AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

QUEERING THE POSTCOLONIAL: GENDER AND MASCULINITY IN CHRIS ABANI'S *GRACELAND* AND TAHAR BEN JELLOUN'S *LEAVING TANGIER*

by
LUNA SAMIR EL RISHMANI

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
to the Department of English
of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences
at the American University of Beirut

Beirut, Lebanon
July 2014

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

QUEERING THE POSTCOLONIAL: GENDER AND

MASCULINITY IN CHRIS ABANI'S *GRACELAND* AND

TAHAR BEN JELLOUN'S *LEAVING TANGIER*

by
LUNA SAMIR EL RISHMANI

Approved by:

_____

Dr. Lisa Arnold, Assistant Professor   Advisor
Department of English

_____

Dr. Syrine C. Hout, Professor   Member of Committee
Department of English

_____

Dr. Alexander Hartwiger, Assistant Professor   Member of Committee
Department of English

Date of thesis defense: June 30, 2014

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

THESIS RELEASE FORM

Student Name: ___El Rishmani_____Luna_____Samir_
                         Last   First   Middle

◯ Master's Thesis   ◯ Master's Project   ◯ Doctoral Dissertation

☐   I authorize the American University of Beirut to: (a) reproduce hard or electronic copies of my thesis, dissertation, or project; (b) include such copies in the archives and digital repositories of the University; and (c) make freely available such copies to third parties for research or educational purposes.

☐   I authorize the American University of Beirut, **three years after the date of submitting my thesis, dissertation, or project,** to: (a) reproduce hard or electronic copies of it; (b) include such copies in the archives and digital repositories of the University; and (c) make freely available such copies to third parties for research or educational purposes.

_____

Signature   Date

This form is signed when submitting the thesis, dissertation, or project to the University Libraries

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Luna Samir El Rishmani   for Master of Arts
                                        Major: English Literature

Title: Queering the Postcolonial: Gender and Masculinity in Chris Abani's *Graceland*
         and Tahar Ben Jelloun's *Leaving Tangier*

My research explores the concepts of gender and masculinity in the novels *Graceland* by Chris Abani and *Leaving Tangier* by Tahar Ben Jelloun. Set in postcolonial states, the novels address the question of gender and the predicament of masculinity in relation to several contexts, including the role of the nation-state, the role of local culture, and the influence of Western epistemologies. Moreover, while portraying colonialism's continuing legacy, the novels move beyond the past to confront a present characterized by an increasingly globalized world which underrates the role of the nation and blurs border lines.

This thesis aims to highlight the approaches set forth by these novels regarding gender norms, patriarchy and queerness, and explore the postcolonial subject as portrayed in the novels in relation to the aforementioned issues. This thesis also aims to create a dialogue between the two novels that extracts the similarity of their concerns despite the difference in their geopolitical settings, thereby illuminating possible new directions that postcolonial literature is taking.

My thesis is divided into four chapters. The first is an introductory chapter that defines the 'postcolonial' and offers an overview of my project. Chapters Two and Three study Chris Abani's *Graceland* and Tahar Ben Jelloun's *Leaving Tangier* respectively and provide in-depth analysis of the novels. Finally, the last chapter attempts to map out the 'generational' location of the novels and examine the novels' standpoints on several contemporary concepts surrounding postcolonial literature today.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND FRAMEWORK

We all write and speak from a particular place and time, from a history and a culture which is specific. What we say is always 'in context', *positioned*. . . it is worth remembering that all discourse is 'placed', and the heart has its reasons.

--- Stuart Hall

In a recent article published in *The Guardian*, Europe voices its concerns as the 'boat season' gets under way. The 'boat season' is not a fun sea ride, nor a touristic season in which people visit Europe for leisure. It is the season when thousands of migrants flee their countries and attempt to reach Europe by overcrowded boats that put their lives at risk. The UN's refugee agency, UNHCR, is now referring to this phenomenon as a "colossal humanitarian catastrophe" as hundreds of people are losing their lives and are only reaching land as dead bodies (Davies). Indeed, the massive scope of the problem is not difficult to discern. One has only to scan through newspapers and journals in order to find tons of news reporting the deaths of border-crossing migrants. Whether crossing the seas by boat or the Sahara on foot, thousands of migrants are leaving their home countries and desperately hoping for better lives elsewhere, only to be confronted by overwhelming challenges or by death. But what is it about the home country that makes life unlivable? And what are the available options? These are questions that some of today's literature is trying to answer or at least illuminate as the real stories of newspapers are reflected in the space of fiction.

Originating from different parts of the globe, what is described as 'postcolonial literature' speaks to the world about the struggles of postcolonial nations and the challenges that their peoples face. It is specific because it is tied to the nation, its history and struggles. It is 'positioned' in history and culture as Stuart Hall contends, and yet it belongs to the world by attempting to find a common space for the postcolonial subject.

In this thesis, I discuss two novels which can be categorized as 'postcolonial literature'; Chris Abani's *Graceland* (2004) and Tahar Ben Jelloun's *Leaving Tangier* (2009). The novels narrate postcolonial perspectives from two different geographical locations; Nigeria and Morocco. And both are written by authors who are currently settled in Western countries. *Graceland* is Chris Abani's second novel and one of four to date. The author was born in 1966 to an English mother and an Igbo father and grew up in the village of Afikpo in Nigeria, which is one of the settings of *Graceland*. He earned his BA in Nigeria and then left to pursue higher education in the UK and the US where he still resides. Abani writes in English and his works have been translated into several languages. After *Graceland*, Abani wrote two other novels and two novellas. Like *Graceland*, the novella *Becoming Abigail* (2006), is a coming-of-age story. However, it is set in London and narrates the difficult journey of a Nigerian immigrant girl. (chrisabani.com).

While Abani is considered to be part of a new generation of writers, the same cannot be said about Tahar Ben Jelloun. Ben Jelloun was born in 1944 in the city of Fes, Morocco where he grew up before moving to the city of Tangier and later to Rabat for education. In 1971, Ben Jelloun immigrated to France to attend the Université de Paris and settle in Paris where he still resides. During his long career, Ben Jelloun produced an

extensive body of literature comprised of various genres including poetry, drama and nonfiction.*Leaving Tangier*, originally published in French in 2006 under the title *Partir*, meaning 'leaving', is Ben Jelloun's fourteenth novel (taharbenjelloun.org).

Despite the age difference between the authors and the difference between the settings of their novels, I have chosen to put *Graceland* and *Leaving Tangier* in conversation in order to highlight similar issues they address. Both novels tackle the persisting effect of a colonial past primarily through the dysfunctional relationship between the nation-state and its citizens, and through the continuing racial prejudices that outlived colonialism. Whereas the colonial past is weaved into the novel's structure in *Graceland*, in *Leaving Tangier* it is intertwined with the relationship between Morocco and Spain. The novels question the definition of nation, a term whose understanding is increasingly becoming contested, and which many perceive as an imposed Western ideology. In "Nationalism and Postcolonial Studies," Laura Chrisman states that "[t]he concept and political practice of nation-states are . . . seen as 'Western' inventions that colonialism has imposed on colonized peoples" (184). In this case, the decolonized nation-state becomes an emulation of the Western nation-state and "dooms itself to conceptual self-contradiction" by replicating its colonizers' domineering strategies while simultaneously upholding its belief in a pre-colonial cultural identity (Chrisman 184). The novels expose the controlling power and the brutality that the postcolonial states exercise over their citizens as the protagonists of both novels are physically and sexually abused by state officials who get away with their acts. They, thus, question the authenticity of the concept of nationalism and the effectiveness of the nation-state as a form of governing.

While the novels emphasize the role of the nation-state as a dominant power which exercises control over identity construction and molding, they also confront a present characterized by transnationality and globalization, which de-emphasizes the role of the nation. The rise of a global community may paradoxically lead to the strengthening of local cultures and traditional views which perceive globalization as a threat to their uniqueness. Moreover, the supposed decline of the nation-state vis-à-vis the global community may be channeled internally towards the nation and expressed through increased violence and oppression. In this way, the nation and local culture, examined against the backdrop of colonial history and globalization, simultaneously contribute to the formation and containment as well as suppression and displacement of subjects.

In *Graceland* and *Leaving Tangier*, I argue, this process is essentially gendered. Bringing both novels into conversation highlights the similar treatment by both authors of gender and masculinity, which emerge as major underlying factors in the interpretation of the postcolonial condition in the twenty-first century. Drawing on gender, queer and masculinity studies, I attempt to show how gender identity and specifically masculine identity in postcolonial settings is highly influenced by the colonial experience and the continually marginalizing contemporary global world. In this introductory chapter, I give a brief overview of postcolonial studies and literature. Second, I provide an overview of my project by introducing the main theories and ideas that, along with the discussion on postcolonialism, form the backbone of my analysis throughout this paper.

A Brief Overview of the Postcolonial

Fifty years ago, 'postcolonial' only indicated a time and place; a time after decolonization in a formerly colonized place. Neil Lazarus states that to have identified a writer as 'postcolonial' "would have been, in a sense, merely to set the scene, historically speaking, for the analysis to come" (3). Lazarus gives the example of Chinua Achebe who "was described variously as an Igbo writer, a Nigerian writer, an African writer, a Commonwealth writer, a third-world writer, but seldom if ever as a 'postcolonial' one" (3). Today, however, 'postcolonial' is laden with political and cultural ideologies. It carries with it the histories of certain nations and informs their present conditions in today's global world. In addition to its geographic and temporal connotations, 'postcolonial' implies that colonization has changed the world so drastically and impacted it so dramatically that its legacy still informs the power balance of today's global politics and is the main reason for some nations' contemporary crises and instabilities. Not all formerly colonized nations, however, can be considered 'postcolonial'. In "Post-colonial Critical Theories," Stephen Slemon contends that while the 'post-colonial condition' "describes a global situation (which may or may not be distributed equally across different nations and cultural groups)," the term 'post-colonial nations'

> begs the question of the difference between, on the one hand, 'white' or
> 'invader-settler' 'post-colonial' nations like Australia, Canada, New
> Zealand, or South Africa and, on the other hand, 'Third-World' 'post-
> colonial' nations like Ghana, Pakistan, Vanuatu, or Barbados. On a crude
> scale that ranges from 'oppressor' to 'oppressed' within contemporary

neo-colonial international relations, the political location of such nations

may differ foundationally, and this raises a question as to whether both

kinds of ex-colonial states ought to be thought of equally as 'post-colonial

nations'. (181)

In other words, while all postcolonial states are ex-colonies, not all ex-colonial states can

be considered postcolonial because the 'post' is not neutral but rather indicates an

ongoing troubled condition of dependency and economic domination that many of the ex-

colonial states still suffer. And it is the writings that emerge from *these* locations that can

be considered as 'postcolonial literature'.

Despite the diversity of definitions and descriptions of postcolonial literature and

what it entails, critics generally agree on how the field has emerged and developed.

Postcolonial studies as a discipline did not exist before the late 1970's. The factors that

led to its emergence have been various. On a political and economic level, between 1968

and 1971, Samir Amin states that "the world system entered a phase of structural crisis,

which continues to this day. The crisis manifests itself in the return of a high and

persistent unemployment accompanied by a slowing down of growth in the West, the

collapse of Sovietism, and serious regression in some regions of the Third World,

accompanied by unsustainable levels of external indebtedness" (qt. in Lazarus 35). The

crises had many radical implications including the materialization of the U.S. as the sole

most influential imperial power after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, and widening

of the gap between the rich and the poor economies that drowned in international debts

and kept the postcolonial states dependent and incapable of progress. Such changes led to

many questions including: How un/successful was the process of decolonization and

what led to its success or failure? What does this tell about the reverberations of colonialism? What is the nature of U.S. power and how similar/different is it from European colonialism? What is the relationship between colonialism, imperialism and capitalism? These questions and more, incorporated into postcolonial theory later on, brought to the latter an interdisciplinary nature and an amalgamation of approaches.

In *Colonialism-Postcolonialism*, Ania Loomba contends that in order to understand the discussions surrounding colonialism and its aftermath, "it is necessary to place postcolonial studies within two broad (and overlapping) contexts. The first is the history of decolonisation itself…. The second … is the revolution, within 'Western' intellectual traditions" (39). The history of decolonization is told by those who lived the experience of colonial rule and fought against it, and those who continue to fight against colonialism's legacy and its impact on the definitions of race, culture and language. One of the main challenges that these intellectual and activists face is making their voices heard. The second context, the 'Western' revolution, engages in similar issues—"language and how it articulates experience, how ideologies work, how human subjectivities are formed, and what we might mean by culture" (39). Both contexts, thus, reflect concerns about the dominant ideologies related to race in light of colonial history.

Postcolonialism, Apollo Amoko states, "traces the vexed historical and enduring relationship between culture, race, nationality and imperialism" (133). He contends that there are two dimensions to postcoloniality; a 'historical' dimension which "proposes a rereading of the canonical texts and paradigms of so-called traditional English or Western literature from the standpoint of race and colonialism", and a 'contemporary' dimension which "seeks paradigms and parameters for reading global culture in the wake of

colonialism" (133-4). Amoko considers Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) as foundational texts for the historical critique approach to postcolonial theory, while he perceives Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin's *The Empire Writes Back* (1989) as a ground-breaking text which adopts a contemporary approach to postcoloniality.

Indeed, there is a multitude of views and categorizations surrounding postcolonial studies which can be added to the aforementioned ones, as the field has "seen its borders and boundaries interrogated and redrawn several times over" (Cooppan, "The Ruins" 80). Nevertheless, most critics agree on the foundational texts that have brought postcolonial studies to light and shaped the field. Arguably, Said's *Orientalism* marks the beginning of postcolonial criticism. Considered by many as the foundational text of the field, the book uncovers the Western discursive practices that sought to produce the East as the "Other". Said questions the nature of the relationship between East and West and unravels cultural misrepresentations that were used to justify European colonization and superiority. By dividing the world into "Orient" and "Occident" through Orientalist discourse, he contends, Europeans defined themselves in relation to the oriental "Other". Erasing this divide between "the West" and "the Other" can only be achieved when the misrepresented Orient is given a voice of its own. But can this be achieved?

In "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Gayatri Spivak engages in this issue as she questions whether the colonial subject is given a voice or s/he is merely a Western object of study. "What must the elite do to watch out for the continuing construction of the subaltern?" Spivak asks (90), the elite being the Western intellectual who speaks for the oppressed while being so far away from their experiences. Like Said, Spivak engages in

the study of Western texts and contends that Western discourse bears a "desire to conserve the subject of the West" (Spivak 66) and thereby fails to adequately represent the oppressed because it reduces the latter to an investigated object of interest, a process which continues to serve the imperialist project. Spivak's canonical text is a vital contribution to the subaltern studies project which aims to reclaim the histories of those who were and continue to be marginalized.

In *The Empire Writes Back* (1989), Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin contend that the challenge to restitute the silenced voices lies in the understanding of the power and function of language, namely the language of the colonizer. With the geographical and cultural colonial invasions "[l]anguage [became] the medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated, and the medium through which conceptions of 'truth', 'order', and 'reality' [became] established. Such power is rejected in the emergence of an effective post-colonial voice" (7). To be heard, thus, the marginal voices have to adopt the language of the empire while molding it to fit their own conceptions of truth and reality. Indeed, this is not an easy task considering that paradigms and beliefs are not only expressed through language but also crafted by it.

Similarly, Homi Bhabha emphasizes the value of experience as he relates postcolonial narratives to testimony. In his book *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha contends that "[p]ostcolonial perspectives emerge from the colonial testimony of Third World countries and the discourses of 'minorities' within the geopolitical divisions of East and West, North and South" (171). It is these discourses that intervene with the hegemonic Western discourses and call for a reassessment of what art stands for and represents. They force us "to engage with culture as an uneven, incomplete production of

meaning and value, often composed of incommensurable demands and practices, produced in the act of social survival" (Bhabha 172). Literature thus becomes a mode of documentation by narrating silenced histories, a sign of survival by testifying to oppression and marginalization, and an act of resistance by affirming a repudiated subjectivity.

Today, it would not be inaccurate to say that the novel is the dominant and most influential literary form in postcolonial literature. In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said describes the novel as "an incorporative, quasi-encyclopedic cultural form," and contends that "imperialism and the novel fortified each other to such a degree that it is impossible . . . to read one without in some way dealing with the other" (71). This implies that the novel is both a product of and an agent in political and cultural perceptions. It narrated the history of imperialism while simultaneously engaging in its formation. Today, the postcolonial novel is exposing the other side of that history and its present reverberations. It is retrospectively engaging with the colonial past by addressing the exigencies of postcolonial nations and confronting the fears of the future. With its "simultaneous representation of a richly described objective reality and a completely evoked psychological interiority" (Cooppan, *Worlds Within* 37), the novel becomes a preferred means to narrate the long-silenced voices and to testify to their experiences. This is not to overlook the importance of other forms of literary expression, but to emphasize the novel's collective character which goes beyond the author's subjectivity, due to its narrative quality and its representational scope.

An Overview of My Project

Taking the paradigms brought forth by postcolonial studies as my starting point, I will engage in the study of gender and masculinity as presented in the novels *Graceland* and *Leaving Tangier*. Gender is not a stranger to postcolonialism as concepts of power, submission, control and hegemony, can be dissociated neither from questions of racial belonging nor from those of patriarchy and sexism. In *Imperial Leather*, Anne McClintock contends that race and gender are "articulated categories in the sense that they come into being in historical relation to each other and emerge in interdependence" (61). One of the examples that McClintock gives to highlight this interrelation is the case of Victorian England. During that time, the lower classes were thought of as belonging to a different race while the colonized were perceived as 'feminine' in that they are weak and passive. Racial and sexist prejudices persist today and they intersect clearly when considering the study of identity markers in postcolonial settings where the history of colonialism has not only affected socio-economic conditions but also infiltrated collective and individual mentalities. Gender, according to McClintock, is so central to colonial discourse that "imperialism cannot be fully understood without a theory of gender power" (6).

To study the intricate relationship between race, gender and power in the novels, I will engage in gender as well as masculinity studies which together create a dialogue that sheds light on the less evident aspect of the 'postcolonial'. My research will draw on Connell's definition of masculinities as "configurations of practice that are accomplished in social action and, therefore, can differ according to the gender relations in a particular social setting" (Connell and Messerschmidt 836). Understanding masculinity as a social

practice leads to the exploration of key concepts such as hegemony, homophobia, domination and subordination, and elucidates how masculinity presents itself as closely linked to and in constant communication with the power relations presented in the novels. Keeping in mind that "bodies are both objects of social practice and agents in social practice" (Connell and Messerschmidt 851), I attempt to show how gendered and sexualized bodies, as presented in the novels, are simultaneously sites of resistance and grounds for exclusion in nations that perpetuate violence and oppression in addition to the marginalization engendered by an unevenly globalized world.

The nation-state which has the power to bestow individual rights can also withhold them and thereby has the power of giving or revoking recognition. In *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler contends that the terms of recognition are essentially gendered such that "[i]t would be wrong to think that the discussion of 'identity' ought to proceed prior to a discussion of gender identity for the simple reason that "persons" only become intelligible through becoming gendered in conformity with recognizable standards of gender intelligibility" (22). In other words, individuals are necessarily pushed into gender norms and roles if they are to be recognized as 'persons'. While the novels insist on conformity as a necessity for survival, they also insist on subversion by 'queering' recognizable standards. Each in its own way, the novels tackle queer sexualities and narrate the subject and the nation through a lens which criticizes and destabilizes dominant ideologies and social structures. Through their questioning of gender norms and roles, *Graceland* and *Leaving Tangier* question the authoritative power given to the nation-state to legitimize and to social structures to evaluate the terms of personhood and subjectivities.

It is important to note, however, that I do not intend to conflate 'gender' with 'sexuality'. In *Undoing Gender*, Butler contends that queer theory argues that

> gender is not reducible to hierarchical heterosexuality, that it takes
>
> different forms when contextualized by queer sexualities, indeed, that its
>
> binariness cannot be taken for granted outside the heterosexual frame, that
>
> gender itself is internally unstable, that transgendered lives are evidence of
>
> the breakdown of any lines of causal determinism between sexuality and
>
> gender. (54)

The novels under study tackle the difference between 'gender' and 'sexuality' in various ways. They present the traditional view which reduces gender to sexuality only to reject it by their portrayal of queer subjects who easily fit neither in the masculine/feminine spectrum nor in the hetero/homo binary. The novels reflect queer theory's direction by highlighting the performativity of gender as they present both fluid gender roles and sexualities. *Graceland*'s adolescent protagonist manifests a vague sexuality that is portrayed literally through his impersonation of Elvis Presley, whereas *Leaving Tangier* presents a form of a 'compulsory' homosexuality as the protagonist uses his sexuality to find his way out of Morocco. Both novels thus illuminate a sexuality situated "outside the heterosexual frame" yet still constrained by a patriarchal system which claims to be preserving gender norms. Gender and sexuality emerge as versatile categories which act as tools for oppression as well as catalysts for change.

Through my multifaceted analysis and my interdisciplinary research, I will attempt to unravel the complexities of the narratives where many contemporary issues arise. My exploration of *Graceland* and *Leaving Tangier* provides a way to understand

the global present in the postcolonial as played out in gendered terms, and elucidate the

subjective experiences that the texts are speaking to and about.

CHAPTER II

CHRIS ABANI'S *GRACELAND*

"In the great divide between a life with meaning and one without, there is

Graceland"   -- Anonymous

The above quote is one of the many messages written by fans on the wall of Elvis

Presley's mansion Graceland in Memphis (Wright 30). The philosophical message

captures a transcendental meaning of the mansion as perceived by many of the artist's

fans and exhibits a quasi-religious quality associated with the place which still evokes

fascination decades after Elvis' death. To many people, visiting Graceland takes the form

of a pilgrimage which satisfies spiritual and emotional needs. To them, Graceland is not

only a place, but a state of being, of becoming.

It is through this perception of becoming that one must approach Chris Abani's

Graceland in order to understand the significance contained in the novel's name and

pages. The novel which addresses identity in postcolonial Nigeria questions the existence

of a space where identity and "a life with meaning" is possible. Oscillating between the

rural and the urban, the past and the present, and between various narrative forms,

Graceland presents a collage of different geographical and temporal spaces intermingled

to convey the complexity of a coming of age in a postcolonial nation-state in an age of

globalization.

The novel exposes the gradual erosion of native traditions and the encroachment

of Western epistemologies. It conveys the conflicts of a nation and critiques the

corruption of its state. The postcolonial subject, nevertheless, remains the channel where several forces converge and are manifested in a contested identity which resists anchoring. In this chapter on *Graceland*, I will investigate these forces as they unfold precisely in the realm of gender and sexuality. This realm emerges not simply as one of the many forces acting on the subject, but also part of subjectivity itself which is inevitably gendered. *Graceland*, I argue, shows how gender and sexuality are employed to serve strategies of control and therefore are intricately linked to questions of power and authority. On the other hand, the novel exposes the performativity of gender and suggests through it the possibility of a fluid identity.

Graceland recounts the coming of age of Elvis, an adolescent living in the slums of Lagos in postcolonial Nigeria. Born in the village of Afikpo into one of Nigeria's biggest ethnic groups, the Igbo, Elvis experiences rural life as a child before moving to the city at the age of fourteen with his father. Named by his mother after Elvis Presley, the protagonist is a huge fan of the artist and attempts to make a living by impersonating him. His passion for Elvis and his music, however, is constantly challenged by the harsh living conditions he has to endure and the need to support himself and help support his father, his stepmother and her children.

The novel recounts two parallel narratives; one is set in Lagos and follows Elvis' life as an adolescent, and the other is set in Afikpo village and relates formative events from Elvis' childhood. In addition, the novel includes intertexts which are dispersed throughout the book and placed at the beginning of each chapter. One intertext consists of parts of a notebook which belongs to Beatrice, Elvis' mother. In it are traditional recipes passed on from Oye, Beatrice's mother. The other intertext is a description of the kola nut

ritual which the Igbo community exercises and highly values. Through the various narratives, the novel resists chronological linearity and insists on the intersection of temporal and geographical spaces.

The Time and Space: Historical context

Before delving into the novel, it is important to shed some light on parts of Nigeria's history. This is not to say that *Graceland* represents the whole Nigerian experience or narrates its history. As Amanda Aycock states, "Abani does not . . . write any sort of 'national allegory'" (12). He does, however, narrate the subject through the nation and vice versa. As a postcolonial nation-state, Nigeria's colonial history and its aftermath are crucial to the identity formation and subjecthood which the novel communicates.

Consisting of more than 200 different ethnic groups speaking over 250 languages, Nigeria was under British rule for over forty years. Before colonization, Nigeria was made up of many states that were interdependent and shared or exchanged resources. From the fifteenth century onwards, Europeans started making contact with the region, and the slave trade began as early as 1480 and was abolished during the nineteenth century. However, the trade with Europe continued and gradually Britain started taking over political rule. In 1861 a consulate was established in Lagos. And by 1905 the whole country was under British rule. Not surprisingly, because of the many different cultural groups, "the Nigerian population did not develop into a strong nation during the colonial period," and "a policy of divide and rule kept them apart" (Falola 10). After several failed acts of resistance, Nigeria gained independence in 1960. However, many outstanding

issues were "swept under the carpet," Falola notes, "most notable among these were

ethnicity, minority complaints, violence, and growing corruption" (93). Nigeria's

decolonization did not produce an autonomous and stable nation-state. The country was

divided into three big regions: North dominated by Hausa-Fulani, West dominated by

Yoruba, and East dominated by Igbo. The three regions regarded each other as enemies

and fought until a military coup in 1966 "marked the beginning of a deeper crisis" (10).

From then onwards, Nigeria witnessed successive coups, totalitarian regimes, civil wars,

corruption at all governmental and military levels, and became one of the poorest

countries in the world. Despite its oil wealth and natural resources, Nigeria remains one

of the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC). "The modern history of Nigeria is a

troubled one," Falola notes, characterized by "the gross failure to overcome the twin

problems of political instability and economic underdevelopment" (223). This failure is

intertwined with social predicaments and the repercussions of colonial rule which left the

country in a vulnerable state of autonomy and cultural clashes.

**The Pre/colonial Past and its Gendered Discourses: "We have always done things
this way"**

Born into the Igbo culture, Elvis carries with him his indigenous heritage as he

struggles to adapt to his present life in hectic Lagos. He carries it through his memories

of his native village Afikpo, and literally through his mother's recipe notebook. The

dispersed recipes, which are believed to have a therapeutic effect, are displayed as an

intertext throughout the novel, and are a constant reminder of Elvis' attempts at

reconnecting to his native past and his mother. Along these lines, the native past is

represented as maternal and spiritual. However, how relevant it is to the present and how successful Elvis' attempts are at reconnecting to it is yet to be discussed.

Both the mother, Beatrice, and the grandmother, Oye, seem to be locked in an inaccessible past as most of Igbo's spiritual beliefs which Oye and Beatrice endorse seem to bear no relation to Elvis's hectic present. Witchcraft, oracles, spirits of the dead and reincarnation are concepts which appear obsolete in the fast-paced and brutal city life of Lagos in which survival is the main concern. The scattered recipes of the mother throughout the book only seem to emphasize the discrepancy between the traditional past and the new present. Elvis' feelings towards his mother as an adolescent and his emotional attachment to her are never quite expressed except through the fact that he carries her notebook with him as a reminder of her, as he says to Redemption. Keeping the journal "made him feel like he had a secret worthy of sharing, like Redemption's passport and visa" (Abani 136). Perceiving the notebook as a secret gives the maternal past a quiescent and reclusive quality. It is presented as tangential to the present reality and not fused into it. This disconnection can be read as a silencing of the female voice, as some critics like Novak and Krishnan contend. To Novak, the female voice in *Graceland* is lost and hopeless, for as Elvis eventually leaves to a place where he might potentially have a better life, the female characters are either forgotten or left on the streets of Lagos, whereas Krishnan states, "[t]he figure of woman, represented by the mother figure, remains within the text, as its driving force, yet out of its reach and transgressing its limits" (13). Although the journal is always present with Elvis, it remains enclosed within the private, the intimate, and fails to connect to the larger context of Elvis' life. "Possessing its own kind of knowledge," Novak notes, "the journal offers a record of the

past very different from that which focuses on the large-scale events of public life" (47). The divide between the past and the present can be read as a divide between the private and the public. The past, represented by the mother figure, along with its homely and intimate associations, is pushed to the background and is swallowed by the impersonal and uncontained events of city life. What is most successfully passed on from his mother is her love for the music of Elvis Presley whom Elvis idolizes and impersonates. The love for Elvis Presley appears to be the singular most significant heritage from Elvis' mother. Thus, while most of the traditional beliefs and notions fade away, the influence of western music persists from mother to child. It survives because it is not at odds with the changing conditions of Nigeria which carry with them western intrusions and multicultural confrontations.

At the end of the novel, Elvis finally admits that the journal "had never revealed his mother to him. Never helped him understand her, or his life, or why anything had happened the way it had. What was the point? Nothing is ever resolved, he thought. It just changes" (Abani 320). Elvis eventually accepts the change and acknowledges the impossibility of returning to an intact past. Perceiving the journal as a symbol of a native past, Elvis' realization highlights the impossibility of a return to a pre-colonial time and the irreversibility of the colonial experience. Colonialism is not simply a disruption of history, but a part of it. Moreover, acknowledging the maternal nature of the journal emphasizes the patriarchal nature of colonialism. The feminine is suppressed and subdued giving rise to the invading masculine.

Another intertext that Abani presents is the kola nut ritual. Like the mother's notebook, the kola nut ritual is fragmented and dispersed throughout the novel as an

epigraph to each chapter. Each segment consists of two parts; the first is a description of the ritual by the Igbo community, the second is an anthropological description told by what is obviously a western outsider. The two different views not only represent two perspectives of the same reality, but also show how a subjective and personal experience only means an object of study and observation to someone not involved in it and viewing it from a distance. The contrast illustrates the western colonial gaze which sees the different as the Other. The western eye remains in the position of the observer and narrator in an attempt to "conserve the subject of the West" as Spivak describes it (66).The western observer gazes from a distance at what seems strange to him/her without understanding its cultural values. To the Igbo community, the ritual is a symbol of hospitality and an affirmation of Igbo history. It consists of several stages, the most important being the breaking of the kola nut and offering its pieces to the guests. The kola-nut ritual is a highly masculinist procedure. Only males engage in it because they are considered to be the narrators of the clan's history. The epigraph "We have always done things this way" is followed by an explanation which states that "women take no part in the kola-nut ritual. In fact, female guests are never presented with kola nuts" (Abani 172). The ritual emphasizes the patriarchal structure of the Igbo community and celebrates its history. As such, the ritual is interconnected with masculinity and male identity, and understanding its value is one step closer to manhood for any Igbo male:

> There are several stages in the rites of passage for the Igbo male. Of prime importance is the understanding of the kola-nut ritual. At the heart of the ritual is the preservation, orally, of the history of the clan and the sociopolitical order that derives from that history. (34)

Narrating the history of the clan is, thus, a gendered procedure, and changes in the kola-nut ritual means changes in the narration of Igbo gendered history. The ritual has changed due to colonialism. Christian prayers for example have been integrated and "Jesus has replaced Obasi as the central deity" (Abani 291). The ritual, like the mother's journal, relates to the novel only through the simultaneity of narration. Its seeming unrelatedness to the story only heightens the ritual's discarded value in a modern multicultural world. Moreover, it anchors the novel within the postcolonial as narrated by the so-called third generation Nigerian novelists who are witnessing the gradual effacement of their native heritage in the face of global modernity. Against the backdrop of globalization and the chaotic life of the megacity, the affirmation "[t]here is only one history: Igbo" (Abani299) fails to explain the relevance of a disrupted past which cannot be projected onto the present.

As can be inferred from the above discussion, both of the intertexts - the mother's journal and the kola nut ritual- are gendered discourses. The first depicts the maternal feminine and its traditional association with notions of home, food, and spirituality; the second the paternal masculine and its association with history, lineage, and power. The preservation of native heritage means the preservation of gender understandings which form the basis of family structures and communities. Defending lineage and genealogy entails sustaining the power of the patriarchal system and its leaders who narrate the history of the clan, and the role of the nurturing mothers who represent its spirit. Holding onto traditional gender understandings becomes essential to resist the supposed western liberal mind which emphasizes individuality and seeks to weaken traditional gender roles, aided by capitalism and the immense expansion of global economy. Inasmuch as these

intertexts endorse gender polarities and heteronormativity through their subject matter, however, their detached status as intertexts which keeps them at a distance from the rest of the novel diminishes the significance of their contents and questions its endurance. Although each of the intertexts conveys a different part of Igbo history through different gendered perspectives, they both act as one narrative against colonial discourse and the force of globalization. Both the feminine/maternal and the masculine/patriarchal attempt to resist a more powerful system of dominance; Western white masculinity and what it represents.

Gender and Race: "What if he had been born white, or even just American?"

In a crucial scene which captures the complexity of the relationship between gender and race, Elvis wears makeup and admires himself in front of the mirror. In this scene, the intertwined and complex relationship between gender, sexuality and race is exposed by the act of drag, thereby suggesting the socially constructed nature of what all of the above concepts entail. After having worn eye shadow, eyeliner, mascara and red lipstick with an added shine of petroleum jelly, Elvis thought that "[t]his was the closest he had come so far to looking like the real Elvis, and he wished he had a camera." As he contemplates himself, Elvis wonders "What if he had been born white, or even just American? Would his life be any different? Stupid, he thought. If Redemption knew about this, he would say Elvis was suffering from colonial mentality" (78). Elvis' desire to look like the real Elvis goes beyond typical fandom. What is most obvious about this desire is a wish to look 'white'. 'Whiteness' here does not only connote skin color, just as Elvis Presley does not only epitomize stardom. In *Elvis after Elvis*, Gilbert Rodman

contends that Elvis Presley represents certain values to his audience beyond those associated with stardom. The most dominant representation is Elvis' embodiment of the American Dream, Rodman notes. Elvis' success proves that America is indeed the land of opportunities and that everyone has a chance of succeeding, even a boy raised in poverty in Mississippi. Moreover, one of Elvis' greatest virtues in the eyes of his fans was his determination "to remain a good ol' country boy at heart," despite his acquired wealth (Rodman 73). This attitude, combined with financial success, make Elvis an idol anyone can identify with and look up to at the same time. But how does this apply to a poor black boy in Nigeria?

The question of being white or 'even just American' explicitly links race to nationality and places the former in a politically and culturally charged context. White means to be privileged and have a better life. Race does not simply indicate a skin color or particular physical traits, but a status which locates one's position in the world. In this sense, race becomes a measure of comparison. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon addresses this approach as he expresses his concern for the way that the black man evaluates himself against others. The sharp divide between 'white' and 'black' and their respective significations is the outcome of a primarily economic process, Fanon contends, which subsequently leads to the internalization of racial concepts of superiority and inferiority.

This process cannot be detached from its gendered context, for what is at stake here is the meaning of 'man' and what he stands for. Relating masculinity to financial success and power reiterates the dominant definition of western masculinity, associated primarily with a white middle-class heterosexual male, and excluding all the others. As

such, ideal masculinity becomes associated with one specific category of male, an idea

Fanon painfully expresses as "For the black man there is only one destiny. And it is

white" (10). In addition to the controversial relation of success/power/masculinity, the

above definition ignores the fact that a majority of males do not even have access to

resources which make this definition possible. Majors states that "[m]any black males

have accepted the . . . norms of dominant social definitions of masculinity (being the

breadwinner, having strength, and dominating women) . . . In other words, the dominant

goals of hegemonic masculinity have been sold to black males," however, "access to the

legitimate means to achieve those goals has been largely denied black males" (210-1). If

masculinity is achieved through successful ascension to power, then there is a systemic

exclusion of the non-white male from the circles of power perpetually defining dominant

masculinity, and inversely from the dominant definition which assumes the possibility of

power. Read against postcolonial history, this exclusion reiterates imperialist discourse

and shows a western domination over gender understandings, whereby the white male is

perceived to manifest the 'normal' masculinity, and men of color to manifest a 'deviant'

one which needs to be disciplined and subjugated. Black bodies were thought of having

an "excessive masculinity", Asian bodies an "insufficient masculinity" (Halberstam 2),

whereas Arabs a perverted one which embraced homosexuality. Halberstam contends that

"these stereotypical constructions of variable masculinity mark the process by which

masculinity becomes dominant in the sphere of white middle-class maleness" (2). The

dominant definition of masculinity is constructed in contrast to what is considered

insufficient, excessive, or deviant masculinities.

The above passage which connects gender and race shows how definitions of humanity have been based on the perceived relationship between both and critiques the rigidity that such a relationship assumes. Using makeup- a major component of drag- as a tool to momentarily "whiten" his skin, Elvis creates an interstitial space that transgresses both racial and gender binaries. This is made clear as Elvis compares himself to transvestites:

> Admiring himself from many angles, he thought it was a shame he couldn't wear makeup in public. That's not true, he mentally corrected himself. He could, like the transvestites that haunted the car parks of hotels favored by rich locals and visiting whites. But like them, he would be a target of some insult, or worse, physical beatings, many of which were meted out by the police, who then took turns with their victims in the back of their vans. (77)

Elvis' attempt to become white will be read as transvestism to the outside world, thereby exposing the interconnectedness of race and gender's binaries, and emphasizing the queerness of transgression. Although Elvis does not necessarily consider himself a transvestite, comparing himself to them expresses a common ground. In the eyes of society, whoever deviates from established gender binaries will be regarded as a transgressor who must be punished. In addition to the social harassment he might face, the transvestite might be 'legally' punished by the state through physical and sexual abuse which implies that "gender is forcibly, literally, policed"(Aycock 16), a phenomenon I will discuss in detail later. Elvis' transvestism may or may not be linked to a troubled sexual identity or correspond to a transgender tendency. As his sexuality

remains ambiguous, Elvis' act of drag emerges as a statement on its own and suggests what Marjorie Garber calls "unmarked transvestism," transvestism as an unconscious pattern," as a language that can be read, and double-read, like a dream, a fantasy, or a slip of the tongue" (Garber 354). Transvestism in this sense is characterized by a compulsion to repeat, and is closely linked to impersonation which seeks to replicate an original. In his attempt to impersonate the real Elvis and look white, the protagonist also imitates gender by replicating its signs and bodily practices, thereby creating a space where racial and gendered manifestations intersect. Race and gender emerge as performative constructions produced by corporeal signs characterized by repetition or replication.

Elvis wears makeup in the privacy of his room and does not risk going out in public looking as he does. His feminine appearance and his attempt to look white suggest gender and racial ambiguity, and both are a threat to native culture. The first threatens heteronormative masculinity on which traditional communities are based, and the second questions the role of race as a determinant of social belonging. Defending native customs and preserving gender norms thus go hand in hand. Two scenes in the novel exhibit this pattern perfectly while simultaneously questioning its success.

Warding off Threats and Defending (Igbo) Masculinity: "'No son of mine is going to grow up as a homosexual!'"

In the scene of Elvis' "first step into manhood" (Abani 19), five-year-old Elvis is asked to participate in a ritual that requires him to kill an eagle amidst the encouragement and celebration of the family. However, Elvis' experience was not very traditional as he was handed an already injured animal which turned out to be a chicken.

There was a line of blood from its beak that ran into the yellow down

around its neck. The blood was beginning to harden and stiffen the

feathers into a red necktie.

"It is alive," Elvis said.

"Of course it is. You just shot it," Joseph replied.

"I didn't."

"You did," Sunday said.

"Is this an eagle chick?" Elvis asked.

Joseph laughed. "Elvis, you funny. No, it is chicken, eagle is too

expensive." (Abani 19)

The substitution of the eagle by a chicken happens for financial reasons as Elvis' uncle,

Joseph, remarks. Thus, an element of the ritual is being altered because of the changing

economic situation. The substitution is only a small example of how capitalism's

dominion can reach and affect even the miniscule details of traditional life, forcing its

amendment. Another alteration is the changing attitude towards the authenticity of the

connection between violence and killing on one hand, and the concept of manhood on the

other. What I mean by 'authenticity' here is the inevitability and necessity of such a

connection, and not its existence as such. Ideally, the ritual described in *Graceland*

perceives violence and aggression as central to the construction of Igbo male identity: "It

is de first step into manhood for you. When you are older, de next step is to kill a goat,

and den from dere we begin your manhood rites. But dis is de first step" (Abani 19).

Thus, killing is considered a *condition* for manhood. However, although it lies at the

heart of the ritual, its execution is flawed and undermined as Elvis does not actually kill

the chicken but is asked to pretend that he did. The pretension exposes the tenuous link

between the behaviours of the male subject and what is considered to be essential

characteristics of male identity, thereby questioning traditional views in light of a

culturally changing society. For "[w]hile it is evident that certain behaviors have come to

characterize males – sexual and physical assertiveness, competitiveness, aggression," it

cannot be said that masculinity necessarily entails them, let alone that masculinity is

based upon them (Whitehead, Barret 19). The pretension also shows the performative

nature of the ritual. The meaning of the ritual is extracted from what the ritual stages not

from what actually happens. It persists through its symbolic meaning which nonetheless

serves the preservation of gender binaries by assigning certain traits exclusively to the

male subject. Even if symbolically, completing this ritual represents the first step towards

a respectable Igbo masculinity. The ritual acquires a higher value when faced with the

changing economic and cultural conditions because while globalization threatens local

customs, it also invokes stronger resistance. Holding on to what constitutes the local

culture becomes a challenging task which requires an amplified sense of ethnic belonging

in which affirmative gender models play a crucial role. The ritual is not only an assertion

of masculinity, but an affirmation of Igbo male identity. Failing to demonstrate the

required aggression and violence would thus mean a failure of masculinity and a disgrace

to the community and culture. It would mean a disruption of the gender structure on

which the community is built and which the culture celebrates.

Elvis causes this disruption and pays the price for it when he dresses up in

women's clothes and has his hair plaited by his aunt Felicia at the age of nine. The scene

starts on a cheerful note as Elvis enjoys the cross dressing game amidst the laughs and giggles of his aunt and her friends.

> Elvis longed to try on their makeup and have his hair plaited. Aunt Felicia finally gave into his badgering and wove his hair into lovely cornrows. One of the other girls put lipstick on him. Giggling, and getting into the game, another pulled a minidress over his head. On Elvis, it fell nearly to the floor, like an evening gown. He stepped into a pair of Aunt Felicia's too-big platforms and pranced about, happy, proud, chest stuck out.
>
> (Abani 61)

The above passage evidently shows Elvis as genuinely enjoying cross dressing. He insists on experiencing it, and when he does he feels 'happy' and 'proud' to take part in an activity that makes him a center of attention. However, being young and innocent, he is not aware of the reverberations of his actions when it comes to social norms and expectations. When he sees his father and runs innocently to meet him and show him his outfit and hairdo, he is shockingly confronted by rage and physical violence:

> Elvis ran straight into the first blow, which nearly took his head clean off. As he fell, his father grabbed him with one hand, steadying him, while with the other he beat him around the head, face, buttocks, everywhere. Too shocked to react, still out of breath from his sprint, Elvis gulped for air as his father choked him. (Abani 61)

Sunday's reaction conveys that Elvis' act is a behavior that cannot be tolerated and that needs to be severely punished. There is no room for words or communication, only violence which is used as an expression of disapproval and as a means of silencing any

possible objections that Elvis might have. The only explanation that Sunday offers is

"'No son of mine is going to grow up as a homosexual!'" (62). He later shaves Elvis'

head while saying "I'm only doing dis for your own good. It's not easy to be a man. Dese

are trying times. Not easy" (63). Thus there is a sharp contrast expressed between

'homosexual' and 'man'. The two cannot coexist and one necessarily means the negation

of the other. Being a man is understood as being a heterosexual masculine man, and

demonstrating otherwise is understood as opposing to the very concept of man. Jeffrey

Weeks notes that "masculinity or the male identity is achieved by the constant process of

warding off threats to it. It is precariously achieved by the rejection of femininity and

homosexuality" (qtd.in Gutterman 61). Elvis' behavior is enraging to Sunday not only

because of the latter's fear of having a homosexual son, but also because it offends and

threatens masculinity in general and consequently Sunday's. And if 'homosexual' is

thought to be produced simply by cross dressing and adopting the fashion thought to

belong to the other sex, then masculinity is hanging by a thread and needs to be

aggressively defended. However, what is interesting about the end of this incident is that

Sunday 'restores' Elvis' masculinity simply by shaving his head. Gender is produced by

and reduced to a change in physical appearance, highlighting the idea that "[t]here is no

gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively

constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (Butler, *Gender

Trouble* 33). Instead of staging masculinity, Elvis stages femininity this time, thereby

disrupting his 'manhood rites' and rendering them absurd. Sunday's fervent reaction to

Elvis' drag act shows the high significance assigned to dress and appearance in

established concepts of gender binaries.

In addition to posing a threat to masculinity and bringing disgrace to the family,

Elvis' behavior worries the father because he thinks that it exposes Elvis as an easy target

of cultural change. "It's not easy to be a man. Dese are trying times," he tells Elvis.

According to Sunday, the name was all that a man needed to earn respect "before dis new

madness with money started" (187). In a scene of confrontation between Elvis and

Sunday, the former accuses his father of consenting to the killing of Elvis' cousin,

Godfrey. Sunday's justification is that Godfrey brought shame to the family because he

was a criminal and that the honor of the family has to be defended. "It took me years of

pain, suffering and hard work to build a name people could respect," he says in response

to Elvis' accusations. He explains "[w]e were white people's slaves, a curse, so we were

disinherited of land, clan, everything. I built our name up with honor until it became a

force to be reckoned with" (Abani 187). Sunday's past is interlocked with the struggle for

freedom and for social recognizability. However, this sounds absurd to Elvis who does

not see any value in the name that his father claims to be defending. To him, the only

thing that his father's name indicates is failure. Sunday gradually loses his authority over

Elvis when the latter loses his respect for his father and no longer regards him as the

forbearer of identity. Ouma contends that the father-son relationship in *Graceland*

presents Valentin Mudimbe's idea of "false fathers", which "questions both the myth and

the reality of the father as progenitor of discourse on knowledge, power and identity"

(Ouma 78). The high value assigned to genealogy is threatened under the pressure of the

changing life conditions resulting from the colonial experience and the continued

challenges to native cultures in the face of an increasingly globalized world. Ouma states:

Traditionally, sons in Africa are born into a genealogical order: taking

over the baton from their fathers, they are born 'in the name of the father.'

However, the new realities in their postcolonial worlds provide for

possibility and the invention of a new discourse 'in the name of the son,'

as Achebe puts it in the epigraph. (79)

In the context of multiculturalism and urbanization, traditional views about biological

symbolism seem to lose their significance. The encounter with western cultures imports

ideas of self-invention and individualism which are reinforced in the "continual creative

play of urban living" (Harvey 5).The 'name of the father' ceases to matter among

strangers to whom the father is unknown. Inasmuch as the father figure is weakened with

the changing circumstances, it remains a key element in the perpetuation of oppression

sustaining a masculinist system. What entails a 'virtuous' masculinity comes under

scrutiny. Killing Elvis' cousin Geoffrey in the name of honor comes as a shock to Elvis

whereas it is understood as a duty for Sunday. Sunday casually expresses the naturalness

of the situation: " 'Can't you understand? I did dis out of love for you'" (187). To

Sunday, it seems natural to save the honor of the family even if it means killing one of its

own. The act of violence is justified by protective paternal love and understood under the

rubric of duty and reason. It can be said that "[w]hat were once claimed to be manly

virtues . . . have become masculine vices" (Maclnness 314). The incident of Geoffrey's

killing, along with the father's alcoholism, unemployment, and consequently inability to

support his family, reinforce doubts surrounding genealogical significance and exposes

an absurdity that hovers over the salience of blood ties. The authority of the father figure

is threatened as traditional identity markers and social values are questioned. As an

adolescent, Elvis views his father as an oppressor, a defender of a masculinist system which does more harm than good. But the latter holds the seed of its own destruction. What becomes of 'virtuous' masculinity then? How can 'masculine vices' be read when they seek to destroy the very concepts they claim to defend?

Destructive Masculinity and Perversion of Authority "'Do you know dat I am a full colonel?'"

If "[t]he image and figure of the father saturates Elvis's critique of masculinity," as Ouma contends, the image of the uncle shatters family ties which masculinity claims to be defending. In one of the most disturbing scenes in the book, Uncle Joseph rapes thirteen-year-old Elvis in a chapel in Afikpo village. In a previous scene, Elvis witnesses the rape of his cousin Efua by the same man who is also Efua's father. The vulnerability of the body is exposed as the body becomes an easy target of violence and assault. If the possibility of rape is inherent in the male body, as Susan Brownmiller states (Cahill 16), then *all* bodies are under constant threat of violation. By presenting both Efua and Elvis as victims of rape, Abani places both male *and* female bodies as susceptible to male sexual violence. In this case, rape is indifferent to the sex of the body and becomes a pure act of domination and sadism which seeks pleasure from any weaker body. However, it is not indifferent to the *gendered* body. "The gendered aspects of rape are fundamental to the phenomenon itself and are no less 'real' than biological realities" (Cahill 33) because what rape seeks to assert is an aggressive masculinity capable of control and intimidation. Although this assertion can be manifested in several ways, "the sexuality of rape differentiates it from other forms of violence and assault. . . . it *matters* that sexuality is

the medium of the power and violence that are imposed on the victim," Cahill affirms,

because "rape constructs male sexuality in a particular way such that it constitutes a way

of imposing harm, pain, and powerlessness" (27). Although enacted by the body, rape is

bolstered by perceptions and attitudes towards sexuality circulated in social systems and

communities. Uncle Joseph abuses his authority as a father and an uncle knowing that he,

as an adult man, is protected by a social system in which such abuses can go unpunished.

Sunday's passiveness about the subject indeed proves this point. The taboo and shame

associated with rape lead to the silencing of the survivors and eventually burying their

stories in an abandoned past. Consequently, the present imminent dangers of the problem

fail to be addressed, contributing to the persistence of masculinist conceptions. Efua and

Elvis' rape completely demolishes the understanding of the family as a secure and

homely space. Instead, it becomes a locale of inescapable fear and terror as the ones

endowed with the responsibility of its protection are the same ones responsible for its

destruction. The patriarchal structures of family, violence and sexuality clash and

destabilize each other's meanings and significations. Sexual violence, domestic in this

case, ravages both feminine and masculine bodies submitting them both to a higher

hierarchical masculinity, that of the adult male. This leads to the question Puar asks in her

study of terrorism and sexual violence: "[h]ow, ultimately, do we begin to theorize the

connections and disjunctures between male and female tortured bodies, and between

masculinities and femininities?" (98) Regardless of its anatomy, the body becomes an

object of assault and a site where sexuality and violence meet to express a destructive

masculinity.

Violence is employed to create and preserve hierarchies within the realm of masculinity. It is also exercised by the state which is embodied by the figure of the Colonel. The Colonel embodies the "ultra-masculine order represented in the text by the military regime" (Ouma 83). "Ultra-masculine" in this context would denote having more aggression, exercising more violence, and most importantly having more power. He is a typical representation of hegemonic masculinity, defined as "a man *in* power, a man *with* power, and a man *of* power" (Kimmel, "Masculinity"272). In other words, it consists of a man who is capable and willing to exercise power and is in a position which allows it. Moreover, the Colonel flaunts his powers and uses this display as a constant confirmation of masculinity. "Do you know dat I am a full colonel?" he asks Elvis who accidently bumped into him while dancing at the club (119). As Elvis assures him it was an accident, the Colonel insists that it was an intentional assault. At this moment, "the front door of the club slammed open and six soldiers . . . came in at a fast trot. . . The six soldiers seemed controlled by a collective mind and stopped in front of the Colonel, saluting. 'Shall we take care of dis dog, sir!' the leader, a sergeant, barked, eyes ahead" (Abani 119). The Colonel gives orders to the sergeant who in turn gives orders to the "collective mind" of the other soldiers to assault Elvis. The incident portrays the constructed hierarchy between the male subjects which constitutes the established military system. The military institution is but a sample of the wider hierarchical structures constituting societies and communities where men with more power subjugate those with lesser power. This is especially true when the military institution is the ruling regime. Militarism is projected into the community and its values are disseminated and normalized. Perceiving the military as a site where "power [is] exercised by senior men

over subordinate men," where heteronormative sexuality is enforced and homosexuality

is rejected and punished, where "power [is] exercised over men who for political or other

reasons reject the military regime" (Emma Sinclair-Webb 87), its characteristics as a

ruling regime are associated with oppressive domination, heterosexism and homophobia.

Moreover, as an institution which systematically trains its members to fight and

kill, the military's attitude towards violence tends to be casual. This is exhibited when

Elvis gets caught during the riots arranged by the King of Beggars. Elvis is taken for

interrogation, and although he had nothing to do with the riots, he is tortured severely.

Several torture methods are performed on Elvis, including beating, body suspension,

flogging, and pouring acid on his wounds. Whereas the torture is meant to make Elvis

confess, it certainly carries a sadistic quality, for the torturer Jerome clearly enjoys his

acts: "He [the torturer] smiled with a mixture of contempt and pleasure at Elvis's

squirming," Abani writes (294). The torture thus can be understood as both a political

action emerging from the state's oppressive control, and a personal and intimate act

emerging from a subject's desire. This double layering is further illuminated when torture

is intertwined with the realm of the sexual. Justified by the idea that confession must

happen at any cost, torture abuses the vulnerability of the body and puts it to the test.

When sexual, torture abuses the vulnerability of gender binaries in order to produce a

deviant subject who consequently is pushed to humiliation and shame. Puar states that

"'[t]he performative act of torture produces its object'. . . the body informs the torture,

but the torture also forms the body. That is, the performative force of torture not only

produces an object but also proliferates that which it names" (87). As Jerome approaches

Elvis with a whip in his hand, he says that the Fulanis (an ethnic group in Nigeria) use the

whip on each other to test who is man enough to marry. Violence as a measure of

masculinity and manhood is again brought to light here. The question of man versus boy,

however, soon turns into an issue of heterosexual versus homosexual, thereby intricately

linking 'man' to 'heterosexual'. What is striking about this shift is that it generates the

sexual with the homosexual. That is, the homosexual is brought forth as soon as the

violence becomes sexual.

> Whistling softly under his breath, he began rubbing a cool white paste all
>
> over Elvis's body. It felt good, soothing almost. Jerome smiled as he noted
>
> his expression. Still smiling, he took Elvis's penis in one hand and gently
>
> smoothed the paste over it, working it up and down. Elvis felt himself
>
> swell. Jerome laughed and massaged Elvis's penis faster and faster. It was
>
> not long before Elvis shuddered and shot semen all over his torturer's
>
> hand.
>
> "So you be homo," Jerome said, laughing breathlessly.
>
> Tears of shame streamed down Elvis's face. (Abani 295)

The sexuality of the torture is meant to produce a 'deviant' homosexual subject which

will be derided and humiliated. Interestingly, this is done through queer methods.

Jerome's massaging of Elvis's penis clearly carries a homosexual desire which expresses

itself in the form of an aggressive homophobia. The homosexual subject here is produced

through queer acts on the basis of which queerness itself is condemned and punished. The

paste which Jerome rubs over Elvis's body turns out to be a chemical that intensifies the

burning sensation of flogging, suggesting that homosexual pleasure will be brutally

punished. The Colonel watches as Jerome sexually abuses Elvis and therefore condones

the acts performed. Although not directly involved in the sexuality of the torture, the Colonel is the one who allows such sexuality to take place under the rubric of investigation. His gaze confirms his approval of the acts and a pleasure derived from watching them, such that "[p]leasure spread[s] to the power that harrie[s] it; power anchor[s] the pleasure it uncover[s]" (Foucault 45).In the efforts to suppress 'deviance' and rebellion against itself and its institutions, the state creates spaces where violence and sexual 'deviance' are exercised under its supervision. This "*incorporation of perversions*" (Foucault 42) into the disciplining system of the state employs queerness as a means to reinforce power, whereby sexuality is employed to further degrade outcast subjects.

By presenting the uncle and the colonel as perpetrators of physical and sexual violence, *Graceland* critiques both the family and the state as protectors and defenders of moral values and identifies them as aggressors. Both emerge as flawed systems that produce abusive subjects who seek gratification from the perversion of authority and power. Furthermore, the rape and the torture occur in two different settings, thereby blurring the lines between the past and the present and the rural and the urban. By placing the rape scene in the past rural context, Abani destabilizes perceptions of the village as being a peaceful, harmonic and communal space, and manifests "a tendency to reject rural and urban polarization," as Hilary Dannenberg suggests in her article "Narrating the Postcolonial Metropolis" (40). "[W]hile the novel's rural and urban spaces are in many ways depicted as different, separate worlds, they are not subject to any polarization along the lines of a city versus country idealization. Both are characterized as dangerous

environments for Elvis," Dannenberg states (41). The common denominator of physical threat and risk renders both geographical spaces unsafe.

Finding an Alternative Space: "half slum, half paradise"

In "Entropy and Energy: Lagos as City of Words," Chris Dunton discusses how *Graceland* explores "a range of expressive initiatives, of critical discursive options" which produces creative energies (74). Dunton states that "[f]or Elvis . . . the chosen medium is professional dancing" (74). Elvis' passion for music and dancing allows him to escape, even if briefly, the harsh realities of his life. Despite the hindrances and constant disappointments facing him, Elvis insists on pursuing a dancing career which alone brings him satisfaction. In addition to music and dancing, Elvis also enjoys reading and watching movies. Western movies are available to watch and different books are easily available by street sellers. Cultural engagement in *Graceland* is intimately linked with identity formation and is part of Elvis' "negotiation of a sense of self" (Dunton 74), as my discussion of the mirror scene, for example, shows. His impersonation of Elvis Presley invokes questions of his racial and ethnic belonging and his ambiguous sexuality against the backdrop of a city that is highly influenced by a globalized American culture as the recurrent references to Hollywood movies and American music clearly suggests. In *Space, Time, and Perversion*, Elizabeth Grosz writes that "the city is. . . the site for the body's cultural saturation, its takeover and transformation by images, representational systems, the mass media, and the arts-the place where the body is representationally reexplored, transformed, contested, reinscribed" (108). In this sense, Lagos seems to be "half slum, half paradise" to Elvis who wonders how a place can be "so ugly and violent

yet beautiful at the same time" (7). Lagos' palimpsestic culture is inscribed on Elvis'

body and manifested through his contested racial identity and sexuality. He carries the

scars of its oppressive state, the memories of its struggling nation, a nationality he does

not comprehend, and an ambiguous sexuality at odds with what he was taught.

In "'Suspended City': Personal, Urban, and National Development in Chris

Abani's *Graceland,*" Sarah Harrison contends that "[a]lthough Elvis finds some solace in

transnational cultural exchange, this is circumscribed by his simultaneous immersion in a

global economic system that perpetuates his marginalization" (97) and delimits his

creative space. His attempts at living the life he wishes and being the person he wishes to

be are constantly thwarted by his lack of money and the difficulty of earning it by legal

means. Questions of morality are thus forced into the complicated process of his coming

of age, and the line between boyhood and manhood becomes blurred. Unlike his friend

Redemption, Elvis is hesitant when it comes to certain means of earning money. When

Redemption gets him involved in a cocaine packing job, Elvis expresses great concern to

which Redemption replies:

> 'Anyway, it is not you I blame, you see?. . . I blame myself for involving a
>
> boy in a man's work'.
>
> Elvis heaved a sigh and took a swig from his beer.
>
> 'This is dangerous, we could go to prison for this.'
>
> 'In dis country you can go to prison if some soldier does not like you. At
>
> least with dis you can make some money.' (Abani 108)

Redemption's statements imply that 'a man's work' is to grab money making

opportunities regardless of their nature. This idea is supported by the fact of the constant

casual threat one faces under an oppressive regime where one's life may depend on another's caprices and fancies, as the incident that Elvis experiences in the club with the Colonel shows. Questions addressing the nature of an identity or a sense of belonging are suppressed and held in suspension when faced with the task of survival. But what does survival mean without an identity or a belonging?

Using Redemption's passport, Elvis finally leaves for America. As he waits at the airport, he flips through James Baldwin's *Going to Meet the Man* and comes across the scene in which a black man is lynched and his genitalia is cut off by a white man. Elvis flinches at the scene and imagines the scar it would leave. "He knew that scar, that pain, that shame, that degradation that no metaphor could contain, inscribing it on his body. . . He and everyone like him, until the earth is aflame with scarred black men dying in trees of fire" (Abani 320). Elvis realizes that leaving his country does not mean the end of fear and threat. He cannot escape his body and what it represents to the outside world that regards him as an Other, an intruder, an inferior social being. Through his departure, Elvis will have to confront again, more fiercely this time, his native heritage, his father's struggle for freedom, his sexuality which will be stereotyped, the meaning of being a man, a black man.

Conclusion

I have attempted to show how gender and sexuality form a thread that links the different themes presented in the novel. Maintaining gender roles is essential to the preservation of heritage which is increasingly becoming threatened by global forces and Western intrusions. It is "not easy to be a man" these days, like Sunday tells Elvis,

precisely because the definition of 'man' is changing as it is confronted with the complexities of a changing nation. Man as a breadwinner is challenged as global economy increases the gap between rich and poor and denies many the resources necessary for a comfortable life and even for survival. Moreover, the adult male as an authority figure is put into question as genealogical bonds lose their significance in the context of multiculturalism and urbanization. The community, defined before through tribal and familial lineages, and headed by a paternal figure, is dissolved in the randomness and chaos of city life. Moreover, the values of such a community are also questioned as it breeds members who violate and destroy what they claim to be defending. Sexual abuse and violence are exercised both by the family and the state, rendering the domestic and the public sphere terrorizing spaces which pose constant threat. Gender and sexuality are abused to extract pleasure from domination and reinforce masculinist interests. The result is a perversion of authority which distorts the heteronormative and the queer alike.

Between conforming and resisting, Elvis finds himself in an interstitial space which crosses both racial and gender binaries. He attempts to create a sense of self by impersonating his idol, Elvis Presley. However, this is already a paradoxical endeavor because what Elvis really desires is to be white or "even just American." Elvis' wish may have been partially granted towards the end of the novel as he leaves for America. However, the novel ends on a bittersweet note as Elvis realizes that his contested identity goes beyond his country's borders. While Elvis embodies a mutable identity in a constant state of becoming, Abani seems to wonder and ask to what extent such an identity will be accepted and endorsed. How will America treat a young Nigerian black Elvis

impersonator? Will he be perceived as a transvestite and a transgressor as well? Or will

America be the Graceland that the young boy is hoping for?

CHAPTER III

TAHAR BEN JELLOUN'S LEAVING TANGIER

Strange to be exiled from your own sex to borders that will never be home.

--Leslie Feinberg

At first glance, there seems to be no obvious connection between sexuality and home. After all, what does being a male, a man, or a homosexual, for instance, have to do with feeling at home or, on the contrary, feeling exiled from home? The above quote, however, clearly suggests an intimate relationship between sexual embodiment and the notions of home and exile. To understand this relationship, one needs to read 'home' and 'exile' not only as parameters of physical location, but also as psychic states that manifest a sense of identity or the lack thereof. Similarly, the body is not merely an anatomy, but rather a site of enacted symbolism where identity is negotiated; it can be a comforting space that contributes to a sense of belonging or a hostile one that aggravates dislocation. The divide, however, is not clear-cut, and the borders are wide. To be exiled from your own sex means, as the quote suggests, to be caught at the borders and to question the very existence of home.

With this approach in mind, I will engage in a critical reading of Tahar Ben Jelloun's *Leaving Tangier*, whose protagonist eventually declares that he is "a traitor to his identity, to his sex" (Ben Jelloun 68), after leaving his home country for a better future only to find himself paying the high price of exile with his own body. Set in Morocco, *Leaving Tangier* narrates the story of Azel, an unemployed young educated man with a degree in law. Azel spends his days drinking in bars and meeting girls for

entertainment and sex. Despaired by what seems a dead-end future in Morocco, Azel, like many others, dreams of leaving his country and seeking a better future in Europe. A nonconformist in many ways, Azel is harassed and abused by state officials and militia before he finally leaves for Spain. While many Moroccans choose to leave illegally by boat, Azel chooses to leave legally with the help of a wealthy Spaniard called Miguel. Miguel offers Azel assistance and the chance to live in Barcelona in exchange of a sexual affair which Azel has to provide. Desperate to leave, Azel accepts Miguel's offer and embarks on a journey the stakes of which turn out to be much higher than what he had expected.

Except for the chapters "Toutia," "Dear Country," and "Returning," the novel is divided into short chapters bearing the names of people whose stories are dispersed throughout the book. Some of them are set in Morocco and others in Spain. What unites them, however, is the characters' desire to cross from Morocco to the other side of the Mediterranean and seek the lives that they wish they had. As a postcolonial novel, *Leaving Tangier* addresses the failure of the decolonization project and highlights the corruption and elitism of the Arab nation-state which drives its citizens to seek futures elsewhere. Departure emerges as an obsession which haunts the characters who desperately want to leave a country indifferent to their needs and ambitions. Moreover, it questions the predicaments of identity formation against the background of a complex colonizer-colonized relationship. The novel, however, goes beyond geopolitics and adopts a 'personal is political' approach, thereby taking the above issues to the level of intimacy and bodily borders. The male body, in particular, becomes an analogy to the

home country which is invaded, abused and subjugated, and emotional detachments emerge as a product of hostility governed by destructive masculinities.

The Time and Space: Historical context

It is very difficult to summarize briefly a rich history like Morocco's. However, it is helpful to acknowledge the historical context which led to political instability, economic turmoil, and the emergence of religious fundamentalism which plays a major role in Ben Jelloun's novel.

In Morocco, European colonialism took effect in the mid nineteenth century. The French power was expanding and took Algiers in 1830. In 1844 it reached Morocco and attacked Tangier and Essaouira. As for the Spanish, their troops first occupied the uninhabited Chafarinas islands located near the Algerian borders in 1848. In 1959 a Spanish-Moroccan war was fought over the borders of the North African city Ceuta, which ended with the enlargement of Ceuta as well as Melilla, another northern city, and their concession to the Spanish. They remain Spanish territories. Meanwhile, an economic crisis was hitting Morocco, primarily caused by foreign trade policies. The country's finances, followed by its territories, were gradually in the grip of foreign hands. Finally, the Act of Algeciras in 1906 and the Treaty of Fez in 1912 entitled France full administrative, financial and executive authority in Morocco, making the latter a French protectorate. The Spanish occupied the holy city of Chaouen in 1920, and Tangier in 1940. Meanwhile, nationalist political parties were emerging and pushing for independence. Finally in 1956 Moroccan independence from the French and the Spanish was achieved. But it was only the beginning of many challenges. At the time of

independence, "eighty-nine percent of all Moroccans and ninety-eight per cent of women could not read or write. . . Most Moroccans had no more than four hectares of unirrigated land: the good irrigated land was owned by the rich, most of them Europeans" (Pennell 163). The following years carried many divisions in political influences, which made it easier for the sultan, now called king, to rule. In 1962, King Hassan II proclaimed Morocco a Monarchy.

Financial problems drove many Moroccans to migrate to Europe starting in the mid 1960s. By 1974, the remittances of these migrants "equaled about eighteen percent of the total import bill", becoming a major part of the overall national income (Pennell 168). Others, living in rural areas migrated to the big cities, which caused a housing crisis. Moreover, fierce objections to the king's rule triggered the emergence of the Islamist movement in 1969 with the creation of the Islamic Youth Movement by the Muslim Brotherhood. The Movement underwent many stages and worked on several social and political levels. However, nothing defeated the monarchy and King Hassan reigned till his death in 1999, leaving, despite several reforms and improvements, many economic problems, including large debts, high unemployment figures, and a high percentage of illiteracy. His son Mohammed VI succeeded him, who promised a more open society. King Mohammed was able to keep a stable economy and implement some objectives related to human rights. However, Islamist opposition was still powerful, unemployment was still a major problem, and migration rates were still increasing. Statistics show that "[i]n July 2001 around a quarter of a million Moroccans were working in Spain quite legally. Yet it was estimated that more than three times that number lived in Spain illegally and many died in the attempt to get there" (Pennell 185).

This is the experience that Ben Jelloun highlights in his novel as he recounts stories of departure and the readiness to die for a chance to leave a place which has ceased to be home.

The Patriarchal Nation/State and the Non-conformist: " 'Leave him to me, we'll charge him with threatening our national security' "

The reader is introduced to Azel, the protagonist, as an unemployed and despaired man who spends most of his time drinking in the city's bars. One night, Azel's rage erupts as he confronts Al Afia, the man in charge of smuggling Moroccans to Spain, at a bar he frequents. Azel's cousin had died while trying to cross the Mediterranean in one of the boats that Al Afia operates. Al Afia is described as "a man of few words and no heart" (5).To him, smuggling people is simply a business; money in exchange for a chance to leave Morocco to Spain. The trip, however, is highly risky as the boats are usually overcrowded and in poor conditions, a fact that does not hinder the continuation of "business". Al Afia has many contacts and knows the right people to call in case of any problem. Moreover, he is described as a very intelligent man who sees through people's characters and recognizes their weaknesses and needs. Despite being an emblem of corruption and malevolence, however, the novel suggests that Al Afia is also a typical example of a masculinity celebrated in Moroccan society, a powerful rich man who can get things done and who is generous towards others. This duality attributes successful masculinity to power and disregards its harmful effects on other subjects whose subordination is in turn a source that fuels that abusive power. Al Afia reflects the patriarchal character of Moroccan society in particular and of the nation/state in general.

His actions are not only respected by many, they are also covered by the state which protects Al Afia and facilitates his business.

After a long diatribe about society and the corruption of the state, Azel addresses Al Afia and calls him "a faggot- a *zamel* . . . an *attaye*," derogatory terms denoting passive homosexuality. At this point, a cop at the bar approaches Al Afia and says " 'Leave him to me, we'll charge him with threatening our national security'" (6). The scene strikingly links sexual transgression to national security as the cops decide to react the moment Azel accuses Al Afia of homosexuality. While Azel's previous insults can be tolerated to some extent, calling a powerful man a *zamel* represents "[t]he ultimate shame" (Ben Jelloun 9) and calls for immediate action. This is because homosexuality and other forms of 'deviant' sexuality are not compatible with the masculinity that society preaches and that the state promotes. The state, being the "main organizer of the power relations of gender" (Connell, "The State" 520), seeks to defend the principles on which its masculinist interests rely. While it protects those who best reflect such principles, like Al Afia, it demoralizes and punishes those who defy them, like Azel.

Azel's sexuality is introduced as nontraditional and adventurous and his relationships with women are described as "episodic but straightforward: sex was the object, nothing else" (20). As such, Azel digresses from a major element which defines the heteronormative gender structure, what Connell calls the "reproductive arena." The reproductive arena seeks to "bring reproductive distinctions between bodies into social processes" and forms the center around which gender is constructed (Connell, *Gender* 11). In other words, it assigns the highest value to reproductive bodily functions to emphasize sex differences upon which gender binaries are molded. This understanding

makes possible the emergence of social institutions such as the family, and social roles such as wife and husband. Consequently, it can be inferred that a non-reproductive sexuality means a digression from social norms and expectations. Reading Azel's sexual relationships with women through this lens places him in a sterile gender role which escapes certain institutionalizations, namely the family and the state's regulatory practices of sexual activities. In "Nationalism as Heterosexism," Peterson discusses how the construction of the state and the concept of nationalism rest on masculinist ideas that normalize heterosexuality and the reproductive sexual realm. "[T]his normalization is inextricable from the state's interest in regulating sexual reproduction," Peterson contends, "undertaken primarily through controlling women's bodies, policing sexual activities, and instituting the heteropatriarchal family/household as the basic socio-economic unit" (40). The case of a single man like Azel who is sexually involved with promiscuous women and prostitutes thus falls outside of the 'normal' and is considered to be a threat to the nation's values and the nation-state's interests. Both he and the women he is involved with escape the power that the heteropatriarchal family can exercise over bodies and their social recognizability. This is especially true for women, whose confinement to the private sphere literally confines their bodies and whose legal status becomes an extension of their husbands'. These strategies advocate the use of the female body for reproduction and celebrate the roles of wife and mother under the rubrics of sacrifice, duty and honor. In addition to being biological and social reproducers, "women also serve as symbolic markers of the nation and of the group's cultural identity," Peterson notes (48). The age-old association of the female with nature has invoked the nation-as-woman trope and the concept of the motherland which views the land as a

woman's body that needs to be defended. This trope however, assumes an idealistic image of 'woman' embodied in a "(heterosexually) fertile" female: "Imagining the 'beloved country' as a female child, a lesbian, a prostitute, or a post-menopausal wise woman generates quite different pictures" (Peterson 49). As prostitutes and promiscuous lovers, the women that Azel is involved with are thus far from evoking an idealistic image of a nation. Azel's sexual relations not only do not fit in the heteronormative state-centric social structures, but they also endorse what represents an antithesis to the nation and the motherland; the promiscuous woman and the prostitute. This is not to say, however, that Azel falls outside the nation-state's influence or control. Azel still contributes to a heterosexist system which privileges males' interests over females', mainly through his entitlement to women's bodies and sexuality. Moreover, his words to Al-Afia, for instance, clearly indicate that he regards the feminine as inferior and submissive, and therefore contributes to a masculinist collective mentality. Although he subverts the reproductive arena and strays from the typical 'national', Azel may well be an integral part of a system which subtly tolerates and encourages what Foucault describes as "compartmental sexualities" in addition to normalized ones (46).In other words, his activities may be subtly condoned as long as they remain under supervision and control. But how can his contribution to the system be read when his own body becomes an object of torture and sex?

As an unemployed educated person with a degree in law, Azel laments his condition as he contrasts it with Al Afia's: "I studied law in a nation that knows nothing of the Law even while it's pretending to demand respect for our laws, what a joke, here you have to respect the powerful, that's all" he exclaims (Ben Jelloun 6). Azel's

statement exposes the hypocrisy of a state claiming to defend morality and at the same time endorsing bribery and exploitation. While the state is infected with corruption, the minister of interior gives orders to "clean up the country" (43) by arresting everyone who displays any kind of unusual behavior. He also "[takes] advantage of the situation to arrest a few of those troublesome intellectuals on various charges and send them to prison" (Ben Jelloun 43).Like many young people his age, Azel gets arrested for being in a bar during the "cleaning up" process. There seems to be no distinction between law breakers and people who simply do not fit in the normative social system. It soon appears, however, that being both educated and unemployed is in itself a menace according to state security. This becomes clear as the investigation with Azel moves "from the hunt for drug traffickers to anti-establishment kids with diplomas but no work" (40). Education becomes a threat when it does not serve the ruling regime. Under the oppressive state where conformity is required, education may promote individuality and increase awareness towards injustice. Adding unemployment to education further intensifies the need to break free from oppression and highlights the inability of the state to provide decent living conditions for its people. An unemployed educated person becomes a proof of the state's failure and a threat to the survival of its ruling regime.

Azel's arrest occurs after he meets Miguel, a wealthy Spaniard who offers his help when the former is beaten by Al Afia's men and thrown to the sidewalk. Miguel offers Azel a ride and takes him to his house where he lets him rest and stay for the night. When arrested, Azel claims that he works for Miguel in an art gallery. This attempt to evade further investigations, however, fails and backfires on Azel. Miguel's name, along with Azel's social status, is used against him as a humiliating tool. The harassment starts

after Azel mentions Miguel's name to the cops who "were imitating actors in American

movies" and "chewing gum while they slugged him [Azel], thinking that was macho"

(41). This quickly turns into a sexualized verbal abuse whereby the cops assume the

existence of a sexual relationship between Azel and Miguel and take it as an excuse to

rape Azel. The characterization of the cops emphasizes an exaggerated masculinity that

borders on theatricality. The cops call Azel a "*zamel*" who likes to be penetrated and

insult him by referring to his educational background and to racist conceptions associated

with his acquaintance of Miguel: "'Take this *zamel* . . . you've got a cute ass- an

intellectual's ass is like a big open book, but us, we don't read, we ride . . . this is what

you do with the Christian, he gets on his belly and you stuff him, well, we 're stuffing

you and you're going to love it'" (42). "Christian" in this context refers more to race than

religion- namely European. The implication that the European is a passive homosexual

feeds a mentality of vengeance and emphasizes an Arab hypermasculinity. It states that

the Arab man can sexually dominate even if he is politically dominated and culturally

defeated, and thus places the phallus at the center of power relations. Although Azel is

the victim of the rape, the European 'other' is used as a fantasy to accentuate a sexual

hierarchy of domination. Azel's sexuality is queered in relation to Miguel's supposed

sexuality, and his body is feminized in relation to his supposedly queer sexuality. An

intricate mixture of racism, homophobia and misogyny thus fuels this brutal sexual abuse

whose aim is to subjugate the non-conforming male subject.

   In *Masculine Identity in the Fiction of the Arab East since 1967*, Samira Aghacy

contends that in dictatorships and oppressive states, "[m]en themselves are targets

occupying a feminine position in relation to the regime apparatus, which is clearly

identified as masculine" (95). The 'feminization' of the male subject is achieved by usurpation of his body through physical violence. As traditional beliefs attribute weakness and submission to femaleness, they perceive the capitulated male body as emasculated and therefore feminized. In its extreme form, 'feminization' is achieved through rape whereby the victim's 'shame' is often internalized and disrupts his gendered sense of self. This is what happens to Azel. When Miguel comes to get him from the police station, he suggests that Azel sees a doctor. The latter, however, refuses adamantly by saying "No, definitely not, I'm ashamed, ashamed!" (42) While Miguel suggests that they get a medical certificate and prosecute the perpetrators, Azel knows that "a policeman's word is worth more than [his]" (42) and that the governing system protects its members and overlooks their assaults on innocent civilians. Unpunished and uncontrolled, these assaults form a strategic pattern that contributes to the power of what Aghacy calls "the modern phallic state" whose aim is to construct "a national subject that is outmaneuvered, overwhelmed, and vanquished" (Aghacy 97). This construction is thus paralleled by a destruction of an established masculinity whereby the male subject is stripped of his self-identified 'manhood' and forced to assume a 'feminized' passive role. In this light, national and gender identity go hand in hand in their formation and their dissolution, creating an ongoing dialogue which debates the meaning and significance of both.

Double Crossing and Sexual Politics: "the lover by night was thus the servant by day"

The paradigms of homeland, nation, and gender are thus destabilized and their association with security and belonging is put into question. However, if staying means instability and oppression, does leaving necessarily mean security and freedom? The act of leaving brands Ben Jelloun's novel which takes departure as its starting point. Ben Jelloun highlights the Moroccan experience of illegal migration in the first chapter entitled "Toutia," the name that Moroccans give to the boat which smuggles people into Spain. Gathering at the Café Hafa in Tangier, people "wait for the twinkling lights of Spain to appear" (Ben Jelloun 1) and for Toutia to arrive carrying with it both joy and dread. Toutia's journey is filled with both a promise of a better life and a risk of death. While many people achieve their goal of leaving Morocco and arriving to Spain, some lose their life and drown in the waters separating the two countries, "in this specific circle," where "a fluid boundary exists, a kind of separation between the sea and the ocean, the calm, smooth waters of the Mediterranean and the fierce surge of the Atlantic" (Ben Jelloun 3).Leaving the country for Azel and for many others is "an obsession, a kind of madness that [eats] at him day and night" (Ben Jelloun 10). This obsession outweighs everything else, even life itself, because there seems to be no life without departure. Paradoxically, there seems to be no home without departure either.

It is only when he leaves that Azel starts building the idea of Morocco as a home through writing. On his way to Spain, he starts writing a diary addressed to his country, in which he expresses his fears and concerns: "I am not leaving you forever. You are simply lending me to the Spanish people, our neighbours, our friends. We know them

well" (Ben Jelloun 54). The act of writing, thus, allows Azel to express for the first time a kind of longing or melancholy towards Morocco. Soon after, this melancholy turns into frustration and anger as Azel's conflicting feelings towards Spain engender the concepts of 'us' and 'them'. After arriving in Spain and as he sits alone in his room at Miguel's place, Azel writes "You know, from Morocco you can see Spain, but it doesn't work like that in the opposite direction. The Spanish don't see us, they don't give a damn, they've no use for our country" (Ben Jelloun 58). While Azel wishes to perceive the Spanish as a friend and a neighbor, he finds himself confronted by the fear of neglect and insecurity. His statements reveal a frustration about the relationship between the Moroccans and the Spanish, and suggest a failed reciprocity. While the Moroccans perceive Spain as a better place, the Spanish are completely indifferent and unthoughtful towards Morocco. Azel's thoughts remind the reader that the "fluid boundary" that separates the two countries is a highly significant geographical determinant which carries with it historical implications, for it separates the "Dark Continent" from Europe. While the Strait of Gibraltar between Morocco and Spain is the closest distance between Africa and Europe, the proximity between the two countries only highlights the contrasts between them and the uneven process of development and progress.

Acknowledging that Spain was one of Morocco's colonizers, the novel interrogates the nature of the present relationship between the two countries and complicates the interpretation of colonialism's legacy. The quest for an identity so complexly associated with the nation and its conflicts becomes a challenge that consumes Azel and drives him out of the very nation he is desperate to belong to and into another to which he may never belong. In this case, "coming to national identity requires . . . leaving

the Nation, going outside the very national identity one is trying to embody" (Hayes 450).

It requires distance from Morocco and proximity to Spain for Azel to realize the stakes of

border crossing. Spain becomes an elusive object of desire, yet a source of self-

destruction. This duality is translated through his affair with Miguel which while

providing Azel with some of his needs, also destroys the very things that he is seeking.

But what is it that he is seeking exactly?

> On his way to Spain, he writes in his diary the following:

>> Today is a great day for me: I finally have the opportunity and good
>>
>> fortune to go away, to leave you . . . I'm ready to change, ready to live
>>
>> free, to be useful, to attempt things that will transform me into a man
>>
>> standing on his own two feet, no longer afraid, no longer dependent on his
>>
>> sister for cigarette money, a man finished with odd jobs. (Ben Jelloun 54)

What is at stake in staying or leaving is not merely a job, wealth, or a successful life. It is

a quest for a subjectivity that is free and fearless. This subjectivity, however, is intricately

linked to what Azel perceives as a successful masculinity. It is interpreted as an

independent man who can stand on his own without the help of others, especially women.

This is further highlighted as Azel's mother says: "I know my son, he cannot accept

being supported in this life by any woman, even his sister. He has his pride" (45). At this

point in the novel, as Azel contemplates departure, it can be questioned whether he

expresses a wish to reproduce the same heteronormative subject that the state endorses

since his understanding of what a successful masculinity is may well be that of his

nation-state and society. This reproduction, however, seems to be not possible in his

home country. In order to become the subject he wishes to be, Azel has to leave

Morocco.

In "Male Homosexuality in Modern Arabic Literature," Frédéric Lagrange states

that "[l]iterature often displaces the shock of the encounter with the West into the arena

of sexuality. This shift is certainly inevitable, and proves the traumatic nature of this

meeting of cultures. It has affected one of the most intimate elements of human life, the

relationship to the body and to sexuality" (187). *Leaving Tangier* perfectly illustrates this

tendency as the relationship between its protagonist and the West is eventually translated

into the affair between him and Miguel. The "encounter with the West" and the "meeting

of cultures" thereby permeate the intimate and the personal through gender play and

sexualized power relations as Azel eventually becomes Miguel's sex slave. In his attempt

to build a better life, Azelnot only crosses geographical borders, but also bodily and

sexual boundaries. After Miguel helps Azel on two different occasions, the two become

close and Miguel expresses his intention to help Azel go to Spain. However, it eventually

becomes clear to Azel that he must become Miguel's lover. Consenting to a homosexual

affair thus becomes Azel's first step towards 'freedom '.With Miguel's help, Azel is able

to leave Morocco and settle in Spain where he starts working in a gallery owned by the

Spaniard. Miguel's generosity, however, has a dark side that is manifested in his

condescending attitude towards Moroccan men:

> He loved the 'awkwardness' of Moroccan men, by which he meant their
>
> sexual ambiguity. He loved the olive sheen of their skin. And he loved
>
> their availability, which marked the inequality in which the relationship
>
> was formed, for the lover by night was thus the servant by day, casually

dressed to do the daily shopping, wearing fine clothing in the evening to

stimulate sexual desire. (Ben Jelloun32)

Miguel's racist attitude towards Moroccan men is obvious in the above passage. He

perceives them as inferior and considers this "inequality" to be the basis of exciting

relationships. To him, the Moroccan man is submissive and willing to do anything to

please his lover. It is with this mentality that Miguel approaches Azel and lures him into

the affair. The latter's sense of adventure, however, soon wanes as he begins to discover

Miguel's dark side. His high expectations and hope in a brighter future soon disappear as

he realizes he is an alien to the new society and is gradually becoming an alien to his

body and sexual identity as well. "[T]he shock of the encounter with the West" thus

attacks on the two intersecting levels of culture and sexuality, and is manifested in a

sense of displacement that haunts Azel throughout the book.

Exoticism and Feminization: "The Orient: Think Pink"

The independent and successful masculinity that Azel seeks is thus gradually

shattered as he becomes totally dependent on Miguel, and his individuality is crushed and

substituted by a generic identity arising from his race. After moving to Spain, Azel

becomes Miguel's lover and has no choice but to obey Miguel's wishes since his stay in

Spain depends on the latter's approval. Eventually, Azel becomes Miguel's sex slave and

embodies his fantasy of the subservient Moroccan man.

The intricate relationship between race and sexuality is perfectly illustrated in the

scene of the party entitled "The Orient: Think Pink" which Miguel organizes in his

house. I wish to discuss how this scene emphasizes the orientalist and imperial discourse

through its double layered theme of 'orient' and 'pink' which brings together racial and sexual stereotyping, connects the 'Oriental' body to 'feminized' and exotic sexuality, and places the 'white' male in the position of control and power.

At the party, "Miguel was dressed as a vizier of the Arabian Nights, while most of his friends wore Moroccan djellabas or Turkish jabadors and saroualsin every shade of pink" (85-6). On the other hand, Azel" made himself up like a bride" by wearing women's clothes, a wig and heavy makeup which covered his face like a mask. As he entered the room, Azel was greeted with the following compliments:

"But what a lovely statue!"….

"And such a perfect *mélange* – half woman, half man! Isn't Miguel just spoiling us!"….

"The loveliest catamite of the Maghreb!"….

"No, no, open your eyes, this is no pickup, and not some passing fancy, this is serious, I can tell you!" (86)

The above quotes transform Azel into an object of fascination and entertainment, and exhibit perfectly a Western gaze directed towards an Oriental body, the body of the Other. Azel experiences what Fanon describes as "[dissection] under white eyes, the only real eyes" which objectively cut away slices of [his] reality" (116), averring that the Western gaze detaches people from their history and struggles, and makes them a fantasy which communicates the ideas and clichés formed by the Western mind about the non Western Other. With his male body, feminized costume and exaggerated makeup, *Leaving Tangier*'s protagonist theatrically displays sexual transgression and emulates the West's fantasies of the Orient. The Orient's "silent indifference, its feminine

penetrability, its supine malleability" (Said, *Orientalism* 206) are invoked in the guests'

comments which transform Azel into a "statue," a sexually provocative exhibited object,

and a "catamite". The eroticization of Azel's passiveness reaches its climax as Miguel

seizes Azel's hand and addresses his guests by saying:

> My friends, I'm delighted to present my latest conquest to you: the body
>
> of an athlete sculpted in bronze, with a piquant soupçon of femininity…
>
> Azel is simply a most beautiful object, an object to tempt every eye… He
>
> belongs to me, and I won't have any fighting over him! (87)

Miguel not only confirms Azel's objectification, but also claims possession over him. A

compelling imperialist discourse presents itself here as Azel's body becomes a space to

be invaded, occupied and subdued, just like the nation of Morocco. This is further

highlighted by the comparison that the author draws between Azel and a bride. Azel

makes himself up like a bride and when ready, imitating bridal comportment as well, he

waits in the room and only leaves it when the bell rings around midnight. As he enters the

living room, everyone "gaz[es] at him in admiration" and compliments him. In addition

to Azel's explicit feminization, comparing him to a bride invokes the trope of the virgin

which in the context of this scene illuminates the power dynamics between Azel and

Miguel. In *Imperial Leather*, McClintock states that "[w]ithin patriarchal narratives, to

be a virgin is to be empty of desire and void of sexual agency, passively awaiting the

thrusting, male insemination of history, language and reason" (30). In this light, Azel,

like a virgin, is stripped of his sexual agency as he becomes dependent on Miguel's

fancies and whims. Moreover, detached from his home country and an alien to a new

society, Azel needs Miguel to launch him into the Spanish culture and help him become part of it.

Following McClintock's reading of the concept of virginity and its relation to the myth of the virgin land, it can be perceived how Miguel's speech reflects a power dynamics against the backdrop of a colonial history. "Within colonial narratives," McClintock contends, "the eroticizing of 'virgin' space [ ] effects a territorial appropriation. . . and white male patrimony is violently assured as the sexual and military insemination of an interior void" (30). Colonial and patriarchal narratives intersect in this scene to conquer, overcome and tame the Oriental male body which acts as a site of innocence, pleasure, and violence. Through exaggerated cross-dressing, Azel fluctuates between being a bride, a whore, a statue, a hermaphrodite, for the purpose of satisfying the guests' fetishes, and is ultimately claimed as the possession of the "white male." The violation of his body symbolizes the territorial invasion of his country.

Religious Fundamentalism and the 'Good' Muslim Man: "The West is diseased, and we don't want it to infect our children"

Azel's feminization, thus, is not to be read as a particular case, but as a symbol of the feminization of the Arab man in general. The novel emphasizes this phenomenon by exposing an anxiety about masculinity that is widespread in the Arab world, and that is manifested in its extreme form through religious fundamentalism which emerges as a powerful player in the book and eventually causes Azel's death.

Despaired by the deteriorating living conditions in Morocco, many young men seek religion as an outlet to their worries and an emotional compensation for their

frustration. Fundamentalist groups take advantage of this situation and attempt to recruit these men by promising them better lives and nurturing their sense of national and religious belonging. The chapter entitled "Mohammed-Larbi" sheds light on the activism of these groups, especially those located in Western countries. Mohammed-Larbi, a young man wishing to leave Morocco is helped out by his uncle to join him in Belgium. The uncle, however, is a leader of a Muslim community that promotes traditionalism and religious fundamentalism. A religious sage, the *alem*, provides spiritual guidance and heads community meetings. Ben Jelloun emphasizes the patriarchal and masculinist nature of the group's approach which uses an essentialist discourse to segregate both genders and cultures. The *alem* addresses gender issues and preaches on "how to maintain the absolute superiority of men over women, how to defeat Western propaganda seeking to destroy masculine power, how to perform one's conjugal duties without slipping into vice, and so on" (71).

According to the group, the west is guilty of destabilizing gender relations by empowering women and promoting gender equality. The Muslim man, thus, becomes the defender of masculinity and the keeper of virtuous manhood. "We are Muslims, responsible and united, we belong to the same house, the same nation, the *UmmaIslamiya*! [Islamic nation]" the *alem* declares (72). Religion, nationalism and masculinity intersect and become equivalent actors in restoring values considered to be lost or fading in the face of a hegemonic western cultural invasion. The *alem* preaches about the role of the fathers who must remain vigilant about the future of their daughters "on Christian soil," the importance of discipline and female chastity, and condemns the west's openness and flexibility when it comes to sexuality. He gives examples of gay

marriage which to him is an indication of a society's insanity, and of western media and advertising, of "[h]alf-naked girls" who pose for commercials and "[m]en made up like women, posing to sell perfume" (72). His speeches put issues of gender and sexuality at the center of the problematic relationship between 'East' and 'West', 'conservative' and 'liberal', 'Muslim' and 'Christian.' The group's focal mission becomes what Kimmel describes as "the recovery of manhood from the devastatingly emasculating politics of globalization" (Globalization 615).Cultural exchange and fusion inevitably bring about change in gender roles and dynamics pertaining to each cultural group. By gradually changing the shape of social communities and introducing new values, globalization becomes a direct threat to traditional patriarchy which rules many social systems.

In "Globalization and Its Mal(e)contents," Michael Kimmel contends that extremist groups

> Deploy masculinity' as a form of symbolic capital, an ideological
>
> resource, (1) to understand and explicate their plight; (2) as a rhetorical
>
> device to problematize the identities of those against whom they believe
>
> themselves fighting: and (3) as a recruitment device to entice other,
>
> similarly situated young men to join them. (605)

Indeed, Ben Jelloun demonstrates this theory as he highlights the groups' fixation on issues of gender and the close link they establish between these issues and their recognized codes of morality and ethics. Defending masculinity and restoring what is lost through globalization and Western hegemony is promoted as the duty of each Muslim man whose very identity is threatened by the sexual 'liberation' of the West.

Religious affiliation, thus, is presented as an alternative to the nation-state which has failed to stand up against Western hegemony. Whether Islamist movements work in opposition to the state is, however, arguable. In *Islamism in Morocco*, MalikaZeghal contends that "the Moroccan case shows that the connection between Islam and the state… is a political construct strategically devised by post-colonial state elites" and therefore "[w]hen the state insists on the necessity of a separation between religion and political activity, it does so in order to ensure its own monopoly on Islam in the sphere of political competition" (xii-xiii). In this light, religion can be easily abused and used as a tool to control and dominate.

Leaving Tangier identifies both the movements and the state as oppressive and exploitive forces and consequently, through its protagonist, refuses Islamism as an alternative to the nation-state. Azel is approached by the fundamentalist groups several times, both in Morocco and in Spain. However, his lifestyle and his awareness of the group's nature have made him immune to their brainwashing methods. Whereas some of his friends have resorted to religion for some spiritual relief, Azel's lifestyle forbids him from taking this path for he is "too fond of girls and drinking" and "most of his pleasures [are] forbidden by religion" (Ben Jelloun 11). Joining a community based on fundamental religious beliefs is thus not an option for Azel, even if it is the last one. He refuses to submit to the fundamentalists' pressure, even when he ends up on the street as an "undocumented alien" after breaking up with Miguel.

Living at the margins: "What is an undocumented alien?"

After many fights, the relationship between Azel and Miguel comes to an end. Far from peaceful, however, the breakup exposes Miguel's violent side, "[t]he slap knocked Azel down and left him stunned. He had never imagined that one day Miguel would hit him" (141).The episode which marks the end of the affair also marks the failure of the one source of security on which Azel depended. Even though the domestic space that Miguel offered did not succeed in providing Azel with emotional stability, it did at least provide physical security and safety from harm, comforts that his nation failed to provide. With Miguel resorting to physical violence, the notion of physical safety collapses and exposes Azel's vulnerable condition once more. After leaving the house, Azel has nowhere to go to but the streets of Barcelona where "he was free at last to go smoke kif, drink cheap wine, hang out in the streets, and see his pals again" (144). At this point in the novel, Ben Jelloun reinstates his protagonist's condition prior to leaving Tangier; broke, drunk, drifting and insecure. This time, however, he is also illegal.

In a chapter entitled "Azel", Ben Jelloun asks "What is an undocumented alien?" to which he provides several answers. "[A] foreigner who has entered a country legally but no longer has a work permit, a residence permit, or any reason to remain in that country," (189) is one definition that applies to Azel after his breakup with Miguel. After losing Miguel as a lover, Azel also loses the right to stay in Spain. At this point, Azel represents an intersection between the queer subject and the immigrant who both face the challenge of recognizability and legitimacy. Although he does not identify as a homosexual, Azel eventually faces the obstacles that many queer subjects go through. His 'queerness' is emphasized through a parallelism that the author draws between him and

his sister, Kenza. Kenza meets Miguel in Morocco when the latter visits Azel's family several times, and soon becomes aware of the nature of the relationship between the two. However, she pushes Azel to convince Miguel of marrying her and taking her to Spain. When asked, Miguel agrees to the marriage which takes place in Morocco and is performed in a traditionally religious manner. For this purpose, Miguel also agrees to convert to Islam and changes his name to Mounir. While this event ostensibly carries an absurd quality to it in the context of the novel, it serves to highlight the performativity of heteronormative social behaviors. Few pointers and tips from Azel on how to look "like a man, a real one" were enough to get Miguel through the marriage ceremony, and Kenza through the Spanish borders. "Kenza arrived in Barcelona like a real princess," (112) and was warmly welcomed by Miguel. Unlike Azel who, upon his arrival, had to stay in the maid's room before moving into Miguel's, Kenza was immediately put in the guest room and encouraged to feel free around the house. "As Miguel's wife and mistress of the house, Kenza had the advantage" over Carmen, the housekeeper, as well as over Azel (119). Even though she does not abuse this power, her centrality underlines Azel's marginality. Despite being Miguel's lover, at some point, Azel occupies a secondary position in the house compared to his sister. Azel's situation is further exacerbated as his relationship with Miguel starts to collapse and the latter's friendship with Kenza flourishes. As a result, Azel "avoided being alone with his sister and was increasingly on edge" (113). The tension between the siblings, mediated by their relationship with Miguel, playfully evokes the reality of the hetero-homo binary and its intersection with racial hierarchies. While Azel has a hold on Miguel's emotional state, he has no access to legal privileges that may result from their relationship. As the emotional and the physical

fail to translate into the legal, Azel finds himself in a civil status the justification of which is no longer valid. His right to stay in Spain was derived from his professional relationship with Miguel and not his sexual one. After their breakup, Azel is left with no job, no money, no house, and consequently no right to remain in Spain.

In the article "Sexuality, Migration, and the Shifting Line between Legal and Illegal Status," Eithne Luibhéid discusses the heteronormative mentality and principles that govern immigration policies which depend greatly on the traditional concept of the heterosexual family. Whereas male-female relationships and blood ties can be used as a basis for legal immigration, same-sex relationships and other forms of alternative lifestyles are not easily recognized if at all. This issue is illustrated in the novel by the contrast between Azel's civil status and his sister's. While Azel ends up as an undocumented alien due to his breakup with Miguel, Kenza, as Miguel's wife, does not face any problems regarding her legal stay in Spain.

The hetero-homo binary, however, is not clear-cut. Luibhéid contends that "heteronormative immigration control has historically withheld recognition from many kinds of relationships, based not only on sexuality but also on intersecting gender, racial, class, and geopolitical factors" (290). After all, both Azel and Kenza depend on Miguel and need his help to stay in Spain. Leaving Tangier and residing in Europe would not have been possible without the help of the Spaniard whose double-edged generosity underlies the vicious circle that Azel and Kenza experience as immigrants. In her article "A Moroccan Tale of an Outlandish Europe," Nicoletta Pireddu contends that "Ben Jelloun's novel focuses in particular on the gap between the anticipation of success and the failure of the adventure of mobility" (21), leading to an inevitable double exile

consisting of a detachment from the native country and a failure of integration into a new

one. The siblings' high hopes soon wane as they both realize that the Europe they desired

was a fantasy and that reality carries with it harsh challenges and compromises. Thus,

after the broken home country and the rejection of religion as a resort, immigration

proves to be another failed compensation for the damaged sense of belonging. The novel

implies that the postcolonial nation-state produces an alienated subject, religion produces

a disillusioned subject, and exile engenders a queer subject that will never fit in

flawlessly.

Ben Jelloun perfectly illustrates this failure as he finally makes of his protagonist

an informer, a job that requires loyalty to none and disloyalty to all. Azel's encounter

with a man called Ahmad Abd al-Wahhab, a member of the Muslim Brothers, finally

determines Azel's fate. The man strikes a conversation with Azel after the latter sells him

a watch. In his attempt to recruit him, the man leaves Azel his card in case he changes his

mind. What follows is an unfortunate incident reminiscent of the one Azel experiences in

Morroco's bar. After the man leaves, a fight erupts between two immigrants on the street

and draws the police's attention. "Responding with exceptional speed, the police arrested

everyone," Ben Jelloun writes (191). Eventually, the police let the Spaniards go and

detained only the immigrants, only the "*moros*." With outdated documents and hashish in

his pocket, Azel is arrested and taken to the police station where he is interrogated. To

save himself, he shows Abd-al-Wahhab's card to the police and offers to help them in

uncovering terrorist plots against Spain. A "*moro*" to the Spanish, a tool to the

fundamentalists, a misfit to his country, Azel finally rejects all labels by becoming

disloyal to everyone. Far from being a sincere initiative, Azel's suggestion to become an

informer is merely an act of survival. It is a card he decides to play when the time is right.

Becoming an informer provides Azel with some comfort and peace of mind. However, it

eventually leads to his brutal death which is foreshadowed throughout the book by his

own death visions.

Death and Its Intimations: "I've become a *walou*, a nothing, an absence, the memory of a man, a shadow…"

From the beginning, driven by the obsession of leaving, Azel keeps picturing

himself as a dead body or an inanimate object crossing the waters in an attempt to reach

Spain: "As if in an absurd and persistent dream, Azel sees his naked body among other

naked bodies swollen by seawater, his face distorted by salt and longing, his skin burnt

by the sun, split open across the chest as if there had been fighting before the boat went

down" (2). The constant fantasy of death exposes the fear associated with the act of

leaving Morocco. It is not only a fear of physical death, but also a fear associated with

loss of identity and recognition. Azel does not only see himself dead, he sees himself

"mourned by his mother and sister, missed by his friends" as well (10). Azel

contemplates his being beyond physicality and considers the value of his relationships

and his recognition. Moreover, the loss of emotions and the sense of alienation are

highlighted through Azel's fantasies of himself as an inanimate object. As he walks with

Siham, a lover of his, along the harbor, Azel expresses his desire to be a crate of

merchandise being delivered to Europe: "I've got the right to envy those crates of

merchandise! I'd like to be one of them- not be inside one, I'd suffocate- but *be* one,

delivered to a warehouse in Europe…" (25). This desire not only reflects Azel's feelings

of estrangement in his own country, but also foresees the rupture, through which he loses his humanity, that he experiences later on in Spain. Consider, for instance, the following image envisioned by Azel while still in Morocco- "He imagined having himself modeled in wax, crossing the border disguised as a display dummy, a lifeless object instead of a breathing human being" (26) – and the quote discussed earlier in the party scene and in which Miguel introduces Azel to his guests- My friends, I'm delighted to present my latest conquest to you: the body of an athlete sculpted in bronze … Azel is simply a most beautiful object" (87). The parallelism is striking as both images insist on Azel's objectification and lifelessness. In both cases, he is a dummy, a passive body to be transported, displaced and manipulated. His expressions and emotions are carefully hidden behind the wax and the bronze which cover his body and which reassign him to the realm of the nonhuman. As Pireddu contends, Azel is "[d]estined to a nonlife" or a double exile caused by the suspension between a Moroccan reality he wants to escape and a Spanish one into which he cannot integrate and where he remains as a nonliving being. The above two images illustrate this state and show that the emotional exile that Azel experiences before leaving Morocco is not resolved and persists during his stay in Spain. Relating Alessandro Dal Lago's concept of "non-persons", Pireddu states that "migrants turn into paradoxical nonexisting human beings, because although their lives look socially and materially analogous to those of the Spanish and European citizens with whom they share the territory, they do not exist either for those very societies or for themselves" (28).

In Azel's case, this dislocation is further aggravated by the questions surrounding his sexuality. After trying to convince himself for some time that his affair with Miguel is

mere role play, Azel finally acknowledges the drastic effects that the affair has had on his

sexual activities and tendencies. Unable to contain his distress and confusion, Azel finally

opens up to his sister and confesses his ideas and concerns. "Forgive me, sister, I must

speak to you about things that brothers and sisters don't talk about" (154) he tells Kenza

before delving into the details of his problem. While he used to resort to women for

sexual pleasure and an assertion of "virility", Azel finds himself no longer able to

perform sexually. "I'm done for, I can't be a man anymore. . . I've become a *walou*, a

nothing, an absence, the memory of a man, a shadow…"(155) he says, unraveling

another layer of conflict, exile from his sexuality, and reasserting the "nonexisting" life

he is experiencing. While his body has offered him some comfort and pleasure in the

past, it no longer serves this purpose. It becomes a projection of the emotional breakdown

and a reminder of "the failure of the adventure of mobility" (Pireddu 21) which Azel

undergoes. The quest for an assertive masculinity eventually leads to a distrust

surrounding sexual identity as Azel perceives himself as "a traitor to his identity, to his

sex"(68).From a marginalized citizen to a lifeless dummy to a shadow of a man, it can be

said that Azel moves in a process of identity degeneration which reaches its peak when

he becomes an informer, especially that he takes pride in what he does: "He had become

another man: courageous, subtle, and strong"(204). In the following passage, Azel figures

as a deluded megalomaniac as he thinks of himself as a hero:

> Azel's dearest wish was to wipe out all memory of his departure from
>
> Morocco, and to return home like a hero. Was he not personally helping to
>
> combat the terrorism that was threatening Europe? Now he dreamed of
>
> appearing on television, introduced as the good Muslim responsible for

> thwarting a dangerous plot. All this had pushed Azel's sexual problems to
>
> the sidelines… (204)

The above passage illuminates a nostalgia mixed with duty and pride. While Azel wishes

to completely erase the memory of his departure from Tangier, he extracts satisfaction

from his work as an informer which to him represents a duty of a good Muslim. Being

Moroccan, living in Spain, practicing Islam, and becoming an informer, are conditions

that coalesce in Azel's consciousness as perfectly harmonious when in fact their

coexistence has failed in his case. Interestingly, it is at this point that Azel's sexual

problems cease to become his primary focus, suggesting that sexuality, like nationality

and spiritual belonging, does not stand alone, and is but another dimension in the matrix

of identity (de)formation. The 'harmony' that Azel reaches, however, does not last long.

Once again, Azel predicts his morbid ending and senses that "this equilibrium [can] not

last forever" (204). After disappearing from view for several days, the police find him

murdered in his flat: "Azel was on the floor, his throat cut, his head in a pool of blood.

The Brothers had slaughtered him like a lamb sacrificed for Aïd el-Kebir" (204). The

protagonist's inhumane death derides the naivety of the optimism of migration, but does

not put an end to the desire of movement and the "call of the open sea" (Ben Jelloun

219).

Rewriting at the Borders: "What if this ship were just a fiction. . ."

In *The Politics of Home*, Rosemary Marangoly George contends that

"[i]mmigration and the fictions it engenders teach a certain detachment about 'home". . . .

Home in the immigrant genre is a fiction that one can move beyond or recreate at will.

The association between an adequate self and a place to call home is held up to scrutiny and then let go" (200). The last chapter of *Leaving Tangier*, entitled "Returning" perfectly illustrates the fictional character of home produced by the experience of immigration. The chapter randomly brings all the characters that have left Morocco, including Kenza and Azel's dead body, together on board the Toutia which is set to head towards Morocco. It carries an absurd and meta-fictional quality which disconnects it from the rest of the novel. The characters gathering at the same time and place does not seem probable in the context of the novel's unfolding events. Moreover, the presence of a character named Flaubert and others named after other known authors transparently exposes the phantasmic element conveyed in the chapter. "'What if this ship were just a fiction, a novel cast upon the waters. . . So, all I have to do is enter the novel . . . . [B]ecoming a character in a novel is the best thing that could happen to me'" exclaims Flaubert (215-6). Fiction emerges as a tool to write a desired return home as well as one's own identity. It offers a detachment from anchoring realities and the possibility to recreate other possibilities. Toutia, this time, is a fantasy transporting people's hopes and dreams, not only their bodies. It is a longing for a place of belonging which might never be reached, suggesting that the imaginary boat is in itself a destination as one of the characters suggests at the end of the book :" 'we are all called upon to leave our homes, we all hear the siren call of the open sea. . . So let us leave, let's sail the seas as long as even the tiniest light still flickers in the soul of a single human being…" (219-20) The last chapter, thus, does not bring adventure to an end. Instead, it makes the journey a destination in itself, and the borders a space where stories of home, of the nation and of

the self can be rewritten. But does this mean that 'home', 'nation' and 'self' are fiction in themselves?

In *The World, The Text and The Critic*, Edward Said states that thinking of the nation as home "does not cover the nuances, principally of reassurance, fitness, belonging, association, and community, entailed in the phrase *at home* or *in place*" (Said, *The World* 8). It is not enough to identify 'home' with a specific geographical area or social system, and might even be misleading. As *Leaving Tangier* demonstrates, the nation-state might not necessarily be regarded as home, especially if it is an entity struggling with its history and present challenges. Moreover, the novel suggests that the postcolonial nation in particular might become a home only in the imagination of the immigrant mind. This is not to say, however, that home is not real, because imagination does not necessarily work in opposition to reality as Butler contends in *Undoing Gender*:

> Fantasy is not the opposite of reality; it is what reality forecloses, and as a result, it defines the limits of reality, constituting it as its constitutive outside. The critical promise of fantasy, when and where it exists, is to challenge the contingent limits of what will and will not be called reality. Fantasy is what allows us to imagine ourselves and others otherwise; it establishes the possible in excess of the real; it points elsewhere, and when it is embodied, it brings the elsewhere home. (29)

Fantasy thus can be a compensation for as well as a tool to construct reality. It fills the reality gaps which create a constant sense of longing, and this is how fantasy "points elsewhere." On the other hand, fantasy can redefine what is real by materializing and becoming itself a reality, and this is how fantasy "brings the elsewhere home." In other

words, fantasy attempts to recreate reality by embodying its missing parts. In this light, *Leaving Tangier* attempts to compensate for the impossibility of rewriting a nation's history by looking for a place of belonging elsewhere. The last chapter, however, locates the 'elsewhere' in the imagination, thereby transforming 'home', 'nation' and 'self' to an individual reality. Like his protagonist, Ben Jelloun constructs 'home' in the pages of a book which can be carried everywhere one goes.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored the concepts of nation, home and exile and their intersection with the realm of gender and sexuality in Ben Jelloun's *Leaving Tangier*. Infected with corruption and burdened with accumulated struggles, the (postcolonial) nation-state becomes an obstacle in the face of individual progress. Moreover, it becomes a hostile space which threatens the individual's body and security. Eventually, leaving ostensibly seems the only option of survival and hope for a life free of shame and suffering.

Leaving, however, comes at a high price for the protagonist. As he becomes Miguel's lover, Azel is forced to negotiate his sexuality and eventually his subjectivity. He is subjected to stereotyping and prejudice as he is objectified to reflect a Western fantasy of the Orient. His sexuality becomes a space where power relations are played out, and his body a site which intimately speaks to imperial conquest and domination. Azel's dream of finding comfort and safety is thus shattered, bringing about his gradual alienation from both cultural and sexual identity.

The novel's simultaneous treatment of immigration, queer sexuality and interracial relationships sheds light on different layers of alienation and exile which intersect and are embodied in the protagonist. Azel experiences physical exile when he leaves Morocco and later an alienation from his culture and his sexuality through his relationship with Miguel. The novel suggests that nothing can replace the sense of belonging which the home country is expected to provide, even spirituality and religion. Religion is presented as yet another political system which fails to stand as an alternative to the nation-state.

However, despite the protagonist's failed endeavors and his tragic ending, *Leaving Tangier* insists on the necessity of mobility. Suspended between countries, between fantasy and reality, and between life and death, the characters in the last chapter choose Toutia and its life-risking journey over staying in Europe. It is not the idea of returning home, however, that the characters seek, but the fantasy of adventure that allows them to rewrite themselves and their stories. The meta-fictional ending highlights the narrative quality of identity construction and therefore the possibility of its reconstruction. But how does one reconstruct sexuality, nationality or a sense of belonging? Would that mean finding oneself after feeling exiled? Or is exile intrinsic to a multifaceted subjectivity?

CHAPTER IV

SYNTHESIS AND NEW DIRECTIONS

… these literatures depict the world that is emerging in front of us, and by doing so

recover, after several decades, from what was "forbidden in fiction" what has always

been the province of artists, novelists, creators: the task of giving a voice and a visage to

the global unknown- and to the unknown in us.

--- "Toward a 'World Literature' in French"

In 2007, forty-four French writers, including Tahar Ben Jelloun, published a

manifesto in the French journal *Le Monde*, in which they declare the death of

Francophone literature and the birth of a "world literature in French." The writers refused

the dominion of one "center" which forces writers coming from abroad to "rid

themselves of their foreign trappings before melting in the crucible of the French

language and its national history" (Simon 54). They declared that the center is now to be

found at the four corners of the globe and this is what allows language to travel freely:

"With the center placed on an equal plane with other centers, we're witnessing the birth of

a new constellation, in which language freed from its exclusive pact with the nation, free

from every other power hereafter but the powers of poetry and the imaginary, will have

no other frontiers but those of the spirit" (Simon 56). According to the writers, thus,

literature is taking a new direction by addressing universal concerns through those who

had no voice. The manifesto describes this as a "recovery" of literature after decades of

silence and a new mission of giving a shape to the "global unknown" and the "unknown" in both the writers and readers.

In this last chapter, I consider this new viewpoint and investigate whether the novels *Graceland* and *Leaving Tangier* represent a new trend which moves postcolonial literature towards a new direction. First, I consider the generational aspect of the two novels by placing them into their respective generational "categories" and posing the question: In what ways are these novels different in their portrayal of nation, gender and identity? To answer this question, I consider the two novels vis-à-vis three classic books which are perceived as canonical landmarks in postcolonial literature, namely Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958), Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* (1966) and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight Children* (1980). The aim of this comparison is to recall chronologically the major concerns that these works have raised and examine how *Graceland* and *Leaving Tangier* reflect a shift in perspectives surrounding nation, gender and identity. Second, I will consider the relationship between the 'postcolonial' and the 'global' and ask whether *Graceland* and *Leaving Tangier* address a universality that voices the "global unknown".

Waberi's "Children of the postcolony" and Nigeria's "Third Generation Writers"

In his article "Les enfants de la postcolonie" (Children of the postcolony), Abdourahman Waberi contends that postcolonial literature can be divided into several bi-decades starting from 1910. From the pioneers, to the Golden age of Négritude, to the third generation who witnessed the dawns of independence, writers have engaged themselves with concerns about their countries, questions of nationalism and communal

identity. What interests Waberi, however, is the new fourth generation of Francophone

writers, whom Waberi calls "the children of the postcolony." This generation, he states,

persists with the same concerns of the previous ones, but presents them through a

different perspective because it is a generation that carries two identities:

> *Les enfants de la postcolonie sont à notre connaisance, les premiers à user sans complexe du double passeport, à jouer sur deux, trios ou quatre tableaux, à se considérer comme africains et à vouloir en meme temps dépasser cette appartenance. Pour forcer un peu le trait, on pourrait dire qu'auparavant on se voulait d'abord nègre et qu'aujourd'hui on se voudrait d'abord écrivain et accessoirement nègre. C'est là un changement de point de vue appreciable* (11).
> The children of the postcolony are the first to use their double passport without complexity, to play on two, three or four fields, to consider themselves African while desiring at the same time to surpass this affiliation. To push this argument further, we can say that previously, writers identified as black first, but now they identify as writers first and as black second. This is a noteworthy change in points of view.

Waberi's statements draw attention to shifts in the hierarchy of affiliations. Most of the

writers of this generation live in western countries and write in the language of their host

countries. As a result, their writings cross linguistic and geographic borders and

complicate spatio-temporal notions. Hence, Waberi states that "the 'here' and 'there' are

notions that have become increasingly related and very difficult to untangle in the time of

globalization, as well as in the space of fiction (14). Waberi's contention foreshadows the

"new constellation" that the forty-four French writers describe in their manifesto and

sheds light on a new phase of writing that is highly influenced by globalization and its

paradigms.

While Waberi's article focuses on Francophone writers, his category "children of

the postcolony" is used to describe new generations of African Anglophone writers as

well. Despite the difference in languages and countries of origin, contemporaneous African writers share similar concerns which are shaped mainly by the writers' experiences with colonialism. According to Pius Adesanmi and Chris Dunton, "[c]olonialism is the single most important marker of unstable generational boundaries in the African context. It is a significant factor because in it are united the dual categories of temporality and ideology (14). In other words, the ideologies and paradigms associated with colonialism have changed with time and this change is reflected in the literature of African writers.

In "Nigeria's Third Generation Writing," Dunton and Adesanmi contend that "[a] number of interrelated factors single out Nigeria as the most vibrant case study for third generation African writing", the most significant being "the numerical superiority of Nigerian writers within the continental equation" (14-5). According to them, "Francophone Africa comes closest to the Nigerian situation with the presence of a considerable number of third-generation novelists based in France (15). Like Waberi's "children of the postcolony", and while continuing to address the fears and concerns of the previous generations, third generation Nigerian writing is characterized by an involvement with the global.

While Chris Abani belongs to "the children of the postcolony" and what is described as "third generation Nigerian writers," Ben Jelloun belongs to an older generation. However, Ben Jelloun is contemporaneous with the new generation and many of his works are therefore written through a current viewpoint and address the exigencies of today's world. So how can two books which emerge from two different locations, in

two different languages, and by two authors who belong to different generations address similar concerns and ask similar questions?

What brings these books together is the time in which they were written and the past that they reflect. With only two years difference in the time of publication, both *Graceland* and *Leaving Tangier* are twenty-first century books published respectively in 2004 and 2006. Therefore, neither novel can escape the machine of capitalism and globalization. On the other hand, both emerging from formerly colonized countries, the books cannot escape the specter of colonialism. Both novels, thus, share a similar temporality characterized by an account of a 'global' present scarred by a colonial past. Neither novel substitutes older concerns with new ones. Instead, they approach them differently and take them to new directions. In the article "The Idea of 'Third Generation Nigerian Literature'," Hamish Dalley argues that

> Th espatio-temporal imaginaries produced by such works [third generation Nigerian writing] are more complex than the national-generational framework deployed by critics to group them. In other words, these novels (and others like them) generate models of time and space that complicate their insertion into critical narratives predicated on concepts like "generation" and "nation." (16)

Both *Graceland* and *Leaving Tangier* reflect the description brought forth by Dalley. They continue to address the erosion of native culture, the corruption of the state and arrested decolonization against the backdrop of a merciless and uneven global system. Moreover, despite the different geographical settings of the novels, they both attempt to define the space of the nation in a way that "*encompass[es]* and *exceed[s]* the

generational-national framework (Dalley 18). Perceiving the nation as more than just a geographical location, the books do not simply question and look for 'Nigeria' or 'Morocco', but for an accepting and tolerant space. The books, however, do not only concern themselves with the nation per se. As previously discussed, the all-embracing concept of the nation intricately infiltrates other categories of identity such as race and sexuality. But what is the significance of the perspectives presented in these novels and how are they different from perspectives conveyed in earlier writings?

To demonstrate the generational shift that these novels re(present), I will consider them briefly vis-à-vis three classic works regarded as landmarks in postcolonial literature, namely, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. Each of the three novels can be said to represent a generational trend in postcolonial literature and together they provide a chronological perspective on these trends.

Things Fall Apart and Okonkwo's "national complex"

Set in pre-colonial Nigerian and the beginning of colonial rule, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* portrays the clash between colonizers and native cultures through the story of Okonkwo, a traditional Igbo man who is finding it impossible to cope with the invasion of Western culture. Okonkwo is portrayed as a hypermasculine man who typically represents the patriarchal culture he highly values. He is a wrestling champion with three wives and a leader of his village. After committing an accidental crime, Okonkwo is banished from his village and forced to spend seven years in exile. When he returns, however, he finds that things are drastically changing in his native village as the

'white man' is taking over. Missionaries have arrived and are converting people into Christians. As the story unfolds, and with the Western culture's penetration into native communities, Okonkwo witnesses the changes brought upon by colonialism from missionaries to governmental policies and even to native mentalities. One of Okonkwo's main worries is his son turning into a weak and 'effeminate' man: "I will not have a son who cannot hold up his head in the gathering of the clan. I would sooner strangle him with my own hands" (Achebe 30). Eventually, his son converts to Christianity causing Okonkwo yet another disappointment. Unable to adapt to the new imposed rules and lifestyle, Okonkwo ultimately prefers death to life under colonial rule.

In "Metonymic Eruptions," Obi Nwakanma contends that "Okonkwo of Umuofia is arguably the most famous character in modern African fiction," for he "signifies not only the Nigerian, but also an entire African tragic patriarchy and its value in history. In other words, the Okonkwo complex has become a national complex" (6). Whether Okonkwo represents Igbo, Nigerian or African culture, he is a signifier of a certain community struggling to defend and preserve its history and traditions. But preservation of history means preservation of lineage and respect of kinship, values which are threatened with the emergence of new cultural influences. In Achebe's book, one of the old men of the clan expresses his concern about this issue by addressing the younger generation:

> I fear for you young people because you do not understand how strong is the bond of kinship. You do not know what it is to speak with one voice. And what is the result? An abominable religion has settled among you. A man can now leave his father and brothers. He can curse the gods of his

fathers and his ancestors, like a hunter's dog that suddenly goes mad and

turns on his master. I fear for you; I fear for the clan. (Achebe 152)

Indeed, fifty years later, the clan is falling apart and the voice is becoming multiple

voices as Abani's *Graceland* demonstrates. Native culture is fragmented to pieces which

haunt the present but does not succeed to change it. Moreover, what Okonkwo stands for

is to a great extent rebuked in Abani's work. Although we can draw a parallel between

Okonkwo's attitude towards his son and that of Sunday's towards Elvis ("I will not have

a homosexual son"), Sunday is in no way exalted as a patriarchal figure. Instead, his

attempt to control his son is perceived as a sign of weakness and a compensation for his

own failure. What used to represent cultural values in *Things Fall Apart* are now

presented as cultural burdens. In *Graceland*, the traditional father figure is no longer a

hero or protagonist, but rather a foil or even an antagonist. He is replaced by his son who

no longer represents the heroic patriot but rather a subject whose presence undermines

the nation.

Season of Migration and the revenge of the Other

Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*, published in 1966 (ten years after

Sudan received its independence from the British empire) presents the aftermath of

colonialism through its unnamed narrator and his nemesis, Mustafa Said. Salih's novel

begins with the protagonist coming back home after seven years of absence. The

unnamed narrator has spent most of his adult life in England where he earned a high

education and enjoyed a sophisticated life. Despite those privileges, however, he decides

to return to Sudan which he still considers his home. The challenges that he faces are

those of re-integrating into native culture after years of absence. As the story unfolds, the narrator finds himself faced with the dramatic impact of his country's colonial past, embodied by the character Mustafa Said who has internalized an inferiority complex and attempts to overcome it by sleeping with British women.

In "The Nature of the Uncanny in *Season of Migration to the North*," Musa Al-Halool states that Salih's classical postcolonial novel presents a "conceptualization of colonialism as rape and of anti-colonial struggle as sexual revenge" (31), a perspective which resonates with Edward Said's contention about the feminization and submission of the East. In *Season of Migration*, Mustafa Said embodies his native country Sudan and takes on the mission of revenge upon his colonizers by sexually 'conquering' British women and making them desperately fall in love with him. "The city has changed into a woman" he says (Salih 39) and therefore sleeping with women becomes equivalent to 'conquering' a city. What the novel presents, thus, is an attempt to reverse the power balance between colonizer and colonized by applying a sexist and misogynistic mentality. The Arab *man* 'conquers' British *women*. Not only does Mustafa said think of himself as a representative of a nation, but of a whole continent whose race has been subjugated to oppression and slavery. His tragicomic statement, "I'll liberate Africa with my penis" echoes helplessness masked behind performative acts of control and domination (120).

Comparing Salih's *Season of Migration* to Ben Jelloun's *Leaving Tangier* may yield several similarities as both novels deal with the sexual politics of colonization. However, *Leaving Tangier* asserts that the Arab/African man is *still* 'feminized' and 'conquered', this time both by the Western man and the Arab man himself, and even the mentality of vengeance is practiced against *him*, asserting that Mustafa Said is but a

symptom of a chronic disease, and that violence goes a long way. The western man

dominates through his financial capacities this time which still buy him mobility and

freedom of movement. On the other hand, the Arab/African man still struggles to make a

living and is allowed very little freedom of movement. His frustration is reflected as

violence which is directed inwards, making the home country a hostile space which fails

to provide security and stability. *Leaving Tangier* as well as *Graceland* clearly point

fingers at failed national leaderships and corrupt elitism. Notwithstanding the matrix of a

world system which envelops national economies and seeps into local decision making,

the postcolony emerges as both a culpable executor and a helpless byproduct. In the

novels, this complex predicament is decoded mainly through the concept of masculinity

as both Azel and Elvis fall victims to sexual abuse and torture practiced by the police and

the army whose purpose is the subjugation of the trangressive male subject. It is the *male*

body against which revenge is practiced and by men from the same community.

Midnight's Children **and Rushdie's cosmopolitanism**

Finally, I would like to briefly consider Salman Rushdie's *Midnight Children*. Written in

1980, Rushdie's novel is set in India and addresses the transition of India from a

colonized to an independent nation-state. The narrative is firmly anchored to a precise

moment in time as the narrator, Saleem Sinai, explains that he was born at midnight on

August 15, 1947, which is the exact moment India gained its independence from British

rule. Saleem, thus, "[is] mysteriously handcuffed to history, [his] destinies indissolubly

chained to those of [his] country" (Rushdie 11). Moreover, Saleem does not think of

himself as merely an individual, but a multitude of people joined by a collective memory:

"Consumed multitudes are jostling and shoving inside me; and guided only by the memory of a large white bedsheet with a roughly circular hole some seven inches in diameter cut into the centre" (Rushdie 11). His subjectivity, thus, is increasingly intertwined with the identity of his nation and its people. Although the book starts with an ideal image or a dream of a nation, as the book unfolds, the image of the nation as a coherent center gradually breaks down and eventually is replaced by a deterritorialized concept of nation as well as a decomposed concept of subjectivity, and it is through this approach, the book suggests, that a reconciliation with the past is possible. "For Rushdie," Rama Lohani-Chase states, "the process of decolonization can work only through deconstruction of the self/other duality and oppressor/oppressed dialectic, and through dismantling the rigid cultural, political and ideological borders and boundaries" (39). In this light, Rushdie's approach to subjectivity and national identity has been described by many critics as positively or negatively 'cosmopolitan'. Regardless of its connotations, however, Rushdie's 'cosmopolitanism' is a step away from the postcolonial and towards the global.

Cosmopolitanism, Timothy Brennan states, "discursively accompanies globalization as the political ethic of the humanities intellectual. It both describes and endorses (endorses *as* it describes) the creation of a singularity out of newness, a blending and merging of differences becoming one entity" (Brennan 130). It is, thus, an attempt of confronting the past by recreating an identity which adapts, lives with and assimilates into other existing identities. I go back to *Graceland* and *Leaving Tangier* to ask how they compare to Rushdie's view and where do they stand in relation to 'cosmopolitanism'?

While the novels endorse fluid and dynamic subjectivities, they acknowledge obstacles to their achievement. They remind the reader that it is one thing to theorize and envision a cosmopolitan world and a transnational identity, and a completely different thing to realize this conception which seems to be a utopian vision detached from today's realities. According to Robert Stam and Ella Shohat, "issues of multiculturalism must be articulated together with issues of colonial history and Eurocentric discourse, or run the risk of being inoffensively pluralist and politically irrelevant" (Stam and Shohat 296). The novels expose this dialogue by questioning self-image and the Western gaze towards the non-Western. The novels suggest that to Western eyes, the Other is a stereotype and a constructed idea. At the end of *Graceland*, Elvis passes as Redemption without anyone noticing. "'Dose white people no go know de difference in de photo'," Redemption assures Elvis (317). Subjectivity is erased and replaced by anonymity reflected only through skin color. Similarly, Azel is reduced to his dark skin which incites Western prejudices, and transforms him into an object to be observed. The novels, however, do not shy away from justifying the wish to be white and the desire to leave the home country which does not seem to fit any definition of nation or home.

Graceland and *Leaving Tangier* do not perceive the nation as a coherent whole. *Graceland*, with its parallel narratives and spatio-temporal collage, draws Nigeria as a fragmented space. Similarly, in *Leaving Tangier*, Morocco is described as a contested site dominated by chaos and personal interests. The ideal image of the nation as a whole embracing the parts is, thus, absent in Abani's and Ben Jelloun's novels, and the ideal 'national' subject does not exist. Even the smallest space inside the nation-state's borders, the private space, no longer succeeds in confronting external challenges. In *Leaving*

Tangier, home and family act only as a reminder of Azel's social failure. He is

financially dependent on his sister, and he is unable to fulfill his mother's wish of him

getting married. Financial success and marriage, two indicators of a 'respected'

masculine social status, are thus unavailable to Azel, and his only asset, the law degree, is

useless in the face of the corruption and economic difficulties his country is in. As a

result, the protagonist spends very little time at home and most of it in bars and on the

streets of Tangier trying to momentarily soothe his distress. After leaving Morocco,

Azel's private space becomes Miguel's home, which also fails to provide comfort and

eventually becomes a space where abuse and violence are exercised. Under the roof of

Miguel's house, Azel's social marginalization is emphasized. He is forcibly and

deliberately labeled as an outsider and treated as a sexual object existing to entertain

Western eyes. Similarly, in *Graceland*, the private space does not represent a shelter.

Sunday's alcoholism and passiveness render Elvis' home an unpleasant space to live in.

Moreover, his financial dependence on Elvis and his constant pressuring of the latter to

find a job exacerbate Elvis' attempt at pursuing his dream of becoming a professional

Elvis impersonator. Abani's depiction of the family and the private space, however, is

much more dramatic than Ben Jelloun's. The concept of family and its associations is

completely shattered in *Graceland* with murder and rape infesting the households. Like

the policemen who rape Azel, Elvis' uncle abuses his authority and exercises violence

against the people he is expected to safeguard. The act of rape in both novels transfers the

collective damage caused by oppressive social structures to the most personal level. If the

smallest unit of community thus fails to provide a sense of belonging, how can the

concept of 'globality' succeed in doing so?

In "Grassroots Globalization and the Research Imagination," Arjun Appadurai contends that imagination plays a vital role in today's world and "encourages an emancipatory politics of globalization" (6). According to Appadurai, imagination nowadays is no longer restricted to individual consciousness but can rather lead to collective and substantial social changes:

> The imagination is no longer a matter of individual genius, escapism from ordinary life, or just a dimension of aesthetics. It is a faculty that informs the daily lives of ordinary people in myriad ways: It allows people to consider migration, resist state violence, seek social redress, and design new forms of civic association and collaboration, often across national boundaries. This view of the role of the imagination as a popular, social, collective fact in the era of globalization recognizes its split character. (6)

Both *Graceland* and *Leaving Tangier* attest to the creative capacity of the mind and its liberating effect which allows an outlet for the suppressed subject. Azel's source of ephemeral comfort is his diary which he resorts to whenever he feels confused or overwhelmed by life's challenges. Through his diary, he addresses his country, his family and himself and attempts to create positive images of self and community. Similarly, Abani's protagonist weaves his own comfort zone through his performing art. Through his Elvis Presley impersonation, Elvis enacts his fantasies of being a professional Elvis impersonator in a society which appreciates his art and does not judge him based on appearance. While imagination allows the protagonists to re-envision themselves and their surroundings, it does not exceed the role of escapism from reality and momentary relief for them. Just when Elvis is excited about going to America to live out his dream,

he is reminded through James Baldwin's book of the racism that will be awaiting him there and the challenges he will be facing. Abani leaves an open-ended fate for his protagonist, but hints at its obscurity. On the other hand, Ben Jelloun's protagonist's fate is presented wide open in front of the reader. Azel takes a chance and experiences life in exile which turns out to be more of a nightmare than a dream. After becoming an illegal alien and living in oblivion, eventually his death puts an end to his illusions and his imagination. The novels, thus, present what Simon Gikandi describes as "the disjuncture between the emergence of global images and the global stories of global subjects. . . who are not concerned with ideas or images, but are focused on the material experiences of everyday life and survival" (632). Imagination is not enough to save the characters from the harsh realities of their world.

With the home countries being dangerous and hostile spaces, the protagonists of *Graceland* and *Leaving Tangier* experience a sense of exile even in their own countries. They are questioning, skeptical subjects who do not seem to fit in. In other words, they are queer subjects where queerness implies an out-of-placeness and a crisis of belonging. In its most transparent form, this out-of-placeness appears in the novels as queer sexuality. Elvis literally comes face to face with his alienated self when he compares himself to transsexuals. Like them, he feels different. Like them, he cannot express himself in public. Moreover, as a coming-of-age story, *Graceland* shows the ambiguity of adolescent sexuality and therefore leaves open-ended questions about its protagonist's sexual orientation. Similarly, *Leaving Tangier* presents queerness embodied in its protagonist. Unorthodox, promiscuous, and engaged in both heterosexual and

homosexual affairs, Azel is almost the antithesis of national conventions and social

norms. However, Azel becomes strange even to himself when he starts questioning his

sexual orientation. Queer sexuality in this case reflects the climax of the sense of exile

and emerges as suspicion in a previously familiar identity. As such, conforming to gender

norms becomes equivalent to fully embracing one's native culture, while subverting them

means detaching oneself from cultural origins and national belonging. While Elvis' wish

to become white is expressed through an act of drag, Azel's wish to be part of Spanish

society is translated into a homosexual relationship. When Azel declares that he is a

traitor to his identity and sex, he is acknowledging the impact of his sexual transgression

on his cultural belonging. Ideally, 'homosexual' and 'Arab' do not go together just like

Elvis Presley and 'Black' do not mingle. Coming to terms with queerness, thus, means

negotiating the terms by which one is defined and recognized, and consequently opening

the door for more questions and possible answers. 'Queer' in the novels not only disrupts

and exposes the artifice of heteronormative identities as Butler contends, but also the

imaginative construct of national and racial identities. After all, if queerness has the

power to deny national and cultural belonging, and the ability to cross borders, then how

strong is this belonging and how real are those borders in the first place? Is not the world

"being reconstituted *as a single social space*" as some scholars believe? (Brennan 123)

In *Empire*, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri state that the world is governed by a

new form of sovereignty now which seeps into every aspect of global interaction. It is

this new global form of sovereignty which they call "Empire". While imperialism was

"an extension of the sovereignty of the European nation-states beyond their boundaries,"

Hardt and Negri contend, "Empire establishes no territorial center of power and does not

rely on fixed boundaries or barriers. It is a *decentered* and *deterritorializing* apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontiers" (xii). In this light, today's phenomena of decentralization and deterritorialization are not necessarily a good sign. It is an indication of a new form of global control which moves between borders and can encompass all aspects of individual life. Moreover, today's global 'empire' does not entail even mobility patterns. While objects and capital move freely, movements of people vary drastically across the globe. In *Graceland*, American music, films, and books can be easily found in the Nigerian market. American culture is widely disseminated and the protagonist being an Elvis Priestley impersonator is the most evident indication of this phenomenon. Going to America, however, requires forging of a passport and the changing of name and identity. Similarly, in *Leaving Tangier*, entering European grounds is not an easy task for Moroccans and can even be a life-threatening act.

Thus, while the novels embrace sexual non-conformity and (inter)national transgressions, they do not underestimate established borders. Instead, they insist on the power of borders and on the high price of crossing them by presenting their protagonists as victims of physical and sexual violence. They provide a bottom-up approach to the complexities of the postcolonial condition while simultaneously acknowledging the massive scope of the problem. History, state politics, family dynamics, and religious fundamentalism converge on the protagonists' bodies and psyches and unfold as brutal and scarring acts. By explicitly depicting the physical and sexual abuse that the protagonists suffer, the novels confirm the 'realness' of borders and reject the

romanticization of border crossing, thereby expressing a skeptic attitude towards the claims of today's 'cosmopolitan'/ 'transnational' world.

What is needed is not simply an expansion of space or multiplication of alternatives, but an understanding of the diverse issues that make up the problems and challenges facing the postcolonial subject. Replacing colonialism with other forms of oppression only aggravates the situation and renders the home country an unlivable space for many individuals. Moreover, although the world is increasingly becoming global in many ways, the movement of people across borders remains a highly selective and controlled process. To stay and endure the harsh realities of one's country or to leave and risk facing death or the alienating experience of immigration, thus becomes the choice that many people have to take.

The novels question kinship, condemn patriarchy, embrace fluid and queer identities while illuminating the obstacles that hinder social change and the risks associated with subversion. They express an urgent need for change while insisting on reading the present as an aftermath of an unjust history. In "Postcolonial Remains", Robert Young contends that the postcolonial "lives on, ceaselessly transformed in the present into new social and political configurations" (22). By illuminating current issues of gender and masculinity, *Graceland* and *Leaving Tangier* urge the reader to see within postcolonial literature these new configurations and how confronting them is vital to the creation of new spaces in which the postcolonial subject can find a promising comfort zone.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abani, Chris. *Graceland*. New York: Picador, 2004. Print.

Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*. London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd, 1980.

      Print.

Adesanmi, Pius and Chris Dunton. "Nigeria's Third Generation Writing: Historiography

      and Preliminary Theoretical Considerations." *English in Africa.*32.1 (May 2005):

      7-19. *Jstor*. Web. 9 Apr. 2014.

Aghacy, Samira. *Masculine Identity in the Fiction of the Arab East since 1967*. Syracuse:

      Syracuse UP, 2009.

Al-Halool, Musa.The Nature of the Uncanny in Season of Migration to the North.*Arab*

      Studies Quarterly 30.1 (Winter 2008): 31-38. *Jstor.* Web. 18 Jun. 2014.

Amoko, Apollo. "Race and Postcoloniality."*The Routlege Companion to Critical*

      Theory. Eds.Simon Malpas and Paul Wake. New York: Routledge, 2006. 127-39.

      PDF file.

Appadurai, Arjun. "Grassroots Globalization and the Research Imagination."*Public*

      Culture 12.1 (Winter 2000): 1-19. *Project Muse*. Web. 10 Aug. 2012.

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back*. London:

      Routledge, 2002. Print.

Aycock, Amanda. "Becoming Black and Elvis: Transnational and Performative Identity

      in the Novels of Chris Abani." *Safundi: The Journal of South African and*

      American Studies 10.1, (January 2009): 11-25. *Taylor and Francis Online*. Web.

      22 Mar. 2012.

Ben Jelloun, Tahar. *Leaving Tangier*. Trans. Linda Coverdale. London: Arcadia Books,

    2009. Print.

Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994. Print.

Brennan, Timothy. "From development to globalization: postcolonial studies and

    globalization theory." *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary*

    Studies. Ed. Neil Lazarus. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. 120- 38. Print.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York:

    Routledge, 1999. *Ebrary*.Web. 3 Aug. 2012.

---. *Undoing Gender*. New York: Routledge, 2004. Print.

Cahill, Ann J. *Rethinking Rape*. New York: Cornell UP, 2001. Print

Chrisman, Laura. "Nationalism and Postcolonial Studies." *The Cambridge Companion to*

    Postcolonial Literary Studies. Ed. Neil Lazarus. Cambridge: Cambridge UP,

    2004. Print.

Connell, R.W. *Gender*. Cambridge : Polity, 2010. Print.

--- "The State, Gender, and Sexual Politics: Theory and Appraisal." *Theory and Society*

    19.5 (October 1990): 507–544. *JSTOR*. Web. 9 July 2008.

Connell, R.W and James W. Messerschmidt. "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the

    Concept." *Gender & Society* 19.6 (December 2005): 829-859. *SAGE*. Web. 14

    Aug. 2012.

Cooppan, Vilashini. "The Ruins of Empire: The National and Global Politics of

    America's Return to Rome." *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond*. Eds. Ania

Loomba, Suvir Kaul, Matti Bunzl, Antoinette Burton and Jed Esty. Durham and London: Duke UP, 2005. 80-100. Print.

---. *Worlds Within: National Narratives and Global Connections in Postcolonial Writing*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2009. Print.

Dalley, Hamish. "The Idea of 'Third Generation Nigerian Literature': Conceptualizing Historical Change and Territorial Affiliation in the Contemporary Nigerian Novel." *Research in African Literatures* 44.4 (Winter 2013): 15-34. *Project Muse*. Web. 1 Apr. 2014.

Dannenberg, Hilary. "Narrating the Postcolonial Metropolis in Anglophone African Fiction: Chris Abani's GraceLand and Phaswane Mpe's Welcome to Our Hillbrow."*Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 48.1 (February 2012): 39–50. *Taylor and Francis Online*. Web. 22 Mar. 2012.

Davies, Lizzy, Harriet Grant, Harriet Sherwood and Helena Smith. "Europe faces 'colossal humanitarian catastrophe' of refugees dying at sea." *The Guardian*, Monday 2 June 2014 17.15 BST.

Dunton, Chris. "Entropy and Energy: Lagos as City of Words." *Research in African Literatures* 39.2 (Summer 2008): 68-78. *Jstor*. Web. 3 Jan. 2013.

Enhaili, Aziz. "Morocco". *Guide to Islamist Movements*. Ed. Barry Rubin. New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2010. Print.

Falola, Toyin. *The History of Nigeria*.Greenwood Press, 1999. Print.

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Trans. Charles Lam Markmann. New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1967. Print.

Feinberg, Leslie. *Stone Butch Blues*. Los Angeles: Alyson Books, 2003. Print.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality Volume I*. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York:

Pantheon Books, 1978. Print.

Garber, Marjorie. *Vested Interests: Cross-dressing & Cultural Anxiety*. New York:

Routledge, 1997. Print.

George, Rosemary Marangoly. *The Politics of Home*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1999.

Print.

Gikandi, Simon. "Globalization and the Claims of Postcoloniality." *The South Atlantic

Quarterly* 100.3 (Summer 2001): 627-58. *Project Muse*. Web. 29 Aug. 2012.

Grosz, Elizabeth. *Space, Time, and Perversion*. New York: Routledge, 1995. Print.

Gutterman, David S. "Postmodernism and the Interrogation of Masculinity." *The

Masculinities Reader*. Eds.Stephen M. Whitehead and Frank J. Barrett.

Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001. 56- 71. Print.

Halberstam, Judith. *Female Masculinity*. Durham and London: Duke UP, 1998. Print.

Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial

Theory : a Reader.* Eds. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman. New York:

Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994. 392-403. Print.

Hardt, Michael and Antonio Negri. *Empire*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2000. Print.

Harrison, Sarah K. " 'Suspended City': Personal, Urban, and National Development in

Chris Abani's *Graceland.*" *Research in African Literatures* 43.2 (Summer 2012):

95-114. *ProQuest*. Web. 3 Jan 2013.

Harvey, David. *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1992.

Print.

Hayes, Jarrod. "In The Nation's Closets: Sexual Marginality and the Itinerary of National

   Identity in Tahar Ben Jelloun's La Prière de L'Absent." *Romanic Review* 89.3

   (May 1998): 445-467. *ProQuest Central*. Web. 29 Apr. 2013.

Kimmel, Michael S. Kimmel, Michael S. "Globalization and its Mal(e)contents."

   International Sociology 18.3 (September 2003): 603–620. *SAGE*. Web. 22 Apr.

   2013.

---. "Masculinity as Homophobia."*The Masculinities Reader*. Eds. Stephen M.

   Whitehead and Frank J. Barrett. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001. 266-87. Print.

Krishnan, Madhu."MamiWata and the Occluded Feminine in Anglophone Nigerian-

   Igbo Literature."*Research in African Literatures* 43.1 (Spring 2012): 1-18.

   Project Muse. Web. 3 Jan. 2013.

Lagrange, Frédéric. "Male Homosexuality in Modern Arabic Literature."*Imagined

    Masculinities*.Eds.Mai Ghoussoub and Emma Sinclair-Webb. London: Saqi

   Books, 2000. Print.

Lazarus, Neil, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*.

   Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. Print.

Lohani-Chase, Rama. "Political (W)holes: Post-colonial Identity, Contingency of

   Meaning and History in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*." *Journal of

   Philosophy: A Cross-Disciplinary Inquiry* 4.10 (Fall 2009): 32-45. *ProQuest*.

   Web. 18 Jun. 2014.

Loomba, Ania. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. London: Routledge, 1998. Print.

Luibhéid, Eithne. 'Sexuality, Migration, and the Shifting Line between Legal and

    Illegal Status."*GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 14.2-3 (2008): 289-

    315. *Project Muse*. Web. 21 Aug. 2013.

MacInnes, John. "The Crisis of Masculinity and the Politics of Identity."*The*

    Masculinities Reader. Eds.Stephen M. Whitehead and Frank J. Barrett.

    Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001. 311-29. Print.

Majors, Richard. "Cool Pose: Black Masculinity and Sports." *The Masculinities Reader*.

    Eds. Stephen M. Whitehead and Frank J. Barrett. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001.

    209-17. Print.

McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather*: *race, gender, and sexuality in the colonial contest*.

    London: Routledge, 1995. Print.

Novak, Amy. "Who Speaks? Who Listens? The Problem of Address in Two Nigerian

    Trauma Novels." *Studies in the Novel* 40.1- 2 (Spring & Summer 2008): 31-51.

    Project Muse.Web. 4 Jan. 2013.

Nwakanma, Obi. "Metonymic Eruptions: Igbo Novelists, the Narrative of the Nation, and

    New Developments in the Contemporary Nigerian Novel." *Research in African*

    Literatures 39.2 (Summer 2008): 1-14. *ProQuest*. Web. 2 Apr. 2014.

Ouma, E.W. Christopher. "'In the name of the son': Fatherhood's Critical Legitimacy,

    Sonhood and Masculinities in Chris Abani's *Graceland and The Virgin of*

    Flames." *English in Africa* 38.2 (August 2011): 77-93. *Academic Search Premier*.

    Web. 18 Apr. 2012.

Pennell, C.R. *Morocco: From Empire to Independence*. London: Oneworld Publications,

    2003. Print.

Peterson, Spike V. "Political Identities/Nationalism as Heterosexism." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 1.1 (1999): 34-65. *Taylor and Francis Online.*Web. 22 Apr. 2013

Pireddu, Nicoletta. "A Moroccan Tale of an Outlandish Europe; Ben Jelloun's Departures for a Double Exile." *Research in African Literatures* 40.3 (Fall 2009).*JSTOR.* Web. 11 July 2012.

Puar, Jasbir K. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Durham and London: Duke UP, 2007. Print.

Rodman, Gilbert. *Elvis after Elvis*. London: Routledge, 1996. Print.

Rushdie, Salman. *Midnight's Children.* London: Cape, 1981. Print.

Said, Edward. *Imperialism and Culture.*New York : Knopf, 1993. Print.

---. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978. Print.

---. *The World, The Text, and The Critic*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1983. Print.

Salih, Tayeb .*Season of Migration to the North.* Edinburgh: Heinemann, 1991. Print.

Simon, Daniel. "Toward a 'World-Literature' in French." *World Literature Today* 83.2 (Mar. - Apr. 2009): 54-56. *JSTOR*. Web. Apr. 4. 2014.

Sinclair-Webb, Emma. "Our Bülent Is Now a Commando: Military Service and Manhood in Turkey." *Imagined Masculinities*. Eds. Mai Ghoussoub and Emma Sinclair-Webb. London: Saqi Books, 2000. 65-102. Print.

Slemon, Stephen. "Post-colonial Critical Theories." *New National and Postcolonial Literatures: An Introduction*. Ed. Bruce King. Oxford, Clarendon Pr, 1996. 178-197. Print.

Spivak, Gayatri. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory : a Reader.*Eds. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994. 66-111. Print.

Stam, Robert and Ella Shohat."Traveling Multiculturalism: a Trinational Debate in Translation."*Postcolonial Studies and Beyond*. Eds. Ania Loomba, Suvir Kaul, Matti Bunzl, Antoinette Burton and Jed Esty. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005. 293- 316. Print.

Waberi, Abdourahman. "Les enfants de la postcolonie : Esquisse d'une nouvelle generation d'écrivains francophone d'Afrique noire." *Notre Librairie* 1.135 (September-December 1998): 8-15. *Gallica.* Web. Source gallica.bnf.fr /Institut Français.Web. 7 Apr. 2014.

Whitehead, Stephen M., and Frank J. Barret."The Sociology of Masculinity."*The Masculinities Reader*. Eds. Stephen M. Whitehead and Frank J. Barrett. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001. 1-26. Print.

Wright, Daniel. *Dear Elvis: Graffiti from Graceland*. Memphis: Mustang Publishing, 1996. Print.

Young, Robert JC. "Postcolonial Remains."*New Literary History* 43.1 (Winter 2012): 19-42. *Project Muse*. Web. 29 Mar. 2014.

Zeghal, Malika. *Islamism in Morocco.* Trans. George Holoch. Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2008. Print.