Women's Voices from the Maghreb: Transnational Feminism in Najat El Hachmi's *Mare de llet i mel* (2018) and Lamiae El Amrani's *Poesía femenina y sociedad* (2010)

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Abstract
This essay focuses on two Moroccan immigrant authors whose recent works provide insights into transnational feminisms in contemporary poetry and narrative. Najat El Hachmi's *Mare de llet i mel* (2018) and Lamiae El Amrani's *Poesía femenina y sociedad* (2010) highlight Moroccan women's collective voices through poetic storytelling and contribute to the contemporary transnational feminist movement. This study analyzes the two works and comments on contemporary feminist and poetic theory as they relate to transnational Peninsular feminism and to the future of Moroccan literature written in Castilian and Catalan. Both authors avoid the pitfalls of certain third-wave, transnational, feminist stances by focusing on the collective voices of Moroccan women and by emphasizing the oral poetic traditions of Moroccan culture and how such forms uniquely communicate transnational feminist perspectives, particularly in the context of global migrations.

Key Words: Transnational feminism, African feminisms, transnational poetics, Amazigh culture, oral poetic tradition

Resumen
Este estudio se centra en dos autoras inmigrantes marroquíes cuya obra reciente ofrece perspectivas iluminadoras sobre los femenismos peninsulares transnacionales en la poesía y la narrativa contemporáneas. *Mare de llet i mel* de Najat El Hachmi (2018) y *Poesía femenina y sociedad* de Lamiae El Amrani (2010) resaltan las voces colectivas de las mujeres marroquíes a través de narraciones poéticas y le aportan contribuciones importantes al movimiento feminista transnacional contemporáneo. Este estudio analiza ambas obras y ofrece un debate sobre la teoría poética y feminista contemporánea en relación con el feminismo peninsular transnacional y el futuro de la literatura marroquí en castellano y en catalán. Cada escritor ofrece una perspectiva diferente que evita ciertos escollos feministas de la tercera ola del feminismo, en parte al enforcarse en las voces colectivas de las mujeres marroquíes, y en parte al enfatizar las tradiciones poéticas orales de la cultura marroquí y cómo tales formas comunican las perspectivas feministas transnacionales, particularmente en el contexto de las migraciones globales.

Palabras clave: feminismo transnacional, feminismo africano, poética transnacional, cultura amazigh, tradición poética oral

In recent debates about transnational feminism, critics have noted the disjuncture between Western feminist stances and the perspectives emanating from Africa, Asia, and Latin America.[1] As Alicia Decker and Gabeba Baderoon argue in "African Feminisms: Cartographies for the Twenty-First Century," an important contribution of African feminist authors has been to emphasize how migratory

movements and transnational perspectives allow for more authentic and robust feminist critique by incorporating insights stemming from women's economic and racial oppression and not simply from gendered status (219). Within the Peninsular context, transnational feminism has yet to be deeply theorized, particularly considering the contributions of female immigrant writers. This essay focuses on two Moroccan immigrant authors whose recent works provide insights into transnational Peninsular feminisms in contemporary poetry and narrative. Both Najat El Hachmi's *Mare de llet i mel* (2018)[2] and Lamiae El Amrani's *Poesía femenina y sociedad: antología poética marroquí* (2010) highlight Moroccan women's collective voices through poetic storytelling and provide intriguing contributions to the contemporary transnational feminist movement. This study will begin with an introduction to the two works along with a discussion of contemporary feminist and poetic theory as it relates to transnational Peninsular feminism. The analysis will continue with a close reading of several selections from each work and conclude with reflections on what the contributions of El Hachmi and El Amrani mean for the future of Moroccan literature in Castilian and Catalan.

Theoretical and Textual Grounding

Transnational feminist perspectives are apparent within the very conception of both works analyzed in this study, in part because they both explicitly address migratory movements, and because they consciously employ communal women's voices as they cross between Morocco and Spain. Najat El Hachmi's *Mare de llet i de mel* (2018) takes on a narrative voice distinct from her well-received earlier publications.[3] For the first time in El Hachmi's migrant-focused novels, the narrative perspective comes not from a second-generation Catalan Moroccan immigrant who is deeply integrated into Catalan society and European literary culture, but rather from a first-generation Moroccan woman who struggles to find her place, first in rural Amazigh culture and then as an immigrant to Catalonia.[4] Fatima, the protagonist in *Mare de llet i mel*, is illiterate and thus unable to interpret even the most literal signs in both cultures. The work focuses on relationships between mothers and daughters, among sisters, and between women as a whole in the struggle for belonging and identity that makes up not just the immigrant experience, but also (as posited numerous times throughout the novel) the experience of women broadly. The transnational feminist perspective takes literary form through an emphasis on oral language, poetic discourse, and the importance of storytelling within communities of women. The novel involves Fatima retelling her life and her immigrant experiences to her sisters after finally returning home, and the work is divided into two parts: "*L'antiguitat d'una dona*,"[5] which introduces Fatima's family, her childhood, and the struggles that have necessitated her migration, and

"*L'antiguitat d'una mare*"[6] which addresses her adolescence, marriage, and challenging relationship with her daughter in a new intercultural context. The entire novel is directed toward the narrator's "*germanes*"[7] as if Fatima were recounting her tale directly to her sisters. While the sisters are explicitly Fatima's extended family, the use of "antiquity" in the section titles signals that Fatima and her sisters also connote the communities of transnational women who are struggling, and have struggled throughout history, to find their places in the world.

Similarly, El Amrani's *Poesía femenina y sociedad: antología poética marroquí* (2010) offers a poetic response to the question of transnational feminism between Spain and Morocco. While El Amrani is not well known on the literary scene, she was born in Tetouan, Morocco, attended the University of Seville in Spain, and currently teaches and lives in Yucatán, Mexico. El Hachmi is from the Moroccan Riff region (Amazigh speaking). El Amrani has published several original poetic works, including *Verde mar sin alas* (2007),[8] *Un suspiro inapreciable de una noche cualquiera* (2007),[9] *Lanzas desde una orilla del alma* (2008),[10] *Tormenta de especias* (2010),[11] and *Venas del desierto* (2018),[12] in addition to her anthology of Moroccan women poets studied here.[13] El Amrani's *Poesía femenina y sociedad: Antología poética marroquí* (2010) includes thirty-four poems by eight Moroccan female poets, including El Amrani herself. While most of the poems are translated from Arabic, others (mainly El Amrani's) were composed in Spanish. The work offers brief biographies of the poets along with a prologue and introduction that contextualize contemporary Moroccan poetry written by women. The poets are included in generational order and their works address diverse themes, including contemporary migration. For example, Fatiha Morchid's "Allí donde las casualidades son citas" and El Amrani's "*Con los límites a cuestas*" consider the precariousness of border crossings and migrant identity. However, the collection addresses a broad range of feminist issues. For example, El Amrani selected three poems by Widad Benmoussa that use the window as a metaphor for experience, and the opening verse, "Tú ventana mía, no tienes patria / tampoco yo un amor" ties together the notions of lyric poetry, national identity, and relational solitude, all important topics related to the development of north African feminisms.

Both El Amrani and El Hachmi have offered interviews and presentations about the situation of contemporary Moroccan women from a feminist perspective, including lectures like El Amrani's "*La situación de las mujeres en el mundo árabe*" and El Hachmi's "*Carta d'un immigrant*" as well as an interview about *Mare de llet i mel* titled "*Najat El Hachmi: 'El machismo en el Rif forma parte del sistema y la cotidianidad'*" (Abella n.p.). However, this study focuses on their literary works, and particularly how these authors have chosen aesthetic forms that emphasize communal poetic storytelling and offer intriguing perspectives for the contemporary transnational feminist debate. Jahan Ramazani's *A*

Transnational Poetics (2009) argues that contemporary literary studies are in need of a new paradigm that can bridge the "vast historical and cultural divisions between global North and South, East and West" and that "poetic analysis in particular—attentive to figure, rhythm, allusion, stanza, line, image, genre, and other such resources—can foster an aesthetically attuned transnational literary criticism" that avoids exoticism and honors autochthonous perspectives and forms (xi). El Amrani's and El Hachmi's works offer just such an opportunity for poetic literary analysis, providing insights into contemporary Hispano-Moroccan literature as well as transnational feminisms. Ramazani proposes what he terms a "translocal poetics," which describes "an alternative to understandings of the relation of poetry to place as either rooted or rootless, local or universal," instead considering how place is "imaginatively creolized and translocalized by black British and other migrant and diasporic poets" (xiii). El Hachmi and El Amrani, although writing in different genres, emphasize women's communal poetic voices as moving beyond national and global divides.

While literary critics like Ramazani have worked to address the transnational insights of contemporary poetic theory, particularly in the context of postcolonial literary agendas, feminist theory has also been undergoing profound disruptions. For example, Stéphanie Genz and Benjamin Brabon's *Postfeminism: Cultural Texts and Theories* addresses how early transnational and third-wave feminism failed to consider many of the economic and migratory impacts of globalization on women within transnational contexts. They argue that, particularly after the 2008 economic crisis, it has become apparent that celebratory "new" feminisms in the West (and even some forms of transnational feminism) have failed to address the needs and issues of subaltern women, along with a range of other marginalized communities, who have been deeply affected by globalization and the economic impact of rapidly changing economies and national governmental structures (Genz and Brabon 64). The emphasis on and celebration of individualism, consumerism, and other Western neoliberal ideals does not stand up under the scrutiny of marginalized migrant movements. In addition, critics such as Cristián Ricci have studied the literary response of Moroccan and Amazigh women in works like *¡Hay moros en la costa!: Literatura marroquí fronteriza en castellano y catalán* (2014). Ricci's third chapter, "Repensar el involucramiento de la mujer marroquí en el ámbito poscolonial," addresses how Western intellectuals have often stereotyped Islamic women and the Islamic world, seeing the latter as "desigual, machista y muy cerrado" (95). At the same time, North African feminist Fatima Sadiqi, in *Moroccan Feminist Discourses* (2014), has analyzed how feminist theory, even from Morocco, has often overlooked the divergent and rich cultural forms emanating from Amazigh and other marginalized cultural groups. In contrast, El Hachmi, El Amrani, and others offer a more authentic, nuanced, and

intriguing perspective on Moroccan women's voices and feminist movements. The works studied here resist the stereotypical approaches critiqued by Ricci, the celebration of consumerist individualism critiqued by Genz and Brabon, and the exclusionary feminism challenged by Sadiqi. Instead, they focus on communal women's voices in the context of borders, migration, isolation, and poetic storytelling. Both authors, in different ways, offer a transnational feminist perspective that avoids the pitfalls of certain third-wave transnational feminist stances, in part by focusing on the collective voices of Moroccan women, and in part by emphasizing the oral poetic traditions of Moroccan culture and the unique way such forms communicate transnational feminist perspectives, particularly in the context of global migrations.

Poetic Border Crossings in El Hachmi's *Mare de llet i mel*

El Hachmi's *Mare de llet i mel* falls clearly within the narrative genre; however, the work highlights the communal oral tradition of Amazigh culture, and thus it offers intriguing connections to the poetic forms and the multivalent feminist voices evident in El Amrani's poetic anthology. El Hachmi has noted the important influence of oral story-telling traditions on her own personal development, an influence that is particularly present in the novel.[14] The protagonist, Fatima, is fascinated with language and with women's storytelling in the context of Amazigh culture, where women often use metaphor or poetic language to communicate. For example, the narrator notes that one of Fatima's earliest memories is of her mother describing Fatima's eyes as "two young almonds": "[S]he used to tell her that they were like two young almonds. Your eyes are like almonds, and Fatima was intrigued by the way Thraithmas associated those two terms, 'sweet' and 'eyes,' and she remained thinking for a while and asking herself if body parts could be tasted to discover their flavor" (43).[15] Fatima, despite not having access to a formal education, is deeply invested in language and intrigued by the meaning of words and their poetic significance. She finds figurative language compelling and comments on its strangeness at length. Indeed, she becomes preoccupied with an expression she heard often, the idea that women, particularly mothers, "could explode":

> Fatima n Thraithmas tenia exactament vuit anys lunars quan va ser ben conscient del fet que les mares podien rebentar, esmicolar-se en mil bocins si el patiment e la vida se'ls havia fet insuportable. Abans d'aquell dia ho havia intuït per les expressions que feien servir les dones en parlar amb els seus fills. Em rebentaràs, deien, o m'has rebentat, *aiiaw*, m'has rebentat. (79)[16]

Fatima found the expression "you have made me explode" disturbing and struggled to assimilate how her community of women employed figurative language to express their frustrations and emotions. She notes that she understood the poetic usage, but she found it disquieting: "Fatima understood that in these cases it was a figurative way of speaking," but "she couldn't stop turning the expression over in her mind, she wanted to figure out when it was literal and when it wasn't" (79-80).[17] Despite this poetic and linguistic fascination, her access to language is truncated, not just by her female status, but also by her lack of opportunity to acquire an education. Indeed, El Hachmi's novel addresses some of the gaps in transnational feminist discourse that Genz and Brabon point out in *Postfeminism*, and that Sadiqi addresses in *Moroccan Feminist Discourses*. For example, it highlights the rich Amazigh cultural heritage and notes the importance of gendered oppression as well as the economic, migratory, and educational challenges faced by rural feminist women like Fatima. Certainly, Fatima's struggles with poetic language and feminist agency are deeply linked to her subaltern status, but communities of women are also her path towards agency. When she asked poetic or linguistic questions, the response even from other women was often "that girls did not need to ask so many questions and that there are things that are as they are and you don't have to give it further thought" (43).[18] Fatima found such responses deeply unsatisfying, but the novel addresses how communities of women also supported the young protagonist's curiosity. For example, Fatima loved her grandmother Ixata because she "always answered her questions, and to do it she always told her stories" (43).[19] The novel thus reinforces the power of subaltern poetic language, offering poetic storytelling as an avenue of empowerment for women. It also provides insights about the agency of girls who love to analyze words, i.e., that even when girls may not be allowed to ask deep questions, communities of women can be counted on to empower each other and to tell a deeper truth via poetic language and stories.

Explicit oral poetic traditions are also highlighted at several points in the text, e.g., Fatima's wedding. The women had gathered for the second day of wedding celebrations and "[t]hey began rhyming phrases without content, like for example . . . 'what will I say, what will I say, my tide, where goes the day?'" (213).[20] The practice of storytelling becomes intimately linked with oral poetry, as the women "began to express their own feelings, singing about love and desire with metaphors that only they understood. And they laughed when they surprised each other with unexpected turns of phrase, when a verse came sharpened or rounded" (213).[21] While the text notes that Fatima was too shy to voice her own verses in these gatherings, she composed them instinctively, as a part of her internal world:

> [A] les festes ni cantava ni ballava ni encara menys componia versos, encara que per dins n'hi venien de rodons, unes metàfores precioses que ni ella mateixa no acabava de desxifrar i en canvi li feien aquelles pessigolles al ventre que després se li escampaven avall cap a l'entrecuix i amunt cap a la gola. Si els hagués dit mai, aquells versos, que sap què hauria passat. (342)[22]

Fatima's fascination with poetry and language continues throughout the novel; these poetic reveries are often linked to women's communal experiences and the need to communicate across emotional and physical distances. After years without being able to communicate in writing with her family, illiterate Fatima begs a friend to write for her. However, the experience is extremely frustrating, as Fatima's poetic orality, requiring translation from her oral Tamazight into written Arabic, proves too much for her friend, who is limited by her basic knowledge of Arabic script: "I said to Sumisha, put down that I am sending them a boat full of kisses and hugs; she got fed up and told me: 'I don't know how to write that, I can't translate that'" (261-62).[23] Fatima longs to connect with her family using Amazigh poetic forms, but she is stymied by her own lack of education, by the complexities of translation, and by how her migratory status has created a distance from a community with an oral poetic tradition.

Even the title of the novel emphasizes the importance of this metaphoric tradition, positioning the text as a poetic description of a type of mother: *Mare de llet i mel* [Mother of Milk and Honey]. Fatima clarifies the meaning of this figurative language by describing her relationship with Thraithmas, her mother, and emphasizing her mother's communal and familial focus, her connection with other women, and her poetic capacities:

> [Fatima] repassava mentalment tots els moments del dia que la mare era el lloc arrecerat on tornar, era tebior reconfortant, era mel que lliscava gola avall. . . . Era mel els dies de cada dia quan de bon matí repartia trossos de pa per sucar en oli d'oliva i els deia a cadascuna, agafa, agafa, com si fossin convidades en comptes de ser les seves filles. . . .. La mare també era mel quan es posaven malalts i bullia un ou dur que un cop pelat ensumaven de seguida . . . Era mel quan demanava al pare que dels seus viatges se'n recordés de portar alguna cosa per a les nenes, un braçalet ni que fos de llauna, roba si en trobava a bon preu. . . . *I era mel, Thraithmas, sobretot quan hi havia festes del tipus que fos i conversava alegrement amb la resta de dones, agafava l'alduf i el tocava amb una destresa que Fatima admirava, cantava al ritme que marcava l'instrument, improvisava versos que*

> *Fatima no entenia però li semblaven carregats d'imatges nítides, resplendents*. (Emphasis mine 132-34)[24]

The refrain "she was honey" and the linking of mother and honey at the moment of oral poetic composition demonstrates how metaphoric language forms a crucial part of Fatima's story. Indeed, as we will see below, it connects her experience as an immigrant with the broader community of women, not just her mother or the circles of women that she experiences at home as a child, but also with all women, all mothers, and all those who have lost a sense of home.

A notion that is repeated throughout El Hachmi's *Mare de llet i mel* is that of female banishment or the "exile announced from birth" (173). The work repeatedly posits that being a woman is like being homeless, and that the feeling of being so begins in childhood. While the novel focuses on immigration, it suggests female banishment is less about migrant status than about the precariousness of the gendered situation and the cultural expectations faced by women across borders. In chapter 17, "Ser i no ser de casa" ["To Be and Not To Be from Home"], Fatima receives a marriage proposal that brings with it a possible "abrupt end to her childhood." She then reflects on the prospect of marriage as an exile [*desterrament*], "the beginning of the road towards exile that had been announced since childhood: your home is not your home" (181).[25] This exile is considered literal within traditional Amazigh Moroccan culture; sons are raised in the expectation that they will stay permanently in the family home, while daughters are raised with the expectation that they do not have a place in the home after marriage—marriage requires forming part of a new family in their husband's household. Women in Fatima's orbit were clearly frustrated with that patriarchal model, and she notes that many people began migrating because "it seemed that going abroad was the solution to all problems (272).[26] The novel, however, suggests that migration was not a solution to the possibility of being homeless or to the challenges of being a woman in a patriarchal society. Fatima and her daughter Sara were both sexually molested in their youth—the mother in Morocco, the daughter in Spain. They felt excluded and isolated in each country and now feel alienated from one another. Soon after marrying, young Fatima could not imagine the possibility of migrating, saying that "there is nothing like one's own land"; later, she realized that "she had no land and thinking that she did was more a feeling than a palpable reality" (272).[27]

Indeed, El Hachmi's use of the exile metaphor recalls Ramazani's theory of *"translocal poetics*" since home in her novel is "imaginatively creolized and translocalized" as Ramazani often notes happens with literature, particularly poetic literature, produced by "migrant and diasporic poets" (xiii). By the novel's end, Fatima's idea of exile and homeland has shifted, and the focus has become the

defining of "home" as a mother/daughter relationship. She recalls that, at first, she did not want a daughter when she became pregnant because she felt that it would cause both of them to feel even more exiled: "Before the birth, she did not want a daughter; she thought she would have to give her up, that again she, and now her daughter, would be foreigners" (335).[28] However, once they baby was born, Fatima realized that her daughter was her home: "But upon Sara's birth, she changed that perception completely, for now she was discovering that gender did not matter, that now, finally, she felt that she belonged in a place, and that place was her daughter" (335).[29] Place in the novel has become malleable and linked to relationships. Yet, what is perhaps most powerful, from a transnational feminist standpoint, is how this sense of finding a home in a community of women is poetically voiced. Home, whether a biological or transnational sisterhood, does not erase the conflicts and tensions of culture and perspective, which are everywhere apparent, but here those challenges are voiced from an Amazigh subaltern perspective, and in an oral poetic form.

The contrast in perspective and tone from El Hachmi's other works is marked, and it is perhaps why this novel's reception has been less positive. The narrative voice is no longer the lettered, sarcastic, acculturated and critical second generation feminist, but rather the guarded, uncertain, frustrated first-generation immigrant who, while comfortable with traditional oral poetic forms, literally cannot read the signs of the new culture to determine how to move forward. Spanish critics have not been as receptive to *Mare de llet i mel* as they were to El Hachmi's earlier publications. A review from *El País*, for example, describes the work as a story that "se desliza a menudo la nota plañidera y melodramática, así como la tentadora síntesis moralizante, lo que ya no resulta tan del agrado o interés de esta lectora" (Rodríguez Fischer). However, it is interesting to note that such criticism of El Hachmi's work surfaced when she placed the transnational feminist voice in the personae not of the second generation immigrant, fully educated within a Western cultural framework, but rather in the voice of a first generation illiterate mother struggling to find her way in a culture that she literally cannot read. When, for the first time in her trilogy, El Hachmi attempts to, as Spivak might say, let the subaltern speak, the critical response finds the narrative voice no longer compelling and feminist but rather "whiny," "melodramatic," and "moralizing" (Rodríguez Fischer). In a newspaper interview, El Hachmi offers a much more nuanced perspective on the work, stating that "La novela me ha ayudado a recuperar mi origen. Ha sido libertador entender que el machismo es universal, que en cada lugar se muestra de forma diferente y que no lo he vivido solo por venir del Rif" (Abella n.p.). It is ironic that in an interview in which El Hachmi emphasizes the shared experience of patriarchal culture between East and West, or Morocco and Spain, the title given by the

newspaper to that interview was "Najat El Hachmi: 'El machismo en el Rif forma parte del sistema y la cotidianidad" (Abella n.p.). The quote from El Hachmi is accurate, but the broader context of her comments make it clear that, far from rejecting or denigrating Amazigh culture, El Hachmi was criticizing all forms of machismo and particularly emphasized how narrating from a first-generation immigrant perspective allowed her to see patriarchy and Western feminisms in a new light. She describes "La conciencia global del feminismo" as something that "ha ayudado a entender que el machismo no es solo un problema suyo," but she also emphasizes that after years of growing up in Catalonia and seeing herself and her environment as free from patriarchal domination, she recognizes "que la igualdad social no se ha logrado" (Abella n.p.).

The complex interplay of Fatima being a vulnerable immigrant struggling to escape patriarchal culture while remaining a strong feminist recalls Decker and Baderoon's postulations in "African Feminisms" about the unique insights stemming from migratory movements for more robust feminist critique. Fatima's feminism is perhaps less championed by Western intellectuals, but it arguably remains more authentic because of her need to overcome intersectional levels of oppression, as evidenced throughout the novel. A recurring motif is the description of Fatima choosing gender fluidity within a binary framework that, at times, leads her to say "I stopped being a woman" (128, 145) and, at other times, to say "I became a man suddenly" (128) and "you are a man, you are a man, you are a man" (147).[30] This binary frame for taking on male identity in order to survive would not be voiced within most Western feminist novels, but yet it offers an interesting example of how Fatima's pragmatic and survivalist feminism enters into constant conflict with her daughter Sara's Western views and with their expectations related to gender and feminism. One day, Fatima follows Sara to find out why she is returning home so late after school. She finds Sara talking animatedly with an older male professor, clearly infatuated and willing to get into his car, an action and attitude that Fatima finds incomprehensible. The gulf between feminist perspectives and roles is apparent. Fatima tries to describe the disjuncture to her sisters, and readers can hear the attempt to cross the transnational feminist divide: "You cannot understand it, *here* things are different, young women belong to their mothers until they belong to their husbands, from mother to husband, but *there* the women do what they want, they can earn money and thus do not have to give explanations to anyone" (emphasis mine 326-27).[31] What is perhaps most interesting about how El Hachmi frames this conversation is not so much that she highlights, via her protagonist, the generational disconnect among immigrants, or the transnational disconnect between different types of feminists; rather, what is most intriguing is that for the first time in her works, El Hachmi voices this disconnect from a subaltern's perspective and

using the "*vosaltres*" [you women] form, emphasizing the non-Western location of feminist perspectives. Thus, when she says "*aquí*," "*here* things are different," the narrator is not referring to Spain or Catalunya, but rather to the Riff, and when she ends with *there*, "*allà*," the distant, foreign land is Spain (emphasis mine 326). "Here" is north Africa, and "there" is the Western world, and that shift in voice and perspective, which the critics find melodramatic and moralizing, is perhaps simply off-putting because it comes from the subaltern, or from the subaltern's daughter. Spivak asked "can the subaltern speak?" and pointed out how historical, economic, aesthetic and political forces have made figures like Fatima vulnerable and left on the periphery, often without agency or voice. Fatima cannot write, but communal poetic storytelling allows a second-generation feminist daughter to pen an aesthetically convincing version of Fatima's voice. In the novel, it is not just El Hachmi, Fatima, and Sara who speak, but also the community of women, the sisters, and the subalterns struggling to address patriarchal culture via many forms of diverse and transnational contemporary feminism.

Communal Feminist Voices and Transnational Resonance in El Amrani's *Poesía femenina y sociedad*

El Amrani also addresses the communal nature of transnational feminism by bringing together diverse women's voices across generations within her anthology aimed at disseminating Moroccan women's poetry for Spanish-speakers. Like El Hachmi, who uses the repeated "*vosaltres*" [you women] of direct address to emphasize the importance of collective identities, El Amrani brings together works by eight Moroccan female poets, creating a similar chorus of diverse perspectives that are held together within a larger transnational narrative. The narrative aspect begins in El Amrani's introduction to the text, "La restauración social a manos de la mujer marroquí" (13). In her opening, El Amrani emphasizes three important aspects of the collection: the diversity of Moroccan culture, the transnational and communal commitments of her editorial approach, and a thematic focus on customs, freedoms, and feelings (13-17). Regarding the first, El Amrani points out that "La sociedad marroquí se caracteriza por la variedad étnica en la cual intentan convivir varias costumbres: las árabes, las bereberes y las africanas" (13).[32] She thus opens her anthology by acknowledging the transnational and translocal space that the collection covers. Like with El Hachmi's work, which crosses Amazigh, Moroccan, Catalan and Spanish territories, El Amrani seeks to highlight this challenge from the outset. The second aspect is that, while she introduces a wide range of female poets, the youngest generation offers poetry that is translingual and transnational, much like El Hachmi's work. Amrani emphasizes the connection between Moroccan feminist poetry and Europe: "No todas estas poetisas escriben en

árabe, sino que hay algunas que lo hacen directamente en francés o en español. Esto nos indica que esta nueva generación está abriendo los horizontes de la poesía femenina marroquí en otros continentes, pero sobre todo en Europa" (15). It is interesting to note that El Amrani describes the transnational focus of the collection using a communal plural form, recalling El Hachmi's choice of the terms "sisters" and "you women" throughout her novel. Here El Amrani, the only author listed in the "Presentación" and the sole editor of the volume, nonetheless uses language that implies that the work has been completed in a communal sense, incorporating "we," "us," and "our" to emphasize the collaborative nature of the anthology: "aunque no *hemos* podido incluir a todas . . . Sin embargo, *señalaremos* que . . . Todavía *encontramos* . . ., Con esto *queremos* decir que" (16; emphasis added). The third aspect denotes how El Amrani categorizes the themes and foci common to these poems. This thematic emphasis is "para expresar su visión y su representación de las costumbres, la libertad y los sentimientos" (17). El Amrani's emphasis recalls many of the key themes and insights in El Hachmi's work, namely the detailed narrative descriptions offered of Amazigh cultural traditions, the struggle for freedom or to find a home of one's own, and the many emotional challenges of women's experiences as daughters, wives, and mothers.

El Amrani's own contribution to the collection includes five poems, all appearing in her (2010) individual collection, *Tormenta de especias*. Two of the five poems originally appeared in a section of her individual anthology, "Entre olas del mediterráneo bailan las esperanzas. 'En memoria de las víctimas de los sueños del estrecho'" (*Tormenta* 48). One of those poems, "Con los límites a cuestas," addresses immigrant dreams and offers contrasting metaphors and images charting the distance between migrants' perceived opportunities and the exclusions visibly apparent:

"Con los límites a cuestas"
Una patria de cartón.
Unas fronteras de hierro.
Un color oscuro que tiñe
el olor a brisa quemada.
Unos ojos de hielo fundido,
un suelo regado con sequía,
el vientre vacío y la esperanza
como una eterna vela
que no se acaba, que no se apaga,
cruza un mar de arena

para encontrarse
otra vez con la miseria,
con la patria anhelada,
con la frontera detestada.
Sueños de un flamenco africano
con la señal en la frente
de prohibido el paso
para una nueva vida,
para una dignidad ignorada. (59)

The poem begins with the metaphor of a cardboard nation, "Una patria de cartón," and the imagery focuses on severe, daunting sights: "Unas fronteras de hierro," "brisa quemada," "hielo fundido," and "sequía." Personification is used to show the suffering at the nation's boundaries. The eyes are of "melted ice," the stomach "empty" and the only hopeful image in the poem a misleading and never-ending mirage: "la esperanza / como una eterna vela / que no se acaba, que no se apaga" (59). The longed-for country is in fact another encounter with "dire poverty," which, rather than offering the idealized "Sueños de un flamenco africano" instead offers "la señal en la frente / de prohibido el paso / para una nueva vida / para una dignidad ignorada" (59). The use of "African flamenco" signals a connection between Africa and a part of Spanish culture that stresses Spain's hybridity and migratory history. Yet the title of the poem, "Con los límites a cuestas," focuses on the border issues referenced throughout the text via "fronteras de hierro" and "la frontera detestada," and on the weight of such limits, even when the border is already "a cuestas" or behind the one who dreams. In this sense, El Amrani's poem highlights not only the process of border crossing with its possibility of death, but also the loss of hope and human dignity. Such loss is reminiscent of Fatima's early life as a newly arrived immigrant in El Hachmi's novel. El Amrani contrasts the cold, callous disregard of the nation in "Con los límites a cuestas" with the sorrow of the natural world in the poem that follows, "Apariciones," in which the poetic narrator asks the somber tree: "Árbol sombrío: / ¿Qué sombras haces con tu cuerpo? / ¿Por quién lloras esperando, / limones de triste canto?" (60). The title of the poem, "Appearances," hints at what the dismal scene beneath the tree might hold, "el cuerpo de la tarde / que se va desmayando" (60). The "limones de triste canto" recall Lorca's poetry and the rich Spanish poetic tradition, but they are also objects from the natural world that recall the realities of material need and are left "en el manto de la noche / y en la sal marinera / que bordea la montaña" (60). The natural world will not ignore the human-held puñal traicionero because "ya vendrá la brisa

/ a oxidar tu rostro / y a envejecer tus fuerzas" (60). Personification of the natural world and resisting boundaries and norms all continue in El Amrani's other contributions, but these choices become more focused on transnational feminism by blending Moroccan and Spanish cultural forms and also by dealing with gender issues.

Other poets in El Amrani's collection treat immigrant issues along with communal women's voices. For example, Fatiha Morchid's "Allí donde las casualidades son citas" employs the second person plural to describe two wounded figures seeking refuge:

> Dos heridos fuimos
> y cautelosos de una noche
> que tanto hemos esperado
> . . . . . .
> y nos hemos refugiado
> en las sombras de los instantes
> precediendo nuestros sueños. (38-41)

The title of the poem uses the term *allí* [over there] to describe the poetic speakers' movement. The same term was seen earlier in El Hachmi's novel, used to highlight the direction of the transnational Moroccan emigrant perspective. Here, the sense of communal support in the vulnerable moment of border crossing is strengthened through the second person plural, with the two wounded subjects leaving together (fuimos), having waited together (hemos esperado), and having found refuge together (hemos refugiado). Another poet included in the collection, Fátima Zahra Bennis, offers an intriguing look at themes of refuge, language, rebellion, and new life. Her poem "Delirio" begins by taking solace in the hidden language of separation:

> Me refugio
> en lo oculto de la separación.
> . . . . . .
> Fumaré el olor del mar,
> embalsaré las hierbas de primavera,
> haré del crujido de árboles, mi idioma,
> intentaré existir.
> Murmullos
> Aquí y ahí
> señalan que soy rebelde de la noche,

adicta a la fuga.

. . . . . .

¡Qué pena!...
Estoy sufriendo con mis deseos,
me estoy envolviendo con mis soplos,
errando por los desiertos.
En mi vagabundeo reside mi quemadura,
y en mi quemadura reside mi perecimiento, y en mi
perecimiento reside la anunciación de otra vida. (54-55)

The speaker here announces a vulnerable isolation ("me refugio" and "Estoy sufriendo") but does not remain passive. She offers poetic language in the simple future tense to stress her determination ("fumaré el olor del mar," "embalsaré las hierbas," "haré del crujido de árboles, mi idioma," and "intentaré existir"). References to the sea, to the struggle for existence, and to an oral poetic language all recall themes of transnational feminism already discussed. Once again, readers find "Aquí y ahí," marking the "murmurs" that the speaker encounters, far and near, calling her a "rebel" and "addicted to flight" (54). Certainly, the speaker's "errando por los desiertos" is related to the question of home as seen earlier in El Hachmi's text. The speaker repeats the verb "reside" near the end of the poem to describe a new kind of existence not limited to a rooted or rootless place, much like what Ramazani described as a translocal, diasporic sense of place: "En mi vagabundeo reside mi quemadura, / y en mi quemadura reside mi perecimiento, y en mi / perecimiento reside la anunciación de otra vida" (55). The residing place here is in fact a sense of wandering or "vagabundeo" that leads to a new life.

The focus on women's issues and transatlantic feminism continues to be evident in Fátima Zahra Bennis's other poems. For example, in "Mujer de fantasía," the title accentuates the speaker's struggle for feminist actualization and links to the erasure of heritage ("[¿]borraron conmigo la espina de la herencia?"). The poetic narrator talks about turning herself into the nakedness of metaphor ("convirtiéndome / en desnudez de metáfora" (51) and ends by again affirming active, future focused and poetic existence:

¿Quién me presta
un sentido con el que
trague mi existencia?
Yo quien maceré mis deseos
en mis palabras

y me dormí
cerca de la luna.
De sus pliegues
creé mis pasiones más bellas. (52)

The speaker asks who will lend her the meaning necessary to swallow her existence, and then responds that she will soften her desires through her poetry (maceré mis deseos / en mis palabras). The focus on senses, desires, and feelings, which was noted as an important concern for El Amrani, is evident throughout the work and again appears in El Amrani's last poem, in which the emphasis on crossing transnational feminist boundaries is more explicit. In "Sentidos dorados," El Amrani highlights how legends and stories, along with poetic form, come together in the most intimate feminist spaces:

"Sentidos dorados"
Ese amor al que entrego
mis dulces lamentos.
Al que desnudo la razón.
Al que dedico las leyendas
de Cleopatra y el César,
las de Kais y Laila.
Por el que mis lágrimas
corren como el aliento
de una joven encantada,
que en las noches
mancha su almohada
de carmín.

Ese amor al que escribo.
Al que llamo por las mañanas
para que despierte mi tez,
en el silencio del ensueño.
El que me enseña
a amarle y a conquistarle
con los cinco sentidos
que brotan del corazón.

Ese amor al que espero con ansia
que venga, como vienen
los días soleados de verano,
a iluminar el verdor de mis entrañas. (63)

The poem begins with the refrain "Ese amor al que …" and each stanza offers a new perspective on the kind of love being portrayed, although the syntax leaves the reader in suspense, without any final word or defining statement, because there is no verb clause to complete the phrase detailing what "that love" exactly means or does. The poetic narrator barely describes the love itself and how she interacts with its expectations: "Ese amor al que entrego / mis dulces lamentos," "Ese amor al que escribo," "Ese amor al que espero con ansia, que venga" (63).

This longed-for, written-about, and sacrificed-for love is also linked to transnational legends that cross cultural and linguistic boundaries. The poetic speaker describes "that love" as the focus "al que dedico las leyendas de Cleopatra y el César, / las de Kais y Laila" (63). The references to classic love stories from Western and Eastern traditions are linked by the poetic speaker, who dedicates her "sweet lament" and her "tears / [that] run like breath" equally to both (63). Yet, she does not simply surrender to this love via her reading and dedication to ancient transcultural legends, but instead also writes about love, "Ese amor al que escribo," calling out to it in the morning, in the silence of her dreamlike state. "Ese amor" is a literary love, distinct from that of the beloved or the lover, because it is the written love that teaches the speaker to "conquer her lover" and to use her "five senses."

The story of Cleopatra and César and that of Kais and Laila are classic tales, but not happy ones, and the darkness of those transcultural references abound in the poem, with the speaker describing "lamentos," "lágrimas," "mancha," and "ansia" (63). The poem, however, is also very sensual, emphasizing how stories can incite sexual pleasure and make sexual relations more fulfilling via the dreamed of sensuality and romanticism of literary texts, as the kind of love found in "El que me enseña / a amarle y a conquistarle / con los cinco sentidos / que brotan del corazón" (63). The sensuality of the poem is evident throughout and recalls how El Hachmi also integrated women's sexual experience, positive and negative, into her narrative. Terms like "entrego" [I hand over], "desnudo" [naked], "noches" [nights], "mancha" [stain], "conquistarle" [to seduce him], "que venga" [to come along], and "el verdor de mis entrañas" [the youth of my inner parts] all signal sexual openness in the poetic speaker. However, the contrasting images in the poem, ardor and sensuality mixed with tears and longing, recall the realities of sexual relations beyond romantic tales, more like

what El Hachmi offers in her novel. El Amrani's poem makes reference to "una joven encantada" like young Fatima on her nuptial bed, but the tears that stream "en las noches" in this poem also imply a young virgin who "mancha su almohada de carmín," thereby alluding to the forlorn tears of a young girl longing for romance but also, through the red "stain," recalling the incredible weight placed on the virginity tradition in Fatima's tale. The sought-after love not having yet arrived, the poem's form also alludes to the transnational nature of this longing. The opening stanza includes twelve lines, followed by eight in the second stanza and four in the final. The rhythmic pattern varies, with mainly seven syllable lines. The poem appears in El Amrani's larger collection, under the section "Love that is born of rhyme," and yet rhyme is not dominant. Here, the poem's title, "Gilded Senses," is not altogether the literary romance that ends badly, but rather the essence of the moment, of the emotion, and of a possibility contained in the tales and in the speaker's own writing. That kind of love may not come, but it is invited and awaited anxiously, hopefully, as a literary adventure.

Conclusion

The question of poetic storytelling, or the power of words and figurative language to create new possibilities and open spaces for women in transnational contexts, is evident throughout El Amrani's and El Hachmi's texts. *Mare de llet i de mel* and *Poesía femenina y sociedad* offer intriguing feminist voices and transnational perspectives that decenter Western individualism and rigid identities via communal voices and poetic form. The insights stemming from complex cultural movements and voices linked to Amazigh, Moroccan, Catalan, and Spanish women writers provide important contributions to contemporary conversations about Peninsular feminisms and transnational Hispano-Moroccan literature. However, the debate about the quality and value of this literature continues to permeate literary circles. For example, in Miguel Moreta-Lara's 2018 edited collection, *La imagen del moro y otros ensayos*, he begins the third chapter by asking "Existe la literatura marroquí en español?" and while he highlights the important contributions of authors like Ahmed Daoudi, Ahmed Ararou, Abderrahmán El Fathi and Laarbi El Harti, he concludes that "¿nos conformamos con un novelista, dos poetas y tres cuentistas? ¿Media docena de creadores? ¿Con solo esos bueyes se podrá tirar del carro del hispanismo literario marroquí? Ni siquiera podemos estar seguros de hablar de grupo o generación" (184). Moreta-Lara is clearly skeptical about the field. Other voices, however, remain steady in affirming the contributions and value of this important part of hispanophone literary production.

As early as 1996, Juan Goytisolo was lamenting the lack of literary study for Hispano-Moroccan authors in "Nadie parece preocuparse de la labor creadora de los marroquíes

hispanohablantes" (286-89). And indeed, particularly in the 1990s, scant attention was being paid to this area of research, and the existing studies focused almost exclusively on male authors. Chakor and Macias's *Literatura marroquí en lengua castellana* (1996), in which Goytisolo published his essay, included one female author. Manuel Gahete's study, published more than a decade later, *Calle del agua: Antología de la literatura hispanomagrebí* (2008), included no female authors in the anthologized texts; the only woman writer included in the extraneous analysis was Sara Alaoui, whose works Ricci criticizes at some length as being troubling and destructive from a transnational feminist perspective.[33]

In contrast, Ricci's *Literatura periférica en castellano y catalán: el caso marroquí* (2010) and *¡Hay moros en la costa!: Literatura marroquí fronteriza en castellano y catalán* (2014) cast this literature under a different light, as does Ana Rueda and Sandra Martín's *El retorno/el reencuentro: La inmigración en la literatura hispano-marroquí* (2010). These three studies are some of the most insightful and comprehensive recent contributions to the field and have also been pivotal in increasing awareness of this important literary current. Sanae Chairi notes in her article "La imagen de la mujer en las dos literaturas, marroquí y española" that, in the context of Hispano-Moroccan relations, the "arquetipo más difundido es el de un harén poblado de sensuales odaliscas, de esclavas cantoras que, vigiladas por eunucos, dedican todo su tiempo a la espera de la llamada de su señor para deleitarle artística y sexualmente hablando" (144). Such Orientalist and stereotypical representations are sadly still commonplace. Thus, the voices of contemporary transnational feminists, particularly those of migrants and of diverse cultural producers whose innovative aesthetics cross ideological and national boundaries, deserve further attention. In that context, Najat El Hachmi's *Mare de llet i mel* (2018) and Lamiae El Amrani's *Poesía femenina y sociedad* (2010) bring exciting new points of departure for a transnational literature and a feminist conversation that is still struggling, but that will continue to fight aesthetically, to destabilize and thereby affirm a sense of the Global Hispanophone home.

Notes

1 See for example Tripp's "The Evolution of Transnational Feminisms: Consensus, Conflict, and New Dynamics," Sadiqi's *Moroccan Feminist Discourses* (2014), Medina Martín's "Feminismos periféricos, feminismos-otros: una genealogía feminista decolonial por reivindicar" (2013), Genz and Brabon's *Postfeminism: Cultural Texts and Theories* (2018), Bermúdez and Johnson's *A New History of Iberian Feminisms* (2018), Contreras Herández & Trujillo Cristoffanini's "Desde las epistemologías feministas a los feminismos decoloniales: Aportes a los estudios sobre migraciones," Adlbi Sibai's *La cárcel del feminismo: Hacia un pensamiento islámico decolonial* (2016), Talbayev's "Gender and Identity in North Africa: Postcolonialism and Feminism in Maghrebi Women's Literature" (2012) and Expósito's "¿Qué es eso de la interseccionalidad? Aproximación al tratamiento de la diversidad desde la perspectiva de género en España" (2013).
2 *Mother of Milk and Honey*. All translations from Catalan to English are mine.
3 El Hachmi has published several other works, including her autobiographical *Jo també sóc catalana*, as well as two other novels that form a trilogy with the work studied here: *L'últim patriarca* (2009) and *La filla estrangera* (2017). For detailed analyses of El Hachmi's early award-winning publications, see for example Everly's "Immigrant Identity and Intertextuality in *L'ultim patriarca* by Najat El Hachmi" (2011), Folkart's "Scoring the National Hym(e)n: Sexuality, Immigration, and Identity in Najat El Hachmi's *L'últim patriarca*" (2014) Ricci's "*L'últim patriarca* de Najat El Hachmi y el forjamiento de la identidad amazigh-catalana" (2010), Ross's "Left Behind: Cultural Assimilation and the Mother/Daughter Relationship in Najat El Hachmi's *La hija extranjera* (2015) and Codina, "The Work of Najat El Hachmi in the Context of Spanish-Moroccan Literature" (2017).
4 An exception to El Hachmi's focus on migration in her novels includes *La Caçadora De Cossos*, which offers an erotic approach to women's sexual agency and does not provide the same in-depth focus on immigrant issues or perspectives, although the work does include sexual liaisons with immigrant characters. Popular press articles and interviews focused on El Hachmi's earlier novels in the trilogy abound, and even address transnational issues, such as Darici's "Literatura transnacional en Cataluña: *La filla estrangera* de Najat El Hachmi" (2017).
5 *The Antiquity of a Woman*.
6 *The Antiquity of a Mother*.
7 sisters
8 *Green Sea without Wings*.
9 *A Priceless Sigh from an Unremarkable Night*.
10 *Spears from the Shore of the Soul*.
11 *Spice Storm*.
12 *Desert Veins*.
13 Ricci describes Al Amrani's work in his study of Moroccan Spanish literature as "otro ejemplo de renovación generacional y afirmación de que la literatura marroquí en castellano tiene un futuro promisorio" (*¡Hay moros en la costa!* 110). Ricci also notes the feminist and non-orientalist approaches of El Amrani's work, despite the title of her collection *Tormenta de especias*: "A pesar de la posible lectura exotista del título del poemario, la lírica de El Amrani no denota visos de (auto)orientalismo alguno. . . ., la poesía de la tetuaní representa la de una voz femenina y feminista que se abre camino propio, con la agudeza de crear en sus versos su propia figura" (110). Other authors have also praised El Amrani's contributions, including Lomas López in "Las literaturas hispánicas del Magreb. Del contexto francófono a la realidad hispano-catalana" and Montaner Frutos in "Crítica."
14 For more on this influence, see the following quote from one of El Hachmi's early interviews: "'Hasta los ocho años, no supe lo que era un televisor. Todo lo que era ficción, lo que pertenecía al mundo de la imaginación, lo recibí entonces a través de los cuentos que me narraba mi madre. La fantasía empezaba cuando se apagaba la luz,' . . .. 'Fue en Cataluña donde aprendí a escribir y leer. Leía todo lo que se me ponía por delante. Ya no había espacio para esa tradición oral, porque las formas de convivir no son las mismas,' . . ." (Punzando Sierra).
15 "l'hi deia, que eren dos ametllons. Dolços són els teus ulls com l'ametlla, i a Fatima li cridava l'atenció l'associació d'aquells dos termes que feia servir Thraithmas, 'dolços' i 'ulls', i s'aturaba una bona estona a pensar-hi, preguntant-se si les parts del cos es podien tastar per descobrir-ne el gust" (43).
16 "Fatima n Thraithmas was exactly eight years old when she became fully aware that mothers could explode, break into a thousand pieces if their suffering became unbearable. Before then, she had intuited it by the expressions that the women used while talking with their children. You are making me explode, they would say, or you have made me blow up, *aiiaw,* you have made me explode" (79).
17 "Ja comprenia Fatima que en aquests casos era una forma figurada de parlar" pero "no parava de donar voltes a l'expressió, volia esbrinar cuan era literal i quan no" (79-80).
18 "que les nenes no havien de demanar tant i que hi ha coses que són com són i no cal donar-hi més voltes" (43).
19 "sempre li contestava les preguntes, l'àvia Ixata, i que per fer-ho sempre explicava històries" (43).
20 "Començaven rimant frases sense contingut com ara . . . 'què diré, què diré mareta meva, per on començaré?'" (213).

[21] "passaven a expressar els seus propis sentiments, cantant sobre l'amor i el desig amb metàfores que només elles entenien. I reien quan se sorprenien les unes a les altres amb girs inesperats, quan els havia sortit un vers esmolat o rodó" (213).
[22] "At parties, she didn't sing or dance, much less compose verses, although inside they came to her complete, precious metaphors that even she herself could not decipher, but that caused those butterflies in her stomach that, afterwards, went downwards to her groin and then upwards to her throat. If she could have spoken those verses once, who knows what might have happened" (342).
[23] "Jo li deia a Sumisha, posa que us envio un vaixell ple de petons i abraçades i ella s'atabalava, em deia això no sé com escriure-ho, no ho puc traduir" (261-262).
[24] "[Fatima] recalled mentally all the times of the day that her mother was the refuge to which she returned, a comforting warmth, honey that slides down your throat. . . . She was honey every day, when, in the early morning, she shared pieces of bread to dip in olive oil and she would tell everyone, 'take this, take this,' as if they were guests instead of daughters. . . . Her mother was also honey when they got sick and she would make hard boiled eggs to create the healthy steam that they would breath in as they peeled them. . . . She was honey when she would ask their father to remember, when he traveled, to bring something back for them, a bracelet, even a tin one, or clothing, if he found something for a good price. . . . *And Thraithmas was honey, above all, when there were parties of any kind and she would talk happily with the rest of the women, take up the tambourine and play it with a dexterity that Fatima admired, singing to the rhythm of the instrument, improvising verses that Fatima did not understand, but that seemed to her loaded with crisp, dazzling images*" (Emphasis mine 132-34).
[25] "l'inici del camí cap al desterrament que li havien anunciat des de petita: casa teva no és casa teva" (181).
[26] "semblava que l'estranger era la solució a tots els problemes" (272).
[27] "Com la pròpia terra no hi ha res" . . . "concretament, no en tenia cap de terra, que era més un sentiment que no pas una realitat palpable" (272).
[28] "Abans del part no volia una nena, pensava en quan l'hauria de onar, ser de nou unes estrangeres, ara totes dues" (335).
[29] "Però en néixer Sara la percepció li havia canviat del tot, ara descobria que li era igual el sexe, que ara per fi se sentia d'algun lloc i aquest lloc era la seva filla" (335).
[30] "vaig deixar de ser dona"; "Em vaig fer home de cop i volta"; "ets un home, ets un home, ets un home" (147).
[31] "Vosaltres no ho podeu entendre, aquí les coses són diferents, les noies són de les mares fins que són del marit, de la mare del marit, però allà les dones fan el que volen, poden guanyar diners amb el que treballen i llavors no han de donar explicacions a ningú" (326-27).
[32] Still, it is noteworthy that El Amrani uses Western terms and simplified categories in her discussion of this cultural complexity. As Ricci notes, "*Amazigh* is the correct term for 'Berber,' the indigenous people of northern Morocco and Algeria, whose main language is Tamazight, not Arabic" and who El Amrani refers to here as "Bereberes" (Ricci "Abderrahman El Fathi" 242).
[33] Ricci describes the troubling stereotypes found in Alaoui's representation of Moroccan culture in his 2014 *¡Hay moros en la costa!*, and thus it should give pause when Alaoui is the sole female author included in a compilation of Hispano-Moroccan literature: "Al lector profano el contenido de sus textos podrían manifestársele de un maniqueísmo *in extremis* que, en lugar de hacerle un favor a las letras marroquíes, le produciría perjuicios más que beneficios. Digamos, quizás todos los 'tópicos' habidos y por haber sobre la figura del hombre musulmán violento, descortés, engañador, traicionero y mentiroso los puede hallar en la narrativa de Sara Alaui. Con respecto a la representación de la mujer, las encontrará el lector violadas, vituperadas y golpeadas por los hombres marroquíes, cuando no juzgadas y calificadas mediante parámetros relacionados con su honestidad, sumisión u obediencia al padre, hermano, novio o esposo" (100-101).

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