is Spanish and his father is Moroccan. Sandra never identifies as racially mixed, but rather culturally mixed, and therefore, in her estimation, more erudite. The differences in identity construction between Pablo and Sandra further point to the fact that “mixedness” often depends on context, and what constitutes a “mixed couple,” or even a *mestizo* hinges on the perception of each individual of their cultural, racial, and national identity.

Sexuality and gender roles overlap with discourses of race and national identity on the forum, as markers that distinguish Spanish or European identity from Muslim or African. As in the characterization of black Africans, Muslims are represented on the forum as possessing an aberrant and degenerate sexuality, echoing as well the Orientalist tropes of the nineteenth century as described by Edward Said: the Oriental was an “oversexed degenerate...essentially sadistic,

treacherous, low” (*Orientalism* 287). This characterization is part of a casting of Muslims as Other than Western civilization and more primitive. “Marta” characterizes Arabs as perverted in a response to a previous post about “los árabes musulmanes,” who she says are racist, beasts, and “enfermos sexuales.” She states and that “they” carry their perverted nature in their blood. The racialization of Muslims that is evident in the forum affirms the analysis of Junaid Rana, who argues that often, all Muslims are conflated with Arabs, all of whom are generalized as “the Muslim,” and represented as violent and perverted. Rana frames the racialization of Muslims as interpellated as an Other by racial, social and cultural cues:

I elaborate a racial phenomenology in which the Muslim is understood not only as a totalized biological body but also as a cultural and social entity constructed within a number of discursive regimes, including those of terrorism, fundamentalism, patriarchy, sexism, and labor migration. By invoking this idea of racial phenomenology, I examine bodies that appear in the visual register as characteristics of race and as performances of characteristics that are read as racial. (Rana 26)

In these posts, Muslim and Arabs are conflated, and framed as not only culturally or religiously different from Spaniards, but rather, their alterity is encoded in their very race or “blood.” On the forum, both Juana and Marta claim that if one is “morena” or looks like “them,” but dresses like a Western woman, “they” go crazy. The posts seem to imply that if the Other mistakes a Westerner for one of them, all pretensions to civilized behavior end. This reveals a discomfort that exists regarding a racial and cultural “closeness” with Moroccans or Arabs in general. The unease with a possible sharing of heritage or “family tree” becomes apparent in comments that imply that if one physically resembles the Other, it is dangerous, because the boundaries created between a Western/European identity and that of the Other become unstable and could fall apart.

The depiction of a supposedly Muslim, violent masculinity goes hand in hand with a constant concern with the place of women in Islam and Muslim societies. As discussed earlier, the trope of the oppressed and veiled Muslim woman is one of the most commonly used to point out purportedly insurmountable differences between a “Western” and a “Muslim” culture. A post written by “Eva” reflects this concern. She asks other women on the forum who are married to Muslims how they can be blind as to the backwardness, “machismo” and submission that they will have to submit themselves. The place of women in Muslim societies is a popular example used to “prove” backwardness and chauvinism, versus the freedoms of Western women. Eva asks if “this” is what readers want for their future daughters, and invokes the future of the nation and of the national family, to which Islam is presented as posing a threat. Her post also marshals the trope of the female as the bearer of national and cultural identity, as those who biologically reproduce the national family, and as mediating, liminal figures, whose sexuality must be contained and controlled. It further insinuates the “stigma of moral panic” that exists around Muslims as imperiling the integrity of Europe (Morgan 2).

Generalizing and stereotyping all Islamic countries, and all Muslim migrants, fails to recognize differences between the experiences of women in different nations and ethnic communities. Further, Muslim immigrants living in European countries such as Spain do not necessarily apply all cultural or religious practices dogmatically. For example, while female genital mutilation is a practice common in regions of the Gambia, in interviews of Gambian–Spanish couples, the majority overwhelmingly rejected the practice of female circumcision on their daughters, as it was not a culturally nor socially appropriate rite of passage in Spain (Rodríguez-García, *Inmigración* 172). In Senegal and the Gambia, the practice is seen in some areas as part of a rite of passage to adulthood, but, among those interviewed, Spanish and

Senegambian partners agreed that was: “una práctica prejudicial y anticuada, señal de falta de integración en la sociedad de acogida” (*Inmigración* 172). In the same study, Rodríguez-García found that, in particular for those who come from a smaller cultural or national community, maintaining cultural some Islamic religious practices was not easy in a new environment like Spain. What many individuals interviewed seemed to agree on was that there were many different ways of “being” a Muslim, which coincided not only with an outward practice but with an interior faith (Rodríguez-García, *Inmigración* 159). These types of statements and lifestyles directly contradict stereotypes of Muslims as dogmatic and fanatical.

### **Cultural Pluralism: Challenging the Pedagogical Narrative**

On the forum and in fiction, narratives continue to deploy the pedagogical discourses that were so significant in colonial literature, distinguishing the Spanish as civilized, white Europeans and Africans as their Others. *Parejas mixtas* is a medium in which other voices and other experiences may be articulated, challenging the pedagogical discourses. The most significant voice that destabilizes the pedagogical are the personal narratives of women who are part of a mixed couple and view it as rewarding experience. While these women understand that they are transgressing cultural, racial, and class boundaries, they present a perspective that is far more nuanced than that which currently appears in fiction. The positive experiences that are shared on the forum serve as a testament to the growing sense of pluralism and even cultural transformation that is occurring in Spanish society, as a result of immigration.

While negative representations of mixed unions tend to portray one member of the pair “losing” their authentic and original cultural identity as a result of coercion or a gentler assimilation process, some narratives on *Parejas mixtas* show individuals successfully negotiating and compromising on even important identity markers like religion, language, and

gender roles, invalidating stereotypes such as the “clash of cultures.” Bhabha suggests this type of give and take in his discussion of the tensions between the pedagogical and the performative:

The question of cultural difference faces us with a disposition of knowledges or a distribution of practices that exist beside each other, *Abseits*, in a form of juxtaposition contradiction that resists the teleology of dialectical sublation. In erasing the harmonious totalities of Culture, cultural difference articulates the difference between representations of social life without surmounting the space of incommensurable meanings and judgments that are produced within the process of transcultural negotiation. (*Nation* 312)

Bhabha directs us to look beyond a parochial concept of Culture, and towards a discursive space of transcultural negotiation, or, as he famously calls it, a “third space,” where cultural difference is neither cannibalized nor erased, but rather exists simultaneously with other differences.

The flexibility that occurs in the third space is reflected in international research on mixed couples. Recent studies of mixed couples and their families undertaken in Canada, Spain, and Morocco have shown that “mixedness” offers individuals and families an opportunity to develop a mentality of cultural pluralism, and a sense of creativity and freedom to venture beyond their previous cultural norms and mores (Meintel 20). In her research on Moroccan mixed couples, Catherine Therrien found that:

Because mixedness creates a new model for drawing references from multiple cultural backgrounds, it provides couples an environment of creativity...Such mixedness also affords these couples a sense of freedom. They have the opportunity to get away from their experiences, cultural models, and the anchors of their socialization, to build on the new, to forge a novel path, to decide for themselves what the configuration of their daily

lives will be. These couples demand, not always in words but in the construction of their daily existence, the right to think and reflect before imitating and reproducing existing models, to live outside a pre-established mold. (“Trajectories” 139)

Therrien’s assertion is borne out on *Parejas mixtas*; while some participants speak about challenges that cultural, religious, or racial difference may provoke, others continue to maintain that these differences have enriched their lives. Both “María” and “Ana” explain that they have been to Nigeria to visit their husbands’ families and, especially in the case of Ana, have developed a pluralist mentality towards different customs and cultures. She claims that she appreciates and even adores many of the Nigerian customs she has learned, and that in certain ways she admires Nigerian culture and lifestyle. Ana and María defend their spouses and other African immigrants from stereotypical associations with criminal activity, and the perception that immigrants only practice exogamy in order to get citizenship papers and financial security. Both describe their marriages as not only authentic but “better” than if they had not married someone from Nigeria, defending their relationships against similar critiques and impolite questions that, for example, Celia experienced. María, for example, claims that her husband is less of a “machista” than most Spanish men. Both women refute stereotypes and generalizations about African immigrants and mixed couples, and they articulate their relationships as genuine and loving. Hence, the forum is a medium in which the women have a level of discursive power, in which they may assert themselves and present a more positive and, for them, authentic image of mixed couples than what they encounter both on and offline.

Expressing what it is to live in the “third space,” or engage in transcultural negotiation, some members of the forum tend to look to new ways to articulate aspects of their partner (and their own) race, religion, or culture. Occasionally, they have difficulty describing their partner as

a sum total of one physical or cultural characteristic, recognizing that they are a complex individual. For example, Penelope calls the racial discourse on the forum exaggerated, saying that she finds it “messed up” that people have to say their partner is “negrísimo.” She claims that when she is with her boyfriend she doesn’t “see” him as black, clarifying that she isn’t attempting to claim that she isn’t aware of how her boyfriend looks, but rather that it isn’t an issue between the two of them. She struggles to articulate the fact that she does not see her partner as “Other,” in spite of the fact that she is aware that her family and friends do see him that way: while she is aware of his race, she sees beyond it. However, she does say that she anticipates that their racial differences will cause some problems for them as they try to maintain a long-term relationship because of her family and friends’ racism.

African–Spanish couples are represented in fiction as being least compatible when one member, in particular the male, is Muslim. “Carolina” began a forum thread to address the anti-Muslim rhetoric on the forum and society at large, and astutely focused on the racialization of Muslims that occurs. Her posts are anchored in actual, personal experience with her Senegalese husband’s family, as opposed to what he calls the “nonsense” and generalizations that some write on the forum. She claims that the women in her husband’s family aren’t submissive, and that to make important decisions women and men get together to make them. The preoccupation with the place of women in Islam and stereotypes of Muslim women as submissive is a frequent topic that Carolina addresses in her post, pointing out that the role of women varies depending on country and culture. In a different post, she continues refuting stereotypes, for example, that Muslim men automatically practice polygamy, stating that, although it is true that some African immigrants seek convenience marriages in order to get residence papers and citizenship, it isn’t the case with everyone. She advises that couples get to know each other before the marriage, and

set expectations. She, for example, told her husband that she would not accept a second wife. Carolina points out that Muslim practices vary by country, and by individual, and that her own husband is not a polygamist. As the anthropologist Dan Rodríguez-García demonstrates with his study of bi-national Senegalese- and Gambian- Spanish mixed unions, not only cultural expectations, but ethnic differences, gender expectations, and also social-class impact the status or “success” of a mixed relationship, and that a blanket explanation such as the incompatibility or “clash” of cultures is inadequate (“Mixed” 403). In his work, Rodríguez concludes that, based on his studies and other research:

The conflicts that arise are due more to socio-economic, situational and personal factors than cultural differences, or at least to a combination of factors, and point to the need for an argument to counter culturalists’ explanations which favour processes of essentialisation... In other words, social actors as active subjects, rather than cultures as whole hardened fixed entities, are the main protagonists in processes of socio-cultural transmission and adaptation. (“Mixed” 426)

Carolina’s posts illustrate some of the points that Dan Rodríguez-García makes in his study: the author represents her relationship as one of individuals who negotiate expectations; although her husband’s brother may engage in polygamy, it isn’t a de facto state of matrimony for *all* men of Senegalese origin.

A common concern raised on the forum is how to raise children in a mixed relationship. In one forum thread, “Sara” expresses uncertainty about resolving religious differences in the future, especially if she and her partner have children. Carolina responds that religion has not been a point of contention in her marriage; her Senegalese husband’s family accepted her with open arms, although they are practicing Muslims and Carolina is not. Her in laws have accepted

the Christian children Carolina has from another marriage, and she and her husband are raising their youngest in Islam, because she likes to pray with her father and because, according to Carolina, she has a Muslim spirituality. When their youngest is older, Carolina claims that they will let her decide for herself which religion she practices. And her husband has adapted to Carolina's religious customs as well: he celebrates Christmas and has attended the first communions of her extended family members. The dynamic that Carolina describes, of her Muslim husband celebrating Christian holidays and rites, as well as some of the Islamic ones, is a common trend among culturally mixed families in certain contexts. Parents seem comfortable allowing their children to develop multiple cultural or religious affiliations, and view it as advantageous, either for future career prospects (especially the ability to be bilingual or trilingual) or as a way for their children to better understand and be accepted by other family members (Meintel 14).

"Irene" also is open to the possibility of her children forming their own religious affiliations, but she asserts strongly that their national and cultural identity will be "Spanish" and that they will be raised in Spain. Her reaction to Sara's concerns about resolving religious differences in a marriage is fairly nonchalant, as she responds that she really doesn't think it's all that complicated. Her partner, whom she calls "mi moro de Marruecos," is Muslim but, according to Irene, practices and observes Ramadan more out of respect for his family and their traditions. When they have children, Irene claims that they will explain both religions to them "sin problemas," and since she and her partner live in Spain, their children will be Spanish. On the one hand, Irene separates religious, cultural, and national identity in her posts, while at the same time ascribes more importance to nationality. For Irene, her children's birthplace is the factor that will determine cultural identity, and it will also trump any religious affiliation that

they choose to have, likely because they will attend school in Spain, absorbing the predominant culture regardless of the religion they practice. While the general trend seems to be that migrant parents try to teach their children their cultural values and language, this occasionally proves to be a difficult undertaking. According to Dan Rodríguez-García: “Senegambian parents resign themselves to their children ‘losing their culture of origin,’” because being brought up in a different culture imbues the children with “different values and points of reference” (“Mixed” 421). It is significant that both Irene and Carolina do not preclude practicing Islam as a part of “Spanish” identity, once again providing a counter-narrative to the predominant discourse expressed in fiction that a loss of “Spanish-ness” will occur upon converting to Islam or engaging in a relationship with a Muslim.

Irene’s post also addresses the place of women in Islam, and female autonomy in African–Spanish relationships. She counters the generalizations and unease that are exhibited on the forum and in broader Spanish (and Western) society regarding Muslim women, asserting that Morocco is closer to European culture than, for example, Pakistan, and declaring that the topic of the “pañuelito” is old news; she asserts that a lot of women wear it as a traditional or national accessory more than anything else. Irene concludes her post arguing that few Moroccan women can be characterized as submissive. Specifically, Irene seems to be responding to the polemic over wearing a veil or headscarf in public, a controversial topic on and off the forum. Carolina claims that she has not seen one woman with her face covered during her visits to Senegal. Irene, again in her response to Sara’s post expressing concern about raising children with two religions, describes her husband’s family as “normal,” which she defines as practicing their religion according to the Koran and praying, but not displaying behavior that she would consider fanatical or backwards. Both Irene and Carolina address the issue with culturally-contextualized

examples (Morocco and Senegal), a tactic that contests the tendency to generalize about Muslims and Muslim nations as though they were all the same.

Personal narratives provide a more nuanced story of African–Spanish couples that, while not denying difference, describe the compromises that couples make and even the fulfillment that can result. Of course, the Internet is not a utopia: stereotypes, racism, and rejection of mixed couples and immigrants continue to be represented with a strong and constant voice. Clearly, entrenched constructions of race and national identity still exercise tremendous ideological force in contemporary Spanish society. Fixed concepts based in the notion of Spain as a European, white, and civilized society against an uncivilized Muslim or black African Other are still thriving.

However, the dialog that results from an online space like *Parejas mixtas* allows participants to challenge stereotypes and racism, using their experiences to provide authenticity and authority to their posts. Fictional representations, such as novels and films, overall present a rather pessimistic view of African–Spanish couples. On an allegorical level, this pessimism speaks to a level of skepticism about the success of cultural pluralism in contemporary Spanish society. Yet, in other mediums, such as web forums, in which personal testimonies may be shared, the variety and complexity of the national discourse on immigration in Spain today can be better understood. *Parejas mixtas* represents a counter-discourse to the more reactionary or nationalistic perspective presented in other media production, because it is a participatory medium in which a range of viewpoints and experiences may be articulated. That these “impossible romances” aren’t so impossible is a clear and positive contribution of computer-mediated communication towards creating a new vision of Africa in contemporary Spanish society.

## Conclusion

### **Todos somos inmigrantes, todos somos seres humanos<sup>32</sup>**

In this dissertation I have tried to show the complexity of the responses to African migrants in Spain. My goal is to open the discussion of migration and race in contemporary Spanish society to see not only the continuities of older, racist constructions of self and Other, but also to acknowledge other voices in Spanish society. Film and literature may frame some of the more conservative attitudes in Spain regarding migration and mixed couples; but a fuller, more honest assessment about Spanish responses to immigrants can be made by investigating other media representations. In particular, subjective accounts, such as the forum posts that I analyze in Chapter Three, provide contextualized perspectives that, while not always able to “escape” from the bounds of cultural frameworks and traditional discourses, articulate more nuanced relationships, and critique racism in Spanish society. Television and theatre are two other areas in which further investigation into representations of race may indicate changing attitudes, and a more flexible approach to national or cultural identity. Ultimately, these mediums may point towards the positive effects of intercultural dialog. To broaden my conclusions and anchor myself in the actual situation in Spain, I will connect my final remarks to recent events and changes in Spain and Southern Europe.

Paul Gilroy asks us to find the courage to reflect on the history of political nationalism that has been entangled with the ideas of race, culture, and civilization. By doing so, we may understand how Europe’s imperial and colonial dominance brought racisms and nationalisms

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<sup>32</sup> Slogan from the fifth annual march for interculturalism and *convivencia* in Alicante, in November 2012.

together in ways that still impact upon present conditions” (“Foreword”). A significant goal of this dissertation has been to demonstrate the continuities that exist between current representations of migrants in Spain, and discourses that were born in a colonial context. Refusing to interrogate the often painful or shameful legacies of colonialism allows us to fall into a sense of complacency and paternalism, and the trap of *la desmemoria*, as the writer Jordi Soler called it in a recent editorial in *El País*.<sup>33</sup> Soler, born in Mexico to exiles of the Spanish Civil War, now lives and writes in Barcelona. In view of the recent economic crisis, which has forced a new generation of Spaniards to seek employment abroad, Soler asks the public to reflect on its history of emigration and exile. Particularly now that many Spaniards or their children are themselves migrants, Soler calls for a moment of reflection and an effort to identify with the experiences of recent migrants to Spain. Ultimately, he wishes to revise what he views as harsh regulations against immigrants. Michael Ugarte, in *Africans in Europe* (2010), also frames his study of Equatorial Guinean emigration and exile in terms of an identification with the human beings implicated in the process; as individuals with families, nations, and histories, who are more than mere statistics or anachronous, “ghostly” presences: “What stands above the condition of losing one’s land is the specific person who loses (and wins) in the departure” (1). I would like to examine three recent “case studies” from Spain and Southern Europe that might help us consider further the actual people affected in the process of migration. These *reportajes* may help us out of *la desmemoria*, and point us towards a new framework for envisioning not only African–Spanish couples, but all recent migrants in Spanish society.

One indication that integration has had some positive outcomes in Spain, is revealed by a recent study on the children of migrants, undertaken jointly by the Instituto Universitario Ortega

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<sup>33</sup> “La desmemoria.” 12 Jan. 2013, *El País Opinión*. Jordi Soler.

y Gasset and Princeton University. The researchers interviewed over 3,000 adolescents who are considered “second generation” migrants. Of those interviewed, fifty percent claimed that they “felt Spanish” (Agudo).<sup>34</sup> One of the possible reasons given for the high sense of acceptance was the lesser amount of ghettos that existed in Spain, as opposed to some other European nations, such as France. Yet significantly, the children of Moroccan migrants expressed the least amount of identification with Spain and Spanish society. Rosa Aparicio, a sociologist who coauthored the study, views this attitude to be a direct result of the stereotypes with which Spanish society treats Muslims: “les atribuimos que no respetan los derechos humanos, que minusvaloran a la mujer y otra serie de características negativas,” which makes assimilation difficult (Agudo). Aparicio’s concluding remarks about the more difficult process of integration for Moroccans illustrates the fact that integration is indeed a bidirectional process. The stereotypes that are held towards a minority community impact its capacity to integrate fully, not merely because of cultural or religious differences, but because perceived differences impact how migrants are treated by the host country, and thus affect civic participation and a sense of acceptance.

A more productive standpoint could be to frame those of African descent, and migrants themselves, not as foreigners or Others, but as an integral part of society. As Paul Gilroy demands in *Blackening Europe*: “We need to conjure up a future in which black Europeans stop being seen as migrants” (“Foreword” xxi). The view of Africans and those of African descent not as newcomers, but as individuals who have been part of Spanish society for a generation or more, is put forth in the 2002 piece on Afrogallegos in *El País Semanal*, by the Galician author and journalist Manuel Rivas. The author affirms that Afrogallegos have been living in Galicia for decades, particularly Cape Verdean migrants and their descendants in the town of Burela (Lugo).

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<sup>34</sup> While this particular question is ambiguous (what exactly does it mean to “feel” Spanish?), it is important to remember that the study subjects were children.

Rivas interviewed the only mixed marriage on the island: Isidro and Antonia. The couple, who met in Teruel, has endured prejudice, not the least of which was the complaint that Antonia's parents filed against Isidro when the pair began to date, causing him to be detained by the police, and her to testify before a judge that she was with him willingly. Their son, David, is featured on the cover of the article playing the bagpipes, the self-styled "primer gaitero de color." Rivas also interviewed 12-year-old Manuel, also born in Burela of Capeverdean parents:

No tiene problemas de nacionalidad: Es español, es caboverdiano, es gallego. En cuanto a identidades culturales, además del fútbol de Kluivert, por ahora le gusta el cachondeo latino de Chayane y los puños de Van Damme. Como a todos. Como a mí. Si le insisten, tal como se haría en una de esas encuestas pelmas sobre el sentimiento de pertenencia, Manuel lo tiene claro: "¡Soy de Burela!".

The interviews given by Cape Verdean migrants and Afrogallegos alike suggest that it is time to acknowledge that Africans are not anachronistic.

In Spain, and Europe in general, there must be a change in the way "outsiders" are viewed in order to end the notion that migrants somehow constitute an attack on society or an undoing of cultural values and mores. Recently, there have been steps taken to accomplish this in Italy, with the creation of the first "Ministry for Integration." Since 2013, the Ministry is headed by Cécile Kyenge, an ophthalmologist and activist who was born in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The first black cabinet minister in Italy, Kyenge's term has been marked by tension, including death threats, with racial slurs hurled at her online and even in Italian Parliament sessions. For example, the vice president of the Italian senate compared Kyenge to an "orangutan" at a political rally (Mackey). In spite of opposition by more extremist groups, and even death threats, Kyenge has stated that Italy is already multicultural, and wants to work to

reform restrictive citizenship laws to recognize that fact: “It’s time to reflect on citizenship, to bring forward the discussion because the country has changed, and my role is to speak about that” (Povoledo). It seems essential that a focus on immigration include an effort to increase access to equality.

Examining colonial texts and deciphering their racist logic is instrumental in the process of confronting racism and xenophobia in the present. The narratives produced during colonial contexts can teach us about the construction of national and imperial identity, and how it is entwined with class, gender, and race. Texts that portray interracial desire and mixed-race romance are powerful frameworks for observing the different manifestations of race in Spanish society. In Francoist Spain, race was a political tool, prismatic in nature, with which to legitimize sometimes competing national and imperialist projects. As discussed in Chapter One, Spanish interventions in Africa were justified with the discourse of “Hispanotropicalism,” which couched Spaniards as uniquely suited to colonizing Africa based on geographical determinism and mystical racial hybridity. Yet, this ideology endangered Spain’s claim to European modernity, as it risked coding the *raza* as non-white and thus African.

While imperial expansion into North Africa in the both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries employed a trope of racial and cultural incorporation, the same was not always true for Equatorial Guinea. As we see in Masoliver’s novel *Efún*, in the context of Equatorial Guinea, racial and cultural mixing was often rejected. Instead, the Spanish were coded as the Guineans’ spiritual, not racial, brothers charged with bringing Catholicism and modernity to the colony. Miscegenation is presented as a dangerous consequence of African colonization, and one that not only endangered the colonial project but also the authenticity of Spanish identity.

As *Efún* demonstrates, comparisons with Guineans served to portray Spain as an idealized modern nation; white, cosmopolitan, technologically advanced. Nineteenth-century concerns of contamination and degeneracy, through desire of racial others or the lower classes, are clear aspects of the narrative's racist logic. Surprisingly, while Masoliver's novel is supportive of the ideology of the Franco regime, it does contain whispers of counter discourses, though not progressive ones. Masoliver's subtle privileging of Catalan protagonists as emblems of whiteness echoes, however faintly, racial ideologies of Catalan nationalists who asserted a whiter, "European" Catalan identity to contrast with the "Spanish." Further, the tragic ending of *Efún*, in which the romance between Carlos and Ana is truncated by her return to Spain, may be read as a critique of Spanish colonialism in Guinea, due to the threat it presents to the "white" Spanish family.

A fascination with the taboo and with interracial and intercultural romance is maintained in the contemporary setting. The narrative and film of the 90s are eager, at least on the surface, to explore what the new presence of African migrants could mean for Spanish society, but ultimately represent Spain's deepest fears about immigrants. Reading and viewing these works, one is confronted with many of the same stereotypes that are inherited from older racist frameworks. These ideologies regarding racial and national identities seem to be sedimented into individual's belief systems. Some of the most prominent racist ideologies that continue from colonialism are stereotypes of black men's sexuality, and a fear that North Africans are closer to Spanish "blood" than is healthy. The reactionary, almost hysterical reflex to protect the "white" family genealogy against contamination is clear in defensive statements made online regarding interracial and intercultural marriage, and in the destructions of fictional characters who dare to transgress. These tropes seem to be particularly intense regarding Muslims, who are portrayed as

unpredictable, violent, and malevolent; often accompanied with themes of Islamic terror. The fear that the African Other is a threat to national identity and the national “family” is also continued in contemporary representations of African–Spanish couples. In recent film and narrative, as I demonstrated in Chapters Two and Three, one may observe a current of cultural racism that informs the more reactionary ideologies, particularly regarding Muslims. There is a sense that society is “under attack” and must be protected from difference in order to maintain its authentic identity.

Race, gender, and social class continue to overlap and entwine in contemporary texts, but in sometimes unexpected and unusual ways. While the female protagonists in recent fiction are “modern,” sexually liberated Spaniards, the narratives analyzed in this dissertation betray an ambivalence regarding female sexuality. On the one hand, the women are portrayed as able to maintain a position of power in a relationship with an African migrant, due to differences in racial and social status. *La cazadora* and “La belleza de ébano,” both written by women, privilege the female gaze, and develop female protagonists who take on an active and sometimes dominating role in their relationships. The incorporation of the female stance on the erotic is a clear sign of changes from the colonial-era narratives. But fears of degeneracy or chaos unleashed in the absence of control over female sexuality emerge, particularly in *Susanna*, and to a somewhat lesser extent, in *La cazadora*. Further, much of the discourses that frame the role of the female protagonists as dominant and assertive also reiterate similar racist and patriarchal dichotomies that were so prevalent in those older narratives, such as civilization vs. barbarism. While cultural taboos are explored, at their close the fictional works confirm differences of Self and Other by rejecting hybridity.

Spain is feeling the effects of the tide of immigration, and will continue to become a more multiracial and multiethnic society: now one may say, as has Juan Goytisolo in *Paisajes después de la batalla*, that “África empieza en los bulevares” (241). An ethical response to the increasing presence of immigrants can and should give them the rights and means by which to participate in the democratic process. Doing so implies a re-negotiation of national identity and notions of race and culture, perhaps one step in moving beyond reified national or ethnic identities. While recent narrative and film has been particularly reactionary regarding African–Spanish couples, it is risky to extrapolate solely from those representations about the whole of Spanish society, as the immigration debate is quite multi-faceted. The hegemonic narratives may be challenged in other mediums, particularly those that give voice to mixed couples, such as web forums. As I demonstrated in Chapter Three, the Internet offers a space of heterogeneous viewpoints and dialogue. The value of the experiences of mixed couples can be a guide for how to negotiate different cultural expectations and a model for achieving cross-cultural discussion.

While there is much to learn from the study of mixed couples, one of its limitations is the very framework that insists on individual and group difference before they “mix.” One advantage of a multicultural, or intercultural approach is to begin from a point of commonality. Integration should be a process that involves minority groups and their civic participation, not merely a top-down view of juridical or political solutions to societal issues. Perhaps a first step is to recognize how race, and racism, are still seared into our cultural, familial, and social frameworks. Challenging our own assumptions about race and migrants that are based on these older narrative scripts would be a positive step towards opening up society. After all, on some level we are all migrants; more importantly, we are all human beings.

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