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Rachid Nini begins his gripping testimony *Diario de un ilegal* (1999) with scenes from the Spanish news that report recent deaths in *pateras*, rickety, rubber boats that African and Asian immigrants utilize to make the 14-kilometer voyage from northern Africa to southern Spain.¹ Seeing the dead immigrants floating on the screen, the author has a visceral reaction and begins to choke. These morbid images convey the perilous nature of immigrant life and the dangers to which some immigrants expose themselves in hopes of attaining better opportunities in Spain, in Europe, in the developed world. The images reappear day after day, and the author admits sullenly on the first page of the diary, “Yo no sé muy bien lo que hago aquí” (9). This existential quandary drawn out of the horrific visuality of the *patera* captured in news images evinces the trauma of crossing central to contemporary immigration and the problematic of mobility intrinsic to “illegal” migrations. The author’s commentary also furnishes the tone of the diary, in which he continually contemplates how to survive in a hostile European destination as an undocumented Moroccan immigrant.

While Nini did not travel to Spain in a *patera*, the connection between the *patera* and his experiences as an undocumented immigrant is evident. The shipwrecked *patera* often functions to symbolize the first step on a path of migration, which, much like Nini’s experience as presented in the diary, is saturated with illegality and risk. Tabea Linhard argues that in many transnational narratives about migration, the shipwreck becomes “the starting point, which unleashes the postcolonial specters” (404). The shipwreck aptly represents the losses that result from contemporary migratory experiences, losses that embody melancholia (Linhard 416-7). Melancholia is a process of identification that hinges on the severing the self from the lost object and reinvesting that lost object into a new object, thus reformulating the past through the prism of that initial loss that continues to bear upon the present.² In recent Spain, in an age of unprecedented immigration, this textual melancholia is “unknown, inassimilable, interruptive, and present” and constructs the lost migrants specifically as that which cannot be overcome or assimilated (Linhard 401, 403). Melancholia is also steeped in violence, which erupts in the attempt to dissolve the internal trace of the Other and establish an autonomous identity (Clewell 43). This conceptualization of the Asian and African immigrants as shipwrecked in *pateras* grounded in melancholia marks their undeniable presence in the collective cultural landscape. At the same time, these representations of tragic death ensure that the immigrants are removed from a scheme that profoundly depicts and interrogates the nature of transnational migration. Rather, they are represented in a violent and dehumanized fashion that consolidates their Otherness in the destination to which they have migrated.

Nini’s decision to begin his text with the traumatic television images of immigrants who perished in *pateras* acknowledges the precariousness of immigration as depicted in contemporary Spanish media and cultural production. The dangerous journey in the *patera* and the shipwreck are dominant tropes in Spanish transnational narratives of migration. Two of the earliest Spanish films on the question of migration, Montxo Armendáriz’s *Las cartas de Alou* (1990) and Imanol Uribe’s *Bwana* (1996) not only foreground *pateras* and shipwrecks as vital to their particular cinematic narratives, but also demonstrate their significance as structuring elements of these visual renderings of migration. To date, multiple literary and filmic works deploy the image of the *patera* to portray migration from the African continent to Europe.³ Even when the *patera* does not capsize, those contained within the dangerous craft still experience tragedy during their trajectories in Spain, either subjugated to this initial traumatic experience of the arrival, or later construed in light of this primal moment. Much like the narrator of *Diario de un ilegal*, undocumented immigrants who do not arrive in *pateras* are still associated with these crafts as a pivotal symbol of a restricted, precarious mobility, paradoxical in a world in which technological advances and porous national borders have resulted in increased, generally unproblematic international travel. The shipwreck as a metaphor, persistently linked to the image of the *patera*, symbolizes the trauma of migration and the concomitant representational practice of textual melancholia which betokens alienation and violence. In Nini’s *Diario de un ilegal*, which, as the title suggests, calls the reader to bear witness to the struggle of an undocumented immigrant or “illegal” in Europe, his initial description of the *pateras* on television links a discourse of immobility and danger to his own personal experience of illegality. In fact, in *Diario de un ilegal*, Nini’s experience coheres around an ongoing

transience, symbolized in his seemingly constant movement throughout Spain and France and his reliance on a variety of forms of transportation. The narrator's problematic mobility is manifest in his repeated need to relocate and others' signaling him as an outsider who ought to be questioned and/or detained in a process that restricts Nini as he attempts to occupy Spanish public space.

From the onset of Nini's diary, the Strait of Gibraltar assumes the function of a watery borderland, a liminal space where personal specificity, common history, and shared human experience fade away during the perilous voyage to Europe. The Strait assumes the role of a conduit, that functions to unite the origin and destination, linking the global poor who attempt to leave Africa to developed, prosperous Europe. Both the Strait and the precarious *pateras* that traverse it convey the danger faced by those who perturb the meticulously crafted nation-state system in an era of globalization and demand recognition as subjects. The immigrants' connection to the Strait, both in reality and in representation, however, belies such a construction of subjectivity. Instead, a violent subjection that eschews recognition and firms an image of the immigrant rooted in tropes palatable to the Spanish collective imagination begins with the textual enunciation of the *patera*. The Strait thus functions to facilitate the production of *an* identity symbolically linked to alienation and violence, and hence, refuses complex recognition of the immigrants that cross the Straits and their experiences.

Recognition is inextricably tied to the construction of the public sphere and the resultant modes of visibility and mobility available to immigrants in the destination. Recognition is tantamount to existing within the realm of humanity and is what allows us to become "socially viable beings" (Butler *Undoing* 2). Recognition results from legibility of bodies in the public sphere and their resultant "recognizability". Immigration, however, complicates processes of recognition in allowing for forms of mimicry, masking, and assimilation that often demand contradictory forms of recognition. For example, the *patera* both provides the means by which immigrants arrive to Spain and the representational mechanism that ensures their violent Othering. The refusal to recognize the individualized immigrants who voyage in *pateras*, both in life and in death, manifests the power the nation-state wields as an entity that delimits both the ways in which certain bodies are established as subjects and more broadly speaking, how the collective conceptualization of the category of human is defined and legitimized.

In "The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man," Hannah Arendt assesses the political climate in interwar Europe and the crumbling of the comity of nations. Many of today's immigrants are caught in-between states and as such, in situations analogous to the denationalized Europeans Arendt studies. She states:

Once they had left their homeland they remained homeless, once they had left their state they became stateless; once they had been deprived of their human rights they were rightless, the scum of the earth. Every event had the finality of a last judgment, a judgment that was passed neither by God nor by the devil, but looked rather like the expression of some unredeemably stupid fatality. (267)

The geographical repositioning of many of Nini's acquaintances and friends in *Diario de un ilegal* similarly results in an obliteration of their most basic rights as those who are effectively stateless. As Nini describes these immigrant acquaintances in detail, the reader learns that many are immersed in political situations that make it impossible for them to return to their lands. The text thus invites interpretation through the theory of Arendt. The immigrants Nini describes are effectively immobilized owing to their citizenship status and forced into an existential stagnancy; they are incapable of returning home and barely able to live on the periphery in Europe where they risk both deportation and death. Further, the text compels the reader to question the ways in which these immigrant bodies occupy and move throughout the political and physical spaces of nation-states when they are deemed unrecognizable or, following Butler, socially unviable, both in the origin and in the destination.

In the title of his diary, Nini embraces the omnipresent and problematic label that defines some human beings as "illegal" owing to a lack of documentation; this term simultaneously reveals the harshness of life for individuals the state refuses to recognize. State recognition manifests itself in numerous forms, and can be partial and limited.⁴ Nonetheless, state recognition largely articulated through citizenship serves as the basis for social belonging and participation. Both the *patera* as craft and the daily encounters in which the "illegals" find themselves immersed make transparent the primacy of citizenship as a means to achieve recognition both by the state of the origin and the destination. In other words, without travel documents issued by the origin, residency

papers issued by the destination, or money from either locale to finance the voyage to Europe, the immigrants must take part in precarious travel systems outside official channels as these forms of transportation do not require such documentation and/or resources. He describes the trip some of his friends took via *patera* in this way: “Tras más de veinte horas en el mar [en la patera], llegaron a las costas de Cádiz donde se dispersaron como langostas” (116). This description of the arduous voyage and the simile comparing immigrants and lobsters are noteworthy as at this moment, and in many others, he begins to compare the existence of the immigrants he encounters to those of animals, in observations that aver the fundamentality of citizenship to a life recognizable as *human*.

Throughout his diary, Nini also describes how even those possessing a recognizable citizenship in the nation of origin opt to relinquish their identities and craft new identities—albeit challenging ones—once they arrive in Europe. Referring to his friend Abelnkader, he says, “Nada más llegar a España, quemó su pasaporte. Así se deshizo de su identidad” (64). Upon entering the European destination, Abelnkader reconfigures himself as a European subject for whom the possibility of return is unlikely, if not impossible. The destination is decidedly final, even if he must remain on the periphery in Europe. Hence, possessing a tenuous citizenship in his own nation, like other migrants, Abelnkader abandons that nation to occupy an ostensibly permanent, “illegal” position in Europe that forecloses the possibility of rootedness and stability. This signals a hierarchy of location in which citizenship in the nation of origin is less favorable than an illegal status in the developed world, in this instance, Europe.

Once the immigrants abandon their identities and assume “illegal” subjectivities in Spain, they are read and interpreted in congruence with deeply entrenched formulations that structure national approaches to Otherness. As mentioned, the *patera* is one symbolic element that often transmits the desperation that many of the global poor encounter in their voyage to Europe, and the Strait similarly exercises symbolic power as a watery borderland that connects Africa and Europe. African immigrants traveling to Europe, particularly immigrants of Maghrebian origin, such as the ones in *Diario de un ilegal*, are also collectively imagined in relation to the Moors, medieval invaders who traversed the Strait and conquered the Iberian Peninsula centuries ago. The Muslim conquest of the Iberian Peninsula serves as the origin of what Flesler describes as Spain’s historical trauma with northern Africa; current encounters with Moroccan immigration draw on this experience to create a “disadjusted now” which entangles the past and present (Flesler 56-7). Invoking the figure of the Moor in reference to contemporary immigrants suggests a culture grappling with the ghosts of its convoluted past (Linhard 401). The figure of the Moor, whose return, according to Daniela Flesler, is feared in the collective imaginary serves to reassert Spain’s configuration as a European, Catholic nation as decreed in 1492 with the expulsion of the Jews and the Muslims. With regard to contemporary immigration, this present “encounter reopens past encounters” and today’s immigrants enter into a discourse of difference, exclusion, and violence instituted in the Middle Ages (Ahmed qtd. in Flesler 4). This conflation constitutes a symbolic inertia that complements the physical immobility narrated in *Diario de un ilegal*. These Maghrebian immigrants, both theoretically and practically, are confined; situated on the social periphery and symbolically affixed to a chronological anachronism, they are limited to the darkest recesses of both physical space and the collective imagination in contemporary Spain.

The overlapping of the history of Al-Ándalus with the contemporary context marked by foreign immigration is most clearly presented in the text when Nini witnesses the festival of Moors and Christians where Spanish nationals reenact the events of the Reconquest. He observes, “Esa manera de contar la historia...me pareció simpática. No se pretende recordar a las nuevas generaciones lo que ocurrió cuando los árabes fueron expulsados de Aláandalus. La Inquisición. Las matanzas. La expulsión colectiva” (38). Nevertheless, the softening of the history does not elide the meaning expressed in the reenactment, which exposes the symbolic investments undergirding Spanish sociality and its relationship to the Maghreb.⁵ During the festival, Nini acknowledges that his presence constitutes “una extravagancia aun mayor que el torneo imaginario en la playa” (39). The presence of Nini, an “illegal” Maghrebian immigrant, undercuts the symbolic magnitude of the festival, which is obviously designed for a Spanish audience to commemorate a violent step in the long process in which the Spanish nation consolidated a European, Christian identity that celebrated the subjugation and removal of Islamic and Semitic cultures present in the Iberian Peninsula during the Middle Ages. Nini’s preoccupation with the police presence at the festival makes it even more difficult for him to view this event. The linkage between these early modern expulsions and the chance of deportation in the 1990s is striking. The persistence of the possibility of removal

from Spain emphasizes the incommensurability of non-European, non-Christian identities with the national project inaugurated with the religious and ethnic purification of the Reconquest.

In the diary, Nini connects the anti-Arab sentiment he feels in Spain to this past history with Al-Ándalus and the image of the *patera*. He states:

La televisión ofrece de nosotros la imagen de un país que no es más que una flota incesante de pateras y una juventud desesperada que prefiere morir en alta mar a regresar a su país. Esta imagen, además de otras desagradables de cadáveres en Argelia, provoca aquí inquietud por todo lo que es árabe. (73)

Nini observes that many Spaniards' ideas about Moroccans interconnect the past and present; for example, they believe Moroccan immigrants arrive in boats—*pateras*—just like the Moors did centuries ago. The *patera* again emerges as a craft central to the collective conceptualization of migration and the manner in which Maghrebians immigrants are imagined to move through space and time. This model, as mentioned, features a complex and alienating temporality that intertwines the past and present and looks to the *patera* specifically as a *vehicle* that excludes the Maghrebians immigrants from a representational schema that would permit them to assimilate into Spanish sociality. The boat as a symbol of a mobility linked to a traumatic haunting and violent Otherness again surfaces in representations of contemporary Maghrebians migration.

The figure of the Moor haunts even the remotest locales Nini visits. In these towns, the people know very little about Moroccans, but share fantastic legends about the Moors and their expulsion; they pass these stories down from one generation to the next, indicating the pervasiveness and significance of this cultural memory. Nini explains to some townspeople that Morocco is just like Spain; the difference is that Morocco is part of Africa, Spain is part of Europe, and they are separated not only by the Straits of Gibraltar, but also an ocean of time (75). This paradox enunciated by the author, rooted in equivalence and profound difference, signals the asymmetry of the world system in which the global South experiences tremendous poverty that stands in contrast to the riches of the North. Hence, his statement also suggests that the borderland, in this instance, the Strait of Gibraltar, which separates Europe and Africa, is a site of social contestation and profound contradiction in which subjectivities and temporalities coincide yet stand in opposition to one another and produce social and cultural difference. For Ryan Prout, the supposedly short distance of 14 kilometers that separates Africa from Europe and Morocco from Spain actually symbolizes “the gulf between rich and poor [...] the hurdles which keep non-nationals from establishing a Spanish identity” (67).⁶ The Maghrebians immigrant, the alien per excellence is a frightening symbol of difference that places the purity of the Christian, Spanish, European nation state in jeopardy. This fear explicates the hostility that these immigrants experience upon relocating to Spain, encapsulated in the state's monitoring and possible removal of these immigrants.

The symbolic confinement that figures immigrants as a facile, timeless Other is complemented by a physical one enforced through state procedures. Through methods like walling and surveillance, the state attempts to transmit a message to immigrants about the power it wields in limiting their inclusion and corresponding movement in the destination. In the case of Spain, a wall between the Spanish enclave of Ceuta separates this city from the rest of Morocco. In her analysis of this imposing structure as Europe's “last” wall and the border space it produces, Parvati Nair reminds us:

State borders must be distinguished from other types of borders as they are policed zones, where the traffic of people and goods is controlled and monitored [...] Indeed the juridical authority of the frontier zone sifts the documented immigrant from the undocumented one. Hidden in the cracks between such opposed categories are the millions of stateless or undocumented migrants who slip across policed borders and inhabit the blurred spaces and precarious times of non-recognition” (23).

This quote aptly surmises both the gulf between Europe and Africa to which the obdurate wall attests and the fate of those who cross state boundaries, with or without the state's permission.

In a masterful analysis that argues that the illegal immigrants serve as spectral presences that perturb the social order, Liam Connell notes “the contradiction in the construction of physical barriers to limit migration alongside the simultaneous liberalization of trading borders for goods and services” (2). Embodied labor thus

becomes illegal not only because of the immigrant's work, but also because the very presence of such immigrants constitutes an abrogation of the nation-state principle, which identifies a political space with a particular national people.⁷ The wall symbolizes this trespassing. This illegal status forces immigrants to assume forms of invisibility, as Connell asserts (3). In the case of *Diario de un ilegal*, invisibility coheres around a constant movement precipitated by the surveillance and barricading of the nation-state which aims to monitor how bodies move through national spaces.

Political theorist Wendy Brown points out that the construction of walls separating the United States from Mexico, the West Bank from Israel, and Spain's enclaves from the rest of Morocco were under way as the world celebrated the eradication of walls in places like Germany and South Africa; further, she notes that at that historical moment, more walls were in preparation in state-sanctioned maneuvers to deter undesirables from certain political and economic spaces (8, 19). As Brown claims, the walls have a theatrical function. The walls purport to project state power and efficacy when faced with the threat of outsiders; in fact, they only symbolically serve to attenuate national fears in an era of globalization and crumbling sovereignty (25). These barricades ought to impede migration; instead, they become a visual manifestation of an official anti-immigrant stance and compel immigrants to utilize different routes to reach the destination. When a plane ticket is not an option, one turns to the *patera*; when a wall is erected, one digs a tunnel. Neither the wall nor the state policies it represents curbs the immigrant's mobility; rather, these measures encourage a wider array of travel forms that signal the ways in which even globalized subjects living in a world of penetrable national boundaries continue to be interpellated by the state.

In the final chapters of the diary, Nini begins a confounding, helter-skelter narration recounting his numerous travels throughout Europe. He interweaves details of these brief excursions with stories of his home in Morocco, and both the content and the form of his narrative combine to transmit to the reader the contours of a life in crossing, marked by constant movement paradoxically constrained by state power and chaotic discourse that reflects the author's difficulty in navigating European territory. For Dotson-Renta, Nini's narration "[reveals] the loss of self he experiences while in transit. This loss is not simply one of identity, but rather one of humanity" (436). As this quote shows, Nini's mobility manifests the limits imposed on undocumented immigrants whose identities are also contorted to align with a nation-state system from which they are wholly excluded and, hence, dehumanized. Nini continually uses comparisons to animals to convey this notion. For example, he compares himself to his landlady's dog, Ethel. He contemplates graffiti on a bus: "moros perros" (138) which eventually leads him to state: "Si [Ethel] me llega a morder, no habría podido hacer nada contra ella. Ethel tenía papeles y un carné que daba fe de sus visitas periódicas al veterinario. Yo no tenía nada de eso" (138-9). This overlapping of the presence of the historical figure of the Moor, the plight of the undocumented immigrant, and a contemplation of human rights attests not only to the collapsing of the past and present but also makes plain Arendt's assertions about humanity and citizenship in an era of meticulously constructed nation-states. In the text, Nini's lack of documentation, fragmented humanity, and recognizable Otherness is also evinced in a constant need to *move* through states clearly hostile to immigrants, as shown in the surveillance and border patrols he describes throughout the text that resonate with the aforementioned theoretical and ethnographic works by Brown and Nair on border walling and immigration.

As Lara N. Dotson-Renta notes, "While [Nini's] story is told through a variety of cities, the primary setting is always a place of transition" (435). Nini travels throughout the diary, within Spain and to other parts of Europe—as the Spain-France trip illustrates—, thus configuring the "illegal" immigrant as one who appears to be highly mobile. He must move from place to place, yet this continuous movement does not improve his circumstances, it only ensures that is not "caught" at that very moment. His hyper-mobility therefore signals a lack of stability that most citizens endowed with national documents enjoy.⁸ This mobility is combined with a sense of discomfort that shows his vulnerability in Europe (Dotson-Renta 436). At one point, Nini sarcastically admits: "Ahora vivo en mis zapatos... es una vivienda segura y maravillosa" (174). While living in his shoes supposedly provides him a safe living, it also presupposes constant movement, which the reader observes in his numerous travels through train stations, bus stations, and waterways.

Nini begins this section of continual travel in the diary with a description of his arrival to the *Estación del Norte* in Barcelona. He describes Asian tourists and "Wanted" posters that demand information about ETA terrorists.⁹ In this context, numerous, diverse groups of people are forcibly amassed and contained within the train

station as arrive and depart. In addition to the incessant movement of bodies through the station, Nini also notes that time seems to progress more rapidly in the station as people incessantly come and go. Two days later, he arrives at the *Estación de Sur* in Madrid. He states: “Me fui de Barcelona sin que me diese tiempo a hacer una foto de recuerdo,” which reflects the author’s movement. The photograph, a commemoration of both time and place, does not occur in the transitory migrant’s visit to the Catalan capital. In Madrid, he again comments the presence of Asian tourists. In addition, he notes the presence of Arabs: “Los árabes, con su aspecto alarmado, recorren los vestíbulos de la estación llevando sus bolsas de plástico, como quien busca la salida en un laberinto. ¿Dios, por qué son *siempre* así?” (172, my emphasis). While the station ought to transmit a sense of transience, the Arab immigrants, much like the Asian tourists, are relegated to a site of stasis and permanence. This notion accommodates Marc Augé’s theory of non-places well as in them a person loses his/her identity. Augé claims: “A person entering the space of non-place is relieved of his usual determinants. He becomes no more than what he does or experiences in the role of passenger, customer or driver” (103). This corresponds to the identity of both the immigrant and the non-nationals moving through the train station. The identity-based stasis comports with a fixed, sealed approach to cultural difference that negates the complexities of the numerous individuals reduced to a facile Otherness. The Arabs and Asians are always there, fixed in the sites of transit and hence, permanently mobile; the simile of the labyrinth only heightens this vision of mobility. The labyrinth as allegory for migration to Spain is remarkable: it requires continual movement without reaching one’s goal as one finds many more dead-ends prior to finding the exit successfully, if at all.

During these final chapters, he also gives an account of a visit to Toledo, a jaunt through the Sol metro station in Madrid, and a trip via high-speed train from Paris to Brussels. He compares the metro passengers to rats running from invisible cats (180) in a rhetorical maneuver that outlines Nini’s perception of the frenetic, European city-dweller for the reader, and connects these denizens to the image he has been constructing of dehumanized, undocumented immigrants. The latter are also in perpetual motion, running from an unseen tormenter, an obvious allusion to the European officials that often seek to repatriate undocumented immigrants. These sketches of Nini’s use of transit, in sum, make the reader aware a life in crossing, begun with the first crossing from Morocco to Spain; this crossing is symbolized in the collective imagination with the onerous voyage in *palera* that is believed to culminate in traumatic death, as shown daily in the Spanish media, or a traumatic existence of in-betweenness as related in Nini’s journals.

Part of Nini’s movement is rooted in his visibility, much like the Arab immigrants he observes in the train station. In addition to the police presence described at the Festival of Moors and Christians, the author mentions his concerns about being apprehended by the authorities and deported throughout the diary. In another instance, he states: “Ayer un coche de policía pasó delante de mi muy despacio. Supe que mi aspecto me había delatado... y por el número blanco escrito en distintas partes del coche supe que se trataba de una patrulla encargada de los inmigrantes... Corrí como si estuvieran bombardeando”(153). Once Nini sees the patrol car, he recognizes the risk he faces as an Arab in Spain and must hide. His physical appearance suffices to alert the authorities. Hence, merely existing as an Arab in the once-homogenous nation of Spain makes him susceptible to questioning and, thus, obliges him to assume cognizance of his difference and the reaction it produces in the Spanish public sphere.

These episodes with the authorities in *Diario de un ilegal* not only mark the surveillance to which immigrants are subjected, but also evidence the recognition of the Other as such intrinsic to racism. Judith Butler builds upon the work of philosopher Emmanuel Levinas to examine the face and the intersubjective dynamics of recognition and representation. Butler affirms, “To respond to the face is to understand its meaning, means to be awake to what is precarious in another life or, rather the precariousness of life in itself” (*Precarious* 134). But the responses elicited in dialogue with the images presented in Spanish visual culture, in immigration debates, and even in interpersonal contact with individualized immigrants often restrict a more profound understanding of the face of the Other and, hence, recognition of both the profundity and precariousness of immigrant life.

Intercultural contact, as Rey Chow suggests, tends to be a superficial, “brush against the Other” (55) grounded in entrenched notions about the Other and stereotype. The stereotype creates and perpetuates the boundary between two communities, accentuating the alterity of the Other (Chow 59). This radical difference is visible in the *face* of the Other, says Levinas, and it prompts the murderous impulse that tempts us to kill the Other; at the same time, the commandment “thou shalt not kill” prohibits this violent act. For Levinas, European civilization is formed vis-à-vis the anxiety and the desire that this interdiction produces (in Butler *Precarious* 136). In

Diario de un ilegal, this anxiety is encapsulated in Nini's face, which ultimately is divested of its particularity; his individualized identity is negated under the auspices of a collective imaginary that opts to Other the Maghrebian immigrant. This face, targeted by the authorities as the deportable Other, necessitates his relocation to guarantee that he remains—illegally and clandestinely—in Europe.

For Butler the face of the other is also “the situation of discourse” (*Precarious* 138). The Other is pivotal to discourse as prior to our own speaking, something must be spoken to us and without these conditions of address, language disappears (*Precarious* 138-9). Thus, to enter into the realm of the human is to enter into the concept of discourse, to give oneself over to the Other and to accept the limitations in human communication and the disjuncture between what is spoken to us and what is interpreted. Through this maneuver, Butler signals representational practice as the crucial point of departure for conceptualizing the human. The domain of representation, says Butler, unleashes continual processes of humanization and dehumanization. Self-representation ensures a better chance of humanization and those who are represented by others risk dehumanization or relegation to oblivion (*Precarious* 141). In *Diario de un ilegal*, the images that circulate in Spanish visual culture and the histories that constitute historical memory create a field that symbolically forges the “type” of the contemporary immigrant and the figure of the Moor and also collapse the two into one Other within that scope of signification. The representational creation of this stereotypical “face” and the dis-identification through the hyperbolic absorption of evil or Otherness into the face is itself a mode of violence (Butler 141, 143). It is the face of the Moor or of the Arab immigrant that comes to represent the Reconquest, a Christian-European identity, and participation in the European project through the European Union. This face continually enters into conflict with contemporary Spanish identity and when that imagined, stereotyped face suffers or dies within the confines of Europe, the lives problematically associated with it are not represented as or worthy of collective mourning or grief. Nini's repeated mention of the *patera* as symbol exposes this dynamic of the outsider whose life chiefly serves to define the national self through negation and as is not deemed “grievable.”

This internalization of Otherness eventually compels the author to abandon his life as an illegal in Europe. He states: “Quiero mirar a mi alrededor y ver a mis semejantes. Que mi aspecto no le produzca extrañeza a nadie. Que no me intimide una mujer y que no me mire un niño con la boca abierta” (197). This assertion uncovers his desire not to be Othered or to be reduced to a villainous face unworthy of recognition as human in the Spanish public sphere.

In a final comment on transit and mobility, Nini compares today's immigrants to Tariq Ibn Ziyad, a Moor who took part in the conquest of Al-Ándalus. Tariq burned his ships upon arriving on the Spanish shores, showing that he sought riches or death in the newfound land. To Nini, it is remarkable that no one ever discusses what happened to Tariq after this profound, symbolic gesture (207). Nini caustically compares immigrants who burn their passports and erase their identities upon arriving via *patera* in Spain to this medieval figure. “La muerte o el botín,” he notes before revealing that there are no riches or treasures to be found in Europe for undocumented immigrants (207). Rather than compare the immigrants to a faceless, ahistorical Moor, Nini selects a historical figure known for his heroism and valor before ridiculing both Tariq and today's immigrants for their delusions about the European paradise and the treasures it putatively contains.

Nini assures his readers that there are no guarantees for illegal immigrants, and there is nothing but work and solitude in the European destination (206-207). In one of the final statements of the diary, he advises, “Si te piden los papeles, basta con abrir la palma de la mano delante de la policía, para que sepan que te ganas el sustento en el campo y te dejen seguir tu camino” (207). The reader is painfully aware that this sort of physical currency carries no weight with the authorities and the undocumented have one option, to flee, when faced with such an interrogation. This comment resonates with the notion of embodied labor transformed into an illegal criminal presence and reduced to a spectral Otherness as a vehicle for survival and compelled to assume modes of invisibility, as formulated by Connell and proven in Nini's diary.

Hence, his narration ends in a manner analogous to the way it began, with a critical interrogation of the representation of Maghrebians in Spain linked to an examination of the ways in which these immigrants are figured in the Spanish social landscape, on the axes of both space and time. The shipwreck assumes a vital function, breathing life into the text and allowing Nini to create a more meaningful dialogue that moves beyond the facile conflation of Maghrebian immigrants with Moors. The shipwreck is the first manifestation of a limited mobility that culminates in hyper-mobility and a perpetual moving to avoid mis/recognition as the reviled Other.

Mobility as a symbolic construct thus conveys the paradox of migration. The “illegal” immigrants, lacking travel documents ought to remain fixed in their nations of origin. Instead, refusing to accept the situation in those origins, the immigrants assume a frenetic and constant movement that could allow them to reconfigure themselves through a repositioning in the destination. The ramshackle *patera* is one example of this limited movement in allowing the immigrants to travel to the European destination in a precarious, tragic manner. Relocation through migration, further, does not result in a full reconfiguration, as shown in the equation of the Maghrebian immigrant with the Moor and in the reviled face that harbors the Otherness the destination cannot confront. The “illegal” immigrant thus is compelled to move constantly to evade surveillance and possible deportation, as shown in Nini’s diary.

In addition to the representational violence of the pervasive *patera* and the material violence intrinsic to the racist Othering of these immigrants, their positioning in non-places, such as sites of transit, also delineates their fragmented humanity. Europe’s recent history has been marked by the movement of masses of people. The twentieth century specifically witnessed numerous migratory flows through Europe resulting from the Russian Revolution, World War I, the Spanish Civil War, World War II, and the implantation of authoritarian regimes in the East and West. As Arendt notes, these human flows resulted in the dehumanization of the stateless, who were essentially rightless without the protection of the nation-states they had left behind. In an age of globalization, national sovereignty may be placed in jeopardy due to increased human flows that allow non-nationals to penetrate territories putatively demarcated and bounded for the national population or citizens. “Illegal” immigrants like Nini find themselves in analogous circumstances. Today, measures to monitor and to deter illegal immigration compel immigrants to assume a perpetual motion. The symbolic import of rootlessness, of belonging nowhere, of a continual personal tumult comports with a construction of immigrants as Other within the national boundaries that have purportedly crossed illegally. Nini, owing to his Arabic face, is mis-recognized as the reviled Other; in consequence, he is forced to be on the run, and he is subject to stares and interrogation. His hyper-mobility indicates his fragmented citizenship and evinces that in Spain he is only *welcome* in his shoes, his dwelling place, as he states in the text. As Flesler states, this anxiety of delimiting the spaces occupied by each group, Moroccan immigrants and nationals, ensures that limits and boundaries are firmly demarcated; nonetheless this demarcation of borders often fails (97). In Nini’s case, his claim that he must live in his shoes indicates there is no space in Spain where he is welcome. This produces the Iberian nation as “off limits” for the undocumented immigrant; such a notion is obviously false as Nini has entered the nation “illegally” and the rigidly erected state borders are proven to be porous. This paradoxical mobility culminates with a fervent desire to return home, to leave hostile Europe and to cease moving pointlessly through the spatial and social labyrinth in which he finds himself getting nowhere.

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Notes

¹ Rachid Nini, the author of *Diario de un ilegal* was released from a Moroccan prison on April 28, 2012 and has stated that he will no longer write. He explains: "Journalists should write about what needs to be said and not what others want to hear. Unfortunately, this type of writing leads you either to silence, isolation or to prison" (Rhanem). He has also criticized the freedom of the press—or lack thereof—in his native country of Morocco.

² While both mourning and melancholia are responses to loss, Sigmund Freud distinguishes the two by describing mourning as "the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which had taken the place of one, such as one's country, liberty, an ideal, and so on" (243). Melancholia, in contrast, does not completely ensue from a loss from the outside world, but from the fragmentation of the self. The object constitutes a displaced figure of the loss already perceived to be present in the self. "The shadow of the object fell upon the ego," writes Freud, describing melancholia.

³ Examples include Gerardo Muñoz Lorente's novel *Ramito de hierbabuena* and the short story collections *Inmenso Estrecho* (2005) and *Inmenso Estrecho II* (2008), Nieves García Benito's *Por la vía de Tarifa* (2000), and Andres Sorel's *Voces del Estrecho* (2000). Recent films include *Las cartas de Alou* (dir. Montxo Armendáriz 1990), *Bwana* (dir. Imanol Uribe 1996), *Poniente* (dir. Chus Gutiérrez 2002), *14 kilómetros* (dir. Gerardo Olivares 2008), and *Retorno a Hansala* (dir. Chus Gutiérrez 2008).

⁴ "Blurred citizenship" refers to the existence of long-time residents of a polity, citizens who are unrecognized by agents of the state because of their lack of official standardized documentation. Sadiq identifies three groups of undocumented natives: those who travel for their jobs and are victims of "dislocation and pauperization in rural areas" (75), dislocated indigenous or tribal groups, and ethnic minorities who are deprived or discriminated against by the majority groups that control the state. These natives, without documentation are not, in fact, "legalized" or "visible to the state, the sovereign, and hence part of the state-instituted infrastructure of citizenship... [or] the circle of members who form the political community... and eligible for social, political, and economic rights" (98). Leaving the community is a mechanism for these blurry citizens to attain many of those rights; migration, however, is predicated upon being able to move through national spaces, a privilege complicated by this lack of documentation.

⁵ For David M. Guss, the festivals of Moors and Christians are a "semiotic battlefield" (in Flesler 98). The significance of these spectacles, as mentioned, intertwine the past and present and imbue the figure of the immigrant with characteristics of the medieval invaders, as Flesler shows in *The Return of the Moor*.

⁶ Here, Prout refers to the collection *Inmenso Estrecho*, which also suggests the enormous distance between Spain and Africa often reduced to the short space of 14 kilometers. This sentiment is echoed in the collection of short stories *Inmenso Estrecho II* and in the film *14 kilómetros*.

⁷ In *Nationalism*, Ernest Gellner states there is a congruence between the nation—the people and the political boundaries they occupy—and the state that administers to those people. The influx of foreigners into the political body of the nation

undermines the nation's purity and sovereignty, an imbalance that can be rectified through assimilation and integration or by less humanitarian means, namely, expulsion and extermination (Gellner 1, Arendt 273).

⁸ In *The Spanish Gypsy: The History of a European Obsession*, feminist literary critic Lou Charnon-Deutsch interrogates alterity and national identity in Spain through the figure of the gypsy, observing the gypsy is central to "ethnic identity and state formation" (11). Like immigrants today, the nomadic nature of the *Roma* links them to a hyper-mobility and a concomitant alterity that Others them while accentuating the whiteness and "Europeanness" of Spanish nationals. Hence, while the *Roma* are Spanish nationals, they too lack stability and are frequently alienated from national culture as articulated through official discourse.

⁹ ETA, the armed Basque separatist group has used terror tactics in Spain for nearly four decades. In October 2011, the group announced an end to the armed confrontation and proposed to talk to the Spanish and French governments with the aim of resolution of the consequences of the conflict.