



Erasmus Mundus



Universidad de Oviedo
Universidá d'Uviéu
University of Oviedo



A Journey Through Fear: Resistance, Assimilation, and Negotiation in Woman Migrants' Experiences of *Otherness* in Spain

By Glenda Belen del Rosario Huerto Vizcarra

Master Thesis

Submitted to Central European University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Erasmus Mundus Master's
Degree in Women's and Gender Studies

Main Supervisor: Ph.D. Nadia Jones-Gailani - Central European University
Support Supervisor: Ph.D. Margarita Blanco Hölscher - Universidad de Oviedo

Budapest, Hungary

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Approval signed by the main supervisor: _____

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of original research; it contains no material accepted for any other degree in any other institution and no material previously written and/or published by another person, except where appropriate acknowledgment is made in the form of bibliographical reference.

I further declare that the following word account for this theses are accurate:

Body of thesis (all chapters excluding notes, references, appendices, etc.): 25,319 words

Entire manuscript: 32,112 words

Signed: _____

Abstract:

Through “A Journey Through Fear: Resistance, Assimilation, and Negotiation in Woman Migrants' Experiences of *Otherness* in Spain” I aim to explore the relationship between migration and fear. In that sense, I will critically analyze the anti-migration system in Spain as well as the mechanism of fear deployed *spectacularly* against the migrant population, which has been intensified after the turn of the century, and how this system of fear *affects* the lives of many migrants. As a way of introduction, Spain will be explored as a country of destination, the position it has within the Euro zone and how it is influenced by the market and its own colonial tradition. In that sense, the anti-migrant mechanism established in the last decades has been improving itself *efficiently*, some may argue, to create an environment of racist exclusion/inclusion, through deathly fear, to respond to the necessities of the market. It is because of that, that the migrant will be subject to illegality, *deportability*, economic precariousness, and will be linked with a discourse of criminalization and terrorism. Constituent elements to oil the ongoing mechanism of dehumanization, a *necropolitics of fear* is set in motion, perpetrated by the state and the mass media. All of this sets the grounds to comprehend how the migrant population, in this case, the women involved in this project, we included—, feel and experience different kinds of fears, as well as the strategies we create in order to negotiate with it, reject or assimilate it, if we let or not to affect our identity.

Keywords: women, migration, fear, colonialism, affects, necropolitics, racism, Spain.

Acknowledgements

"As a mestiza I have no country, my homeland cast me out; yet all countries are mine because I am every woman's sister or potential lover. (As a lesbian I have no race, my own people disclaim me; but I am all races because there is the queer of me in all races.) I am cultureless, because, as a feminist I challenge the collective cultural/religious male-derived beliefs..."

—Gloria Anzaldúa—

I would love to thank all my *compas* who were part of this journey, with whom I grew not only in knowledge but in emotions and laughter: Halima, Biby*, Juanita, N.M*, Luz, Sandra, Assia, Khady, Gladys, Alma, Vicky, Fatu, Eva, Josefina, Su, Merce, Brea, John, Edu, Pablo, Ale, Mon, Kenz, Max, Shehreen, Stella, Mara, Shiran, Ootgoo, Fer, Ger. You all make a difference.

And, Nadia, for the friendship, the love, and... the beyond borders support. After this experience together, I am more convinced than ever that we are here to disrupt. Not as individuals but as a collective gathered to fight for a dream —another academia is possible— and to engage with uncomfortable topics as migration, racism, fears, feminism, and decoloniality. Thank you, again, for being here.

For us, with love & fear

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*Para ellas que
transgreden*

—Introduction—

"Living on borders and in margins, keeping intact one's shifting and multiple identity and integrity, is like trying to swim in a new element, an "alien" element." ¹

"This project is about migration and fears in the spanish context," I told informants and interested parties who wanted an explanation of my research project. As I reflect through the following chapters on the central topic that first conceived, I realize that the complex experiences and lived realities are far more 'real' than any reality I might have initially have envisioned recording amongst women migrants in Spain. This research is informed by a personal politics at the heart of feminist qualitative reflexive work in order to capture the women and their universe of journeys, emotions, affects, reactions, resistances, against systems of exclusion and domination produced through wired borders, deportations, racism, murders, citizenry, colonial paternalism; the list is long and seemingly endless.

Every journey has a beginning, and this one in particular started with a hunch that I followed to what I felt was a logical conclusion. In retracing my steps to try and recreate the journey through the research in this thesis, I start my with my encounter with a migrant girl who was only six years old at the time. In the way that she confronted and questioned my subjective stance in the fieldwork, it disarmed what I thought I understood about the perversity of the anti-migrant rhetoric within the Spanish migrants system, and how racism operates in daily life. In a chance encounter with this girl, she told me more about the pressing issues faced by migrants who are also black in Spain, including the integration initiatives in her school, about her fears, and, finally she also recognized my difference. With her

¹ Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands: the new mestiza*. La frontera (San Francisco: Aun Lute, 1987)

confession my little friend was looking for an ally and she found one in me, not because her network was not supportive enough but because in between all the whiteness around us she saw in me the same *difference* that until then featured her life. My *brownness* and her *blackness* were confronted against a wall of whiteness. Neither she nor I would belong, and the 'othering' of this woke up the migrant woman inside me and produced a fear about my newly embraced *otherness*.

I believe it is important for you to grasp a sense of what I aim with this project.

You have to understand:

When I think about **migration**,

I relate to my own experience, although limited and privileged.

When I think about migration,

Fears, Borders, Identities, Gender, Politics, Economics, and **Death** come into my mind.

When I think about migration,

I think about *you* and how I need for you to understand.

Not as an individual but as a **WE**: a they, a we, a she, a he, a you, an I,

All together in the same boat, in the same plane, in the same train, in the **same** road.

When I think about migration,

I want for you to feel how it hurts. Or at least, have a sense of it.

Not because I want your empathy, but because I want you to understand how complex this is, complex like we are.

It is because of my embodiment as a migrant that I wanted to explore about emotions involved in every migrant journey, especially the role played by fear as a personal emotional but as a political affect related to the spanish socioeconomic context. In that sense, I have three aims. First, to observe and analyze the impact of fear upon our identities as migrants,

how it was feel —with intersectional lenses— and the different strategies we created in order to bargain with it; in other words, if we assimilate it, reject it, or negotiate with it. Second, to research if fear was being used by the spanish government to create an environment of spectacle to dominate, control, subjugate and kill the migrant population through different mechanisms of repression. Finally, although bias, my third inquiry was related to gender, if the experience of fear was defined by our gendered condition or not.

As Joan Scott² reminds us, it is because we are involved that becomes political, but it is also because, once aware of my othernes, it becomes a sort of political obligation —activism—to uncover an oppressive reality. In Anzaldúa’s words, there is a necessity for women of color, as myself, to become politically active, write and theorize about our experiences³. Thus, my journey begins with this research project. I consider myself a migrant, no matter if it is limited or permanent. I arrived in spain with the intention to pursue an education. That fact gave me a margin of action to position myself in a more advantaged and unfair condition. But my journey started when I began the paperwork at the spanish embassy in lima. The experience was excruciating. I needed almost three months of bureaucracy, a medical examination to prove I was healthy, and a criminal record check. A student visa procedure that for all means aims for the foreigner to give *evidence* of being suitable for the spanish state, hence, to prove I did not represent a health nor a security threat —nor contamination, nor invasion—. Once my request was approved by the king himself, my student visa was issued. As a result, I was allowed to stay in the country for more than three months with the condition to request afterwords a proper alien card. This card besides giving me an authorization of temporary settlement, stated a few facts: that I am a foreigner and a student —therefore, I cannot work—, that I am female and a woman, and that I am easily

² Scott, Joan W. “Experience,” in *Feminist Theorize The Political*, ed. Judith Butler and Joan W. Scot.

³ Joysmith, Claire. “Una plática con Gloria Anzaldúa,” in: *Debate Feminista* (septiembre, 1993)

traceable, and therefore with my address in hand I am potentially deportable⁴ at any time if I fail to abide the regulations of my *fragile* [i]legal status. A scene comes to my mind: there I am in the middle of a small manifestation against the penitentiary system in Oviedo, reckless, with no preoccupation more than the rain, and suddenly it hits me: the police is also there asking for identifications. There I was: a non citizen with a student visa engaging in a sort of civil disobedience. What if? I feared. In spite of my bubble of comfort, I have felt racism and fear in everyday life from the explicit hatred look or the ‘*go back to your country*’ to the vile tokenization for being a woman from the global south.

Little by little my suspicion increased. It was after taking into consideration my own personal experience, and after observing and discussing the reality of other fellow migrants, that I glimpsed a certain commonality in our different migrant experiences: ‘fear’, a feeling we got familiar with when someones made us feel unwelcome or questioned our presence, or when we acknowledged the otherness in ourselves as a vindication. My aim, then, is to understand the complexity of fear, as a personal emotion as well as a political interaction part of a governmental strategy against the migrant population. In order to do so, it became relevant to analyze the role played by fear within the spanish migrant narrative from a subjective experience.

The narrative of migration in Spain has been changing in the last decades. After the 9/11 different discourses emerged within the Spanish anti-migrant narrative associated with criminalization, terrorism, illegality which led to an imposition of a precarity condition in every day life. After the economic crisis —and several terrorist attacks around the globe—this

⁴ De Genova, Nicholas “Spectacles of Migrant ‘Illegality’: the scene of exclusion, the obscene of inclusion,” in *Journal of Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36:7, 2013, 1180-1198; Biehl, Kristen. “Governing Through Uncertainty: Experiences of Being a Refugee in Turkey as a Country for Temporary Asylum,” *Social Analysis*, 59(1), 2015, 57-75; Griffiths, Melanie. “Out of time: The temporal uncertainties of refused asylum seekers and immigration detainees,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 40:12, 2014, 1991-2009.

scene has endured even more during the last decade. The outcome is a severe intensification of a process of dehumanization of the migrant other —at external and internal borders— wether by the government itself, the mass media and/or the spanish society in general; creating an environment of fear which triggers at the same time acts of racism, discrimination, hate crimes, deaths, and prohibitions⁵ of every kind.

Borders constitute another central element of my analysis because these spaces became spectacles of death and surveillance of the migrant population. This is the reality of the spanish southern border: Ceuta, Melilla, the canary islands, and the mediterranean sea. These spaces have become, in De Genova⁶ words, *borders of spectacle*, where plain geographies become wired territories —not only spanish ones— with fences, check-points, and military deployment. Borders, as it would be explained, have become not only a mechanism but an institution⁷ of necropower and fear produced and reinforced by the media in alliance with the spanish state. Then, migrants in these places lose their subjectivities and become subhuman: suddenly migrants become lifeless bodies in the mediterranean sea, bodies being hurt by the guards or by the wired fences, bodies that are raped, bodies being deported and left in the dessert to die of starvation or thirst.

Migration, as I perceive it, is not merely a socio-economic phenomenon, rather it constitutes experiences involving subjects, affects and emotions⁸. It is a less transited approach to understand the complexity of contemporary journeys and to give voice to people who have been portrayed as a racialized alterity against a ‘homogeneous’ spanishness. In that

⁵ Fear increments the necessity to prohibit certain expressions considered as threatening like the burka and nihab. These prohibitions are a reality in the Netherlands, France, Belgium, Austria, and in some places in Catalonia, for example.

⁶ De Genova, “Spectacles,” 1180-1198.

⁷ The southern border, including the canary islands, has being reinforced with a high tech vigilant system (SIVE) since 2001. The aim is not rescue or protect migrants victims of the sea, on the contrary, to control, defend, and protect the fortress (Sánchez, 2006, 29).

⁸ Perera, Suvendrini. “‘They Give Evidence’: Bodies, Borders and the Disappeared,” *Social Identities* 12:6, 2006, 637-656.; Ahmed; Butler Judith. *Precairous Life. The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. (London and New York: Verso Books, 2004)

sense, and because of the historical —colonial—tradition in Spain, a decolonial and postcolonial theory are necessary lenses⁹ to not only address migration in the Spanish state but to engage as well in a critique to alterity and to challenge western notions of race, plunder/privilege, citizenship, and whiteness^{10 11}.

Literary Review

Migration Studies is an extensive field with interdisciplinary approaches as well as geographies. With that logic, this review intends to be succinct, covering a general overview of migration to a situated one (Spanish), as well as to address the emergence of ‘Gender and Migration’ and contemporary approaches involving affects and ‘new materialism’. In that sense, Wimmer and Glick¹² genealogy will be taken as the skeleton of this literature to comprehend precisely how Migration has been addressed by the academia, gaps, and paths to develop.

Movement, migration, and ‘displacement’¹³ become, sometimes, interchangeable terms of the same phenomenon. A phenomenon rooted in a tradition of *modern* colonialism — mainly French and Anglo— during XIX century explored by authors like Gilroy, Hall, Stoler, McClintock, Enzensberger, De Genova, Romero, Fernández, Brandariz. Nevertheless, migration as a phenomenon has always had an important part to play in determining the

⁹ Fernández Bessa, Cristina and Brandariz García José Ángel. “Transformaciones de la penalidad migratoria en el contexto de la crisis económica: el giro gerencial del dispositivo de deportación,” in *InDret*, nº 4, 2016; Romero, Eduardo. Conference 2018.

¹⁰ Even western academia and production of knowledge.

¹¹ Mohanty, Chandra Talpade, “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses,” 49-75; Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg eds., *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988); Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*, 1987; bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*. (New York: Routledge, 1994); Rivera Cusicanqui, Silvia. *Sociología de la imagen. Miradas ch’ixi desde la historia andina*. (Buenos Aires: Tinta Limón, 2015); Adlbi Sabia, Sirin. *La cárcel*, 2016; Bouteldja, Houria. *Los blancos*, 2017.

¹² Wimmer, Andrew and Nina Glick-Schiller, “Methodological Nationalism and Beyond: Nation-state Building, Migration, and the Social Sciences,” in *Global Networks* 2(4) (2002): 301-334.

¹³ Gatrell, Peter. “Population Displacement in the Baltic Region in the Twentieth Century: From ‘Refugee Studies to Refugee History,” *Journal of Baltic Studies* 38:1, 2007, 43–60.

borders of modern nation-states. According to Wimmer and Glick Schiller¹⁴, contemporary migration should be considered the “child of the postwar era,” an era of reconfiguration of the world, nation-states, borders and passports¹⁵, and citizenry; in that sense, migration processes occurred during this time are precedent for current western-centric “securitization problem” and “crisis.” A focus in the literature has been on the labor market and projects of assimilation and integration to European societies in order to boost their economies and sustain their subsequent Welfare States¹⁶. For Enzensberger¹⁷, mobility is tied or responds to economic reasons like trade, neoliberalism, and globalization, to facilitate a type of economy based on inequalities and the exploitation of immigrants¹⁸.

Migration scholarship has also developed an interest in the narratives of nation-states as well as the concept of diaspora¹⁹, and ‘displacement and refuge’ between WWII and cold war era. As a precursor to what is now considered to be Refugee Studies, studies of migrants’ lives and their histories have paved the way for the field to now turn much of its attention towards offering explanations for the developing crises of refugees worldwide²⁰. The latter will be resumed after the consequences of 9/11 attack, where an ongoing debate emerged as a consequence of what was called the “refugee crisis” in 2015 in which a distinction between

¹⁴ Wimmer and Glick “Methodological”, 301-334.

¹⁵ Torpey, John. “Coming and Going: On the State’s Monopolization of the Legitimate ‘Means of Movement’,” *Sociological Theory* 16:3, 1998.

¹⁶ Wimmer and Glick “Methodological”, 316; Berger, John and Jean Mohr. *A seventh Man*. (London: Verso, 2010); Sassen, Saskia. *Inmigrantes y ciudadanos. De las migraciones masivas a la Europa fortaleza* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 2013); Arendt, Hannah, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (San Diego, New York and London: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1973), 263-303; Enzensberger, Hans Magnus. *La gran migración. Treinta y tres anotaciones*. Barcelona: Editorial Anagrama, 2002.

¹⁷ Enzensberger, *La gran migración*

¹⁸ Enzensberger, *La gran migración*; De Genova, “Spectacles,” 1180-1198; Romero García, Eduardo. *Un deseo apasionado de trabajo más barato y servicial. Migraciones, fronteras y capitalismo*. Oviedo: Cambalache, 2010; Fernández and Brandariz “Transformaciones”

¹⁹ Malkki, Liisa. *Refugees and Exile: From refugee Studies to the National Order of Things*, 1995.

²⁰ Sassen, *Inmigrantes y ciudadanos*; Arendt, Hannah, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (San Diego, New York and London: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1973), 263-303; Berger, *A seventh Man*, 2010

“economic migrants” and the category of “refugee”²¹ emerged, and what I consider a dangerous strategy used by politicians²² and some scholars.

Another pillar of this chronology of migration, is the conceptualization made by the Chicago School about the figure of the migrant as a marginal man²³, without problematizing notion of race, nor gender. As a response to it, matters of race, and ethnicity within migration were addressed because of black feminist, post colonial and decolonial scholars were tensions between colonizer and colonized, migrant and native, were raised by authors like Lugones, Quijano, Stoler, McClintock, Gilroy, Hall.

At the end of the XX century a shift occurred, ‘Migration Scholarly’ advocated towards women and the role played by them in this phenomenon. A process scholars called a ‘feminization of migration’ associated to family reunion and labor market. But is in the XXI century that numerous authors started to integrate a more complex gendered perspective, engaging with particularities, intersectionality, and a diversity of research areas. For instance, during recent years, scholars have been problematizing about queer sexual²⁴ and/or LGTB identity in the context of asylum seekers within a nationalistic structure. At the same time, an increase of researchers involve emotions, temporal mobility, liminality, and precarity produced by the uncertainty of being waiting²⁵; or others engage with a fiercely critique, towards the different mechanisms of violence imposed by western nation-states and

²¹ Butler, Judith. “Critique, Crisis, Violence”. Lecture, Bologna University, Bologna, June 26, 2017; Butler, Judith. “Vulnerability and the Politics of Resistance.” Lecture, Sciences Po, Paris, June 29, 2017; Rodier, Claire. *Migrants & Réfugiés. Réponse aux indécis aux inquiets et aux réticents* (Paris: La Découverte, 2016)

²² Some months ago, the Belgium Parliament wanted to deport every “economic migrant” in order to allow the entrance of refugee population.

²³ Wimmer and Glick “Methodological”, 316

²⁴ Vogler, Stefan, “Legally Queer: The Construction of Sexuality in LGBTQ Asylum Claims.” *Law & Society Rev*, 50: 856-889.

²⁵ Griffiths, Melanie. “Out of time: The temporal uncertainties of refused asylum seekers and immigration detainees,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 40:12 (2014): 1991-2009.

hegemonic discourse of race and whiteness²⁶, or critique the heinous anti-immigrant policies in favor of securitization²⁷.

Over the last decade, there has been a new and emergent discourse in which authors such as De Genova, Perera, Abu-Lughod, Ahmad, Schwarz, May & King problematize the phenomenon through not only a multiplicity of approaches but by taking into consideration the subjectivity of the migrant, gendered experiences, emotions, memory, sexuality, temporalities, returns, and complex analysis regarding new materialism, the migrant body, and even necropolitics is applied in some particular contexts regarding state policies, illegality and —deathly— exclusion.

Finally, regarding scholars of migration in Spain, the predominant trajectory has been from an economic perspective and labor force, a sociopolitical understanding and/or addressing the legal connotations. It is since the late 90's that scholars had an interest in unveiling the reasons to migrate, the role in boosting the national economy, and portrayed the economic migrant as male. In that sense, it is not strange to find authors —although acute and resourceful—like Marcu²⁸, Fernandez and Brandariz²⁹, Romero³⁰, Alba Rico³¹, among others, mainly focused their work from a macro perspective, using migrant experiences to denounce, characterized, or exemplify the process, all the while addressing the topic mainly from an observer standpoint and taking for granted emotions.

²⁶ Brewer Current, Cheri. "Normalizing Cuban refugees." 2008. Volume: 8 issue: 1, page(s): 42-66

²⁷ Allison Brysk. Beyond Framing and Shaming. 2009. Human trafficking, human security, exploitation of women, contribution to anti-immigrant policies targeting migrant racialized bodies; Sharma, Nandita. "Anti-Trafficking Rhetoric and the Making of a Global Apartheid," *NWSA Journal* 17:3 (2005): 88-111.

²⁸ Marcu, Silvia. "España y la Geopolítica de la inmigración en los albores del siglo XXI." *Cuadernos Geográficos*, nº 40, (2007-1), 31- 51.

²⁹ Fernández and Brandariz, "Transformaciones"

³⁰ Romero, *Un deseo*, 2010.

³¹ Alba Rico. "La izquierda, los inmigrantes y los derechos de los españoles", Cuarto Poder, accessed December 22, 2017, <https://www.cuartopoder.es/ideas/opinion/2014/03/24/la-izquierda-los-inmigrantes-y-los-derechos-de-los-espanoles/>

Is this absence, the one related to emotions and affects what constitutes one of the cornerstones of this project. What I bring to the discussion is a way to understand a human phenomenon like migration from a personal —yet political—subjective—yet complex—perspective where emotions are the core and powerful instrument of denunciation against a criminal system like the anti-migration machinery in Spain.

The second relates to fear per se, usually perceived as a negative emotion but with a great and real potential to create resistances. It is through the institutionalized deployment of fear that a mechanism like the Spanish one can undermine and commodify the migrant subject. Nevertheless, it is through the fear felt that we regain our subjectivity back, by feeling we become subjects again, and networks, comradeship, sisterhoods, associations are created. And I recall Romero³² saying once how important and necessary it is to recompose community ties, and create collectiveness to fight a murderous racist anti-migrant system.

Precisely during my fieldwork, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to engage in a few of these powerful demonstrations and the feeling emerging from La Tancada Migrante in Barcelona, for instance, or Mujeres Pachamama in Oviedo, is that these are spaces/groups of resistance, laughter, solidarity, music, and why not, *revolutionary love*³³. And that is my last contribution, to be involved. The way in which I envisioned this research project was as an attempt to close the gap between knowledge and praxis —or activism—, to create new ways of doing feminist research, to commit, to decolonize the academia, to engage in discussions of new methodologies. In a sense, to embody our methodology and our theory even if by doing so the price to pay is our hearts and souls.

³² Romero, *Un deseo*.

³³ Bouteldja, *Los blancos*.

Description of Chapters

In the first chapter, ‘The Journey’, an introduction of Spain as a country of destination is made. In this subsection a historical, socio-political and economic context is explained and rooted to its colonial tradition. In the second subsection, some characteristics of the migratory process in Spain are explained, especially in terms of criminality, terrorism, precariousness and illegality. Finally, I compare and contrast some of the reasons to migrate as well as the expectations with the reigning anti-migrant reality of exclusion, fear and racism.

In the second chapter, ‘Encounters: A Discursive Approach of the Category of Migrant and the Mechanism of Fear(S)’ I aim to comprehend through three public events the emergent discourse of the migrant, how is *othered*, racialized, and perceived by the media, and the Spanish state. Second, how a mechanism of fear is deployed nationwide — geographical borders and internal borders—in order to subjugate the migrant population. Last, regarding fear as a social phenomenon, I will analyze how it is used by the political and economic structure as a tool to subjugate the immigrant population. And finally, through the chosen cases, I intend to identify the reactions and resistances originated by fear and analyze if in any of the cases might be some gendered difference.

Finally, the third chapter, ‘The Affective Machinery of Fear,’ engages the political characteristic of the affective emotionality, and how we as migrants interact through them with a hostile environment of fear and necropolitics. I interrogate how we second our fears through different female eyes and from a multiplicity of personal experiences within a very political context. Lastly, this chapter attempts to shed light on this fear in terms of how it is anticipated at different intensities, and how women must interact, negotiate, and/or to resist these fears in order to determine if fear affects our identities, and how, if so, we can create resistance.

—Methodology—

We cannot address migration without recognizing the heinous links with colonialism, as well as we cannot discuss blackness or brownness, the orient, the global south, nor *if the subaltern* (she/he/they) *can speak* or not, if we do not engage with a critique to the colonial system³⁴ and *his* equal heinous descendants: coloniality³⁵, modernity, nation-states, and contemporary notions of citizenry³⁶. Therefore, mi core methodology will be imbued by a feminist methodological and ethical approach as a political statement because I am involved, as J. Scott reminds us through the *personal is political*. Therefore, my research —and myself— is influenced by her but mainly by feminist authors from the margins like bell hooks, Anzaldúa, Rivera Cusicanqui, among others.

The introduction itself is a reflection of what this project means to me, personally, theoretically, and methodologically. Exploring migration, emotions and fears it is a complicated task, and being a migrant makes the experience even more challenging. Now, instead of telling you that my intention was to interview 5 to 6 women —which is true—, the hours I spent with them, how I processed the information, and so on. I will start with a small ethnography of what experience while doing fieldwork in an event called ‘*Acoger ye natural*’³⁷ because of two reasons, to then reflect on how the particular methodology I chose took me there, to that precise experience. First, the interviews cannot be understood without a context, that is to say, the spanish nation-state and what happens inside its borders. Second, because what I am about to tell you is an example of what we have to face as researchers

³⁴ Césaire, Aimé. “Discourse on colonialism,” 1956 (Canada: Monthly Review Press, 2000); Spivak, “Can the Subaltern”; Mbembe, Achille. *On the Postcolony*. University of California, 2001; Said, Edward. *Orientalismo* (Barcelona: Penguin Random House Grupo Editorial, 2016)

³⁵ Quijano, Anibal; Adlbi. *La cárcel*.

³⁶ Romero, Eduardo. Conference, 2018.

³⁷ ‘To give refuge is natural. I *Citizen* Encounter of Human Rights of Migrant and Refugee People’

when a topic becomes this personal. Although you may think this approach is experimental, even unprofessional, it is not. Every decision made here is intentional, is political, and is a commitment with myself as much as with new ways to create a *decolonial-black-indigenous-postcolonial-fluid-transnational-queer-situated-subjective-committed-feminist* epistemology.

Somehow writing with anger has become my thing. Is the impulse I need to write, an urge to say what I have experienced as migrant in an articulated sense. Having that in mind, I have gone through a difficult time while writing, not because of a deadline or to reach an academic glory, but because of what this process represents. It means to evince my life and emotions, it is confronting myself as much as talking about/with people I have met and care about/for. Is to undress myself and to undress people's affects in front of you, the reader, to show our vulnerabilities and to embrace it while juggling between learning how to deal with our emotions and doing a sort of autoethnography of our migrant lives. That is to say, recomposing our lives as lives that matter to be lived free of rejection, racism, criminalization, and, even more, free of the white man's burden —the paternalistic and condescending savior's complex.

As I was in the middle of my ethnographic research in Spain, I joined a pro-refugee seminar *Acoger ye natural*, organized in Xixón, a town close to Oviedo. I went with hope, even though I knew beforehand that the discourse could be problematic, to say the least, because of a core distinction between refugees and economic migrants. Contributing to a differentiation of unnecessary hierarchical categories of people rooted on who is entitled to rights and who isn't. In other words, it equates to whom is entitled to 'certain humanity,' which is a discourse well sustained by many European countries, their politicians and their citizens.

The program was problematic from the beginning. The one day seminar was divided in (1) theory, (2) experience, and (3) praxis. My analysis will only focus on the first two parts.

During the first session, the discussion went from a very general perspective of laws and protocols for asylum, the role of media, specific cultural and educational projects of interculturality, to a very well contextualized presentation of the anti-migration system interconnected with the role of borders and the machinery of deportation within the consolidation of the nation, the capitalist system and the role of migrants in this machinery of production, and welfare. I will not focus on the content but in a few details we should take into consideration. Every single person at that table was from the Spanish state, and the approximate time they spent in their presentations was between thirty to forty minutes long. All their names were in the program as well as their affiliations. Although it was interesting, it was an exhausting morning that was full of *spanishness* leaving me feeling somewhat saturated by the topic. The second part of the program, however, did not improve my mood, on the contrary; it is because of that that it is hard to tell. The table ‘The immigrant and the refugee situation explained by the protagonists themselves’ involved four people —presented as migrants—who were unnamed not because they had asked for anonymity.

The presentation was in charge of one of the organizers, who is also part of an organization called No Name Kitchen (NNK). He began by saying that everyone was free to tell the story they wanted to tell, no pressures. Good, I thought. The beginning was exciting: “la sociedad asturiana está convencida que no es racista pero sí lo es”³⁸, Alma³⁹ compelled the latent racism in the asturian society —and a certain discomfort covered the room—she went through by criticizing the presence of colonialism, and the pervasive impact of “development” over our territories of origin (México, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, among others), as well as aiming for the recovery of our political agency as migrant women. An agency overshadowed by the demands of the labor market but mostly by the fear of losing the residence permit if we

³⁸ “Asturians are convinced they are not racist but they are!”

³⁹ Muyeres Pachamama [Women from the/and Earth], a new organization of Latin American migrant women in Oviedo.

become politically confrontational. Powerful words surrounded by kindness, honesty, and a warm familiarity that lasted only eight minutes, no more.

“La fragilidad que implica la migración, aquí te va el permiso de residencia en eso (si protestas). Las mujeres no se han constituido en sujetos políticos porque están enfocadas en trabajar. ¡Qué las mujeres sepan que tienen derechos políticos!” (Alma, 2018)⁴⁰

The second and third participants were presented as ‘two pakistani refugees’⁴¹ who were accompanied by a third person, Bruno —his name was said loud and clear— a spanish *well-intentioned, inexperienced, and sensitive* volunteer from NNK who was assigned to ‘translate’ both interventions from english to spanish. I immediately recognized the unsafe environment and the theatrical - extractivist function of the table. Not only this person did not translate accurately; he occupied the time-space, he re-contextualized, modified, interrupted, and embellished in a sensationalistic way the migratory experience the ‘two pakistani refugees’ had, searching for—I guess— an aw response from the public. He became the master puppeteer of the narrative: what he thought the audience wanted to hear.

I went from anger, contempt, impotence, and frustration. All emotions going in crescendo, sometimes at the same time, sometimes shifting from one to another. I stormed out, then came back, stormed out again...Some faces were in shocked —I want to think—, some were at the expectative, most of them were unaware. The final blow came almost at the end: “Now, can you tell us about your positive experience here in spain? Isn’t it that spain is a

⁴⁰ “Migration implies a kind of fragility, if you get involved in politics you can jeopardize your resident permit. Women have not constituted themselves political subjects because they are only focused on working. Women need to know they own political rights!”

⁴¹ A week later, when I met Alma again, she told me that one of the organizers intentionally avoid to mention everyone’s names because the last names of “the african” man was too difficult to pronounce.

great country?⁴² — his sickly-sweet condescended, paternalistic, white savior tone was unbearable.

Repulsion. Disgust. Nausea. Fear? An unknown shiver of not being safe run through my body, could it be fear? I was going through a rainbow of emotions while he was feeling proud of himself. Then, a flashback from a movie I saw many moons ago hit me: *Beyond Borders*. There is this scene where the white male protagonist, a “renegade doctor”⁴³, breaks into an Aid Relief International’s charity event with JoJo, an ethiopian boy —bad nourished, poorly dressed—, in his pursuit to affect an indifferent british society: “so I took him with me to London, you know, my talisman, my courageous Africa...”, he says. All in fancy gowns and tuxedos looking back at them in shocked and petrified. He delivered a grandiloquent speech, of course, “When I met him he was so hungry he was trying to eat his own tongue... he was a pile of bones and a pool of shit, and I don’t mean a civilized shit.” The room is in silence, suddenly a banana is thrown at them, the silence is broken with laughter. The maybe existent empathy vanishes.

The comparison may look extreme for some: in this real life theater there were no bananas, there was no laughter —except when a: “you have no idea the amazing chicken they cook!”, said with a condescending tone irrputed the room—, they were from pakistan not from ethiopia. However, the spectacle was set in motion. One mexican woman, one man from senegal, and two men from pakistan. A colorful display of exoticness. A tokenization of the migrant experience. What hurt me the most was (1) to witness the deployment of this twisted humanism^{44 45}; in first row with racism and violence in its more naturalized environment, (2) a

⁴² These were not the exact words, I was feeling too sick that could not write accurately.

⁴³ IMBD.

⁴⁴ Or “pseudo humanism” for Césaire.

⁴⁵ Césaire, “Discourse,” 1956; Bouteldja, *Los Blancos*

non-existing reflection about an inherent and well-oiled relationship of power between one subject and two fetishized objects, and, finally, (3) to observe an unaffected audience.

In dealing with my emotions, I might have hurt an ally friend who was also present in this event. He is not *really* guilty nor he chose to be a white spanish male, even though, in Bouteldja words, he is *responsible* for the historical oppression of colonialism imposed by a well designed and *imagined* white supremacy he inherited, and he not only knows it but acts on it. Although this fact did not matter because we —me and him, both allies against the spanish anti-immigration system—, in that supposedly safe room, became *different* again. We were segregated by our colonial history. He was also in shock —one of the few— even disgusted like me; but, could he feel how it hurt? Could he understand how the display of paternalism was shattering my soul, therefore my tears were unstoppable? Could he? And, how to tell him that by approaching me I felt threatened, that as a way of resistance I wanted to be unreachable and pulled myself away? At that time, overwhelmed by everything, I could not articulate a sane response to my friend, nor to the mainly unaffected/unaware audience nor to the ‘inexperienced’ perpetrator himself without reproducing violence or *endangering*⁴⁶ those who were placed as objects. Then, how to say all of this without addressing it with anger if what we want is to engage with a decolonial *revolutionary love*?⁴⁷ If what we want is to fracture the economic and political structure, to destroy borders (real and symbolic), to reinvent a new form of belonging, and more?

Besides the disproportion between sexes [male predominance], the problem goes beyond on who is entitled to speak about migration and who is not. It goes with, first, how we perceive theory and knowledge [reason] and who has the domain of it, the use of time, the use of space, etc. Second, how the migrant experience is reduced not only in time nor space but in

⁴⁶ Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the world and me* (Melbourne: The Text Publishing Company, 2017)

⁴⁷ Bouteldja, *Los blancos*

importance, to become a mere anecdote of the migration journey [emotion]. It does not matter if the main presenters are spanish, or if the public was from the spanish nation-state or migrant. No, it is more complex than that.

A friend reminded me about the dangers of the situated knowledge or how decolonial theory, for instance, could be applied at the extent of becoming a sort of ‘jail’ to not letting ‘outsiders’ to discuss certain topics. And I do agree partially, but also I believe there are different types of [protagonist] roles. In some fights we become a spokesperson and in others we are allies. The problem, in other words, resides in the subjacent discourse that articulated the whole event where ‘the migrant’ has not escaped the role of the *other*: a monolith subject to whom ‘the spaniard we’ help, welcome, accept, and/or give refuge. In this case, the ‘we’ at that table was positioned as morally superior while the migrant had the obligation to feel grateful for the kindness and the ‘recognition’ obtained for her/his humanity in his/her path to the citizenry. On one side all the sensitive saviors as protagonists [subjects], on the other the *victim* migrant is compelled to share the saddest story ever [objects]. Therefore, not only the division between migrants and refugees is central in this narrative, but, without realizing—or, do they?— the category of citizen is imposed without problematizing. We end up, then, dealing with a hierarchical triad from top to bottom of citizenry- refugee-economic migrant, a spectrum of rights and the absence of them.

It is through this ethnography that I can present you why I chose a feminist methodology, why it took me so much time and effort to create bonds with the women I met, why some experiences like the one I told above became emotionally difficult, why it did not feel as a fieldwork but as a shared experience. It because I did not want to be that guy at that table, and the risk is always there if we do not become responsible of our researches and engage with a constant reviewing of the methodologies we apply. I argue this because—even though I have always been very careful with the people I have interacted with—these past

months, I have spent days asking myself about my role as a researcher, and trying to find a way to minimize the pervasive impact of my profession.

In fact, at the beginning of this project I was reluctant to interview women because I was afraid to harm them. Thus, I can relate with what J. Sangster⁴⁸ argues when she addresses our privileges as a researcher and how by simply asking questions a relationship of power is established and we may be reproducing certain paternalistic and condescending behavior. Fortunately, I found the answer with Rivera Cusicanqui⁴⁹, and through her I realized how the gap between two intersectional people is overcome by the spoken words and the ties they create between interviewer and interviewee, emerging in that sense a collective we. Indeed, this is what I experimented in the field with Halima, N., Juanita, Khady, Luz, and Biby, with whom I spent more time; but also with the other women I met on the field and became not only informants but sisters in arms against the anti-migration system. And that is also why sometimes along the text the 'I' becomes 'we' and vice versa.

Finally, as my last cry-out of resistance, I have declared myself “against the imposition of capitalization”,⁵⁰ for me, for my migrant sisters, my migrant brothers. This means to resist the ‘language of colonialisms’ just like bell hooks⁵¹ did only that I resist to capitalize the names of those former colonies, today nation-states who deliberately use the power they have to inflict fear, murder, discriminate, exclude, subjugate, criminalize, and objectify the migrant population. As well as I refuse to capitalize any name of any nation-states who base its existence in exclusionary terms of citizenship. The only names I allow myself to capitalize are the names of the cities, and subaltern regions as a way of vindication. This is my contribution to decolonize narratives and praxis.

⁴⁸ Sangster, Joan. “Telling our Stories: feminist debates and the use of oral history”, in: *Women's History Review*, 1994, 3:1.

⁴⁹ Rivera, *Sociología*

⁵⁰ <https://theestablishment.co/bell-hooks-and-the-extraordinary-power-of-names-dcb1fe44ec29>

⁵¹ Ibid.

Even if my methodology might seem eclectic with different sources⁵² and different voices, the experience itself has been rewarding, and I invite you to take chances and create more methodologies or to be disruptive with an oppressive system.

⁵² Women's link, SOS Racismo, CEAR, Médicos del Mundo.

Chapter 1: —The journey—

*“Tell me, O Muse, of that ingenious
hero who travelled far and wide...”⁵³*

On the next pages, a story within a multiplicity of stories will be told by me, a narrator. It is a story of migration and fear within the Spanish nation-state, its borders, and its anti-migration machinery. But, mainly, it aims to be a story of women who have moved from different locations, impelled by different reasons, and embraced different expectations.

It is through the first subsection, ‘Introducing Spain as a destination’, that the relationship between migration, politics, and economy will be introduced and established as the foundation for the ruling mechanism of fear through which the migrant population will be commodified and/or annihilated. In that sense, the colonial tradition will work as a cornerstone to understand this migratory process and how Spain became an idyllic locus of destiny associated with a discourse of progress and superiority. The ‘Plan Africa’ in early XXI century, Halima’s labour experience and the current scandal of exploitation in the strawberry fields in Huelva, are taken as examples to illustrate the connection between migration and current forms of capitalism.

In the second section, ‘Characterizing the Spanish dream’, we will approach some of the characteristics of the migration process in Spain through its historical background, moving from the 70’s to a more contemporary narrative —after the turn of the century—where forms

⁵³ Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by S. Butler.

of racism, discrimination, and exploitation are intensified and coexist. In that sense, first, a change of rhetoric will be explained were a crescent discourse of terror is associated to some racialized migrants, the muslim community. Second, we will engage with the economic precariousness reinforced as a consequence of new forms of economic dominance and global crisis with repercussions upon the *legality/illegality* of the migrant subject. Last, a criminalization discourse of the migrant was developed as a consequence of the economic crisis with the intentionality to make of the anti-migrant system a more efficient one.

Finally, is in the last subsection that we argue that no matter how different our experiences, motivations, and expectations, the anti-migrant system will be imposed upon us without hesitation with the intention to neutralize us and reinforce our *othered* condition to fulfill an economic but also a sociopolitical end in terms of (neo)colonialism.

1.1. Introducing Spain as a Destination

Mobility is, and always has been, a part of human history. The image of a *ship in motion*, used by Gilroy⁵⁴, results in an innovative way to illustrate —beyond the *Black Atlantic*— displacement and migration processes worldwide. This includes, of course, interconnecting continents and at the same time, people, cultures, ideas, stories, and emotions⁵⁵. The history of human mobility as it has been recorded —from the western eye— demonstrates a myriad ways to understand both ‘voluntary’ and ‘forced’ migrations from the nomads to Odysseus, Alejandro Magno to Columbus, and more recently from settlers,

⁵⁴ Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, London and New York: Verso Books, 1993, 1-40.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 4

colonialism, and slavery to post WWII labor migrants, to finally the current migration and refugee crisis⁵⁶.

During the period of modern spanish/portuguesse conquest and colonization of the Americas⁵⁷, the predominant narrative has been one recorded through religious enterprises and an incipient mercantilism where people —dehumanized—were traded intermittently by colonizers as commodities⁵⁸. Precisely, in the same line of argument, Mbembe —citing Buck-Mors— portrays how some bodies were commodified through the narrative of colonialism — with mobility and capitalism— to the extent of reducing one “person’s humanity” to a “thing” or a shadow with no possession of their own life. A predominant narrative—I argue— prevailing in contemporary migration:

“This power over the life of another takes the form of commerce: a person’s humanity is dissolved to the point where it becomes possible to say that the slave’s life is possessed by the master. Because the slave’s life is like a “thing”, possessed by another person, the slave existence appears as a perfect figure of a shadow”⁵⁹.

To emphasize, the increment of mobility works as a response to economic reasons like trade, neoliberalism, and globalization⁶⁰. Enzensberger suggests that since early times the rules of the market and any form of capital have always possessed a dominant role over frontiers and over how the world is structured, for capitalism destroys any national borders⁶¹. In the same line of argument, Romero⁶² reminds us how the spanish government used —and uses— the needs of the market as a central strategy or solution to stop or regulate migration.

⁵⁶ Enzensberger, *La gran migración*, 2002; Sassen, *Inmigrantes y ciudadanos*, Berger, *The Seven*

⁵⁷ According to Adlbi, following Dussel’s argumentation, the west is incapable to recognize 1492’s “amerindian invasion and genocide” as constitutive of what then became known as ‘Modernity’, which actually should be considered as the second modernity. Adlbi, *La cárcel*, 24-27.

⁵⁸ Gilroy, *The Black*, 1993; Enzensberger, *La gran migración* 2002; De Genova, “Spectacles”

⁵⁹ Mbembe, “Necropolitics.” 22

⁶⁰ Enzensberger, *La gran migración*, 23

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Romero García, Eduardo. *Quién invade a quién, Oviedo: Cambalache*, 2006, 8

An example of this action is the Plan Africa executed in 2006 to provide aid and development to African countries in order *to stop the invasion of more than 20 millions of Africans*, according to the spokesperson of the Economy and Treasury Department of the Canary Islands⁶³.

It is curious to think how the mobilization of certain goods is freer than others. When capital moves/arrives in the form of migrants, restrictions are made —and strengthen—to “incorporate” them temporarily in order to facilitate a type of society and economy based on exclusion (belonging/not belonging), inequalities (social hierarchies), and exploitation of migrants. What is happening in the strawberry fields in Huelva, Andalucía, one of the major providers of this red golden commodity to Spain and most parts of Europe, is a conclusive evidence of how this mechanism of slavery is forced upon female migrants, usually recruited in Morocco, like Halima.

“There is an increasing need of cheap, manual labor in Huelva. Coming from regions of Morocco where jobs are scarce, Kalima, Sabiha and her co-workers saw the opportunity to work in Spain as an escape from economic precarity. Starting work at 6am in the morning until lunch and then again in the afternoon. They do not earn more than 30 euros per day. Companies do not compensate them in case of bad weather, temporary reduction of production or for completely arbitrary reasons, such as sanctioning for mistakes. Perpetrators use this financial dependence of the female workers.”
“(corrective.org)⁶⁴

The history of Halima belongs within this narrative. The day we met, she was waiting for me at the bus station, in Avilés. A few years back, this action would have been impossible because of her lack of documentation and racial raids. Before arriving in Spain, Halima had to

⁶³ Romero, *Quién invade*, 8-9

⁶⁴ <https://correctiv.org/en/blog/2018/04/30/rape-in-the-fields/>

More information also in: <http://lapoderio.com/2018/04/11/jornaleras-de-huelva-el-sabor-amargo-de-de-los-frutos-rojos/>

travel to Casa Blanca to apply for a job in one of the strawberry fields in Huelva, Spain; where she was examined, especially the roughness in her hands, to determine her ability to work:

"Te miran las manos para saber si has trabajado antes."⁶⁵

She crossed the border by ferry to reach the Spanish soil. Huelva is known to be a place where a particularly vicious cycle of violence and rape continues to plague the lives of migrant women who come here to pick lucrative cash-crops in seasonal work. As soon as Halima got there, the man in charge took her passport as an insurance policy, so she won't leave before the season ends and without paying her debts. The work was hard as well as the living arrangements, seven women slept in one room, she only received 100 euros after a week and a half of work to buy food, and because she didn't know any of the language she had to confide in one of the men in charge with the risk to be robbed, as she was. This experience left her with regrets of having left her country, and sentiments of anger because of her *vulnerable* condition:

"Te quitan el pasaporte. El trabajo es duro, vives en una habitación con seis personas. Te dan poco sueldo, 100 euros después de una semana y media para comprar víveres y la gente te engaña. Sientes rabia, no entiendes. Piensas por qué dejaste el país"⁶⁶ (Halima 2018)

She stayed in Huelva less than a month, leaving *everything* there. With a woman she met in the fields she traveled north: to Gijón (near Oviedo) with the expectation to find better job opportunities. Since then, she has been working in restaurants, houses, anything she could find. The experience has not been easy for her, fear has always been a constant in her *undocumented* journey—fear of the society in general to fear of her now former partner—. In fact, one of the first things she told me was how hard were her first years living in Spain. At the

⁶⁵ "They examine your hands (the roughness) to be sure you've worked before."

⁶⁶ "You feel angry, you don't understand. You think why you left your country."

beginning she was afraid to go out because people stared at her, she didn't want to speak because people made fun of her when she made mistakes, and even she was afraid to eat the food they gave her because she knew it was prepared intentionally with some ingredients she could not eat because of her costumes.

“Tienes un miedo, miedo a salir. Cuando hablas la gente te mira. Tienes miedo a hablar. La gente se ríe cuando cambias las palabras. Si trabajo como burro te engañan con la comida, saben que por tus costumbres no comes ciertas cosas y te las dan. Al inicio es muy duro. No sabía hablar.”⁶⁷

This feeling somehow changed when she obtained her *legality*, *acquiring* a sense of tranquility. Today Halima speaks spanish well and she looks more confident, although something in the way she looks away and is often lost in her thoughts suggests to me that her healing process is still underway. She lives in Avilés since 2013 only with her younger daughter —the older one still lives in morocco— and she is currently separated from her husband as a consequence of domestic violence. With a smile, she tells me how things are different now even though she is currently unemployed, she feels free and without fear even to look back at the police if they talk to me or ask for my documents.

“Te sientes más libre, sin miedo. Si miras a la policía antes, te piden papeles. Ahora miro sin miedo”⁶⁸

It is outrageous to observe how some human beings are still used as merchandises or invisible objects, because their materiality and subjectivity are not recognized by the rightful

⁶⁷ “You are afraid to go out. When you talk to people they stare at you. You are afraid to speak. People laugh when you make mistakes when you talk. If I work hard, they fool me with the food they give me, they know I don't eat certain things because of my costumes but they don't care, they give it to me. At the beginning it was hard. I didn't know spanish.” (Halima 2018)

⁶⁸ “You feel free, with no fear. Before if you look at the police, they will ask for your papers. Now I look at them without fear”.

white [european] citizen⁶⁹, while others, personified by the figure of the tourist, are entitled to mobility without restriction and without borders⁷⁰. According to Romero's analysis of the Cayucos avalanche in the Canary Islands (2006, pp. 8), there is a disproportion in the narrative according to if a person is perceived as a migrant or a tourist. For instance, the number of migrants arriving from January to September of 2006 to the islands was estimated in 25 thousand people, therefore, they became an avalanche in contrast to the nine millions of praised and welcomed tourists received in 2005.

As a scholar from the Global South [Lima, peru], I grew up embedded with a narrative of progress associated with europe, and the western culture equated to civilization, superiority, and prestigious knowledge. Ain't an unjustified rhetoric, it belongs to an imposed colonial tradition we inherited, as decolonial and postcolonial authors remind us, since the *discovery of the Americas*, the spanish conquest, and an afterwards persistent coloniality⁷¹.

I recalled this for two reasons, as a way to contextualize [and emphasize] how the contemporary world has been built up within colonialism, organized in first world and third world countries [former colonizers and colonized]. Second, to understand how this logic was spread over the world, mining territories, populations, and knowledges. My father would be amazed by the european architecture, imperial palaces, churches, and more, idealizing the richness of the "european culture" while comparing it [contemptuously] with ours (peruvian or Latin American). A [libyan] friend would compliment the "civility" in drivers' behavior. Another friend would praise the order and cleanliness of [some] european streets. Female friends from non-european countries would feel safer walking at night [even with the high

⁶⁹ Enzensberger, *La gran migración*; De Genova, "Spectacles"; Berger, *The Seventh*; Romero, *Un deseo*; Fernández, and Brandariz, "Transformaciones"

⁷⁰ Alba Rico, "La izquierda"; Romero, *Un deseo*

⁷¹ Quijano, Aníbal. "Colonialidad del poder, eurocentrismo y América Latina". *En libro: La colonialidad del saber: eurocentrismo y ciencias sociales. Perspectivas Latinoamericanas*. Edgardo Lander (comp.) (Buenos Aires: CLACSO, Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales, 2000)

rates of sexual assault and feminicide here in the “civilized” europe]. For another Latin American friend, white babies are cuter than non-white babies. These, although innocent remarks, belong to a colonial racist narrative where the west, no matter its deficiencies, will always be better than the Orient, the South, or developing countries. Without simplifying or trivializing, the idea of Europe as progress is still alive in current days. In fact, it has become one of the reasons, along with others, why people choose to cross borders in order to reach the ‘dream’ [or the idea of it].

1.2. Characterizing the Spanish Dream

I will introduce two experiences, Gladys and Juanita’s, to illustrate what constitutes the Spanish dream and then move towards some of the constituent characteristics of this migratory process.

I first met *Gladys* through her written history; she participated in a project called: ‘Women who move’ or ‘Moving women’; I like better the latter because the title implies movement and at the same time it acknowledges the ability to feel, to be moved or affected by something or someone. After reading about her, I had the pleasure of being *affected* by her words in one of her presentations and could see parts of myself through her experience. For her, migration is a frustrating experience—with this sentiment she started her presentation. Gladys, without embarrassment—probably as a vindicating act—exposed her *bare life*⁷². She went on telling about the frustration felt everyday, the difficulties of being a “migrant” subject, the nostalgia, the *fractured identity*, the dislocation, the lack of network and the

⁷² Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer. Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. California: Stanford University Press, 2007.

eagerness to be in contact with others but the fear of *knowing* yourself *illegal*... and the emptiness that comes with moving from one place to another.

“La nostalgia, el desarraigo, la soledad. Nos encontramos vacías, no tenemos amigos...y a la vez queremos involucrarnos.”⁷³

For Gladys, migrating to Spain was not her first experience, when she was young she moved to Argentina with her family on an attempt to escape from the political crisis in Uruguay. As an adult, Gladys followed her husband as a way to escape again only this time from the economic crisis. Spain represented an opportunity not only because her husband's Spanish inheritance could have eased the arrival but because economically it was considered a good destination to improve someone's economy. Her expectations were crushed with what she encountered, need of *legality*, scarce opportunities to work, exploitation, horrible hours, low salaries, among other realities. When she reviews her story she wonders how Spanish people could be insensitive and racist with “migrants” without understanding the tearing-apart complexity of our journeys, the suffering from being away from our families, the mourning of loved ones at a distance, and the difficulties Europe represents.

“Me pregunto cómo se puede tener esa insensibilidad hacia los demás. Si supieran cómo se siente uno, todo lo que hay que pasar para llegar un país extraño, el sufrimiento de estar lejos de la familia, de no poder estar cuando fallece un ser querido. La gente cree que venimos a hacer la Europa, cuando la mayoría estamos viviendo igual o peor que en nuestro propio país.”⁷⁴ (Gladys)

Juanita's experience, although different from Gladys', also illustrates us about a repetitive dreamed narrative in which Spain is equated with opportunities to then clash with an

⁷³ “The nostalgia, the alienation, the solitude. We feel empty, with no friends, and at the same time we want to be active in the society we live in.”

⁷⁴ “I wonder how people can be so insensitive. If they knew how we feel, what we have to overcome when we move to a foreign country, what we suffer from being away from our families or from not being there when a loved one passes away. People believe we came here to “make the Europe” when we actually are living the same or worse than in our own countries.” Quotation from: Médicos del Mundo. *Mujeres que se mueven*. (Oviedo, 2018)

afterward reality. She talks to me in a whisper, her voice is low and rough as a consequence of a surgery she had here in Oviedo. Spain provided Juanita with a reason to cross the border and improve her health. Juanita came from equatorial guinea, a former spanish colony, which she tells me as a way to explain to me the “nature” of her name and the reason why she —aside from being *black*— speaks spanish. She arrived here because of the advice and the help of one of her cousins, who unfortunately passed away a few months after she stepped into spanish territory, leaving her without a network of resistance —no family, few acquaintances—and in a precarious situation as well because of the lack of job opportunities for people like her, without residence or permits.

“Yo llegué en avión”⁷⁵, and I am not sure but I noticed a hint of pride in the fact she arrived by plane, taking distance from the ones arriving by *pateras* [dinghies]. In a way, she could have been telling me: *I am not a boat people*, which is understandable because of the current stereotyped/criminalized discourse around ‘being’ a migrant.

Both stories characterize some aspects of the context of migration in Spain during the last decades, where it became a country considered a locus of opportunities, political refuge during the 70’s, education, and a constant economic relief for many of the denizens arriving from the third world, global south, or former colonies. In a more contemporary migration process, Spain still represents the dream if compared with loci of origin, but an increasing awareness of ‘reality’ has been spread out. Expectations, even if higher, come along with a hostile environment produced by a narrative of terror, precariousness, illegality, criminalization, and fear.

⁷⁵ “I arrived by plane.” (Juanita 2018)

1.2.1. Migrating Towards a Rhetoric of Terror

During the 1970's, an unprecedented number of political refugees arrived from Latin American countries due to the growing persecution and increasingly dictatorial regimes. From this decade to 1985 migration was seen under a different light. In order to illustrate the process above described, I am inclined to explain this period of time through Luz's testimony rather than using academic sources. According to Luz (2018), there is a before and after of the first immigration law in 1985⁷⁶. People arriving in Spain during this period of time were not moved by an economic urge — although economic reasons were present, they became more relevant after the 90's—, instead, the intention was to escape from political persecution, to be reunited with family members, or to pursue an education like in her case. With this, she makes a differentiation between migratory processes embedded in the decision to migrate, in which being a political refugee had a different status from any other migrant.

In a contemporary context, Romero⁷⁷, Marcu⁷⁸, and many national and international reports⁷⁹ concur that the current process of migration developed from the 1990's with the consolidation of a post-franco era. By this time Spain recovered its political and economic stability and could be considered a locus of destiny like other European countries. It is said that the 'migrant' population came from different places of the globe, from Latin America because of the expanded economic crisis; from the Maghreb area, in particular Morocco because of its demographic explosion⁸⁰; but also from Eastern European countries like Romania. However, the analysis made by Marcu might be incomplete for neglecting the

⁷⁶ Sánchez, Raúl. *Fronteras interiores y exteriores*. (Madrid: Traficante de sueños. 2006), 29.

⁷⁷ Romero, *Un deseo*, 2010

⁷⁸ Marcu, "España", 2007

⁷⁹ FRONTEX, Defensor del Pueblo.

⁸⁰ Marcu, "España", 36

responsibility europe had and has with these geographies, creating economic instability in order to procure a cheap labor force⁸¹.

When Spain entered the European Union in the late 1980s, the country became a more attractive potential settlement for migrants as it was considered the entrance to Europe owing to its proximity to the Maghreb peninsula. Out of this, the European Union urged an immigration policy in 1985⁸² to control the “migrant” flow. This was the time where the number of *pateras* arose at the same time that the first “migrant bodies” were found in the shores of Cadiz, an incipient “deathly sequence” about to worsen through a “Schengen mediation”⁸³. During the 1990’s a great contingent of migrants from South America, especially Ecuador and Colombia⁸⁴ chose Spain because of a certain commonality of language and a shared historical past. Moreover because of a certain Spanish strategy to reestablish commercial-liberal ties with Latin American countries to expand its market and recruit labor force⁸⁵. Marcu explains —without problematizing— how historic links between Spain and the ‘Iberoamerican’ countries are present and relevant in current political and economic decisions⁸⁶.

However, this process was far from being ‘easy’. Romero⁸⁷ described the story of Jenny⁸⁸, a Peruvian woman who arrived in Spain after what I dare to call ‘a casting process’ where women were subjected to psychological and medical tests, and reduced to commodified bodies to be selected/purchased/rented/hired according to their physical capabilities, a

⁸¹ Romero, *Quién invade*, 2007

⁸² Sánchez, *Fronteras*, 29

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Marcu, “España”, 38-39, 45; INE

⁸⁵ Marcu, “España”, 45

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Romero García, Eduardo. *En mar abierto*. Oviedo: Cambalache, 2016

⁸⁸ I had the pleasure of meeting her during the presentation of the book *En mar abierto (In Open Sea)*, sometime around 2017. When we met, she did not need to tell me how hard was her experience, nor did I dare to ask. She found the way to tell me a bit more about her through her words, through the look in her eyes. At the beginning I was afraid she was feeling uncomfortable/nervous of presenting her story to an audience, to present herself as Jenny, to let people know who she is. Later, I could read how important that moment was to reaffirm herself, not as a survivor but as the owner of the story.

continuation of a slavery mechanism: the best muscles, the best teeth, strength, durability, etc. Jenny's story narrates the intricacies of a migratory process starting in the country of origin where companies from Spain —first world—travelled to countries like Peru —third world— to 'recruit' labor force by promising all kinds of benefits which came to be modified once arrived at the destination: a salary minus the flight fee, minus accommodation, and other expenses⁸⁹.

Therefore, migrants with no contract have to engage in several routes to reach the country, while others are forced to accept labor contracts that make them human slaves. It did not matter how or why migrants from Latin American countries arrived to Spain, they were all subjected to discrimination as they were called *sudacas*⁹⁰: A contemptuous term used to address South American immigrants even in current days.

“Sudaca, ¿por qué no te vas a tu país? ¿Por qué estás acá? Me dijo una mujer mayor en una parada de bus.” (Biby, 2018)⁹¹

Jumping ahead in time, a discourse of rejection and racism towards South American migrants may be shifting —or masked—. Nowadays, some Podemos affiliated, a 'left and progressive party', defend a welcoming discourse in regard of a shared past, and republican and Christian values —“easily assimilated” and “producing less rejection”— in opposition to Arab/Muslim/Islamic migrants who are condemned for being part of an “an invasive religion” imposing its views and values [in France]. Hooks and Anzaldúa's work as well as Ama Ata Aidoo and Ken Bugul's have influenced my own reflection regarding my experience and my state of being as a migrant in Europe. As a migrant student in Asturias, Spain, I have felt the injustice of a hatred look. I have experienced subtle racist comments from 'friendly' voices

⁸⁹ Romero, *Un deseo*, 2010

⁹⁰ Makes reference to South American immigrants in a pejorative way.

⁹¹ “Sudaca, why don't you go back to your country? Why are you here?, An old woman told me on a bus stop.”

just because I am not white: ‘*you cannot pass as an asturian girl even if you speak asturianu*⁹²’. I have been sexually stereotyped because of my exoticness. I have felt the fear running through my body after someone tried to run over me. And it made me think. At risk of sounding reductionist, sometimes it does not matter where we come from or how we arrived, at the eyes of the assumed white other, we are all the same because we come from outside and we are people of color (black or brown). In other words, we constitute the other and we signify a threat, an invisible or an unreal threat. A menace that might be different from the 90’s, and towards which Spain needs to respond because geographically constitutes the southern border of the continent, and needs to demonstrate its capability to protect the European fortress from the *illegal* migration and terror, just as Greece. And even if I can state ‘we are all the same at the eyes of the white other’, sometimes we are not. There is a subtle mark of difference regarding women of color, some of us wear a veil and this element has become a symbol of threat in the XXI century, a synonym of terrorism. Female migrant friends, usually from Morocco, have told me how difficult for them to find a job when they go to interviews wearing a veil—even some organizations working with migrants have recommend them to avoid the use of it when hunting for jobs.

This is an in crescendo narrative across Spain and Europe according to Douhaibi and Almela⁹³. Both authors provide an interesting example of how this racialized community is being persecuted and discriminated in the Catalunya region. For example, after the attack in Paris in 2015, a protocol of prevention, detection, and intervention of Islamic radicalization (PRODERAI) was implemented in every Catalan school to detect on time any indication of Islamism inside the classroom. A similar securitization program is being used since 2008

⁹² Language from Asturias, north of Spain, in processes of recognition.

⁹³ Douhaibi, Ahinoa and Vicent, Almela. “El PRODERAI, vigilància a les aules.” in *La Directa* Nov 29, 2017.

inside the penitentiary system to prevent same acts of islamic radicalization⁹⁴. Through a globalized discourse of terrorism since 9/11, measures like PRODERAI —similar to united kingdom’s CONTEST⁹⁵ created after the london attack in 2005—are deployed to criminalize and police an entire community, now inside classrooms. Some of the radicalization indicators are between twisted and hilarious. For instance, if the student does not celebrate christmas, nor drink coca-cola, nor listen to occidental music, nor play football, etc. Or, on the contrary, the student assists to combat classes, watches violent cartoons, visits islamic websites, comes back from morocco with henna drawings, or has a mark in her/his forehead as an indicator of praying, etc.⁹⁶

“No celebrar el Nadal, no beure Pepsi ni Coca- Cola, no escoltar música occidental, no anar als llocs on van els joves com discoteques o concerts, no veure la televisió, no jugar a futbol, fer classes de lluita, fer dibuixos amb armes, mirar pàgines islamistes, parlar sobre el Califat de Còrdova o l’Al-Andalus, tornar del Marroc amb les mans pintades de henna, tenir una durícia de resar al front, ser molt curós amb l’alimentació Halal o dir que marxem de vacances a Síria o l’Iraq”.⁹⁷

1.2.2. A Matter of Precariousness

By 2000, the spanish border was properly fenced with the help of european union funding. Coinciding with neighboring trends, spain’s immigration laws and maritime border control centered their efforts on a mission to “stop irregular migration by sea”⁹⁸, a mechanism strengthened immeasurably a decade later in the rest of the countries in the continent (Fernandez & Brandariz, Marcu). On that first decade, the immigration rates raised until spain

⁹⁴ Douhaibi and Almela, “El PRODERAI”, 4

⁹⁵ CONTEST: Strategy for Countering Terrorism.

⁹⁶ Douhaibi and Almela, “El PRODERAI”, 6

⁹⁷ Ibid., 4

⁹⁸ Marcu, “España”, 40

faced in 2008 the worldwide economic [ongoing] crisis (Romero 2010, Vela 2018⁹⁹); it went from around 420 thousand immigrants (non euro zone countries) at the end of the 90's to almost 3 million at the end of 2005 (Marcu, 37). Is in this turn of the century, I alleged, that the migratory phenomenon in Spain started to change. Not only the Immigration Law was modified to contain aliens and reinforce their 'illegal' condition, but the discourse around migration and the 'migrant subject' permuted in a narrative of economic *precarity* and *precariousness*.

Is in this line of argument were reflecting on economic precarity and a precarious condition imposed upon the migrant subject becomes relevant when addressing the contemporary presence of the migrant other in Spain. If before the XXI century, the migrant condition was already subsumed to certain inferiority within the —submerged—labor market, is in the last almost two decades, with the globalization of the economy and a worldwide economic crisis that migrants have become the most vulnerable 'class' where the already existent precarious conditions have toughened up. Enzensberger¹⁰⁰ reminds us how when restrictions of certain goods are made the system creates black markets with exorbitant prices, although when a submerged migrant labor market exists traditional rules do not apply and migrants become not a *rare good* but a common and *abundant* labor force, therefore cheap.

When Gladys and Merche argue that a *precariousness has been imposed upon them*, they mean that freedom and the ability to work is contingent to a nationality or visa permits with no help from the local administration or social services. It also means that if someone manages to find a job, it would be in the submerged economy which would be characterized by its temporality, uncertainty, unbelievable hours (all day long), lack of social security, and a

⁹⁹ Vela, Corsino. *Capitalismo terminal. Anotaciones a la sociedad implosiva*. Madrid: Traficantes de Sueños, 2018.

¹⁰⁰ Enzensberger, *La gran migración*, 45

minimum income among other conditions. All elements of a distorted mechanism mirroring the neoliberal economic system which takes advantage of the sentiments of fear and necessity the same system produces.

“Estamos *precarizadas*. Yo cuando llegué no tenía papeles. Llegué en San Juan y necesitaban ayudante de cocina. Y, claro, los instrumentos de cocina no se llaman igual pero había necesidad. Pero trabajaba muchísimo y cobraba 420 euros y trabajaba todo el día pero para mí era la gloria. Regresaba llorando a casa.”¹⁰¹ (Gladys, 2018)

“No ha sido fácil encontrar trabajo sin papeles. Al inicio piensas que te vas a España y te va a ir bien. Te encuentras que no es así y te paralizas, vas a una Administración y no hay salida, te dicen seis meses, un año. ¡Es difícil!”¹⁰² (Merche, 2018)

Precariousness, then, has a twofold, it works as a social response or mechanism to overcome the modern anxiety of the unknown other¹⁰³ who has dared to overcome the geographical frontier of the civilized Spain/uncivilized third world, then, illegality is produced. And, through that illegality the *other* is made an instrument—a mean—to burst the Spanish economy. In that sense, the subject holding hers/his precariousness needs to be kept in line, to be reminded of hers/his constant *precarity* transformed into *precariousness* in order to fulfill the economic end¹⁰⁴ through a *subaltern* role. Hence, a differentiation between denizens is reinforced, on one side, the rightful Spanish citizen—who is not a monolith, of course—and in the other side of the spectrum, the migrant other without papers and/or *illegal*. Thus, a

¹⁰¹ “*Precariousness* has been imposed upon us. When I arrived I didn’t have papers. I arrived just in Saint John’s festival and they needed someone to help in the kitchen. And, of course, things have different names but I was in need. I worked very hard and they only paid me 420 euros for working the whole day but for me it was the glory. Every time I went home, I cried.”

¹⁰² “Finding a job without papers hasn’t been easy. At the beginning you think you’re going to Spain and everything will work. You find out things don’t work that way and you freak out. You go to Town Hall and there’s no solution, they tell you that in six months, a year. It is difficult!”

¹⁰³ Ahmed, Sara: “The Skin of the Community: Affect and Boundary Formation,” *Revolt, Affect, Collectivity: The Unstable Boundaries of Kristeva’s Polis*. Eds. Tina Chanter and Ewa Płonowska Ziarek (Albany: SUNY Press, 2005), 95-111; Said, Edward. *Orientalismo* (Barcelona: Penguin Random House Grupo Editorial, 2016)

¹⁰⁴ De Genova, “Spectacle”; Romero, *Un deseo*

historical relationship of power, domination, and fear is instituted or fixed as the norm to deal with the migrant subject arriving in Spain¹⁰⁵.

Thus, we should take into consideration the above-mentioned debate in order to review the last decades in Spain. It is during the turn of the century when some business agreements were made in-situ to attract workers, male and female, into the most precarious areas of the Spanish economy with the most dubious contracts and conditions like domestic service, tourism (hotels, restaurants), agriculture, and construction (Fernández & Brandariz, Romero 2010, 2016). What Fernández and Brandariz¹⁰⁶, among other authors¹⁰⁷, called a “Post-Fordist system of production” where the immigrant population is *integrated* as labor force with “disturbing levels of exploitation, insecurity, and economic vulnerability”; convenient for the Spanish economy but criminal for the migrant population. Some of the migrants arriving from African countries, especially Morocco and sub-Saharan Africa, came as seasonal workers, a figure promoted by the Spanish government. This scenario became problematic for the authorities when the temporality condition of the workers changed to an indefinite stay, in addition to the migrant population arriving as a consequence of political crises exploding in the African continent. Although the numbers of migrants arriving increased¹⁰⁸ it does not constitute the grounds for an *invasive action* if compared with the total of the country population, as the national discourse claims¹⁰⁹. In 2008, with the economic crisis reaching the Spanish nation as in many other European countries, an even more precarious atmosphere was developed for those *irregular* migrants, as Virginia well explains:

¹⁰⁵ Anzaldúa, *Borders*; De Genova, “Spectacle”; Romero, *Un deseo*

¹⁰⁶ Fernández and Brandariz, “Transformaciones,” 4

¹⁰⁷ Cited authors: Calavita, 2005, 48, 101; Romero, 2010, 18, 56, 88; Brandariz García, 2011, 96.

¹⁰⁸ For the Wittgenstein Centre for Demography and Global Human Capital, the population coming from these two countries rose during 2006, although representative in numbers, was not significant enough. From six thousands in the first quinquennial (1995-2000) to 126,000 between 2005-2010; meanwhile, the population arriving from Morocco went from 88,000 to 280,000 (Sander). An amount if compared with the total migrant, 6 millions (Europa Press), and local population in the country, around 41 million (INE), is meaningless.

¹⁰⁹ Sander, Nikola and G. J. Abel. “Quantifying Global International Migration Flows.” *Science* 28 (Mar 2014): 1520-1522.

“En el 2009 España estaba mal, si no tienes papeles no tienes ayuda.”¹¹⁰ (Virginia, 2018)

The report made in 2010 by the Spanish Migration Observatory about the relationship between labor and migration suggests that the majority of the affected people were actually immigrants as a consequence of the insecurity of their temporal employment. What the system calls ‘illegals’ were systematically deported or persecuted by using *racial raids*: they became the target of xenophobic sentiments by the authorities and the population, where fear became an essential element in the interaction between nationals and migrants¹¹¹. Migrant others were portrayed through violent images as bodies to be feared and as a further source of economic instability for the country. What is shielded from view to the public is that the labor force provided by migrants is very often necessary by the government to fuel the national economy.¹¹²

The story of Halima, for being from Morocco and arriving as a seasonal worker in the strawberry fields¹¹³, illustrates the existent precarious economy in Spain and so does N.'s story and her journey through Melilla, Murcia, and Oviedo. She came from Rabat (Morocco) and crossed the border through Melilla, a Spanish *colonized* city in the African continent. The Melilla border-cross is used daily by many people on both sides. Moroccan people working in Melilla have special Spanish permits that allow them an ‘uneventful’ crossing, others apply for a tourist visa or use the excuse of visiting family members—as I was told by other friendly sources—. N. decided it was time for her to move on, since she had been working all her life to sustain her family—eventually having to stop her studies. At that time, she was

¹¹⁰ “In 2009 Spain was in crisis, if you didn’t have papers, you couldn’t receive any aid.”

¹¹¹ Spanish Migration Observatory, 2010; Fernández and Brandariz, “Transformaciones”; Romero *Un deseo*.

¹¹² According to the Migrant Observatory report (131), Eurostat also agrees with the role played by immigrants in the improvement of the economy. This agency “estimates that by 2060, Europe without migrants would have lost around 100 million persons capable to work (Rossi y Burghart, 2009: 5)”, which can be translated to an irrefutable increase of the economy.

¹¹³ Although I do not agree completely on how the topic is addressed, you can look it up here for more information: <https://correctiv.org/en/blog/2018/04/30/rape-in-the-fields/>

working in Rabat as an underpaid worker in a textile company, 200 euros a month for long hours a day even during weekends. This precarious situation pushed her to become a business entrepreneur, going back and forth to Melilla where a borderland economy became an advantage for her. With an excruciating work dynamic, she saw Spain as a source of alternative economic progress. When N. arrived, the language was her first barrier in addition to the violence she suffered from her former partner, increasing in that sense her vulnerability. All the jobs she could manage to find were unsurprisingly related to household chores and taking care of elderly people, where she could savor the good and the bad when dealing with 'locals', the precariousness of the submerged economy, and the pressure of the illegality imposed by the anti-migration system. In her way of overcoming the many difficulties imposed by her illegal condition, N. committed to a relationship as a way to legalize her migrant situation, unfortunately with a violent outcome. Now she is a divorced single mother living with a son, with a 'good' job—as she describes it. Thus, it is interesting to point out how she feels *grateful* to have found a place where she is fairly paid, with decent hours, and she is treated with *humanity* and respect. What supposedly should be the prevailing rule in a 'first world' country becomes a *glorified exception of precariousness* when migration and labor market collide. No *matter* if our journeys are particular and diverse, we, as migrants, are all *affected* by the same racist colonial structure of exclusion and domination; what is today a monstrous [improved] neoliberal system.

Butler's argument about *precarity* and *precariousness* becomes relevant to understand how subjects are constructed upon difference: while precarity is a condition of vulnerability in every human being, precariousness becomes an imposed one, mediated by a fixed tradition of colonialism, western-centrism, patriarchy, and —an *imagined*—white racial supremacy. In that rhetoric, Gladys, Merche, Halima, and N. testimonies not only explain how they are *needed* and *need* to become part of the national economy in order to subsist within the same

mercantilistic logic, furthermore, they explain how a *precariousness*¹¹⁴ condition is imposed upon their bodies and subjectivities only because of being ‘migrants’. This condition does not come alone, it goes with an above-explained narrative of criminalization of certain ‘others within the other migrant’. The other, if monolith, became

1.2.3. Criminalization of Migration

Before the immigration law was reformed in 2009, the european union passed the “Directive on Return” (2008), best known as the ‘shameful directive’, urging the european nations to deport *irregular* migrants, and to extend the period of time allowed to detain (control and surveil) people in CIEs (Detention Centers for Immigrants). For Fernández and Brandariz, the Immigration Law 2/2009 has some hidden motives, it works as a response to the spanish economic crisis. A sort of strategy to reduce costs and reinforce the mechanism of deportation but not with the intentionality of deporting per se, instead to put in motion an “efficient reorganization of the deportation apparatus’ selectivity”¹¹⁵. In other words, to select better who should be deported, and who should remain in fear for the sake of the labor market^{116 117}. Out of necessity, this scenario leads to an acceptance of precarious, insecure, servile and menial labor.

Drawing upon the work of Fernandez and Brandariz, I frame my analysis of the spanish state using a foucauldian approach as a first approach that unveils the political stratagems and the structures of power within the spanish migration system. As a “sovereign technology of power” where control, surveillance, and power are executed over the immigrant

¹¹⁴ Butler, *Precarious Life*

¹¹⁵ Fernández and Brandariz, “Transformaciones”; Romero, *Un deseo*.

¹¹⁶ Initiative of the right-wing party: Populist Party follow, without questioning, by the socialist parties.

¹¹⁷ Romero, *Un deseo*.

other, the ability to legislate migrants as criminal means that a new discourse evolves in which “delinquent aliens” can be deported as a means of inhumane efficiency¹¹⁸. *Crimigration* thus creates *deportable* subjects that can be justifiably – by law – made non-existent in order to be able to prosecute them via the legal system, creating vicious cycle that incarcerates (often indefinitely) migrants¹¹⁹.

Even if Biby’s¹²⁰ story did not end in deportation nor she is a criminal, she has been criminalized and discriminated by the spanish society. Why don’t you go back to your country? was one of the answers Biby received from a volunteer/worker from the Red Cross who was assigned to help her in. As a consequence of that kind of comments, fear and aggressiveness became part of her life, first, for not having papers and second, for being the target of racism. Biby, whose’ name she preferred to keep in reserve, told me how moving to spain was not in her plans. It was after a series of misfortunes back in panama that she ended up here. She arrived in Madrid with a tourist visa, as many migrants do, therefore, working was difficult without proper documents. For her, the solution was in using fake documentation which constituted an extra risk. Once, outside the metro station —a place she was told to avoid— she got detained by the police and was taken to the county jail for a night where she was scared by the threat of deportation. That experience still haunts her. When she told me that part of her story I could feel her resentment and indignation because she felt she was treated like a criminal, “a delinquent, a murderer”. When she got out, she did it with an order of expulsion that fortunately was never executed.

¹¹⁸ Fernández and Brandariz, “Transformaciones”, 12.

¹¹⁹ De Genova, “Spectacle”; Biehl, “Governing”; Griffiths, Melanie. "Out of time: The temporal uncertainties of refused asylum seekers and immigration detainees," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 40, n°12 (2014): 1991-2009.

¹²⁰ Name inspired in a famous telenovela actress during the 90’s, Bibi Gaitán.

Nevertheless, the structure employed to control migration constitutes more than a mechanism of biopower, a necropower. It could be considered as the “ultimate expression of sovereignty”, the power of the government to decide who lives —and how the subject will be control and surveil— but also “who dies”¹²¹. This exercise creates an atmosphere of uncertainty among migrants and generates a state of vulnerability. The precariousness in everyone, as Butler states, becomes a precarity imposed on those over whom the power is performed. And the right to kill and to *vulnerate* the lives of others coexists with the right to live and self-protect against the dangerous other, the migrant who has crossed the boundaries of the fixed spanish nation. Because the life of the other migrant is not recognize as such, it is racially inferior, therefore, it is deportable/disposable and/or killable. This is the spanish state, a “racist state, a murderous state”¹²².

The next example may add a human approach and a better understanding of these mechanisms of control and necropower deployed against the migrant population. It's eight in the morning on a Friday holiday. I woke up wishing no more bad news, but the world had other plans. Once more the cruelty of the spanish state knock on my door, another “migrant” killed by spanish authorities. His name was Mmame Mbage¹²³ and his heart stopped on March, 15th after police personal —and with them the whole spanish racist anti-migration apparatus— persecuted¹²⁴ him through the streets of Lavapiés, a Madrilene City well-known

¹²¹ Mbembe, “Necropolitics,”16-19.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/15/madrid-migrants-clash-with-police-after-death-of-street-vendor>

¹²⁴ “Municipal police arrived and chased him from Sol to Lavapiés with a motorbike,” said Modou, a 25-year-old vendor from Senegal who refused to give his surname” (The Guardian, March 15, 2018).

<http://www.lne.es/sucesos/2018/03/15/graves-disturbios-barrio-madrileno-lavapiés/2254147.html>

<http://www.lne.es/sucesos/2018/03/15/investigacion-muerte-mantero-madrid/2254117.html>

https://elpais.com/caa/2018/03/16/madrid/1521183632_844094.html

for its migrant diversity. He was 35 years old and lived in the country for about 14 years working as a *mantero*¹²⁵, as many migrants do due the absence of opportunities.

Mmame die before reaching the ‘european dream’, the welfare dream, the human rights dream, the white plunder¹²⁶. His heart stopped before his humanity could be recognized by the spanish government, the mass media, and part of the spanish society. He remained as one of those ‘boat people’ the newspapers and authorities like to call. And I wonder, as we should all do, how many more should died in the spanish soil, in the sea, in the border, before realizing state’s anti-migration laws are killing people? This is a deathly [“death in life”] encounter where not every migrant is ‘lucky or ‘privilege’ as myself or the women I interviewed because we are still alive. The immigration law is meant to control, surveil, kill and impose a sort of [maybe?] necropolitic of fear to the “migrant” other who already reached the country and for those who want to follow.

As I see it, this law and the mechanisms deployed to stop migration are components of the institutional racist violence deployed by the government. This means negating/annulling/killing the existence of the *other*, making them invisible in a daily basis and visible when needed. The only allowed existence is when migrants are criminalized in order to terrorize and subjugate the other existing within the depths of the submerged economy. Therefore, the materiality in them is not existent. Thus, they —displaced people— become deportable, vulnerable, and *ungreivable* bodies [no one will mourn their lost lifes] available —free of charge—for the hegemonic nations like spain. For some, this asseveration could be found disproportionate; nevertheless, its intentionality seem to be clear. The intention is to criminalize human beings and dehumanize them only because of their ‘illegal

¹²⁵ A street vendor selling goods on top of a blanket.

¹²⁶ Coates, *Between*.

status' and their potential link with terror. Behind it, motives of racism, nationalism, colonialism could be found by a good observer.

Why does this claim could sound disproportionate for some? Because there is a process of naturalization of violence¹²⁷ happening in the spanish context where the government has the monopoly of the means of violence (Weber; Torpey, 1998) and the supreme right to establish who belongs to the nation and who does not. However, this is complicated to grasp especially after the 9/11 were states are conceived as protectors of their citizens in a Westphalian bias¹²⁸. Therefore, the spanish nation would not be conceived as capable of acts of terror or institutional violence. These actions are reserved for the stereotyped monolithic migrant, a violent other and the potential terrorist. The bias Meger mentions is precisely what spanish authorities apply in the anti-migration scheme: “the right to control its boundaries internally through whatever means necessary over broader normative considerations, such as the right of people to be free from repression or arbitrary arrests and detention”¹²⁹.

Nowadays results relevant to problematize the anti-migrant machinery of fear deployed by the spanish state because people are still arriving or attempting to cross the border. After reading *Los migrantes que no importan*¹³⁰, I realized, as the author did, that the action ‘to migrate’ not only can be easily interchangeable by a multiplicity of verbs, but it implies a complex universe of intricate stories and expectations. To run away for your life, to study, to be happy, to reunite with your family, to be healthy, to be safe, to feel hope, to have

¹²⁷ Meger, Sarah. *Rape loot pillage: the political economy of sexual violence in armed conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 3-4

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 4

¹²⁹ Meger, Sarah. *Rape loot pillage: the political economy of sexual violence in armed conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 4

¹³⁰ “Migrants who don’t matter” by Óscar Martínez, an impressive chronic about the journey of many central american migrants in their attempt to cross the mexican-us border to reach the neoliberal El Dorado, united states of america..

new opportunities, to live. For every one of us who have migrated there is a lot more linked to this autonomous decision.

1.3. Reasons to Migrate and Expectations

In this theater of superiority, Spain plays the role of a dream destination, a place to fulfill hopes and wishes, to escape from [gender, political] violence, to escape from poverty, from climate change, and/or to reach progress in all sort of forms: better education, better incomes, better opportunities.

Luz and I came to Spain pursuing an academic degree, although she came in the 60's and I did it in plain XXI Century, she was 17 and I arrived in my early 30s; what differentiates our journeys the most is that for her to study abroad constituted a symbol of status and better labour opportunities in the future, besides to be an opportunity to grow up in independence.

“Llegué a España en el año 1962, con diecisiete años, aquí cumplí los dieciocho. Era muy jovencita. La verdad es que la primera propuesta para salir a estudiar era ir a Estados Unidos, donde tenía una tía. Se decidió que iba a ser más libre, más independiente si venía aquí. Económicamente España era muy barata en aquellos años (...). En aquella época, era un tema de moda en mi país, se suponía que una carrera hecha en el extranjero te daba más posibilidades de trabajo y de historias, que quedarte a estudiar en la Universidad de allí. Era la idea de mejoría. Se sabía desde siempre que yo iba a venir a estudiar, era una cosa acordada.”¹³¹ (Luz¹³²)

On the contrary, what motivated myself was the opportunity to embrace knowledge and to challenge myself. Although, Luz's Nicaraguan context is a parallel with 'my' Peruvian

¹³¹ “I arrived in Spain in the year 1962 when I was 17, here I celebrated my 18 birthday. I was very young. The truth is that the first choice to study abroad was the United States where I had an aunt. But my family decided I was going to be more independent if I were to travel to Spain. At that time, Spain was economically affordable, it was cheap to come here (...). In my country to study abroad was trendy, supposedly to have a career from a foreign country would give you more opportunities than to study in a national university. It was the idea of progress. To study here was settled for me.”

¹³² Escartín Sesé, Javier and Manuel Pinos Quílez. 2005. *Encuentro en el espejo. Inmigrantes y emigrantes en Aragón. Historias de vida*. Fundación Seminario de Investigación para la Paz. Zaragoza, España. Pp. 75-76

reality were the discourse of success and progress related to the *great europe* is shared among my family members.

Arriving to Spain in my thirties gave me another perspective as well as other expectations than the ones Luz had when she arrived 60 years ago and in her teens. I did not have idyllic fantasies about the Spanish society in general, although I did have some great expectations regarding the academia I was about to encounter. For Luz, leaving home meant a heartbreaking experience accompanied by sentiments of happiness and great expectations while for me, this time, leaving my mother and my father was a difficult decision to make—a different feeling from ten years ago where I left for Japan with only excitement. For Luz, arriving to Spain meant a new world to explore, for me, frustration, disappointment, and discrimination.

“Al despedirme tuve dos sentimientos: lloré mucho, porque fueron a despedirme todos (mis amigos, mis amigas, mi padre, mi tío, todos...). Lloré muchísimo porque la separación era terrible. Pero por otro lado, tenía tantas ganas de llegar, tantas expectativas. Eran las dos cosas, alegría y tristeza. Eso pasa cuando eres joven; te alegras de irte, aunque llores porque te vas.”¹³³ (Luz¹³⁴)

Europe as a concept became hideous as I grew up. Never understood why, during my school years, it was more important to know the history of a faraway continent. To learn about the I and IIWW as *universal* history than to acknowledge about what was happening in ‘our’ region. To study in a Spanish university prove me right for what I encountered in the classroom was a dislocation of reality, a Eurocentric vision, a lack of awareness [or avoidance] of the colonial Spanish past and current asymmetric power relations with [former?]

¹³³ “When I left I had mixed feelings: I cried a lot because everyone said goodbye to me my boy and girlfriends, my dad, my uncle, everyone. I cried a lot because the separation was unbearable. On the other side, I was so excited to go, I had so many expectations. It was like being happy and sad at the same time. That happens when you are young; you’re happy because you go although you’re sad because you leave.”

¹³⁴ Escartín Sesé, Javier and Manuel Pinos Quílez. 2005. *Encuentro en el espejo. Inmigrantes y emigrantes en Aragón. Historias de vida*. Fundación Seminario de Investigación para la Paz. Zaragoza, España. Pp. 76

colonies. As a colorful example, the last postcolonial congress organized by many professors in the Gender Department was celebrated with a gala in the most controversial hotel “de la reconquista”, a hotel’s name appealing to conquest and imperial dominance, where, in fact, the royal family stay when they visit Oviedo¹³⁵.

Besides our discrepancies and expectations, what we did have in common was the acknowledgment of *being Third World women* living among ‘first world citizens’. Luz’ experience came while studying Law when while sitting in a classroom she suddenly realized her previous knowledge did not prepare her for the western world, even though if in nicaragua she belong to a cultivated intellectual upper-middle class. She felt her knowledge was not valid, was not *european enough* because she did not learn about Plato or Aristoteles, nor Latin. Could we take this example as a reflection of the colonial domination and the hegemony of knowledge?

“Empecé a ver la diferencia que tenían, la diferencia cultural; ahí fue cuando descubrí que yo era de un país del tercer mundo, por que todo mi bagaje intelectual no me servía para nada, no sabía nada ¡pero nada!; no sabía quien era Platón ni Aristóteles. Luego en derecho romano, todo el mundo sabía latín, todas las definiciones se daban en latín, no me comía ni una rosca; me di cuenta en seguida de que no estaba preparada para estar en una universidad española, el nivel era muchísimo mayor.”¹³⁶ (Luz¹³⁷)

My realization of *otherness* came from an everyday encounter. It happened in the classroom when a friend from bolivia and myself became interchangeable even though we were only few from Latin America. It came when the university invited us —the Latin American students—to partake in an exchange of cultures or what I called an exhibition of

¹³⁵ Not to mention a controversial place linked to gender discrimination and harassment against female workers

¹³⁶ “I began to notice the cultural difference, in that moment I discovered I was from a third world country, all my cultural baggage was worthless, I didn’t know anything, anything! I didn’t know who was Plato nor Aristoteles. Then, when studying Roman Law, every one in there knew latin, all the terminology was taught in latin, I couldn’t understand a thing. I realized then I was not ready to study in a spanish university, the level was higher.”

¹³⁷ Escartín Sesé, Javier and Manuel Pinos Quílez. 20005. *Encuentro en el espejo. Inmigrantes y emigrantes en Aragón. Historias de vida*. Fundación Seminario de Investigación para la Paz. Zaragoza, España. Pp. 77

former colonies because nor Spain nor other western countries were involved. It also came in the street with every strange look I received, with every *where are you from?*, it came when a man intended to run over me, and, finally, it came along with how they —Spaniards— perceived in me traces of *exoticness* because of the color of my skin, a dangerous subtlety which made them feel entitled to invade my personal space to touch me. For Khady, it came when she gave birth and a nurse called her: “esta negra tonta” —stupid nigger. For Biby when she was called Sudaca. For Juanita when she was asked why she has a Spanish name. For Halima when they made fun of her when she spoke.

But a career or a master are not the only reasons to migrate. Juanita, for instance, came to Oviedo because of her health. She needed a surgery impossible to afford in Equatorial Guinea. Now, after the operation, she found out there is no opportunity to work because of the lack of documents. At her home everyone can work with or without papers, she tells me, even if the money is not good in comparison to Spain anyone can work and there is no need of charity—as an old [disgusting] Spanish man insinuated her with a sardonic tone. A man who, she confides in me, wanders the neighborhood offering her a small amount of money [10 euros] for having sex with him, even though she rejects him all the time. Not only Juanita’s expectations of working after the surgery are gone but she is also exposed to be object of gender violence or sexual assault. When I talked to her, I felt she was stuck in a limbo because she cannot have a life here but she cannot go back to her home because she cannot afford to buy a ticket. I remember her telling me she rather go back home but in her own terms. She is conscious about the machinery of deportation and her intention is not being deported, nor to spend time in a jail or in a CIE with no information about the departure date.

The experiences of N., Halima, Biby, Gladys, are not the same but are marked by an economic impulse with no mediation of proper documents. The motivations are diverse, going from new opportunities, jobs with better incomes, or to reinvent a life. Khady’s story also

follows the same pattern, although the difference resides in the family reunification process she began long before traveling. This gave her a margin of security the others did not have, just like Luz and myself with a student visa. Nevertheless, we should not be fool by this fact which provide us with certain advantage that only lasts until we faced the immigration office, or we get questioned at the airport gate [when, what, why, for how long?], or we feel those looks on the street, or when someone with a white or european *plunder* (Coates 2015) do not want to sit next to us on the bus because we are a *negra, negro, sudaca*, or when we do not get a job because we use a veil, or when in a rally against fascism and racism we are confronted by buckets of water and soap as in saying ‘dirty *migrants* go wash yourself and do not contaminate our city’ (Fatu, Antifascism and Antiracism Activist).

Being *othered* is part of the migrant journey. Besides our expectations and our decision to migrate to spain, a palpable reality of discrimination exists within the territory whereas being hurt, and feel anger and fear become part of the experience. This was an attempt to illustrate the spanish anti-migration mechanism through the personal and the intimate, and to demonstrate the interaction between the macro politics and the micro politics of migration in terms of necropolitics, precariousness, and fear.

Chapter 2:

—Encounters: A Discursive Approach of the category of Migrant and the Mechanism of Fear(S)—

“I am visible—see this Indian face—yet I am invisible... But I exist, we exist. They'd like to think I have melted in the pot. But I haven't, we haven't.”¹³⁸

Migrants have in many ways always been categorized and imagined according the nation as “other.” When I am asked [constantly] where I come from, I try to avoid or deflect the questions by positioning myself politically between a diversity of nationalities. I know, from the perspective of the person asking, that I am ‘different’ —otherwise why ask? Drawing from reflections of this ‘otherness’ in my own life as well as those of my informants, the chapter seeks to explore how the racialized category of “other” is imposed in Spain. In particular, I am interested here in exploring popular media representation, actions perpetrated by citizens of Spain, and institutional responses. In order to understand borders through the encounter between “citizens” and “migrant,” this chapter takes as its ‘texts’ the growing affective discourse of fear that has become intertwined with a new-rhetoric of terror. I seek to understand here how this discourse *affects* the experience of ‘other,’ in addition to how these ideas will be reflected in our experiences of fear, which will be explored in the next chapter.

The following two sections approach three public ‘events’ from a comparative perspective in order to explore how they are represented in International newspapers like The Guardian, The Telegraph, BBC, The Independent, and national/local newspapers like El País,

¹³⁸ Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*. 86

and La Nueva España (Asturias). My aim is to explore the *mechanism of fear* that is introduced and reinforced by the *spectacle* of mainstream media¹³⁹ within a broader european narrative as well as a country specific narrative. According to Guy Debord, the spectacle reflects a social relationship between people mediated by images¹⁴⁰; in other words, the spectacle has become the core of the current ‘real’ world as in ‘what we see is what it is’. The first event to consider is the “crisis of cayucos”¹⁴¹ in the Canary Islands, what was known as the major migrant *invasion* in recent years (2006) along with the ‘illegal crossings’ from Ceuta and Melilla between 2005-2006; if I take both as one event even if they are located in different geographies is because the discourse produced and reproduced has similar nuances. The second is the “immigration crisis” represented by the lifeless body of Aylan Kurdi in 2015 on the shore of Bodrum in Turkey. And the final case study is of the attack on a veiled Muslim woman in Barcelona in 2016, where the veil is increasingly seen as a symbol of terror.

The representation of these events is a consequence of a narrative of fear imposed by an international context of racism, crisis, terror, and supremacy. These events contribute a better understanding about the current narrative of the “migrant,” including how a particular discourse of the “other” emerged. Furthermore, as I will try to establish in the chapter, what can we glean from a careful reading of the discourse in terms of the securitization of nations, immigration laws, and the mechanisms of deportation in the spanish context? The representation of the “migrant” is included in current debates around the deployment of foucaultian biopower; nevertheless, my intention is to complicate —or reformulate— this debate by including what Mbembe understands as *necropower and necropolitics*. As I argued

¹³⁹ Guy Debord, *La sociedad del espectáculo*; De Genova, “Spectacle”

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.,9

¹⁴¹ Small boats.

in the first chapter, this power is deployed by the spanish nation-state to guarantee and safeguard, on one hand, a territory, citizens, and [national] identities from an external threat that should be avoided, controlled, and temporarily employed —De Genova’s *obscene inclusion*—, but, ultimately, destroyed, when possible; and on the other, to protect the notion of [white, western, eurocentric] supremacy embedded in a tradition of social Darwinism, eugenics, and colonialism¹⁴².

The use of necropower is thus twofold; it becomes an instrument to reproduce the “migrant” discourse and to shape the perception of us, “migrants” subjects, as subhumans or as abjects. Furthermore, there is a strong desire to eliminate or exclude migrants through the immigration law and the *machinery of deportation*¹⁴³, which is used as an instrument that *affects* our self-identity. As I will illustrate, the “migrant” in spain has been constructed, defined, and portrayed as a [male] dangerous terrorist alterity, while the female migrant when visible is taken as vulnerable or oppressed —although when wearing a veil the narrative might be the one of terror—hence, a they against a national us. This becomes a gendered and racialized discourse of the “other,” —a discourse that is perpetually reproduced and reinforced by the local/(inter)national media and institutions of power.

2.1. Consolidating the Image of the Other Migrant

There is a fraction of time, a very small window of clarity, in which we, as migrants, realize we have been *othered* by others, and it hurts. You often feel as though you cant resist it because you do not want to acknowledge it, or to embrace it, and yet it happened nevertheless. It is the moment you notice how people look at you, what they say to you or

¹⁴² Gilroy, *The Black*; Mbembe, “Necropolitics”; Ahmed; Said, *Orientalismo*; Spivak, “Can the Subaltern”; Romero, *Un deseo*, Fernández and Brandariz, “Transformaciones”

¹⁴³ Fernández and Brandariz, “Transformaciones”

what you hear when passing by. Spain is a society, as many others, built on inequities, hierarchies, class, and discrimination of all kinds: racisms, sexism, classism, among others. This logic is carried forward from the colonial past, meaning that what constitutes a different self becomes inferior in front of a superior mainstream identity that is considered homogeneous: the white [middle-class-male] spaniard; an identity legitimate by both, media and a national discourse.

An important element to consider is who controls this ‘naming’ of categories, that is, who names whom, and why? And who is allowed to have Rights, as well as who is being made a subject that is objectified and dehumanized? For me, these became pertinent questions when addressing migration issues because the “migrant” condition from beginning to end defines and reduces us to non-human status; in many cases we are represented, if represented, through a monolith stereotype of violence, and/or victimhood, a *spectacle* for the western white public.

Up until the end of the 1990’s, the migrant in Spain was usually portrayed as male and associated with laziness and delinquency, while migrant women only started to be considered as migrant subjects during process of reunification and a small number of workers stayed to fulfill a demand for care workers. From all the women I interviewed, only Khady came through a family reunification process, and all of them —when they work—fulfill the role of care workers. In Spain, there was a shift from 2005-2006 when the association of the migrant with extreme violence and terrorism began to intensify, due in large part to a series of terrorists attacks across Europe. A narrative of criminalization was consolidated nationwide. Scholars and mass media indicate that by 2005, the southern Spanish border was marked as dangerous and perceived as the main entrance for “migrants” and terrorists crossing

“violently” and “fiercely”¹⁴⁴ via the fences in Ceuta and Melilla. During the peak migration year in 2006, newspapers in Spain denounced what they called a *massive avalanche* from the Canary coast. In numerous days, groups of migrants made several attempts to cross the border. In 2005, for example, La Nueva España informed that around “500 people from sub-Saharan Africa tried to enter” the country through Melilla as in the “4th massive avalanche in the last seven days”.

“Unas 500 personas, en su mayoría de origen Subsahariano, han tratado la pasada madrugada de entrar en España saltando la valla que separa Melilla de Marruecos. Es la cuarta **avalancha masiva** que se produce en los últimos siete días.” (La Nueva España, 2005)¹⁴⁵

These borders have become what De Genova¹⁴⁶ calls the *border of spectacle*; a place where the discourse of *illegality* is reproduced and reinforced by the media, highlighting the ‘violent migrants’ and demonstrating a practice of exclusionary measures against migrants. The migrants arriving to the Canary Islands or crossing the fences in Ceuta and Melilla were depicted as an invading force that threatened the safety of the nation. Based on the shifting political landscape that helped to bring about the Brexit referendum vote, The Telegraph’s feature read as follows:

“Britain faces a new wave of illegal immigration from “boat people” who have fled Africa to the Canary Islands. (...) The journey, in open boats, can take a week. An estimated one in three vessels do not make it, resulting in thousands of deaths each year. A Home Office spokesman said: “The Government is committed to taking the necessary steps and working with its international partners to combat illegal immigration.””¹⁴⁷ (The Telegraph)

¹⁴⁴ It is said that around 30 thousand immigrants arrived to the Canary Islands. In December 27th, 2006, a headline in El País read: “Four boats disembarked with 174 immigrants on board.”

¹⁴⁵ https://elpais.com/elpais/2005/10/05/actualidad/1128500217_850215.html

¹⁴⁶ De Genova, “Spectacle”

¹⁴⁷ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1540084/Canary-Islands-illegal-immigrants-heading-here-Home-Office-memo-warns.html>

Popular coverage in the media, such as in the Telegraph excerpt above, show how the condition of illegality is constructed with an intent to justify the violence committed upon migrants in response to the government's rejection. By manipulating the discourse, power, control, and fear are inflicted upon the bodies of migrant 'others,' and this state of precarity has allowed the state to capitalize on their cheap labour as a profitable commodity in the Spanish labor market. What this excerpt also demonstrates is that borders are also a way to materially construct illegality as a show of the strength of the nation. By making visible who can and cannot belong, the migrant is rendered entirely vulnerable to the government and the populace. Is not only that, these borderlands, Ceuta, Melilla and the Canary Islands, what produced at the end is a *spectacle* of bodies rather than subjects. Those who cross the wired fence or arrive by pateras are not any migrants, they belong to a racialized group of black migrants coming from the sub-Saharan African region who have been racialized at the extent to be symbolically represented as uncivilized —“violent, irrational, and monstrous characters”¹⁴⁸—, subhumans or objectified bodies to be contained or killed, as Moffette¹⁴⁹ argues, a representation embedded in the colonial and post-colonial modernity. In contrast to a narrative of whiteness, what could be more scary than showing hundreds of *negroes* with — what is read as—angry faces trying to cross *in desperation* the —unperceived deathly—wired fence? Then, fear is imposed to the populace.

Anzaldúa's words emerge strongly when arguing about the visibility-invisibility some migrants get by the spectacle created by the media at those borderland zones. In that particular case, migrants —as a collective—who are usually invisible for national —economic— purposes become visible out of need, out of producing a tangible threat to be contained at any

¹⁴⁸ Moffette, David. “Governing Irregular Migration: Logics and Practices in Spanish Immigration Policy” (PhD diss., York University, 2015)

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

cost for being considered as an invasive menace link to terrorism and an insatiable predatory instinct for welfare aids¹⁵⁰. Being visible and invisible is not a contradiction, on the contrary, are the two sides of the same migrant coin. The visibility, as explained, comes as a government/media strategy to reduce the migrant to its more vulnerable/precarious form so then as malleable objects can mutate to a whatever mainstream narrative or instrument at the service of the spanish nation.

In eyes of the mass media and the government, we mutate from subjects to objects. The next quote is a reflection on this positionally towards the migrant, confirming the dehumanizing —extremely aggressive and stereotyped—discourse:

“In Britain, David Cameron and Philip Hammond have been criticised for the “dehumanising” language they use to describe refugees. The Prime Minister described refugees coming to the UK as a “swarm”, and later said he would not “allow people to break into our country”. Hammond, the Foreign Secretary, said refugees were “marauding” around Calais.” (The Independent, 2015)

This process of dehumanization occurs when the migrant subject is not seen as an individual with rights, but instead as a threat to the immediate security of citizens, as is depicted in The Guardian in 2006, the “Canary Islands fear disaster as number of migrants soars” (The Guardian, 2006). In a way, I could venture myself and argue this constitutes a loss of the corporality the immigrant possess before crossing the border. Before the journey begins is a subject a history, past, present and future. After and during the crossing, a sort of mutability occurs. An objectification, if I may, where the immigrant becomes a totem of difference, easily converted to a profit, a veil, a black skin, a swarm, a body; something (not someone) palpable, fixed, without humanity.

¹⁵⁰ According to ‘*Looking behind the culture of fear. Cross-national analysis of attitudes towards migration*’ the spanish nation was the third and the seventh nation to consider migrants as a welfare threat and a criminal threat, respectively (Messing, Vera and Vence SÁgvári 2018).

‘A body without humanity forever stuck in time’ is the image that comes into my mind when I recollect Aylan’s case, the second event I want to address. The published photo came along with a discourse of refuge, (pseudo) humanism, moral obligation, and a brief responsibility from the international community. Aylan, then, became a representative photo of the crisis, a graphic way to describe the ongoing situation:

“The Independent has taken the decision to publish these images because, among the often glib words about the "ongoing migrant crisis", it is all too easy to forget the reality of the desperate situation facing many refugees” (The Independent, 2015).

For other newspapers more cautious with the images, Aylan also was a symbol of refugees (La Nueva España), and an outcry of the migrant crisis (BBC), an “image of the drama these people live” (El País, 2015). Although, at the end he stayed a death body on the shore (BBC), a “heartbreaking poem, a requiem” (El País, 2015); while the guard became “the hero with the sad eyes” (El País, 2015).

As The Independent noted in 2015 in response to this kind of coverage from the Telegraph, “if these extraordinarily powerful images of a dead Syrian child washed up on a beach don't change Europe's attitude to refugees, what will?” (The Independent, 2015).¹⁵¹ In fact, nothing changed, since then the sea continue to be an unnamed graveyard for many thousands of lifeless bodies who have no opportunity to be grieved because they have not been recognized by anyone. This is when a distinction about *humanness* and *movement* becomes palpable, a hegemonic hierarchy of who is entitle to move is worldwide deployed, the adventurer tourist —whose body if lost in the sea would be looked for and reclaimed— versus thousands of nameless —already—bodies who if lost would be lost forever. Before Aylan’s lifeless body was found in the shore, life had slip away from him. He was a body in a

¹⁵¹<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/if-these-extraordinarily-powerful-images-of-a-dead-syrian-child-washed-up-on-a-beach-don-t-change-10482757.html>

boat, a body in the water, a body in the shore. Then, became a picture, a symbol, a discourse of ‘humanity’, even a poem. Photographers and journalists were entitled to own his body as a way to make visible a reality while guards became the heroes: an inert *agencyless* body in contraposition to actors of this tragicomedy of horror. Aylan’s death was also a spectacle.

Both realities described and analyzed above constitute what Mbembe argues as a “practical” impossibility to recognize the “body and flesh of “the stranger” as equal, as sharing a “common humanity”¹⁵². This is a historical tradition of negating/annulling the existence of the other, making her/him invisible, enhancing her/his *precarity*; hence, the materiality of his/her body is not existent anymore and the migrant subject becomes a body mostly unable to be *grieved*¹⁵³. If Aylan would have not be taken as a symbol of an ongoing migration, if Aylan’s father would have not survive the incident, no one would have grieved him. And it does not matter how many pictures of Aylan would have been displayed, same as no matter how many (male) migrants died in the attempts of crossing the spanish border of spectacle, the majority of them will never be mourned. They are only meant to be seen by a grotesque spanish/european society of spectacle who believes noting have to do with europe, and rejoices in an emphatic indifference of a drama happening far away, and fears when the drama is closer and posses a racial burden.

The third event, ‘a muslim woman being attacked in Barcelona’, may be seen as different or lacking of connections with the two priors, nevertheless I considered it was relevant to illustrate the contemporary discourse surrounding migrant women, in which elements of gender, racial discrimination, and islamophobia collide.

The incident of a Muslim woman being attacked while heavily pregnant in Barcelona was covered in headlines by some of the main UK and spanish newspaper:

¹⁵² Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 2

¹⁵³ Butler, *Precarious Life*

“Pregnant Muslim woman wearing a veil reportedly attacked in Barcelona...” (Daily News, 2016),
“Football hooligans kick heavily pregnant Muslim woman” (The Independent, 2016),
“Two hooligans detained in Barcelona for kicking in stomach a pregnant woman wearing veil” (La Nueva España, 2016),
“Alleged aggressors of pregnant woman wearing a niqab released on bail” (El País, 2016).

With a focus on the veil or the niqab, the Independent, El País, and La Nueva España all treated the injury to the woman with obvious suspicion with the Independent alluding to the “apparent hate crime” (The Independent, 2016), and El País noting that the woman was “supposedly insulted and kicked (the pregnant Muslim woman)” (El País, 2016). But what scares the most are the reaction from readers of the Independent arguing this was an “act of self-defense” because of “so much islamic terrorism on the streets”, and she (the pregnant woman) was wearing “the uniform” and could easily be concealing a “bomb or a weapon”. In all of the recollected news—and comments— she remains without a name and was reduced to a veil or a niqab, a bomb and a symbol of terror according the readers opinions.

I always wonder why when news people write about an event regarding migrants, and migrants are the core of the news, not the background element, hardly ever the migrants they interviewed are named—and is not a deliberate act to protect someone’s intimacy. In other cases, an immediate association with the nationality occur: ‘a senelegalese said’, ‘two morrocan students’. In this case, religion is the relevant factor: a *muslim* woman because she is wearing a veil. This, for me, has to do with the inability, already mentioned, to recognize/negate the humanity in others¹⁵⁴, specially in a society of spectacle where

¹⁵⁴ Wynter, “Unsettling”; Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*

protagonism and recognition are the current coin. And, I wonder, would this be a way to *disposes someone of hers/his/their identity and history?*¹⁵⁵

In this case, the muslim woman is not only unnamed and invisible, but the action against her is sometimes taken as dubious, even the ‘alleged aggressors are released’. Moreover, *she* is associated with an increasing narrative of terrorism, where her unnamed body is reduced to the veil she wears, and from there an argumentative line is conducted: she wears a veil, she is muslim, she is a fanatic, she is terrorist, therefore, she is not pregnant she is concealing a bomb. Although, it might also have been triggered by, what other authors recognized as, an already existence of “maurophobia” or “fear of Moors”, an element present for certain spanish identities.¹⁵⁶

Besides specific events like Aylan’s picture, the majority of news reports fulfill this ‘not naming’ tradition which ain’t new. We could argue it is rooted in the spanish colonialism since the XVI Century chronics, and later on, to overcome a white spanish colonizer anxiety towards the unknown native population in order to belittle, contain, and justify the violence upon them (Said, Rivera Cusicanqui), but also —and maybe this is the more relevant one—to not be responsible for them: if they are unnamed may disappear, may remain *invisible*. This praxis reinforces the prevailing model existent in the spanish society—borderlands included—: an organized hierarchy of subjects/bodies where different *whiteness-es* are conceived as superior over the black, the brown, the Indian, the Latina, the Muslim *others*¹⁵⁷.

¹⁵⁵ Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*, 4

¹⁵⁶ Zapata-Barero 2006, In: Moffette, David, “Governing immigration through probation: The displacement of borderwork and the assessment of desirability in Spain.” *Security Dialogue*. June 2, 2014, 45.

¹⁵⁷ Fernández & Brandariz, “Transformaciones”; Wynter, “Unsettling”; Coates, *Between*; Mbembe, “Necropolitics”; Davis, Mike. *Control urbano: la ecología del miedo*. Barcelona: Virus Editorial, 2001, Gibler, John. *Morir en México*. Translated by Alejandro Reyes Arias. Madrid: La Oveja Roja, 2017.

2.2. *Borders Beyond Borders: The spanish Southern Border and the Nationwide Institution of Fear*

“08 de octubre
Frontera sur de Europa. Argelia.
Desierto del Sáhara. 08.20 h.

Tienes que elegir entre morir en el desierto o morir tiroteado en la alambrada. Ya se cuentan los muertos por decenas. De hambre y sed. Condenados al afuera. Han traído a miles y otros hermanos están en campamentos militares. Hay mujeres con sus bebés entre los brazos. Muchas embarazadas (...).”¹⁵⁸

“Saharan dessert. 08.20. You have to choose between dying in the dessert or being shot to death in the wired fence. Death bodies can be counted by tens. They have died of hunger and thirst. Condemned to the outside. They have brought thousands (of migrants) and many other brothers remain in military camps. There are women with their babies in arms. Many are pregnant women.” In the above quote, the narrative testimonies of deportees to argelia by the spanish and moroccoan governments in 2005 are consolidated to form a terrifyingly real account of the dehumanization of migrant bodies. Ceuta and Melilla, still colonized territories, are frontier zones or, as well described by Anzaldúa—in a different context—, constitute “*heridas abiertas* where the Third World [constantly] grates against the first and bleeds”¹⁵⁹.

After the *spectacle* occurred in these borders zones between September and October of 2005, part of the event analyzed in the previous section, where dozens of “migrants” were hurt or killed¹⁶⁰ by the spanish-moroccan authorities during the attempted to cross the wired border, a retaliation came from the authorities. Many who ‘successfully’ reached the other side of the fence, or were detained because of this *illegal crossing* or *invasion*, or were

¹⁵⁸ A narrative composed from different testimonies from those who were deported to argelia by the spanish and moroccan government in 2005 as a retaliation after the “invasion of cayucos in the canary islands. This is an extract from: Revista Contrapoder. *fronteras interiores y exteriores*. March, 2006. Traficantes de sueños. Spain.

¹⁵⁹ Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*, 3

¹⁶⁰ By the use of extreme force: bullets, rubber bullets, clubs, tear gas, and every tactic of repressive assault.

already detained in CIEs at that time, were deported in the middle of the night to the saharan dessert, argelia, and were abandoned there without water, nor food, nor refuge. Many families were separated, and women reported losing their children during the chaos of this dreadful night. The testimony of a woman interviewed by Women's Links Organization captures the agony, fear, and terror of that night:

“También he perdido a mis hijos en el desierto del Sahara cuando nos deportaron. No puedo olvidarlos. Son hijos que yo he parido y no puedo olvidarlos... Nos detuvieron y metieron en los caminos, nos llevaron a Oujda. Allí había mucha gente y empezaron a separarnos. La gente gritaba porque separaban a las madres de sus hijos, a parejas. Sentíamos que algo estaba pasando, algo que no era normal, y después nos empujaron de nuevo a los autobuses y después a los camiones. Los hombres iban esposados. Nos abandonaron en el desierto por la noche. A las mujeres les dejaban una botella pequeña de agua y algunos militares nos pedían perdón por lo que nos estaban haciendo. Estaba oscuro y comenzamos a oír disparos. Todo el mundo corría, era una avalancha de africanos. Perdí a mis hijos en el tumulto, en la oscuridad, en el caos, en el miedo...”¹⁶¹

What, then, do we talk about when we talk about borders? Are they only geographical spaces to delimit one nation from another or rather *imagined*? At what degree the state is involved in delimit frontiers? Anderson reminds us how a nation, a community of people, creates its own ties to constitute an *imagined, limited and sovereign* unity which is not necessarily homogeneous, nor fixed and territorialized. Therefore, boundaries associated to imagined communities are more ethereal, but as understood today—in the modern capitalist world—they have being hijacked by the state. In that sense, borderlands are established and

¹⁶¹ “I’ve also lost my children in the Saharan dessert when we were deported. I can’t forget them. They are my children, I gave birth to them and cannot forget them... We were detained and took us to Oujda. There was many people, they separated us. People were screaming because they were tearing apart mothers and children, couples. We suspect something was happening, something wrong; then, they pushed us into the buses again. Men were handcuffed. They left us in the dessert in the middle of the night. Women were given some bottles of water, and some soldiers asked us for forgiveness because of what they were doing to us. Everyone ran, it was an avalanche of african people. I lost my children in that commotion, in the darkness of the night, in the chaos, in the fear...” In: Women’s Link. *Los derechos de las mujeres migrantes: una realidad invisible*, 2009. Also in: *Mujeres en el CIE*, 55.

fixed in specific geographies with the aim to become a tangible mechanism of exclusion. Is thorough borders that a state like the spanish nation-state conveys the *sovereign us* to accept a policing system with the purpose to contain the population within, to control movement, and to allow the entrance of *others* if needed. For Anzaldúa¹⁶², “borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them*. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary”. Then, a discourse of belonging and protection is impulsed to safeguard the *imagined* ‘us’ —different from *them*— living within its borders —vague and unnatural—from external threats, from migrants, from enemies, by using an exaltation of emotions.

If borders are linked to nations and nation-states is because or as a response of movement and an imperialist (economic and political) desire, according to Malo¹⁶³. Therefore, we can argue frontiers existed long before the second modernity¹⁶⁴, before restrictions over mobility had to be made, and documents like passports [a premature version of them] had to be issued by local parishes¹⁶⁵. Is with globalization that frontiers constitutes a paradox: the need to open up to allow or impulse a ‘free mobility’ and in that sense, nation-states borders become endangered; and on the other hand, borders are multiplied, and fortified by strengthening a discriminatory racial mechanism of control and police over *certain* [racialized] women and men’s mobility in terms of capital¹⁶⁶.

¹⁶² Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*, 3

¹⁶³ Malo, Marta. In: *Fronteras interiores y exteriores*. (Madrid: Traficante de sueños. 2006), 8-9

¹⁶⁴ Second modernity according to decolonial theorists like Dussel and Grosfogel comes with the Illustration.

¹⁶⁵ Torpey, John. *The Invention of the Passport: Surveillance, Citizenship and the State*. Cambridge Studies in Law and Society 8 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

¹⁶⁶ Malo, Marta. In: *Fronteras interiores y exteriores*. (Madrid: Traficante de sueños. 2006), 8-9; Romero, *Un deseo; Fernández and Brandariz*, “Transformaciones”; De Genova, “Spectacles”

Going a step forward, borders constitute “world *apartheids*”¹⁶⁷, in other words, a fence is not only a mechanism of defense —or a *check-point*¹⁶⁸— but an institution per se where a “color bar” is instituted and “runs through all societies”¹⁶⁹ to reject, dispose, and kill, but also to “include” and fix certain subjects to specific social [marginalized] contexts and labour circumstances [of exploitation], as what is happening in the spanish case¹⁷⁰.

Indeed, is after the first law intended to regulate immigration (1985), Luz reminded us, that the following immigration policies have harshen the mechanisms and means of containment, control, surveillance, deportation, and killing. Visa permits were established for certain Latin American nationalities like ecuador, colombia, peru, as well as equatorial guinea, among other african countries —even if they were former colonies—. Is because of the latter that after the 90’s decade the first *pateras* became part of the country’s narrative of migration. If more people could realized the perverse nature of borders [and nation-states], if only.

“Todo ha cambiado desde 1985 con la primera ley de extranjería. Antes la gente venía a estudiar la carrera, no se necesitaban visados, los marroquíes podían entrar, los latinoamericanos y guineanos como antiguas colonias españolas. Es a partir de 1990 que comienzan las primeras pateras, después del pedido de visado.” (Luz, 2018)¹⁷¹

The Annual Report of 2003 compiled by S.O.S. Racismo (spain) on the topic of racism in the spanish state, explores how the european union has taken controversial measures in order to protect the inviolability of the *fortress*. Since then, countries like denmark, italy,

¹⁶⁷ Balibar, 1993/2002 In: De Genova, “Spectacle”; Malo, In: *Fronteras interiores y exteriores*. (Madrid: Traficante de sueños. 2006), 8-9.

¹⁶⁸ Malo, Marta, in: *Fronteras interiores y exteriores* (Madrid: Traficante de sueños), 9.

¹⁶⁹ Balibar 1993/2002, in: De Genova “Spectacle”, 1192)

¹⁷⁰ Malo, In: *Fronteras interiores y exteriores*. (Madrid: Traficante de sueños), 9

¹⁷¹ “Everything has changed since 1985 after the first Immigration Law. Before that, people came here to study the whole career, there was no need for visas, people from morocco could enter as well as Latin Americans as and guineans as former colonies. Is after 1990 that the first *pateras* arrived, after the visa requirement.”

the spanish state, united kingdom, australia and the netherlands, have built immigration policies according to minimum requirements imagined as necessary to secure the perimeters, and this includes fencing and policing the physical borders as part of a coordinated mechanism, in addition to measures designed to strengthen visa requests, restrict asylum, coordinate expulsions, and to externalize frontiers to neighbor countries. What is relevant in this european narrative is not the right to move freely or human rights in that matter, but to protect a plunderous welfare social structure.

“Se unifican los acciones policiales, pero no los derechos de las personas extranjeras que viven en la UE. En correspondencia a esta tendencia comunitaria, varios países europeos han modificado últimamente sus legislaciones para hacerlas más restrictivas: Dinamarca, Italia, estado español, reino unido, australia y holanda.” (Informe anual 2003 sobre el racismo en el estado español 2003, 24).

Taking again into consideration the spectacular scene of the *illegal attempt of crossing* in 2005, as well as the ones occurring in the following years, it is revealing to notice how it was considered by Zapatero’s government as a ‘humanitarian crisis’ endangering the security of the spanish state as well as ‘invading the european fortress’¹⁷². As I already explained, the narrative of invasion and security was set in motion by the media and got internalized among the spanish population. In that logic, actions like deportations in the middle of the night, or arrangements with nearby african states (argelia, morocco, mauritania, among others) to contain the affluence of “migrants” were not unexpected outcomes. Following that argument, the spanish border, for the time being, has a twofold; on one side, is geopolitical located in the south, currently functioning as a force of exclusion/inclusion for the currents coming from the African continent according to the necessities of the market. On the other, function as an institution of fear allocated across the spanish territory: the border is the airline check-point,

¹⁷² Sánchez, in: *Fronteras interiores y exteriores* (Madrid: Traficante de sueños), 28

the city itself, the bus station, the neighbor next door, the street, and, at some point, is the “migrant” her/himself.

Those working on migration systems and the growing state of geopolitical securitization offer an interesting reflexive point regarding borders—they do not actually end at material borders and in fact go far beyond the geographical borders in order to externalize—domestically—their externalized security policy. Luz said of those at borders where she had witnessed others fall prey to the same system of abuse:

“Yo cuando las veo en la frontera me da una pena, y las ves dando gracias ¡pero no saben lo que les espera! Y cada vez es más difícil, más complicado. Y las criaturas que llegan o terminan en la cárcel o en la calle.” (Luz 2018)

[When I see them in the border I feel so sad, and I see them being thankful. But they don’t know what’s coming! Every time is more and more difficult, it gets more complicated. Children arriving here end or in jail or in the street.]

It does not matter how one decides to cross the border, going through the spanish state high tech wired fences in the south or the subtle air company checkpoint. Automatically, a system of differentiation and exclusion occurs: country of origin, the color of your skin, your back account, your language, your religion, your gender, etc.; and the “migrant other” is created. A testimony, recollected by Malo¹⁷³, from a [nameless] migrant from senegal reflects on how the other will never be an equal, either because is a poor *negro* victim, either because is part of the mafia; therefore, the gap between european union and the rest of the world goes in crescendo:

“«si morimos en el mar somos pobrecitos negros víctimas de las mafias y si estamos preparados y nos protegemos somos malos y mafiosos. El tema es no tratarnos nunca como iguales y seguir

¹⁷³ Malo, in: *Fronteras interiores y exteriores*. (Madrid: Traficante de sueños)

abriendo la brecha de la distancia entre Europa y África». (Malo, 2006, 11)¹⁷⁴

Then, the migrant other is perceived at which ever border as: a) an abjection, b) someone whose subjectivity is under question, c) something to protect when the victimhood discourse results relevant to justify the extreme securitization of borders —to fight against the mafia in order to protect the poor migrant, when in fact is the spanish state the source and perpetrator of that reality, and, d) something to reject when the other who cross is capable to defend her/himself, to fight dying for what they were told for centuries was the land of opportunities, where dreams come true, and where the *master* comes from, in that case the migrant who resists becomes a threat, a ‘bad migrant.

If at some point of this chapter my argument felt repetitive is because I needed to be cleared, not like the bloody currents of the mediterranean sea. The reality is that borders set in motion a mechanism of exclusion/inclusion in which a *border of spectacle* —a geopolitical space located in the southern border— is created in spectacular terms by the media to produce fear among citizens and migrants, at the same time that coexists with a *scattered border* —a border where a normalized spectacle of exclusion and discrimination occurs in the quotidian of everyday life—. Both types of deathly borders fracture identities, instate fear, and undermine the “migrant” complex subjectivity.

Instead, why don’t we think alternatives to organize the world map in terms of *borderless* geographies and interstices? Why do we let the nations be coopted by ferocious states and logics of exclusiveness citizenry? Why don’t we subvert exclusionary dualities (us-them) and embrace complexities? Recognizing the existence of fear as a mechanism deployed

¹⁷⁴ “If we die in the sea we are the poor nigger victims of the mafia, and if we arrive well prepared and defend ourselves we are bad and become the mafia. The point is we will never be treated as equal, and the gap between europe and Africa will increase.” Citation in: Malo, *Fronteras interiores y exteriores*. (Madrid: Traficante de sueños)

by the spanish state, as so many others, and be able to feel it and subvert it in order to create a spectrum of resistances might be a step forward in to the *right* direction.

Chapter 3:

— The Affective Machinery of Fear—

“One remains ignorant of the fact that one IS afraid, and that it is fear that holds one petrified, frozen in stone. If we can't see the face of fear in the mirror, then fear must not be there. The feeling is censored and erased before it registers in our consciousness.”¹⁷⁵

This is the end of our journey. What an experience! I have met wonderful women with wonderful stories all worthy to tell just because are humans and no superheroes, from the most graceful 6 years old Manme to the most fiercely yet sweet Fatu. It did not matter if the time together was too little or too much, we engaged each other in a complicity beyond our own personal borders, even in a split of a second. Why might you wonder? Something unified us besides our multilayered subjectivities: we have all experienced strong emotions while living in a racist spanish state, and feeling fear was one of them; although, sometimes Anzaldúa is right, we would have preferred to *remain ignorant* or *cancel it from our consciousness* so it could hurt less.

Fear is a constant in our journeys. It came in different forms, at different times, from different people, in different places, and felt with different intensities. So, now I find myself in a position of authority to decide how I am going to present you this *fear*, how I am going to explain you the fear I have felt and what women like Halima, N., Biby, Juanita, Khady, Luz, Gladys, have shared with me, or what I have seen, or heard during these last months. I

¹⁷⁵ Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*, 45

have a choice, then, to portray us as *fearful* subjects, *affected* and reduced to an abject other by a murderous anti-migrant system, with its policies, with its borders, with its media, with its undercover guards, with its CIEs, with its *integration/assimilation*; in other words, to portray us, following Agamben, as *bare life*. Or, on the contrary, to show us as *fearless* subjects, *unaffected*. To choose one or the other, I believe, undermines the complexity of *being*. Then, it occurred to me: why not considering both and/or an *in between*? To let us be *affected* without losing our agency or our ability to laugh and to resist. In a way, to embrace our fears by creating a mechanism to overcome them, even through silence, by fighting back, or knitting networks of solidarity.

In the next section, I will explore the concept of fear, how has being understood, and how it shifts from being conceived as a personal emotion to an affect related to environment (Tomkins), that is to say, embedded in political connotations, and interactions with others.

3.1. From Emotions to Affects

According to the online etymology dictionary, emotion comes from the latin *emovere*, as in “move out, remove, agitate”. If emotions means movement, if movement imply emotions; then, why not starting to look into migration from a perspective of emotions? ¹⁷⁶ or, a sort of, *politic of emotions*?

You might be wonder why the ethnography of a particular event like *Acoger ye natural* is relevant. What I experienced is what Halima, N., Luz, Khady, Juanita, Gladys, Virginia, Alma, Karla [an MA colleague], and young women like Dulce, or Samah [both second migrant generation]; or Fatu and Vicky from the *Tancada* in Barcelona [Migrants

¹⁷⁶ Emotion (n.) 1570s, "a (social) moving, stirring, agitation," from Middle French *émotion* (16c.), from Old French *emouvoir* "stir up" (12c.), from Latin *emovere* "move out, remove, agitate," from assimilated form of *ex* "out" (see **ex-**) + *movere* "to move" (from PIE root ***meue-** "to push away"). Sense of "strong feeling" is first recorded 1650s; extended to any feeling by 1808. Definition in: <https://www.etymonline.com/word/emotion>

lock-up for a dignified life] who I met almost at the end of this project, felt at some point and in various intensities.

It does not matter if we just arrived to the spanish state, or if we have been living here more than a decade or four, or if we are second or third migrant generation. It does not matter if we are students, or high-end workers, or belong to the labor class. Every one of us have felt the weight of racism, colonialism, white paternalism, and any form of discrimination upon our “migrated” bodies, upon our “migrant” subjectivities merely because we transgressed a border. The way we have felt and currently feel goes from only anger, contemptuous laughter, sadness, impotence, to fear; one emotion at a time, a few, or all at the same time.

We are social beings, I have been told since I was a young girl who wanted to live in a deserted island. Hence, “no” was always the answer. This affirmation makes me reflect on how we are all interconnected, even our own emotions are manifestations of internal as well as external stimulus. We are affected by a social structure at the same time we affect others, according to Spinoza, *to affect and be affected*¹⁷⁷. Therefore, the spanish anti-migrant machinery affects us, and we, by the power of our presence are affecting/disrupting a racist colonial system; consequently, the rainbow of the emerging emotions like anger, contempt, sadness, fear, overcome the personal and go through a process of *affective-ness* in which the political becomes an important element within [so does love, empathy, and solidarity].

“Sientes *rabia*, no entiendes. Piensas porqué dejaste el país” (Halima, 2018)¹⁷⁸. “Aquí aprendí a estar a la *defensiva*” (Biby 2018).¹⁷⁹ “Lo que he pasado...para llegar a *sonreír*” (Virginia 2018).¹⁸⁰ “También empecé a tener problemas de salud, de *fobias*, de *angustias* (...)

¹⁷⁷ Seigworth, Gregory and Melissa Gregg. “An Inventory of Shimmers” Tomkins, Silvan S. *Affect imagery consciousness: the complete edition*. New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2008.

¹⁷⁸ “You feel anger, you don’t understand. You wonder why you left your country.” (Halima, 2018)

¹⁷⁹ “Here I’ve learned to be defensive” (Biby, 2018)

¹⁸⁰ “You have no idea what I have to overcome...to smile again.” (Virginia, 2018)

Yo me hacía la dura pero era una cría, estaba muy *sola*. Yo creo que iba forzando demasiado la máquina y me salió por todos los lados. Ese cura me empezó ayudar y me ayudó tanto que me hizo agnóstica” (Luz).¹⁸¹ “Pasaba por la Casa de Encuentros de las Mujeres de Mieres y veía su programa de actividades, pero no me atrevía a entrar porque, como no tenía papeles, *temía* que alguien se diera cuenta y que me deportaran. En aquellos tiempos tenía tal cara de *amargura* que no le enviaba ninguna foto a mi familia.” (Gladys¹⁸²).

Halima’s anger. Biby’s defensiveness. Virginia’s struggle to smile. Luz’s anxiety, loneliness, and physical health problems. Gladys’ fear of deportation, anger, and outrage for being subject and witness of injustice.¹⁸³ These emotions are a reaction to the cruelty of the nation-state system of exclusion which is no more and no less than a *residual form of colonialism*¹⁸⁴. I am extrapolating Gibler’s analysis on the wars against narco to the [worldwide] anti-immigration mechanism which—with its differences—is reproduced by a similar nation-state logic where Spain is embedded. To apply this residual logic is a way to create/produce a legitimate *racialized terror* with “*death and death in life*”¹⁸⁵ but also *life through fear*.

Momentarily, this is a fatalistic approach which we are entitled to because the migratory scenery has not changed much. One of my discoveries during fieldwork was Ama Ata Aidoo’s novel *Our Sister Killjoy*¹⁸⁶. This author approaches the concept of necropolitics even before Mbembe. She warned us about the colonial system and the power to annihilate

¹⁸¹ “I became sick, I had phobias, anxiety... (...) I pretended to be strong, but I was just a kid, I was alone. I think I pushed too hard and then I broke, I felt apart. A priest helped me, he helped me that much that I became agnostic.” (Luz)

¹⁸² “I passed by the Women Social Center of Mieres and saw the program but I didn’t dare to go in because I didn’t have papers, I was afraid someone could realize that and could deport me. In those days I had such an anger that I didn’t send any picture of me to my family.” Quote from: Médicos del Mundo. 2018. *Mujeres que se mueven*. Pp. 35

¹⁸³ It is interesting to note that some of these emotions are correlated, especially fear and aggressiveness, according to Tomkins (936).

¹⁸⁴ Gibler *Morir*, 168

¹⁸⁵ Gibler, *Morir*; Mbembe, “Necropolitics”

¹⁸⁶ Aidoo, Ama Ata. *Our Sister Killjoy*, 1994 (70’s), 12-16

lives on the name of difference and exclusion, a system sustained in an imagined superiority and an entitlement to hijack lands and identities as well as to kill lands and subjects:

“But what she also came to know was that someone somewhere would always see in any kind of difference, an excuse to be mean.
A way to get land, land, more land.
(...)
Power, Child, Power.
For this is all anything is about.
Power to decide
Who is to live,
Who is to die,
Where,
When,
How.”¹⁸⁷

What Ama Ata Aidoo did was to reflect critically about her migrant experience in Europe during the 60’s, similar to Ken Bugul’s experience in the 70’s Belgium with *Le Baobab fou*. Nevertheless, the world failed to listen both. When revisited today, both authors tell us a story about migration from a perspective of emotions and politics. Fifty years ago — and still relevant—they were critiquing how the—usually male—white, western, European individual had always felt entitled to *plunder* the life out of the world since slavery and colonialism became the ruling system of the world¹⁸⁸; and, second, how the migrant — already a racialized other from the former colonies—was treated with explicit murderous violence, and sometimes with “benevolent humanism” triggering all sorts of fears.

There is a cruelty, Mbembe and Gibler remind us, how the life of the slave or its parallel, the migrant in Spain, is killed [in the southern border, in the Mediterranean Sea, in the Saharan desert, in deportation flights, in CIEs, in jails] or is forced to live a *death in life*. The

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Césaire, *Discourse*; Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*; Aidoo, *Our Sister*; Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*; Spivak, “Can the Subaltern?”; Bouteldja, *Los Blancos*; Rivera, *Sociología*; Adlbi, *La cárcel*; Mbembe, “Necropolitics”; Coates, *Between*; Gibler, *Morir*; Romero, *Un deseo*

reason I decided to focus in Mbembe's work and not Foucault or even Agamben is because there is a subtlety I find interesting, the emphasis the author makes over colonialism, slavery, and race. In that line of argument, Mbembe explains how current nation-states go beyond the control over life to apply “mechanisms of destruction, to produce terror, to reduce lives”¹⁸⁹ of the already reduced *gendered racialized other*. Not only the migrant has *dared* to cross over and *invade* the fortress, the inflection resides on *who* is crossing has always being racially inferior, to whom a materiality had been negated because of racism: a *puta negra*, a *moro*, a *sudaca*, a scum, a rapist, a terrorist. Those *residuals* would be excluded/included when become economically necessary¹⁹⁰ by strengthening a spectacle of fear, or why not, a *necropolitics* of fear?

3.2. What About Fears?

What I encountered during fieldwork is that addressing fear was never a problem. It was always present, explicit or implicit. Sometimes it would pop-up instantly without having to bring it up into the conversation like with Halima, Biby, Gladys, Juanita, N., Manme, and myself. Sometimes it would be recognized in some friends' experiences, like Luz. And, sometimes, when talking to Khady, and Luz, fear would not be named at first, but then, as the conversations moved on, it always found its way to reclaim a place in the story. Is not one fear, though, is a multiplicity of fears, an emotion taking different shapes, caused by different actors or mechanisms, felt in specific circumstances, and, also, changing in time and context¹⁹¹.

¹⁸⁹ Mbembe, in: Gibler. *Morir*, 162

¹⁹⁰ De Genova, “Spectacle”; Romero, *Un deseo*, Malo,

¹⁹¹ Cole Diana and Samantha Frost Editors) Samantha Frost. *New Materialisms. Ontology, Agency, and Politics*. “Fear and the Illusion of Autonomy.” Duke University Press. London, 2010; Tomkins, *Affect*

Psychologists describe fear as a negative emotion, like anger, associated with survival and to protect oneself. When addressing fear, Tomkins reflects on the definitions made by Aristotle and Freud. For Aristotle, fear is related to an external element with the capacity to inflict in the subject “great pain” or with the “power to destroy us”; while for Freud, fear constitutes a “signal of danger” in the form of warning. In both cases, fear alerts us about an imminent danger for our body to respond. In that sense, is through fear that an individual identifies a problem or a threat in order to produce what psychologists have named an adaptive response¹⁹² But fear is also considered by academics in the disciplines of International Relations and Security Studies, in that case, fear when connected with socio-politics becomes, according to Raymond Taras¹⁹³ a constituent element for democracies to promote subjugation; while Helton, cited by Tirman¹⁹⁴, explains how migration becomes a *maze of fear* not only for the ones in displacement—which overcome “a fearful venture”—but also for the host society recalling sentiments of insecurity (crime), and employment and welfare threats.¹⁹⁵

What does this theory about fear mean? Let me illustrate it with an example. The first time I felt my body was endangered I was going back home on my usual route. A mechanic action suddenly was interrupted by a threat to my existence. Out of the blue, a car intended to hit me while I was passing by the pedestrian crossing. The man behind the wheel was a

¹⁹² Öhman, Dimberg and Öst 1985. In: UNED. *Psicología de la emoción*.

¹⁹³ Taras, Raymond. *Fear and the making of foreign policy* (Edinburgh University Press Ltd., 2015)

¹⁹⁴ Tirman, John, ed. *The Maze of Fear: Security and Migration After 9/11* (New York : New Press, 2004) 2003

¹⁹⁵ Before leaving Budapest, a research was presented in which the main statement was that a *culture of fear* existed and could be measured with a “fear index”. Although fear was not explained beyond attitudes towards migrants, the results showed that among european countries, the spanish nation was the third nation to consider migrants as a welfare threat, the seventh to consider us a criminal threat, and the eight to consider us an employment threat. What the study shows is how perceptions of fear among citizens —host society—are a reflection of how they perceive their own governments (unemployment, welfare, etc.). Then, could it be that the fear caused by “migration crisis”, or narratives of “invasion” has nothing to do with the real displacement of us migrants rather with and caused by the socio-economic and political system ruling the world? In: Messing, Vera and Vence Ságvári. *Looking behind the culture of fear. Cross-national analysis of attitudes towards migration*. 2018

white—supposably—spanish man looking at me with contempt. For a brief nanosecond, I was paralyzed and feared for my safety. He has the power to destroy my body, I thought. I realized in that second how easily my body could be harm with a great percentage of impunity¹⁹⁶. My alert system identified the unexpected danger and my body reacted to defend itself. I did not run to reach the other side of the road rather confronted him: looked back with anger, yelled at him, and probably even insulted him, all of these while I could feel the cold steel against my skin. I know it was a risky reaction because when I answered him like I did, I was still at his mercy but fortunately he did not retaliate.

Now, let's assume what happened when he saw me because I did not ask him why he wanted to scare me or even *kill me*? He identified me as an outsider because he could perceive my *brownness*. This detail might have triggered in him a feeling of rejection, maybe anger, and contempt associated with a narrative of the migrant who *invades, brings crime or terrorism, benefits from the welfare, steals jobs*. At that particular time, I represented all that he feared. I was associated with the spectacle created by the mass media when exploiting the figure of the migrant. I represented what politicians say about us, that we are a threat to the national order and citizenry. I was there, in front of his car, with my vulnerable migrated exposed body. He was in his car, powerful, and legitimated/supported by a system. All the elements converged a personal emotion, his fear and mine, a fearful reaction from a host society, and underneath a national mechanism of fear to contain/annihilate migrants.

What happens when the fear is triggered by the interaction with a law enforcement officer? The institutional mechanism of fear is more palpable. Biby and I were sitting in a cafe at plain sight when she told me how she was detained two times and almost got deported. The first time, she remembers, was in Madrid. She and her partner were going out

¹⁹⁶ Coates, *Between*

with some friends when at the beginning she confused the undercover officers standing outside the metro with friendly people. It was too late when she realized what was going on. She was always told to avoid certain places, and the metro was one of them. They asked for her documents, which she did not have. *I was illegal*, she tells me, working with fake documentation as is the only way to survive the city, attaining to her an extra vulnerability. Nevertheless, she reacted with anger and refusing to show her documentation. For her, it did not matter they were the police. “Una caliente que va pa’allá”, one of the officers told the other while they took her on a patrol. Her time in a cell was the most horrible experience: *I felt denigrated*. The second time she was detained it happened in Asturias while her legality was in process. One of the officers told her: “You stay here until we deport you in the next flight”. This time she was really scared but knew better. Biby did not want to spend time in a cell again, so she faked an asthma attack. In the hospital she was help by the physician, but guards did not leave her side like if she were a criminal. She remembers telling them with anger, fear, and impotence that her only crime was being illegal, that she was not a murdered, nor a delinquent.

“Mi único delito es no tener papeles, yo no soy asesina ni delincuente” (Biby, 2018)

The undercover agent acts like a “fear provoking”¹⁹⁷ or who/what activates the fear. This is a common practice in the police, especially when they have to hunt migrants in racial raids to fulfill quotas or to fill deportation flights according to the destination (Brandariz, Romero). Their routes will consist in train stations, bus stations, metro, nearby streets, and some other bar known for a migrant clientele or —even worse—workers. What we will call ‘spaces of fear’ which are common knowledge for every migrant arriving to the country

¹⁹⁷ Tomkins, *Affect*, 931

because they already experienced it or someone told them. Nevertheless, no matter how careful someone is, like Biby, you can always get caught.

Nowadays, the quantity of racial raids have lowered down because of the new *efficiency* of the anti-immigrant system to reduce costs. In order to dream with the legality and government aids migrants are required to establish residency, thus, police officers already know where migrants live. Anyone can be summoned to the station with the excuse to sign some random papers and then be deported. This mechanism institutes fear inside our own homes. We experienced this in Oviedo a two weeks ago, and again in Barcelona. When people around us are deported we take it personally: fear and a demoralizing feeling invades us, hearts are shattered, homes are broken. In Oviedo we succeed. In Barcelona we lost, the criminal murderous anti-migrant system won. The necropolitics of fear has been oiled, again.

When Halima told me what was her fear, I realized how the machinery of fear worked. It does not have to be a tangible fear. She never had a direct encounter with a police officer, undercover or not. Although, she learned to fear an invisible power, but power at the end, with the will to do as it please with her migrated body, to crush her identity, to criticize her religion, to belittle her language skills, to subsume her in the precariousness of a migrant life.¹⁹⁸ The border and the mechanism of control was inside the city she lived in.

Fear of what? She feared everything. She lived in fear. Even worked with fear. Halima was not only afraid of the undercover police who sometimes passed by the restaurant she worked, she also was afraid of people making fun of her because she did not know the language.

“Siempre camino con miedo. Viví con miedo. Trabajaba siempre escondida”.¹⁹⁹ (Halima 2018)

¹⁹⁸ Constituting a “social fear” aiming to “promote the social order by dominant hierarchies” (Öhman 2000. Fear and anxiety: evolutionary, cognitive, and clinical perspectives. In: UNED. pp. 255)

¹⁹⁹ “I always walked with fear. I lived in fear. I used to hide myself when working” (Halima 2018)

As Biby, the way she got to know the city was through fear. She had to choose which streets to use or to avoid as well as which places (like bus stations) were problematic, she learned to never walk home at night because the risk to be detained by the police is higher. She was taught that the color of people matter. Thus, Halima developed a superpower, she became *invisible*, an existence in the shadows²⁰⁰ enforced by the system's illegality.

“Mi jefe me dijo: no vas en autobús sola. Voy en autobús con nervios. Ibamos con mi jefe, su novia y el dijo: ella no baja porque es más negrita (república dominicana) y tú más blanca. Pero ella tiene papeles y tú no. A ti te pueden llevar.”²⁰¹ (Halima 2018)

What and whom do we fear, then? We fear racism, discrimination, fascism, the anti-migrant policy, racial raids, deportations, CIEs, wired fences, the bus station, the metro entrance, the street at night, the bar where all the *polis* go, to sleep in a cell. The police, local authorities, the nice lady at the legal aid office who might rat us out if she knows we are illegal, the guy who hits us and we're afraid to report, the old lady who tells us *sudaca go back to your country*, the neighbor who thinks we might be an *ocupa*, the children who won't play with us because our skin is darker —much darker—, the people who look at us with curiosity and contempt, the many others who might want to run their cars over us, the hospital nurse who calls us *negra tonta*, the guy to whom we are exotic and maybe someday he feel entitle to....To speak in public because we have an accent or we are learning the language, to work as a teacher and some kid might call us *puta negra*, the imminent question 'where are you from?' —follow by a silent 'and when do you leave?'—. But, I am also incline to believe we fear ourselves when we make mistakes, when we do not assimilate the

²⁰⁰ Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*

²⁰¹ “My boss told me not to go by myself on the bus. I did it, but I was afraid. My boss, his girlfriend, and I were on the bus and he told me: she (his girlfriend) can't get off the bus because she is more *negrita* than you are (from dominican republic) and you are whiter. The difference between you two is that she has papers and you don't. They can take you.”

rules, when we are not ‘good citizens’; then, we become panopticons²⁰² to police us and our love ones, and that thought scares me. We fear everything-everyone that might harm us, and make us feel unwelcome: that we do not only not belong but never will.

To recapitulate, fear is a personal emotion triggered by different threats, physical or psychological²⁰³ and in every one of them the menace is real, constant, and becomes present in every day life because of an underneath national mechanism of exclusion/inclusion²⁰⁴. Is personal because emerge from the self as a reaction, in this case, as being positioned as migrant within the spanish society. Although the fact that we migrants react with fear is a consequence of a hostile political, economic, and social environment who uses fear as a mechanism of defense. In that sense, is not only a reaction but an *interaction* with the society as a whole: citizens, institutions, policies, etc. where asymmetric power relationships are established. Therefore, fear becomes political since the moment we affect our surroundings by our presence — the use of fear as a mechanism toward us—and we are affected by the same surroundings. Fear functions as a *core political emotion* with a multiplicity of interrelations, impacts, meanings, names, definitions/interpretations, ways of experience it; but, furthermore, fear —as a mechanism and as an emotion—impacts on our identity, on who ever we decide to become within the spanish territory: migrants or not, mestizas, españolas, or with a diasporic identity.

“Put a negra” (Juanita 2018)

“Sudaca” (Biby 2018)

²⁰² Coates, *Between*

²⁰³ In: UNED. *Psicología de la emoción*. 250

²⁰⁴ I make this emphasis to differentiate fear from anxiety, where the first “is produced by an imminent existent danger”, the latter “anticipates a future danger, undefined, and unpredictable” In: UNED. *Psicología de la emoción*. pp. 250).

“Negra tonta” (Khady 2018)

“Puta inmigrante” (Khady 2018)

“Te importa que trabaje en tu casa? Te importa el color? Le dije.” (Virginia 2018)

[Do you mind if I work with you? Do you mind my color?]

“¿Cómo puedes tener ese nombre si eres negra? (Juanita 2018)²⁰⁵

[That’s no name for a *negra*]

“Si ella no sabe hablar ¿por qué está trabajando?” (Halima 2018)

[If she doesn’t speak, why is she working?]

¿Y tú sabes hablar español? ¡Si nací en portugal y llevo viviendo en españa desde que era pequeña!” (Dulce, 2018)

[And do you speak spanish? If I was born in portugal and moved to spain when I was a child”]

²⁰⁵ ““Mary, Mary...and you an African?”

‘Yes.’

‘But that is a German name!’ said Marija. Mary?

But that is an English name, said Jane.

Maria...Marlene.

That is a Swedish name, said Ingrid.

Marie is a French name, Said Michelle.

Naturally

Naturellement

Natürlich!

Mary is anybody’s name but...” In: Aidoo, Ama Ata, *Our Sister*

“Me acuerdo en historia del derecho que me preguntaron y cuando me levante y me oyeron hablar, una carcajada general; ahora claro, la gente no se ríe cuando oye hablar a un latinoamericano, pero entonces se te reían en la cara. Después de la carcajada yo jamás volví a abrir la boca en clase, nunca más y no me levante jamás a hablar.” (Luz)

[I remember I was in class of History of Law and they asked me a question, and when I stood up and they heard me speak, they laughed at me; now, no one laughs when they listen to some Latin American, but then they laughed in your face. After that, I never spoke again, never.]

3.3. *Re/acting the Fear*

It is said that the experience of fear, Tomkins²⁰⁶ argues, is multiple according to each subject. Have you noticed in the previous section what Biby, Halima and myself have in common? First, we all felt fear at some point through different experiences in time and space, and, for different reasons. It was caused by: a man in a car, an undercover police officer, an imminent risk of being detained in a bus stop or by walking in *that* street, at *that* hour of the night. It also might have a multiplicity of consequences: for me, losing my body; for Biby losing freedom and spending time in a jail, for Halima being deported. Second, we were able to recognize it, to name it. Third, what we felt as fear is rooted in an anti-migration mechanism with the same operating logic of the spanish nation-state: colonialism, racism, domination, exclusion/inclusion, annihilation of the other different, migrant, and colonized.

Theorists agree there are four defensive strategies when we face fear: redrawn, immobility, threat, and stop or deflect the attack²⁰⁷. Are these the only ones? Do they always apply—for everyone—? These responses make me wonder about how we react and process fear. Every person is unique, therefore, how I react or face my fear might be different from

²⁰⁶ Tomkins, *Affect*, 936

²⁰⁷ Marks. 1987. *Fears, fobias and rituals*. Oxford Uni Press. 1987. In: UNED. pp. 262.

what Biby, Halima, Juanita, Luz, N., Khady, Gladys, do. We all start from the same point as female migrants, after that, a variety of circumstances mediate: our places of origin, our language, our skin color, our religion, our previous experiences, our age, our network of support, our condemnatory ‘legal’ status. In other words, our *intersectional* subjectivities — and bodies—matter in order to understand in what degree fear impacts on us and how we react on it.

I would employ two examples on how we react or resist in the everyday life according to our intersectionality. For instance, when Biby recognizes she has become more aggressive since she got to Spain—even with the police—, that she always reply —politely—an insult. Or myself, I also get angry, and when I am not too overwhelmed I fight back and confront whatever or whoever is causing me fear. These reactions constitute a sort of a threat or attack or an intent to stop the attack itself. Being aggressive/angry/confrontational is a way of fear. A way to protect ourselves, our body²⁰⁸. Even in the fearless expressions we found fear, remind us Coates. Our responses are part of a package, Biby and I come from a Latin American context, with Spanish as a ‘mother’ language, we arrived in our adulthood, and besides our differences —like I “owned” a student visa and she had to work in the submerged economy with fake documents— the language itself give us a margin of action. It allows us to listen and comprehend random racist comments directed to us or to someone else, and also entitles us with words to respond. This little fact makes the difference. When I think about my days living in Budapest and my lack of Hungarian skills, my degree of responsiveness is almost non-existent, I can only understand a 0.10% of the racist environment. In Spain I can easily fight back like Biby, in Hungary I am well-aware of the extra fragility of my body— although, sometimes, that notion does not stop me.

²⁰⁸ Coates *Between*

Luz— who arrived in her teens—, and Juanita’s experience, on the contrary, are different. They are fifty years apart, from different socio-economic class, different countries although both former colonies —nicaragua and equatorial guinea—, one came to study, one to have a surgery, and I could go on presenting their differences although what interests me now is the commonality they share: the language. When Luz arrived, if she did not speak, people considered her as andaluza or from any other southern region; in a sense, her presence was not questioned, because she could pass as a spanish woman. The problem came when she spoke, her language was not *spanish enough*, she had a Latin American accent, funny enough to make them laugh—it seems—. Juanita’s case is slightly different because she is not recognized as a native speaker either, her language skills, as well as her name, are in question all the time. Why? She is black and for the spaniard imaginary, how could a *negra* speak the language and, worst, has a spanish name? Is easily forgets that this unfortunate commonality [“a dubious bargain”] is a byproduct of “past plundered”²⁰⁹ where spanish colonialism not only plunder goods but languages in the Americas and Africa, imposing *his* hegemonic tongue. This scenario left these two women in silence, or, maybe, open them up to more possibilities than fear through anger?

These are not the only reactions, I have encountered as well that laughter is a healthy way to overcome the feeling of fear. All of us —with no exception— laugh, it could be a sad laugh or a laugh with contempt or a laugh to move on. Ultimately, we laugh because we recognize the fear, and as a consequence we do not want that anyone have any kind of power over the way we feel. We resist, we negotiate, and sometimes we assimilate.

Here is when our identity might be subject of change or might be affected by fear. Identity, as Anzaldúa reminds us, is internalized through not only images but emotions with

²⁰⁹ Aidoo, *Our Sister*

the power to transport you to —what ever you consider—home. Identity is constituted by different elements, contradictory or not, which make you *feel* —something, anything— more than what you are. It is not a matter of be or not to be rather to feel or not to feel²¹⁰. When she says “*A veces no soy nada ni nadie. Pero hasta cuando no lo soy, lo soy*”²¹¹ is because we transcend the *being* to the *feel*. Sometimes I have questioned myself to the point of feeling I am nothing, but even so in that nothingness I still *am* because I am *feeling*. Is by remembering that we are individuals with feelings and that that simple fact constitutes our *being* is when we can fight to be othered or to be reduced as simple objects by an *affective machinery* —or, maybe, a *necropolitic*—of fear.

²¹⁰ Muñoz, José Esteban. “Feeling Brown: Ethnicity and Affect in Ricardo Bracho’s *The Sweetest Hangover (and Other STDs)*. In: *Theater Journal*, Vol 52, n° 1, March 2000, pp. 67-79. John Hopkins University Press

²¹¹ Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*, 63

Conclusions

When I envisioned this project, I wanted to answer three questions. First, if fear exists in the migrant experience as a core emotion capable to modify identities —or if I was just imagining it—. Second, if fear was an institutional mechanism of power deployed by the spanish nation state to dominate/control/surveil/subjugate/*kill in life* the migrant population. Finally, if we could talk about fear being gendered.

As I talked to these women, it results fear is the first emotion they related to their migrant experiences, including myself. As I went through explaining how fear is perceived and how is managed (resisted, assimilated or negotiated), I got to the conclusion that fear affects us in different ways and in different intensities and that has to do with our personal histories and the mean of fear impose to us. For instance, if someone is exposed to a police officer and a night in a cell, this experience may affect the way this woman interacts afterwards with the city she lived in. Therefore, fears can modify our behavior as well as our identities. Nevertheless its condition of negative affect, fear can create collectives and resistances. I argued that through the emotion itself, through feeling fear, we can reactivate our lost subjectivity and contest the spaces of fear.

The second question has been demonstrated in the first two chapters, how the anti-immigration system, including the machinery of deportation, the spanish southern border of spectacle, and the border within the territory, responds to a logic of what I have decided to call a *necropolitics of fear*. That is to say, to apply not an ordinary modus of doing politics but a politics of death, aiming, first, to a spectacular disembodiment of the racialized migrant — physically [death] and symbolically [death in life]—as much as possible. And, second, installing fear as a verifiable threat [through the mass media spectacle] for migrants living in the territory and especially for those *potential* migrants who are waiting to be included in a

subordinated position to enhance the national economy when need it as a way of De Genova's *obscene inclusion*.

Third, one of the 'limitations' of these project was the predisposition of informants to share their experiences, with that said, the people who approach me and show interest about this project describe themselves as women, as female. I am not inferring the experience of fear is not gendered, I believe it is, but is not possible to attain a conclusion without being able to explore the existent spectrum of gender diversity intertwined with migratory experiences. This constitutes an opportunity for a further research.

Finally, besides the *affective lens* I added to the conversation about migration, there was an underneath aim, a challenge related to the process of doing research. It could have been done with any research but because this project was about migration and fear, involving emotions and subjectivities, the methodology needed to be challenged. As I already explained it extensively in the Methodology Chapter, this was a commitment to challenge how we, scholars and activists, engage with research, how we create knowledge in a feminist way. For some, this methodology seemed chaotic, for me was the 'right' decision because this project could *feel* for itself. It was not doing research, but living research, in a way. I did not "looked for migrants" with a check list, I let people be interested in the topic. I did not use a structure, semi structure, opened, closed interview guidelines, I listen what they wanted to share with me. I did not have to *unsettle* anyone to reach the argument I wanted to hear, fear was/is always there. But I also shared my experience with them, not because it was a strategy to get closer, but because we, at the end, were in a conversation, it became a dialogue between migrant sisters, a resistance. I have kept in-text the knowledge in the language it was produced, as it should be—even if Spanish, as well, is a language of domination. I have rejected the colonial and oppressive power of nation-states, therefore refused to capitalize those names. The outcome was not having a grandiloquent, theoretical heavy project, in fact, I

wanted to disengage with it so praxis could become theory, I did not succeed completely, but I reflected on it. We still need to let the field *speak* for itself, as Rivera Cusicanqui says, there is a world outside the walls of the academia and a few depressing authors —some I have read, even used for this thesis—.

I complete this journey thankful for these two years of knowledge, even more, because I engaged myself with a political statement. My Feminism, my Subalternity, my Brownness, my Queerness, urged me to do so. This was the moment to bend the rules in order to make changes and I reaffirm all my decisions and invite anyone who listens to disrupt with me the academia. It is time to decolonize the knowledge, to decolonize spaces, to decolonize ourselves from all forms of oppression, specially from (our) western-centrism.

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