

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF MOHAMED BOUDIAF - M'SILA

FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

N°:.....



DOMAIN: FOREIGN LANGUAGES

STREAM: ENGLISH LANGUAGE

OPTION: LITERATURE & CIVILIZATION

SCENES OF ENCOUNTER IN LAILA LALAMI'S
THE MOOR'S ACCOUNT

**Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Master's Degree**

Candidate:

Ms. Amal BATTACHE

Ms. Bouchra BOUHALI

Supervisor:

Mr. Bachir SAHED

2021

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my dearest parents Ahmed and Zoulikha, the symbol of love and sacrifice, and the only source of happiness and success in my life, and also,

To my beloved sisters: Widad, Basma, Chourouk, and my little princess Khawla.

To the dearest brothers: Mohamed and Said, and to my brother's precious soul, God bless him. For my brothers in law: Faisal and Hicham. For my sweetie niece Asil,

For my dear nephew Abd al-Raouf.

I would like also to express my deepest love and gratitude to all my friends, namely my soul mates: Bouchra, Chaima, Imane, Ahlame, Radia, and for being such great friends with whom I shared so many wonderful moments.

Amal

DEDICATION

To Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

To my dearest mother Zakia for her existence in my life, for her support and for her kindness

For my father, Elkhier, for his support in all times

For my brothers: Kamal, khaled and the naughty Hicham for giving me their continuous support

For my sisters: Chaima, Hind, Zakat and Sara for the happy moments and the good company they provide me with

For my grandfather Muhammed and my grandmother Fatma for being lightening candles in the darkest moments

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To all my teachers who direct me to the way of knowledge, those who will have an eternal mark in my life and whom my words are never enough to describe their grace

Bouchra

ABSTRACT

Laila Lalami has been known for narrating stories of marginalized people and alienated cultures. In her novel, *The Moor's Account* (2014), she protests Eurocentrism and attempts to restore the cultural heritage of marginalized people. The present study examines cross-cultural encounters in the novel through Homi Bhabha's theories of hybridity, mimicry, ambivalence, and unhomeliness. It investigates the cultural differences, clashes, and interactions between the colonizer and the colonized, highlighting the significance of storytelling in the life of the main character Mustafa and in the life of other characters. Moreover, the study emphasises the importance of names and naming as identity markers in the colonial and postcolonial world. Thus, the study is divided into two chapters. The first chapter presents the socio-historical context and the theoretical framework. The second chapter, on the other hand, analyses the main character's identity (de)formation in the light of Bhabha's theories.

Keywords: cultural encounters, postcolonialism, naming, hybridity, mimicry, unhomeliness

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INTRODUCTION

From earlier times, minority voices were silenced all around the world. An example of that is the Muslim slave Mustafa ibn Muhamed ibn Abdsalam Al-Zemmuri who was a participant in the unfortunate Narvaez expedition 1528, with six hundred men heading toward The New World. All the men died except four survivors including Mustafa, Senor Dorantes, Cabeza De Vaca and Alonso Del Castillo. They had a long trip in the new land with indigenous people and for eight years. Cabeza De Vaca, after returning home, wrote a book narrating the events of the entire journey. As Alex D. Krieger mentions: “The fourth is named Estebanico, black in colour, Arab, native of Azamor in Africa” (D. Krieger, 2003, p. 301).

Laila Lalami was born and raised in Morocco. Her novel *The Moor's*, published in 2014, and a finalist for the Pulitzer, challenges the original chronicle of Cabeza de Vaca where Mustafa, the slave, was neglected by white Castilians. Hence, Lalami tries to give voice to the Muslim slave who was baptized and who faced the various types of danger such as hunger, disease, loss, and death. In the novel, at some moments, Mustafa visits the past to create his present within the story. At the beginning, Mustafa is silent, passive, and lonely. But after the departure of the crew and in the most difficult moments, he imposes his wise opinions on his companions in order to save himself and the others, where they find themselves obliged to follow his orders and suggestions as an only way to survive. At the end, he chooses to live in The New World instead of returning to Azemmur, the place where he could smell the breeze of his childhood memories.

The novel offers a truthful insight into the status of colonized people and Muslims in the sixteenth century which is reflected in nowadays lives. It also presents a portrayal for master-slave relationship which is a common postcolonial theme. It also gives a clear idea about the proud image of the Spanish conquistadors where at one point turns to be stigma of outcast. Lalami mixes colours of reality with fiction to tell that history can be reconstructed and rewritten.

The present study offers a postcolonial examination of the work as it focuses mainly on cross-cultural encounters. The issue of culture becomes an essential focus that colonialism aims to destroy, and the novel tackles the attempt of the Spaniards to ignore and efface. The study also highlights how writing and storytelling are considered to be tools to revive cultures, because without Mustafa's storytelling, Mustafa's past as well as the Indian culture would not be restored.

Colonialism aims to erase the indigenous people's cultural identity; it plays a major role in the subjugation of the people. In the novel, the white men totally ignore the culture of the other groups. Indeed, both Mustafa's culture and the Indians' culture are ignored. The novel also presents cross-cultural clashes among characters, in the way they react differently to their religious values and social norms. Therefore, this study aims at highlighting the cultural differences among the characters on the one hand and the turning point in the Castilians' idea of superiority when they were obliged to abandon it and mimic the Indian cultures in order to survive. On the other hand, it seeks to show how writing and storytelling are tools for reviving cultures, and creating resistance against the attempts to eradicate culture and reshape identity.

The motive behind this study is to shed light on the Arab Muslim character Mustafa Al-zemmuri, and how he uses his native culture to function properly in The New World, even after the Portuguese baptized him and changed his name that ties him to his roots. He keeps faith in God, the One who can protect him in the darkest moments that could weaken and destroy him. The Arabic and Islamic norms instilled in him protect him against all forms of temptation; the Castilians on the other hand abandon their religious values, and all of them, eventually, intermix with the Indians and mimic their culture in order to survive the harsh nature. Hence, as Lalami's work examines and presents social facts about one's own culture, this study investigates the reasons leading the colonizers to mimic Indians, and the real intentions behind colonialism, as it intends to suck the cultural spirit, strip it from its values, and destroys the life style.

This study investigates the cross-cultural differences among the novel's characters. It develops an understanding about the different aspects of cultural overlapping between them, and the way they react to their religious and social beliefs. Besides, it uncovers the conditions when they mimic and assimilate to the Indian lifestyle; where at one point, they become hybrid and unhomey. In addition, it aims to highlight the use of writing as a tool to revive culture, and how it along with storytelling, becomes a mean of resistance.

Since cultural issues dominate Lalami's novel, *The Moor's Account*, the present study attempts to answer the following main question: How does Lalami present the cross-cultural encounters among the characters? To answer this question, the study also tries to answer the following sub-questions: how does the intercultural transition become prerequisite for survival? How identity (de)formation is portrayed through the

characters? How do the powers of colonialism and postcolonialism interact to create a hybrid world and identity?

Recent studies have shown interest in this topic, and in Lalami's works. Critics have praised Lalami's reflective analysis the issue of identity and culture in her fictional work, *The Moor's Account*. Indeed, numerous researchers have shown interest in analysing the cultural side of the novel.

In her seminal work, "Reimagining Transatlantic Iberian Conquests in Postcolonial Narratives and Rewriting Space of Resistance", Seher Rabia Rowther analysed three works which treat the colonial status of communities, identities, and traditions in Al-Andalus and Latin America after 1492. The study explains how fiction can present an area of resistance for the voiceless and subaltern. In other words, it expounds on how Lalami's writing, after decades, gives Mustafa a place in the historical arena, as he was not mentioned in the original record, and was considered a mere property.

Besides, Rowther refers to Orlando Patterson's work on social death and slavery to show how Mustafa views his shift into Estebanico, Christian rituals of birth and possession as a form of social death. So, he turns to language to liberate himself and his wiped identity; he reminds readers about how stories have a crucial effect on people and how they view things. Moreover, her study presents Mustafa's family life and how his narrating self is separate from the life he experienced. Her work tackles "seeing beyond stories"; it is a process of remembering who Mustafa would have been within the space between history and fiction; more to the point, history transformed Mustafa into Estebanico and by his process of writing his story, he

becomes Mustafa again. Rowther's study did not treat the cultural clashes, the impact of colonialism on identity, and writing as a means for the rebirth of cultures which are discussed in our study.

In an article entitled "Speaking Back to European's Idea of Greatness in *The Moor's Account* (2014) by Laila Lalami" Inda Sri Wahyuni refers to the Spanish conquistadores' idea of greatness and superiority over others and their false images about the other races, while our study focuses on the reasons that led them to abandon that stereotypical idea as they felt slaves for Indians. It also tackles the cultural clashes between the novel's characters using Bhabha's concepts of mimicry and unhomeliness. Inda Sri Wahyuni lists previous studies to the novel, among them Linea Ungewitter's "The Story of How Estebanico Became Mustafa in Laila Lalami's *The Moor's Account*".

Linnea Ungwitter investigates the importance of storytelling in the novel, making connections between storytelling and the process of rewriting history, and how those concepts relate to postcolonialism. First, the writer considers storytelling as an important Moroccan tradition. She claims Mustafa's need of subjective narrative. Second, she analyses how Lalami rewrites history. Third, it focuses on postcolonialism by investigating the reason behind writing the novel, and ending up giving voice to the voiceless. Therefore, the portrayal of the cultural side in this novel attracted many researchers, and the different attempts to study the novel are valid proof of its value.

This research employs a postcolonial approach. It analyses the way in which white men delegate themselves to preach and civilize the indigenous people in *The New*

World, the superior lens they see others through allowed them to possess privileges. But, they find themselves working for the Indians to insure their daily needs. The writer portrays the cultural issues in detail, how the protagonist's name is changed, how he has been peptized, and how he departed his homeland to be in strange places. As a result, his language needs to be changed. Mustafa, despite all of this, succeeds in creating the identity that helps him adapt to the new environment.

Bhabha's concepts of naming, mimicry, unhomeliness, and hybridity are essential concepts for analysing characters and events through the novel. Naming, as a part of Mustafa's identity, forms an essential part of the cultural side. Names are precious; they carry inside them one's roots, spirit, home, dreams and success. Mimicry, a common theme in the novel, explains the process of imitation, where the four survivors are obliged to mimic the Indians' life style. Hence, they give up their idea of superiority.

Unhomeliness and hybridity make the colonized feel weird and lost. But the case here is reversed; the colonizers are the ones who feel unhomely and hybrid. Away from home, they are lost, confused and weak. As a need for salvation, the survivors make use of their previous experiences at home and at wars to cure the Indians. Hence, they gained the title of "sons of the sun".

This study is divided into two chapters. The first chapter is entitled Socio-historical Context and Theoretical Framework. It starts with putting *The Moor's* into its socio-historical context. It clarifies how the Portuguese invasion of Azemmur and the Narvaez expedition are related to the development of the historical events in

Mustafa's life. It sheds light on the outstanding circumstances that led Mustafa to be a slave.

Moreover, it presents the theoretical framework, applying postcolonialism to analyse the novel. To show how colonialism comes to exploit natural resources of The New World, to spread Christianity and to wipe out the existing culture. It employs Homi Bhabha's ideas of culture to underline how colonialism affects and (de)forms identity. Furthermore, it deals with the concepts of mimicry and unhomeliness. Huddart notes that mimicry in Bhabha's writing is an exaggerated copying of language, culture, manners, and ideas. Here the exaggeration means that mimicry is repetition with difference, where the Castilians accommodate to the Indians' culture (Huddart, 2006, p. 39).

The second chapter is entitled: Interculturalism and Unhomely Identities. It sheds light on cross-cultural encounters among the three-sided groups: Mustafa who presents the Arabic Muslim culture, the new land's natives, the Indians, and the Castilians who present the European culture. In an attempt to unveil how the survivors' idea of superiority disappears, and how the Castilians become obliged to assimilate Indian life and get rid of their arrogance, and put their hand in that of their Indian counterpart in order to face nature. Moreover, this chapter attempts to show how Mustafa revives his culture and the Indians' culture. The history turned a blind eye on Mustafa's side of the story. But Lalami with her fictional work does rehabilitate Mustafa as well as his culture and his full journey.

CHAPTER I: SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the early fifteenth century, the world witnessed a wide wave of geographical discoveries and explorations by the sea. They were led by the Europeans, particularly Portugal and Spain, in which they were motivated to look for new trade routes, to be wealthy and powerful, and to spread Christianity.

1. Old Worlds, New Horizons: The Portuguese Invasion of Azemmur

On the threshold of the sixteenth century, a growing number of French and Portuguese historians have written about The New World invasion and the most important discoverers in those times, like Christopher Columbus, in a total absence of Arab historians' writings. However, the sources that mentioned the Arab Muslim discoverer, Mustafa ibn Muhammad ibn Abdussalam al-Zamori, are fundamentally non-existent, because as the historical narrative is one-sided in favour of the powerful, the rich and the higher position in society.

Nevertheless, Mustafa, also named Estebanico, was mentioned in few of the historical materials, but he was soon drawing the historians' attention to learn about him, where the role in circulation was breached and that is because of his generosity, resourcefulness, and humanity. There are some historians who consider al-Zamori to have completed the experience of the famous Moroccan traveller Iben Battuta in his journey around the world. Mustafa's life before 1513 was unclear; there is no touchable trace in the Moroccan city of Azemmur of Mustafa's origin or birthplace,

although local researchers such Sahil Halifi believes that his life was so coincidental that they call him a “man of destiny” (TV Channel, Al_ Jazeera Documentary, “Mustafa Al_ Zemori...the slave who discovered La Florida”, Younis Miskin, 2021). And Al-Azemouri’s account cannot be completely valued if not sighted within the context of Portugal’s colonial presence in Morocco.

Lalami was one of the remarkable writers who shed light on the historical disregard on Mustafa al-Zamori as an important discoverer and a participant in the discovery movement that began in the 16th century; in particular, the Narvaez Expedition. So, who is Laila Lalami? And who is Mustafa al-Zamori?

Lalami is a Moroccan-American novelist, essayist, and professor. She was born in 24 February 1968 in Rabat and educated in Morocco, Great Britain, and the United States. She is the author of four novels, including *The Moor’s Account*, which won the American Book Award, the Arab-American Book Award, and the Hurston-Wright Legacy Award. *The Moor’s* was on the Prize longlist for the Pulitzer Prize for fiction.

Lalami received a fellowship to study in the United Kingdom (UK), where she earned her Master’s degree (MA) in linguistics. In 1992, she moved to the USA and worked as an associate professor of creative writing at the University of Southern California. Lalami is interested in writing about the invisible and marginalized exiled. In general, she copes with postcolonial literature, celebrates and values the richness of the local Moroccan culture in her writings (Kuyucu, 2020, p. 55).

Lalami, like many contemporary researchers, questions the absence of Mustafa the Moroccan discoverer from the historical writings. She contended:

He was Moroccan and had this incredible, just absolutely incredible, life story that I had never heard of. And I wanted to question why I had never heard, you know? I went to school in Morocco and I studied history there, and I also took history classes in college, and I had never heard of him (Video, NowThis, Lalami, 2021, 00:00:25).

She discovered his absence especially when she came across Cabeza de Vaca's original account; in which she found that the account talked about a largely Spanish crew of 600 men sailed to America in 1527, and only four survived, and while the historians focused on the three Spanish survivors, namely Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, Alonso del Castillo Maldonado, and Andrés Dorantes de Carranza; they ignored the black Arab slave as a member in the expedition.

Therefore, Lalami decided to write a memoir entitled *The Moor's* (2014) to reconstruct Mustafa's character, life, and journey during the catastrophic Narvaez expedition, because she thought that fiction is the most direct path to the truth. In an interview with the National Public Radio, Lalami mentioned that she believed that "it is in the form of fiction that we come closest to truth" (Christopher, 2016, p. 51).

Lalami's fictional work attempts to build an integrated infrastructure to Mustafa's character, and authorize him to narrate his own transcultural experiences when traveling from his original land, Morocco, to Spain afterwards to La Florida in The New World. Fiction came to rescue Mustafa from the destruction of his cultural heritage and documented the history of the European invasion of La Florida from his own perspective. Moreover, the novel tackles important cross-cultural scenes that appear throughout Mustafa's journey in the three lands: Morocco, Spain, and The

New World, due to the cultural overlapping between the different races, namely Arab, Portuguese, Spanish, and Indians.

The writer sheds light on the cultural differences among the characters and the Castilians' abandonment of the idea of superiority, as they start to mimic the Indian cultures in order to survive. On the other hand, Lalami shows how writing and storytelling are tools for reviving cultures, and creating resistance.

Lalami formed her novel as different stories rather than chapters, for example: "The Story of the Illusion" and "The Story of La Florida". She wanted to make the work more influential, interesting, and related to Mustafa's own story. By allowing him to be the travel writer, she impersonates the style of Ibn Battuta. Lalami said: "one of the influences is a great Moroccan traveller named Ibn Battuta who was born in Tangier and who travelled huge spots of the world and came back as an old man and wrote about it" (Christopher, 2016, p. 58). In addition, what pushed Lalami to write about Mustafa is that he is of Moroccan origins just like her; so it is an honorable feeling to have this ability to write about one of the first explorers of the New World.

Lalami provides us with an overview of that expedition through the eyes of a man who has been considered a mere property. She uncovers the demolition of the cultures of marginalized people and identities throughout history. Lalami gives Mustafa a voice to reflect on his own Arab and Islamic identity, and highlights the importance of storytelling in the process of realizing selfhood.

2. Mustafa and the Azemmurian Cultural Heritage

Azemmur, the small town in Morocco had witnessed the birth of one of the greatest discoverers on its territory, Said Benhaddou (1500 -1539), known as, Mustafa ibn Muhammad ibn Abdussalam al-Zamori and later with Estebanico, the first to cross America from east to west and from the Atlantic to the pacific coast. Michel Amengual added in his article *From Azemmour to Mexico: The Extraordinary Odyssey of Estebanico, the First Moroccan to Cross the Atlantic and America*¹(trans. mine), that although his birth is not mentioned exactly in the story, but for sure he was born in 1503.

Al-Zamori rose to prominence after 1513, which coincided with the Portuguese occupation of Morocco. His fall into slavery marked the beginning of his journey as a member in The New World discoveries. He survived the inevitable death during the Narváez expedition, leaving only four survivors of the 600 people who were on the trip, Mustafa and three of his Castilian masters. Though Lalami cannot seem to get enough to identify Mustafa's adventure during the Narváez expedition, she manages to create for him a profile with: a name, identity, past, and memory.

The name "Azemmur" or "Azemmour" is a symbol that may indicate several meanings. It may be intended only for literal meaning of the word, or surpass the surface into deeper to describe some of the city's features.

The term precisely designates 'the wild olive tree, not grafted' Azemmur probably, meant 'Oleaster' which

¹ D Azemmour A Mexico: L Extraordinaires Odyssees D Estevanico, Premier Marocain A Traverse L Atlantique et L Amérique

grows spontaneously in Al-Maghreb...the semantic genesis of such a category remains obscure, perhaps it refers to even an older meaning of the root ZMR, known elsewhere in Berber with the meaning of to be able, to be capable, and to support ² (trans. Mine).

Azemmur is a small town of Duccala in Morocco; it lies at the Atlantic Ocean, while the city is characterized by the multiplicity of minarets that reflect the large number of mosques, and gives a signal that the city was a religious and conservative place. In addition to the large number of houses which indicates that it was a fully-fledged inhabited town during the sixteenth century (Africanus, 1563), (Pory, 1896, p. 293). It is an ancient city with an ancient culture and history, a town in which Mustafa grew up smelling home, hearing the stories of his grandfathers, and building his personal identity based on the ethnic and religious grounds that pervade the country.

As stated previously, the scarcity of information in the historical texts hinders the presentation of the Azemmurian society and its practices. Nevertheless, very few resources talked about such a rich historical and cultural heritage. In the twentieth century "...the city had become a centre of Islamic culture; philosophers like Moulay Bouchaib Erredad attracted disciples there from across the Arab world. One of them, Lallah Aicha Bahria" (Morse, 2002, p.2-9). Morocco has experienced a succession of dynasties: Almoravids, Almohads, Marinid, and Wattasid...etc. Mustafa's lifetime in Azemmur coincided with the Wattasid dynasty's authority in the Kingdom in between 1465 and 1554; historians may regard this period to be the age of tyranny and

² "Le terme désigne précisément l'« olivier sauvage, non greffé ». Azemmur signifiait donc sans doute à l'origine « oléastre » – qui pousse spontanément au Maghreb(...). La genèse sémantique d'une telle dénomination pour un groupe humain reste évidemment obscure ; elle renvoie peut-être à une signification plus ancienne encore de la racine ZMR, connue par ailleurs en berbère avec le sens de « pouvoir, être capable, Supporter" (S. Chaker, 1990, p. 1220-1221)

oppression of the foreign invaders, though, the country had evolved in several fields, economically, politically, and socially.

The Wattasid established a chain of Islamic colleges to promote teaching and learning in the empire. In 1492 an influx of both Jews and Moors fled the inquisition in Spain. The influx of the refugees increased the local population and benefited both the economy and the culture of Morocco as the Moors introduced the kingdom to new intellectual and creative ideas. Some of the greatest architecture, fountains, mosques, courts, and building, both public and residential, were constructed during this period (Njoku, 2006, p. 15).

On the other hand, the intellectual life during the Wattasid dynasty was very deteriorating; the people showed poor attention into literature, science, and mathematics. The authorities in the country had shown no encouragement for talented people who exhibited the capacity of creativity. However, the emergence of a number of leading scholars and Sufism *ulema* in that time was one of the most important features of the intellectual life (Harakat, 1996, p. 255). The emergence of maktab schools in society made the Quranic schools one of the most endearing things in Morocco, giving rise the number of those who memorized the Qur'an and mastered religious studies.

The Moroccan society was traditional, religious, and conservative in general; Africanus praised them in his writings and described their cleverness, kindness, and tournament. He argues that they keep their promises; they were vigilant in guarding their religion, and they were travellers, and when they moved they received welcome wherever they went (Africanus, 1563, qtd. in Harakat, 1996, p. 236). Al-zemori grew

up in the Azemmurian society and rose as a free man who was aspired to be a great merchant contrary to his father's wishes for him to be a notary. And even though he had been forced to lose his name, identity, and convert to Christianity, he would always be Mustafa Al-zemori.

3. Azemmur, A Place of Temptation

The Portuguese were already admiring Azemmur since the end of the 15th century because of its strategic location in the country. Ahmed Boucherb mentioned in his book *Duccala and the Portuguese Colonization in the Year of Asfi and Azemmur's Evacuation (before 28 August 1481 – October 1541)*³ (trans. mine) that many Portuguese historians discussed the major natural resources with which the region is endowed. For them, Duccala is rich in livestock and large quantities of wheat. Instead of being a net exporter overseas, the Portuguese were the single most important importer of fish, oil, cereals, livestock and other traditional industries in the Moroccan markets even before the 16th century. Furthermore, according to Boucherb, many historians have seen the abundant intake of cereals in Duccala's region, beside its strategic geographical position. Duccala was rich with fertile areas, but the availability of water poses a serious problem; the peasants rely mostly upon springs and dug wells for their needs (Boucherb, 1984, p. 57). Azemmur, unlike a number of the cities in Morocco, has a geographical position to be one of its principal economic assets. This gave the region a great political and economic importance, "it is located on the province of Douccala, near the plains of Shâwiya, in a region with fertile land and rich in cereals, since the dawn of time. The city is built on the left bank of one of

³احمد بوشرب, دكالة والاستعمار البرتغالي الى سنة اخلاء اسفي و ازموور (قبل 28 غشت 1481 _ اكتوبر 1541)

the major rivers in Morocco, Oum Er-Rbia,⁴ (Tans. Mine). The river was a source of fish stocks, it was used by the Azemmurians in agriculture, “the river is five hundred and fifty five kilometres long, with an average water through put of one hundred and five m³/s, it is the second largest river in morocco after Sebou River”(Africanus, 1563),(Pory,1600, p. 293).

Azemmur was an important economic source on land and water. According to Leo Africanus, the Azemmurians gathered fish from October to April, fried to extract oil for lamps, and then sold to the Portuguese who came once a year to buy them in huge quantities to the benefit of the town’s wealth. Besides, Azemmur scrolled on a wide coastal area. Such factors made the city and the country in general a target for the Portuguese occupation.

However, the Portuguese invasion to Morocco had other intentions besides the strategic and economic factors, most importantly the religious factor. Boucherb argued that the Portuguese kings tended to fight Islam, Eliminating its worlds, and turned masjids into churches, the churches worked to develop a spirit of hatred and hostility towards Muslims. So, the ultimate goal for them was to spread Catholicism in the world and to fight Islam and colonize the Muslim land (Boucherb, 1984, p. 148).

In the beginning of the sixteenth century, slavery became the most desirable cargo that the colonization power had ever dealt with. The Portuguese traders had formed a specialized slave trading company, and shipped the African slaves as labour force in

⁴ “Elle est située dans la province de Doukkala, près de la plaine de Shâwiya, dans une région aux terres fertiles et riches en céréales, depuis la nuit des temps. La ville est construite sur la rive gauche de l’un des principaux fleuves du Maroc, L’Oum Er-Rbia.” (Michaux-Bellaire, 1904, pp. 24-28).

planting The New World horizons. This trade offered a fortune for the Portuguese traders and the Portuguese crown.

Boucherb mentioned that Prince Henri the navigator was interested in establishing trade centres along the coast, and imposing a trade monopoly and other colonial privileges on the area. He was interested in slave trading more than in the missionary activities and fighting against Islam (Boucherb, 1984, p. 149).

Starting from 1480, the Portuguese flotillas launched a military offense along Duccala's coast in order to control the city's natural resources. They imprisoned the inhabitant and loaded them towards the slavery markets. The Azemmurians were frightened by the force shown by the Portuguese power and panicked expecting the worst, so they proposed to become the king's subjects. Besides, they would pay the annual tribute of the fish in return for protection and to let Azemmouri dealers provide their jobs.

In conjunction with the escalation of slavery in the region, the Azemmurians got mad and revolted against the Portuguese racial and ill-treatment of the inhabitants, they refused to pay the tribute and looted the Portuguese ships in Oum El Rabia's mouth. When the king discovered that, he was angry, and in order to forgive the Azemmurians, he put a set of conditions: that the azemmurians should send the overdue tribute, restore the captured ships, and accept the tax increase. The Azemmurians became afraid of the desolation of the Portuguese king, so, they accepted his conditions and sent him an apology.

In 1519, both Portugal and Spain signed agreement whereby Spain would get more slaves. Spain needed slaves because of the serious lack of the original inhabitants in San Domingo's island, a Spanish colony. This lack may result in the departure of the Indian people. In 1521, Azemmur became a large and organized slave market, due to these conditions, and the famine that struck the region especially Duccala. Mohamed Razouk in his book *Studies in The History of Morocco* ⁵(trans, mine describes the miserable conditions that the Moroccans suffered.

The political, social and economic crises led to poverty and despondency. Consequently, the Moroccan sold himself as merchandise in exchange of some bread for him or for his family. Many contemporary Spanish and Portuguese thinkers describe the awful scenery of the country's condition, referring to the sales and prices (Razouk, 1991, p. 12). Razouk stated the Portuguese historian Diogo B. Rodrigues's saying as an example on such heinous treatment among the Moroccan. Razook quoted from B. Rodrigues's *Famines and Epidemics in Morocco* in *Hesperis Tamuda's Magazine Vol. XV, (1973)*⁶ (trans. mine), that he said: "As famine spread, people started coming to us in large numbers, to get a living. Where father sells his children and the brother sells his brothers... And that's something that has never been heard before..."⁷ (Trans. mine).

As more Moroccan slaves were in the market, their worth was less. So, they were available by a tiny sum of money. In 1513, the city of Azemmur fell into Portuguese hands. Throughout 1520-1521, people were forced to sell their children. Ben Hadou

⁵ دراسات في تاريخ المغرب للكاتب محمد رزوق

⁶ *Famines et Epidemies Au Maroc in Hesperis_ tamuda, 1973 vol. xv*

⁷ "مع انتشار المجاعة، بدأ المغاربة يأتون بكثرة إلينا للحصول على ما يقتاتون به، وكان يبيع بعضهم بعضاً. فالأب يبيع أبناءه، والأخ أخوانه... وهذا شيء لم يرا ويسمع به قط ...". (Razouk, 1996, p. 12).

deported to Europe after being sold to Portugal, on aboard one of the fifty boats leaving the port of Azemmur every day carrying slaves in Cadiz. Al-zemori was forced to change his name by a new one, Estebanico, derived from his master's name. His owner baptized him for, under Spanish law, the expedition into America could not include Muslims or Jews. Andrés Dorantes left Castile with his slave, Estebanico, to The New World in search of gold, wealth, and fame.

4. The Narvaez Expedition and Cultural Blending

A failed expedition to the southeastern coast of the present United States walked across North America to the Gulf of California. These were three Spaniards—Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca, Andres Dorantes de Carranza, and Alonso Del Castillo Maldonado—and Estevan, the African slave of Dorantes. These four hardy men were feted and honored on their arrival in Mexico City in July 1536, and the western world has marveled at their exploits ever since (D. Krieger, 2003, p. I).

The Narvaez Expedition was unlike any journey that the world had seen before. It was a risky travel in which a crew of 600 men sailed to explore unknown lands with an ill-conceived plan, in addition to the lack of resources and maps, which has a terrible toll with only four survivors.

Cabeza de Vaca is the writer of the first historical memoir entitled *Relation* in 1542 which documented this expedition. Cabeza's work is considered as the very first book in American literature to follow such a style of writing of a travelogue or a memoir. Cabeza was an eye witness to the expedition which enabled him to write such a rich historical document; Lalami refers to it as a primary source when looking for information for the new account written for Mustafa, the Arab Muslim slave's

prospective, *The Moor's* (2014). Cabeza's work affected directly Lalami's writing in which she created a counter discourse from the slave perspective.

Cabeza de Vaca mentioned a little indication in his travelogue about Mustafa. He assumed: "the black (was the one who) always spoke to them, he would inform himself about the trails we wanted to follow and the towns there were and the things we wanted to know" (De Vaca, 2003, p. 153). Edmund J. Ladd the Zuni described Estebanico as "a man either ignored or avoided by history, who is a very important south-western historical personality" (Herrick, 2018, p. 24). So, Lalami took the initiative and revive Mustafa throughout her contemporary novel after all those years of marginalization and obliteration.

Mustafa was enslaved in a time when Morocco was occupied by the Portuguese, but later he turned to be a slave to a Spanish master. Since the beginning of the daring sea and land exploration over the fifteenth century, Spain and Portugal relations faced a political and economic instability, and with every new trip by one of the two countries, the conflict went deeper and took a dangerous turn, necessitating the church authorities to find a solution to the problem before it escalate and spin out control. Thus, a number of treaties had been signed. Two agreements were most remarkable and consistent with this search which is under progress; the Asiento de Negros and Treaty of Tordesillas 1494.

Spain signed a monopoly contract called Asiento de Negros with several foreign merchants, usually the Portuguese, for the right to provide African slaves for the Spanish American colonies. It chose to deal with merchants instead of directly participating in trade from Africa itself, "old history of the Asiento de negro, the

contract by which the Spanish colonial administration tried to ensure the supply of slaves to their colonies. The Asiento was at no time merely a Spanish issue” (Weindl, 2008, p. 230).

Subsequently, another important treaty appeared in conjunction with the continuing increase in the Spanish and Portuguese expeditions in the world. The scramble to acquire further lands and exploit natural resources urged Pope Alexander VI to mediate in order to find a solution. D. Eric Schnakenbourg a professor of modern history, director of the centre for Research in international and Atlantic History (C.R.H.I.A.) wrote an article entitled “The Treaty of Tordesillas June 7th 1494”, where he explains how Spain and Portugal divided the world between themselves, to clarify the whole agreement. In simple words, the Pope divided the land with a delusive line in-between Spain and Portugal to resolve the conflict over them; he divided the undiscovered areas: Spain took the western lands, and Portugal took the eastern ones under the name of Treaty of Tordesillas in June 7th 1494. It was signed to resolve the disagreement over what part of a land belongs to which of the two countries.

The Narvaez Expedition named after its leader Panfilo de Narvaez, who was a talented man, so that the king authorized him to be the viceroy (sub-king) of vast lands from Florida,

The expedition is famous of the title “Doomed” or “Unfortunate”. About 140 men were lost in Santa Domingo, and in Cuba, two of the ships sank because of the hurricane with 50 dead men and a number of horses. Narvaez remained in Cuba to fix and repair the damaged ships until 1528. He managed to resupply from Havana, but as if the nature was against him, due

to the strong winds, he was obliged and pushed north to Florida (E. MacDougld, 2018, p. 4).

After reaching Tamba Bay shore, Narvaez managed to subdivide the crew into land group and sea group, hoping to meet again at later point, but he never saw his vessels and men again. The land group consisted of a large number of soldiers led by Narvaez, to colonize, settle, and explore Florida. The meeting with the natives was not tolerable. From Apalache, he managed to reach Aute in search for gold and precious materials, but he was felicitous (E. MacDougld, 2018, p. 5).

The men died gradually; they could not endure the harsh climate, they were killed in confrontation with the Indians, died by hunger, or by diseases. Because the march to north was long and tiring. At the end, there were only four survivors, Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca, Senior Andres Dorantes de Carranza, Alonso Del Castillo Maldonado, and Estebanico the Arab slave, who were obliged to mimic the Indian life lifestyle to survive the harsh nature, joining tribes for eight years.

After the explorers arrived at The New World, their story took a different direction: from a story of a crew of 600 men searching for gold and glory, into a story of four surviving members in a strange and unknown land trying to save their lives. They fought the harsh natural circumstances, and attempted to grow and deepen the cultural contacts between them and the Indians for mutual benefit. The result is the emergence of a various cross-cultural encounters between the Castilians and the indigenous people.

While the study attempts to investigate the triangular cultural relationship between the Castilians, the Indians, and Mustafa as an ambassador of the Arab culture, it is

worth mentioning that Lalami in her novel provides a clear focus on Mustafa as a fundamental actor in the new cultural overlapping between the three forgoing sides. He can be considered as the bridge that enables this transcultural operation to happen due to his intelligent character.

Mustafa was included in the expedition as a slave, and that is what obscures all about his hidden potential, but after his masters abandon their idea of greatness, they start to listen to the other, in an attempt to understand its way of life or rather, its culture. This is where Mustafa's hidden talents and energies have emerged gradually. In addition to his translation abilities, he has practical skills and self-education, land navigation, medical skills, as well as physical health to endure the difficult nature.

Spanish explorers reached the new land loaded with stereotypes of natives; they were considering them as savages, barbarians, and animals that look human. They ignored their cultures, histories and spiritual values. But after the natural disaster, they were obliged to intermix with the Indians and accept the other and even mimic their ways and their thinking.

5. Bhabha's Postcolonial Discourse of Identity

The New World invasions in the sixteenth century with all of its effects, causes, manifestation, and consequences paved the way for the emergence of a new and remarkable approach to literary criticism named Postcolonialism. The study of Postcolonial literature is considered to be one of the most controversial issues in the twentieth century. Concerning this second part, it will be the theoretical background of Postcolonialism. So, the very first element to be tackled is a general overview of

the period of colonialism and its harmful effects on the colonized peoples and how postcolonial writers depicted the negative implications of colonialism, and particularly those relating to the cultural identity of the colonized. Thus, the research covers Homi Bhabha's theories of Mimicry, Hybridity and Unhomeliness.

European colonialism is one of the most dreadful and greedy forms of colonialism, as the colonizers had not only occupied the land for the inhumane exploitation for the individuals and the land's sources; but, indeed, the colonial authorities have striven to occupy the colonised people's mind, destroying its values, altering its traditions, and obliterating its identity. To this end, the colonists attempt to reshape the colonies' identity in order to ensure subjugation; thus, the consolidation of this colonial perception can only be achieved by abolishing the existing intellectual and cultural reality by erasing the identity of colonized, and by dissolving it into the European society, and the most important point, the colonisers focused on completely removing the colonised from their Arab-Muslim affiliation through several ideological policies and mechanisms.

Postcolonialism emerged as a result of the colonial period and its damaged effects on several levels. It is concerned with the colonized people's literature within and after the colonial period and its consequences. In addition, it examines colonial literature which demonstrates the realities of colonial subjects, to show their unpleasant experiences in those times, and to observe the different conflicting situation of culture and identity.

In her article "Introduction to Postcolonial Studies", Depika Bahri asserted that "post colonialism is a reaction against colonialism which exercises power on the

natives to abuse their wealth". (Bahri, 1996) The oppressors adopt a policy which confiscates the colonized land and obliged them to work as slaves in their own lands. Besides, the colonial power exploited the colonized's land and resources. It targets the colonized people's cultural identity.

People struggled and wished to characterize their position in postcolonial society, which have suffered the brutal system of colonialism that have been separated from their homelands and expelled from it. The colonial subjects were under the threat of disappearance with the entire element of actors' identity: Cultures, Ceremony, Memory, Origins, Life style...etc

Lalami's literary works enlighten us about the troubles of community under the colonial times; it increases undiscovered matters about the truth of colonialism. Throughout her novel, in which she had a strong focus on the identity issue, she celebrates cultural identity and attempts to protect it in her narrative. Lalami restores a whole history of a great discoverer who was the first Arab black Muslim slave to set foot in The New Land.

So, the most dominant theme in the novel is identity. Lalami portrays how Estebanico became Mustafa again after the Castilians changed his name, inhibited his religion, and departed him from his homeland. As a result, his language needs to be changed. Mustafa, despite all of this, stays stable and finds himself in someone else's land. For Lalami, naming is a crucial theme because it is part of Mustafa's identity and forms a fundamental part of cultural composition of individuals as well as communities, since a name is precious. It carries in it one's roots, spirit, home, dreams and sensation. Lalami in *The Moor's* argues: "A name is precious; it carries inside it a

language, a history, a set of traditions, a particular way of looking at the world. Losing it meant losing my ties to all those too” (Lalami, 2014, p. 5).

Furthermore, Lalami highlighted the role of religion as a remarkable aspect in forging someone’s identity. This study attempts to follow the development of Mustafa’s identity during the Cultural Overlapping between the novel’s characters, in order to develop an understanding about the different aspects of cross-cultural differences.

Lalami reacts to Mustafa’s religious and social beliefs away from home, because one does not perform similarly when he is in diaspora. She tries to highlight the use of writing as a tool to revive culture. She makes her protagonist tell a number of stories from his own memory in order to demonstrate his original culture and some faces of lifestyle. Lalami uses storytelling as a mean of resistance and even triumph.

The Moor’s by the Moroccan-American writer, Lalami is in fact a great example for discovering and improving visibility of various subjects such as migration, diaspora, and religion in shaping someone’s identity. Lalami states, “my work is concerned with the transformation of identity, and how migration contributes to that transformation” (Hankir, 2019). She discussed the most important aspects of cross-cultural encounters in her work; such as political anarchy, social discrimination, and most significantly scattered identities. In addition, the writer articulated this cultural richness through the characters by following their journey for searching for their own identity.

Mimicry, as another major contributing factor in the identity (de)formation, contracts with the process of simulation, where the four survivors are obliged to mimic the Indians in order to survive the hardships in *The New World*. Hence, the Castilians abandon the idea of greatness as well as the stereotypes they created about Indians, this coexistence between the Indians, Mustafa al-Zemmuri and the Castilians had created overlapping relationships and cultures, which had contributed to the appearance of a new hybrid identity, and this paved the way for the emergence of cross-cultural encounter issues in the novel.

Homi Bhabha, the postcolonial pioneer has written influential books such as *The Location of Culture* (1994) and *Nation and Narration* (2003). He has come up with various important key concepts in Postcolonialism, namely Hybridity, Mimicry, Ambivalence, and the idea of Unhomeliness. In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha states that “history is happening”, in other words, how it is represented. Because history representation differs, continuing to be written: “within the pages of theory, within the systems and structures we construct to figure the passages of the historical” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 25). Furthermore, Bhabha states that, people should understand how the Hybridisation process results in cultural differences. He claims that Hybridisation precedes the coming of cultures. He argues that cultures are part of an ongoing process; the West ought to see themselves through postcolonial lens, because minority cultures are intentionally marginalized and ignored, and mostly obliged to assimilate. While Edward Said separated the world into binary oppositions, Bhabha refers to deconstruct Postcolonialism. He views postcolonial cultures as hybrid. As Gillian Rose writes in the interstitial perspective: “Bhabha's work engages with

complex theoretical issues. And unawareness of poststructuralists techniques” (Gillian, 1995).

One should carefully view Bhabha's experience into postcolonial discourse as he forms a set of concepts, Mimicry, Hybridity, Ambivalence and Unhomeliness. Those concepts are known to be ways for resisting colonial discourse and its oppressive power. The terms provide a sense of superiority to colonizer over colonized, and he refuses the existence of binaries: West/East, Civilized/Savage, Central/Marginalized.

Cultural interaction happens and both colonized and colonizer's identities become in a process of formation, the binaries of West and East must disappear, because they are the reason behind one's domination over the other. The processes of intermixing and interculturalism are what cause Hybridity, as Bhabha refers to in his essay signs taken for wonders". This term, for him, is influential in destroying the false images about the margin culture of the colonized.

The term Hybridity is a famous one in postcolonial culture. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin define Hybridity, in their book *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts* as “cross cultural exchange ... the idea of hybridity also underlies other attempts to stress the mutuality of cultures in the colonial and postcolonial process in expressions of syncreticity, cultural synergy, and transculturation" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 2007, p109).

Thus, hybridity is the merging of different cultures in the form of transculturation; Bhabha sees it as a way of resisting colonialism. Moreover, Marwan M. Kraidy, in his book *Hybridity: Or the Cultural Logic of Globalization*, states “it is clear that

hybridity is not a negation of Identity; rather, it is its quotidian, vicarious, and inevitable condition" (Kraidy, 2005, p. 147). Kraidy clearly states that hybridity is an inevitable state of identity and it is its daily form. It also indicates a direct contact between the self and the other.

Mimicry, in Bhabhian view, is another concept for resisting colonialism. In his essay "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse", Bhabha argues that "mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 86). In other words, mimicry is an exaggerated state of copying the colonizer's language, ideas, traditions and dress, where the colonized becomes the incomplete and unacceptable version of the colonizer. The sense of difference is obvious for the colonized. Hence, he never fits the cultural environment of the colonizer' that both of them are ruled by.

Without the colonizer's authority and power over the colonized, mimicry would not emerge; that is, Western domination and ignorance to the colonized people result in the emergence of this notion. Bhabha writes, "Mimicry is also the sign of the inappropriate, however, a difference or recalcitrance which coheres the dominant strategic function of colonial power" (Bhabha. 1994, p. 86).

Therefore, Mimicry is a sign of difference and disobedience that suits the colonial strategic domination. Leela Ghandi, in "Postcolonial Theory: An Introduction" writes:

"But mimicry is also a sly weapon of anti-colonial civility, an ambivalent mixture of difference and disobedience. In effect, mimicry inheres in the necessary and multiple acts of translation which oversee the passage from colonial vocabulary to its

anti-colonial usage. Mimicry inaugurates the process of anti-colonial self-differentiation through the logic of inappropriate appropriation"(Ghandi, 1999, p149_ 150).

In other words, she suggests that Mimicry is an anti-colonial act, an ambivalent phenomenon and a mixture of assimilation and difference. Therefore, mimicry is a deliberate acceptance of the colonizer's authority over the colonized.

This imitating phenomenon causes colonized people (East) to establish a sense of inferiority against the superior colonizer (West), educated, knowledgeable and civilized master versus illiterate, ignorant and primitive slave. As a result, slaves' cultural identity is left in an ambivalent and confused state.

Bhabha adopted the notion of ambivalence to describe a state of complex mixture between attraction and repulsion towards someone or something. Like the colonizer and colonized relationship is known to be ambivalent, and that is because the colonized is not completely objecting and refusing the colonizer (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 2007, p10).

The way in which colonial discourse relates to colonial subject is featured by ambivalence. As ambivalence contains the colonizer's habits, assumptions and values along with the colonial ones, it becomes a kind of mockery that never satisfied the colonizer and he unwelcomes it. Moreover, the process of Mimicry which is encouraged by the colonizer becomes distorted, and here it causes a disturbance for colonial authority.

Ambivalence, then, is an ambiguous process by which the colonizer and the colonized see each other, where the colonizer sees the colonized as inferior, while the colonized regards the colonizer as corrupt and enviable. As a result, it produces a sense of curse and blessing at the same time.

Ambivalence often comes with Mimicry; as Bhabha writes "what they all share is a discursive process by which the excess or slippage produced by the Ambivalence of Mimicry is almost the same, but not quite" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 86) or in other words, it means the same but not white.

Another postcolonial term generated by Bhabha is Otherness; the other produces a sense of difference, envy and inferiority among East and West. This concept is used by many critics, particularly Lacan and Derrida. Bhabha in his essay "The Other Question: The Stereotype, Discrimination and The Colonial Discourse" states that "The problem is not simply the selfhood the nation as opposed to the otherness of other nations" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 148). The other (West- colonizer) and the other (East- colonized) deliberately indicate a sense of political, economic and most important" cultural differences" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 68).

Under the title of "Unhomely Lives: The Literature of Recognition", in *The Location*, Bhabha asserts, "To be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can the unhomely be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and public spheres" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 9). Sometimes the unhomely feeling can happen at home, when one becomes lost and loses the sense of belonging. The person is unable to adapt or accommodate his people's traditions and customs.

Therefore, the sense of unhomeliness becomes somehow a personal issue. But in postcolonial studies, it refers to the colonized people's position during and after colonialism, as many people were obliged to immigrate and settle in diasporic places, while others were taken as slaves and they were not allowed even to practice their religious, political and cultural rituals freely. So, the sense of lacking a place or environment to belong to is increased, "although the unhomely is a paradigmatic colonial and postcolonial condition, it has a resonance that can be heard distinctly, of erratically, in fictions that negotiate the powers of cultural difference in a range of transhistorical sites" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 9). Fiction, also, portrays the concept of unhomely even though it has a strong relationship with colonial and postcolonial condition.

In addition, unhomeliness is an important postcolonial concept to the extent that many researchers tackle it in their writings. Mohammed Gouffi and Fatiha Kaïd Berrahal state: "So central to understanding unhomeliness, one has to bear in mind that unhomeliness is essentially different from homelessness. The morphological nuance is semantically amplified by the deep structure of the first. Homelessness, one may say, has to do with not owning home or shelter, whereas unhomeliness is not to feel at home despite the fact that in the lived reality, the unhomely does have home and he/she is bodily at home" (Gouffi and Kaïd Berrahal, 2020, p. 02). In other words; or morphologically, homelessness is to have or not to have a home, while unhomeliness is a kind of feeling where the person may have a home, but he also feels alienated or psychologically far from his family or friends.

Also, the previously mentioned writers argue: " Recognizing, however, the enormous ramifications of unhomeliness, the unhomely has to experience a sort of defamiliarization and estrangement that pushes him/her to the confines of

psychological exile"(Gouffi and Kaïd Berrahal, 2020, p. 02). The quote indicates the serious danger of the feeling of unhomeliness, because- as mentioned earlier- one may face this feeling despite the fact that he is living with his family and in his home country. Besides, the quote above suggests the real power of a single letter; homeliness and unhomeliness are different with few letters, but the meaning widely different.

All in all, Bhabha contributed to the development of postcolonial literary criticism with various notions and works. Although his work, *The Location of Culture*, has been criticized, Robert Young claims that Bhabha's book is "difficult to place" (Howell, 1996, p. 113), as Philip Howell states in his essay "Book Review: The Location of Culture by K. Homi Bhabha, "perhaps even directionless in the sense of lacking a specific addressee" (Howell, 1996, p. 113).

CHAPTER II: THE INTERCULTURALISM AND THE UNHOMELY IDENTITIES

Identity has been a main concern in colonial and postcolonial writings. Colonial writings, focusing on Eurocentrism, portray Europeans as civilized and Africans as backward, while third world writers try to rise up with their population's identities. Many African writers portray the encounters between their people and the others, either Americans or Europeans, to express the clashes of their cultures and civilizations.

1. Mustafa or Estebanico? Naming As a Marker of Identity

A name is precious; it carries inside it a language, a history, a set of traditions, a particular way of looking at the world, losing it meant losing my ties to those things too (Lalami, 2014, p. 12).

In the article entitled "Proper Name As a Clue Symbol of Identity", Assem Aksholakova asserts: "Proper name is very important for identification of an object or a person. If a name is mispronounced or written incorrectly, it can be considered as the distortion of an identity in the sense of personality of a man"; names, in other words, are the fingerprint of personality, if it is mispronounced, it becomes a kind of fragmentation in one's identity (Aksholakova, 2013, p.465).

Aksholakova, again quotes: "The Identification can be performed with the help of proper names as well. Thus, in modern countries it is compulsory to register the birth of a child and to get a birth certificate with the given name, surname and father's name which allows the child to become a part of a community as an individual and to enjoy all social welfare provided in this society" (Aksholakova,

2013, p. 465). In other words, a name is the path through which one can gain his rights. They are important to because they give a sense of security and belonging to people. The absence of name means the absence of identity. Besides, they allow a person to confirm his existence, to perform his duties.

The naming and renaming processes form a connection to the violence witnessed and resisted within Mustafa's account. Naming process is an act of protection against the feelings of being lost, disconnected, and unsafe. When one bears a name, he is secured against any kind of alienation. Therefore, names have their identical and cultural weight and they differ in meaning from one place to another.

Places and contexts, as mentioned previously, play a major role in forming names, identities and selves. As an example, Mustafa of Azemmur is neither Estebanico of Seville nor the New World. In his country, he has the freedom to practise his daily activities; religious beliefs social and cultural celebrations and rights. While in Seville, his first master Bernardo Rodriguez controls his actions that constitute his identity, "Estebanico was the name the Castellians had given me when they brought me from Portuguese traders, a string of sounds whose foreignness still grated in my ears" (Lalami, 2014, p. 12).

The quote above indicates the two struggles Mustafa faces: the struggle to accept his new name that still seems foreign, and the struggle to accept himself being a slave and to adapt to the environment in the new place he is in. Perhaps if he kept holding his original name, his foreignness and struggle would have been reduced.

A name is a sensitive aspect in characters' lives. The slightest details can affect it. Language can affect names and their pronunciations. When Mustafa first meets Rahmatullah, he finds it a weird name. But later on, he becomes surprised with the change a pronunciation can cause. Rahmatullah in Mustafa's tongue is pronounced Rahmatullah. Potolv Holleland writes in his article "Place Names and Identities",

Name and place belong together regardless of how the name is formed etymologically. The name is a key to memories and experiences. To be familiar with the same name is to know a little about each other. Names are social signals of solidarity. The more names one shares with others, the stronger the solidarity with them is (Hulden, 1994, qtd. in Holleland, 2012, p. 96).

Place names are important on the regional and national levels. This refers to the rich historical value of these names. Changing place name may cause a serious rise of feelings of insult among the population, as they form part of national symbols and identity (Holleland, 2012, p. 98).

A place name is a witness to its stories, glories and even failures. Therefore, it would be a strange thing to read about how the Castellians from the Narvaez Expedition, easily and regardless to these places' history, name each place they pass through as they wish neglecting their past, present and history.

Juan Velasquez, a reckless or brave soldier, lived an adventure on a river of a foreign land. The adventure, however, led to his death. Senor Narvaez named the river after him, neglecting all about that river, "And the governor announced that he had named this river in honor of the dead man: Rio Velasquez" (Lalami, 2014, p. 69).

Names continue to have a personal, social, cultural and national value. Mustafa seeks to omit the erasures caused to him by colonialism, “When I fell into slavery, I was forced to give up not just my freedom, but also the name that my mother and father had chosen for me” (Lalami, 2014, p. 12). Mustafa lives a state of fragmentation when he lost his name, the name he used to replies to: Mustafa. Also, he feels proud to add his father’s and grandfather's names: Mustafa ibn Muhammed ibn Abdsalam al-Zamori. To explain more, between his name and family name, there is a soul, a story, and a dream that he has no life without. Slavery causes him to lose his most precious property that he did not ever imagine to lose it.

After senõr Rodriguez sells Estebanico to senõr Dorantes, Estebanico is added another title just like a property, Estebanico Dorantes. Mustafa is the name that reminds him of his naughty childhood, his life with his family and the dreams he has wished to make come true.

There is a conspiracy of silence around the colonial truth,... masterful silence in the narratives of empire, what Sir Alfred Lyall called ‘doing our Imperialism quietly’,...more ominous silence that utters an archaic colonial ‘otherness’, that speaks on riddles, obliterating proper names and proper places (Bhabha, 1994, p. 123).

Colonization, then, does not work only to rape and exploit a land's properties, but also to omit, erase, and deny that land’s spiritual and cultural sides.

Without stories life is unenjoyable, but without names there are no stories and no life. How can anyone tell a story without mentioning the hero's or the heroine's names? Or without a place's name? Names are the essential marks of individuals and their identity, and Mustafa's identity is shaken when he leaves his country as a slave and faces name change. Names are often chosen carefully, in honour of close beloved

ones and they have specific meanings. Also, cultural identity is indicated through names, because in many places people are known by their names and accents. Furthermore, names are important to the extent that they are repeated each time one is called.

Names come to gain an importance which cooperates with the belief in power of spoken words. They are the key to individuals' identity. Immigrants are often obliged to change their names to fit in the new places and assimilate. Mustafa also does not have any choice to keep his name, because in his case, he loses both his name and his freedom.

Lalami reveals how an essential side of one's identity like names may be lost under the shadow of slavery, assimilation, and also survival "Mustafa ibn Muhammad ibn Abdussalam al-Zamori, I replied, naming myself, my father, my grandfather, and my native town" (Lalami, 2014, p. 104). Mustafa, innocently, adds the names he is used on to his name.

"With deliberately slow movements, the clerk opened his register and dipped his feather into black ink. Mustafa Fifteen reais" (Lalami, 2014, p. 104). Mustafa is shocked by the movement of erasure he has just witnessed, how it is easy for an outsider to delete what is valuable. In order to feed his family, Mustafa sells himself to bondage; then for others' survival, his name is deleted. Mustafa continues, "I could not know that this was just the first of many erasures" (Lalami, 2014, p. 104).

In addition, naming is a very important aspect of identity. Stripping people of their name hits the heart of their bones of personality, as it can cause a serious

psychological trauma. Besides, when Mustafa faces his name change, he experiences the feelings of loss and unhomeliness.

According to M. N. Guboglo, linguistic identity is a set of linguistic characteristics of a person or a group of people; these characteristics include: language proficiency, linguistic performance and language skills (Guboglo, 2003, p. 54).

Identity as the bowl of characters and personalities is "never in a priori, nor a finished product, it is only ever the problematic process of access to an image of totality" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 51). In other words, identity is formed through time and it is processing along with the person's lifetime. The most valid example of this is Mustafa's flexible identity. It develops through both time and space, an Arab and Islamic identity in Azemmur. He is raised on the religious beliefs and Arab cultural traditions; he never misses a prayer, mentioning God's name before eating, staying away from what is haram and taking bread to the town's oven. He writes: "[...] I had eventually learned the principles of Arabic grammar, memorized the Qur'an, and was ready to graduate from the msid" (Lalami, 2014, p. 54). In short, these traditions are what formed Mustafa's identity.

Islam, Arabic language, culture, and loyalty and belonging to one country are the constituents of an identity. They are clearly presented in the novel. Lalami states how the Azemmurians were eager to defend their country despite the betrayal of materials. This loyalty to the country is a characteristic of Arab people in specific and Third World people in general, because they experienced colonialism: "Of course the

Portuguese want to hold on Azemmur, my father was saying, now for the third time. But we will defeat them" (Lalami, 2014, p. 52).

Azemmurians share a collective identity because they speak one language, live on the same land, have one common culture and most of them are of Muslim origins, "I waited at the door of the msid, surrounded by my schoolmates and the fqih until my uncle Omar brought the horse, a white stallion rented for the occasion and adorned with colorful green garlands" (Lalami, 2014, p. 75). The quote refers to the time when Mustafa finally memorized the Holly Quor'an; that is why his uncle Omar rents a decorated white horse for this happy occasion to hold Mustafa on, and his family would prepare a feast for the village's people.

If there is a difference among the people of Azemmur, it would be slight. Because at that time Azemmur contained Muslims and Jews from Granada, and Morocco was the shelter for them. As a result, Mustafa learns a lot from them: their crafts, traditions, and even the Portuguese language. These things would help Mustafa later on to adopt in The New World.

Islam shapes and limits Mustafa's identity to what is *halal* and what is *haram*. Because Muslims are careful when applying the Islamic teachings and all what is related to the *sharia* "The men gathered around my father, read verses from the Qur'an, and asked the Most High to bring his blessings upon me" (Lalami, 2014, p. 29).

Muslims believe in destiny and believe how God have decided how everyone will be born, live, and die. Heniya, Mustafa's mother, has always told him that he is

destined to live a life of voyage. And that believing in destiny is what comes to be later on true, "She said I had been destined for a life of travel" (Lalami, 2014, p. 29).

Bhabha states that "the question of identification is never the affirmation of a pre-given identity, never a self-fulfilling prophecy. It is always the production of an image of identity and the transformation of the subject in assuming that image (Bhabha, 1994, p. 45). Identity is always in the process of production, it is influenced by both time and place.

Lalami's novel may hint to the point that individuals in exile, besides their sense of diaspora and unhomeliness, struggle to maintain relationships with people they left behind at the far home but who still live in their memories. Relationships form an essential part in the building of identity, because they shape a sense of belonging. Furthermore, as Appiah investigates, "in constructing an identity, one draws, among other things, on the kinds of person available in one's society" (Appiah, 2005, p. 21). People who are alike help each other build their identities.

Furthermore, if the presence of people in individuals' lives help in identity formation, their absence also shakes it. The way of interaction with people inside and outside home may have a tremendous impact on their identity. Hence, as mentioned earlier, Mustafa's identity is flexible. This is due to the many people he interacts with at his home, on his way to Seville and then to the New World.

The absence of a sense of belonging to a specific place can cause serious issues with identity, as the person feels rejected, have low self-esteem and face inability to reach the sense of self-actualization.

In John A. Arthur's *African Diaspora Identities*, he explains, "The identities that are manifested and represented in these formations often intersect due to the fluidity and continuum of African immigrant identities, their highly vibrant and hybrid forms, and the sheer complexities in their structural and individual contents" (Arthur, 2001, p. 91). That is to say; immigrants' identities are shaped differently depending on the company they have.

In the book of *Post-colonial Studies*, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin tackle the key concepts of postcolonial studies, and many of the concepts are related to the impact of colonialism on colonized nations. They state, "In countries such as Britain and France, the population now has substantial minorities of diasporic ex-colonial peoples. In recent times, the notion of diasporic identity has been adopted by many writers as positive affirmation of their characters hybridity" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2007, p. 62). The colonial rule caused serious troubles for the indigenous population's identities; they became confused and alienated. And many postcolonial writers adopt this phenomenon to their writings. But in the case of Lalami's novel, it is the colonizer's identity that becomes hybrid and unhomey, and they find themselves obliged to assimilate to the Indians' culture.

Despite the struggles and hardships Mustafa and his companions face in the New World, they succeed to pass through them. They mix their previous knowledge with the learnt one from the Indians later on. Mustafa eventually develops a sense of self-consciousness, self-recognition, and becomes able to establish a well-constructed identity. In this sense, Bhabha explains, "This makes the moment of self-consciousness at once refracted and transparent; the question of identity always

poised uncertainly, tenebrously, between shadow and substance" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 49).

While names reflect identity, identity is the mirror to the selfhood. It reflects the behaviours, attitudes, traditions and language. Bhabha argues that people who call for liberating the cultural change and initiating a productive instability, are the holders of hybrid identities. To explain more, the people whose identity becomes hybrid with time of colonialism are the ones influenced by colonial culture.

Mustafa and his companions quest their identities in a foreign land. They become obliged to give up many aspects of their native culture as they follow the Indian culture's path. They use their previous knowledge to heal and cure the sick Indians, and, eventually, they become identified by the name of "sons of the sun".

2. Unhomeliness and Identity (De)formation

Lalami's *The Moor's* guides readers through the several stories narrated by Mustafa that contribute to identity formation and discovering the self of her transnational characters. And the present analysis checks the specific ways in which Lalami's protagonist, Mustafa, appointed with both self-discovery and self-fashioning in someone's land in order to revive the past and build the future.

Lalami's characters in general and Mustafa in particular experience a sense of 'Unhomeliness'. Mustafa Al-zemori is a traveller who suffers poverty and deprivation in Morocco during the Portuguese conquest, bondage and anguish while in Spain, and along eight years of misery and rootlessness in the land of Indians. He and his

companions faced many difficulties that make them constantly seek to search for their identities in diaspora. In order to develop this postcolonial nation, Bhabha argues:

To be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can the 'Unhomely' be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and public spheres. The unhomely moment creeps up on you stealthily as your own shadow (...) the recesses of the domestic space become sites for history's most intricate invasions. In that displacement, the borders between home and world become confused; and, uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as is disorienting (Bhabha, 1994, p. 09).

In *The Moor's*, Mustafa depicts the futile search for self in his own land, he was not satisfied on his family decisions taken for him, and he feels the restriction of his freedom and aspirations. He wishes to be a rich man traveling throughout the sea and land.

Mustafa grew up as an ambitious boy and a dreamer in a lovely family with a happy environment. He says, "we were not rich but, as I said, we were happy" (Lalami, 2014, p. 31). However, his father Muhammad was drawing a vision of his son's future. He wanted his son to follow his path by inheriting his craft, that Mustafa himself was not satisfied with. He says, "this image of me as a dutiful recorder of events in other people's lives did not particularly inspire me. [...] My senses of this injustice was especially strong on Tuesday, which was market day" (Lalami, 2014, p. 31). Because he has different interests and aspirations, he was very intrigued by the merchants and their daily life activities and travels throughout the land and the sea, in addition to those herbal and spiritual healers offering their services in the market, Mustafa declares, "I began to skip school in order to indulge in my favorite pastime visiting the souq. There, I watched fortune-tellers, faith healers, herbalists, apothem

[...], but the stories they told or foretold comforted people, inspired them, allowed them to imagine a future they had denied themselves” (Lalami, 2014, p. 31). Despite he is punished because he skipped school, he always repeats it and goes to the market.

Unlike his father, his mother’s stories were as a motivation that made Mustafa cling to his dreams and inspirations, to be a rich merchant instead of a simple notary. She was always telling him stories real or imagined, to educate, to guide, or to give a moral behind the story. But, in “The Story of My Birth”, she gives him a dream, he said “My mother once told me that I had been destined for a life of travel. The signs had been there on the day of my birth” (Lalami, 2014, p. 31).

After several years, the Portuguese occupied Azemmur and the famine takes hold on Morocco as a whole. Mustafa was obliged to sell himself to slavery in order to feed his family, in a time when a crust of bread became more expensive than people. And that is how Mustafa’s journey of looking for himself has started in the New World as a slave, in which he was clearly suffering an identity crisis specially after being enslaved, baptized and faced name change, he said “I had entered the church as the servant of God Mustafa ibn Muhammad ibn Abdussalam al-Zemori; I left it as Estebanico. Just Esteban converted and orphaned in one gesture” (Lalami, 2014, p. 143). Here, Estebanico became alienated from his own self and the symptoms of the unhomeliness started to emerge in Mustafa’s attitudes and inner thought, he started feeling weird and fruitless. He says, “this servant of God was still just alone, just as helpless. I tried to turn to happier memories, the sort that had sustained me during my journey to Seville and later to La Florida” (Lalami, 2014, p. 137).

It is important to note that Mustafa used his memory to revitalize the experiences that make him lose himself after the departure of his homeland. He recreated some of his childhood experiences in order to give an “inward eye” about his indigenous self, in an attempt to rebuild his identity by redrafting some of its features. In addition, Mustafa tries to shape an understanding of the new world around him, through the stories he has already heard or experienced, and whether it is real or imagined. Moreover, he seeks those stories which help him imagine his life as a narrative toward self-actualization. In this connection, Bhabha refers to John Locke’s perspective that “as far as this consciousness can be extended backwards to any past action or thought, so far reaches the identity of person” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 48). That is to say, Mustafa’s memories which his conscious mind can recollect contribute to his identity and help him find himself.

Despite all odds, Mustafa gained awareness and wisdom, as he sees the necessity of coupling the view of the past with the events of the present in order to reach a world that is multipolar and multicultural, but equal at the same time. He starts realizing the true signifiers of those past experiences until later, when he finds himself in a foreign land stolen from his roots, and feeling the bitterness of being weak and lost. Furthermore, he regrets some of his previous deeds; for instance, the act of selling the three slaves in Azemmur, when he himself fell into slavery he learned the meaning of life and freedom, he said “to go from freedom to slavery was a fate worse than death; it was a rebirth into an alien world, with its strange customs and unbearable rules” (Lalami, 2014, p. 163). The memory of this incident helps Mustafa to overcome the nasty nature of greed and to access the real meaning of freedom.

Throughout the journey, Mustafa faced his unexpected fate that is different from the one he was aspired to. As a consequence, his personality, attitudes, and way of thinking had changed gradually. He learned how to be patient in the hard moments, and he learned how to handle tough situations on his own. In addition, he reached a high intellectual maturity and the ability to endure the oppressors' injustice as well as the nature's adversity. For instance, unlike Europeans who could not control themselves, he prefers hunger over cannibalism. This often shows how the Europeans appear as prehistoric and uncivilized. He assumed "Ruiz was a soldier from Galicia and he had not, to my knowledge, ever given an inclination toward cannibalism, but such was the wretchedness that the Narváez expedition forced upon him" (Lalami, 2014, p. 224).

Here to say, Mustafa's faith in God is one of the essential factors that makes him stand firm in the face of challenges, and helps him overcome the difficulties no matter how hard they were. Those difficulties have even contributed to strengthening his religious beliefs. As a Muslim, he was always practicing his Islamic religion even though the Castilians baptized him. He applied the provisions of Islamic Shari'ah in his daily life in North America; for example: he did not drink alcohol, did not eat carcass, and he did not practice adultery. Mustafa was a religious man, so he considered the hardship as a test for his patience as well as a great test for his faith in God, and a test for his adherence to his own indigenous culture and religion. This is apparent in the novel when Mustafa and his companions got up to leave the harsh nature of Aute, he said "as Dorantes gave out the order to unfurl the sail, I turned to look at him and saw my own desires reflected in his eyes: let us leave this land, where we have met nothing but ill luck and misery, and which resembles nothing so much as

a great test of our faith and a punishment for our sins” (Lalami, 2014, p. 168). Additionally, Mustafa’s openness on the other’s faiths makes him rehabilitate his own religion by discovering its norms once again, and this time he discovers Islam through practice rather than the innate religion that is inherited from father to son. Besides, the Spanish promiscuity and the diasporic life were additional factors that make Alzemori hold to his beliefs to pass the hard times.

Lalami focuses on Mustafa’s transnational identity formation as an individual. He travelled from Azemmur to Spain to La Florida, where immigrants like him always seemed alienated from both home and outside. However, Mustafa throughout the way of discovering himself, recognizes that there is no exact passageway to self-actualization other than the one each person shapes on his own. So, he started developing new ways to enable him to upgrade his conditions. He used his ability to learn languages at first to be as a bridge of connection that can be a lifeline for himself, for the Castilians, and for the Indians as well.

Mustafa slowly begins to accept the other cultures as well as the Castilians’ and the Indians’, the three of the participant in the cultural process start an ideological process toward each other. Mustafa, for the sake of getting his freedom, was helping his masters to communicate with Indians, in the same time he tries to get close to the Indians. The Castilians give up their idea of greatness and engage in the cultural transformation process in order to survive the Indians anger plus to survive the harsh nature of North America. And eventually, the Indians keep the Castilians lives because of their healing skills, alternatively they will teach them how to fish and plant.

Mustafa assumed “now, I was no longer a slave, but my freedom had come at the price of being an interloper among the Indians” (Lalami, 2014, p. 286). He overcomes the obstacles that are made by his masters, when they stop cracking down on his behaviours, conduct and movements, as a result of the common predicaments; but even though he is still an outsider in the Indians’ eye. Mustafa declares, “I had thought that my condition of poor exile would forever doom me to a life of loneliness, but as my situation changed so too, did my prospects” (Lalami, 2014, p. 295). Mustafa struggles to assimilate into the new culture without losing his indigenous self. He develops impressive communication abilities and learns the Indian language in order to reveal a more authentic version of his individual identity and improving it in the Indian society. The postcolonial studies have contracted with the cultural transparency narrative. And “Bhabha emphasizes the hybridity of culture and rejects the notion of a pure, essential identity- both for the colonizer and the colonized” (Gaugele and Titton, 2019, p. 29). Considering the analysis of the novel, the reader can observe that Mustafa’s status has changed in several times from a master into a slave into an interpreter than into a healer, so he accomplishes the conditions finding his self in its new hybrid form. Ashcroft *et al.* define hybridity as “the creation of new forms within the contact zone produced by colonization” (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 2003, p. 118). Against this background, Mustafa’s life in the New World starts to gain a new tone. He achieves a new complex multi-cultural identity that helped him to melt in the Indian society. He starts seeing things differently and builds relationships and makes friends. He meets an Indian beautiful girl named Oyomasot from the Avavares Tribe. She is the daughter of the tribe healer, and their relationship quickly develops. As such, Mustafa falls in love with her and they get married.

Because he feels that is holding something in her personality just fit with his once, he said

I do not know why I fell in love with Oyomasot. Who can explain such things? Perhaps it was because I saw in her someone who, like me, chafed under the rules that were imposed upon her. Perhaps it was because, though she lived at home she did not seem fully at home –an outsider of a sort, another interloper (Lalami, 2014, p. 293).

Mustafa describes Oyomasot character as if he is talking about himself. He emphasizes Oyomasot's feelings of alienation and unhomeliness. However, in postcolonial studies homeland is no longer such a particular location. The concept of home has developed to take other dimensions. It is possibly established anywhere, in this light, Tyson supported Bhabha's argumentations, he said "To be unhomed is to feel not at home even in your own home because you are not at home in yourself: your cultural identity crisis has made you a psychological refugee" (Tyson, 2010, p. 421). This is the point in which Mustafa means to show in his beloved character, the same issue that he was soon struggling from. But he disposes it later.

Finally, Mustafa's searching for home has stopped, and he is no longer wishing to return to Morocco. Because he finds what he was looking for in the Indians land, he starts feeling at home in diaspora. He has well integrated into the Indian society as a new home so, he said,

and so there came a moment when I stopped struggling, when I decided that I would cease making anymore plans to return to the old days. I made up my mind to look upon the present as exactly what it was: it was all I had. To add to my sense that my curse had turned into a blessing, not only was I free - I was no longer alone" (Lalami, 2014, p. 295).

He takes his wife and participates as a scout in the new expedition led by Father Marcos de Niza, searching for the land of Gold “Cibola”. And soon, Mustafa does a last trick in order to dissociate himself from Esteban identity that was imposed on him by the Castilians. Therefore, he sent a false report to the expedition’s leader and writes about the fictional death of Estebanico, an act which indicates that Estebanico never been himself because he always abandons it in the first chance he gets.

3. Interculturality and Cross-cultural Encounters

World's societies establish their differences through many elements: language, customs, traditions, religion, education, culture...etc. Each one of these societies has a specific way of life that seems different to the rest.

The sense of difference rises when one or two persons interact, communicate or even live together. The different cultures come face to face in one place, each one tries to celebrate his valuable cultural heritage. The interaction maximizes or minimizes the levels of violence and aggression; for example, the first encounter of Spanish conquerors with the natives was hostile due to the use of weapons, while the other next meetings were a little bit friendly, because the Spanish needed help figuring out the ways into the land and also because it was rather in forms of conversations than fights.

The expressions of cultural encounters vary between cross-cultural theories, cross-cultural discourses and the distinct experiences of cross-cultural. But what matters is the encounter, clash or confrontation of cultures, usually in one place, each on its way.

The term cross-cultural is divided into three branches: Multiculturalism, Postcolonialism and Interculturalism (Lo and Gilbert, 2002, p. 32).

While multiculturalism refers to the multiple cultures that coexist in the world, as mentioned above, each place is characterized by its cultural cover. The second term concerns postcolonial encounter and it mainly tackles the previous cultural encounters between colonized and colonizer, where the dominant culture is that of the colonizer's. The third and final term suggests the confrontation and interaction happening among these cultures as will be explained in the next lines.

Encounter is probably the appropriate term referring to communication at the edge of cultures. Cross-cultural studies include a wide range of elements related to linguistic studies as language, linguistic performance and language skills.

First, Mustafa's culture is far away from that of the Castellians and the Indians. People in Islamic places are raised on the Islamic norms, as Mustafa mentions: "He learned that my father studied shari'a that he planned on becoming a notary, and, most interesting of all, that he was a broader" (Lalami, 2014, p. 40). In order to document people's properties and issues, his father, and others like him, should learn Islamic teachings to be fair with all people. Also, Mustafa's grandfather likes Muhammed, Mustafa's father, so he gives him his daughter Haniya as a wife. Because he knows that he learned these teachings, and by them he would take care of his daughter.

It is a common thing to see Arab people doing *hijama*, as one kind of medicament, they also use herbs a lot to cure many diseases, visiting good people's tombs, baking loaves in the city's oven, wearing *jellabas* and *caftans*, using *henna* by women, are of

Arabic Azemmurian traditions. Uncle Moussa likes to watch people and gossip about their news "Moussa had been our neighbor for many years, a cobbler by profession, but a gossip by vocation" (Lalami, 2014, p. 68). Moussa is, after all, an example of Arab men and women.

Second, the Castellians' culture differs from the Arabs. After being a slave, Lalami narrates how Mustafa sees them practicing their activities and norms: Singing prayers at the church, baptizing slaves after buying them, wearing long boots and pants. They are known for downplaying other's values. Senõr Dorantes makes wrong stereotypes about the Indians saying: "Because the Indians are known liars, Senõr Dorantes replied" (Lalami, 2014, p. 13). The colonizers keep trying to glorify the idea of Eurocentrism; to make all about them is superior: "... the attempt to dominate in the name of a cultural supremacy which is itself produced only in the moment of differentiation" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 34).

Third, the Indians have different and special traditions and ceremonies; art, language, clothing and buildings, which look heathen and uncivilized for the Castellians,

A few wooden idols sat along the far end of the lodge, three in the shape eagles and two in the shape in the shape of panthers. Hanging from the ceiling on opposite walls were a dozen ceremonial headdresses, of the same kind as those we had seen in Portio" (Lalami, 2014, p. 39).

Castellians see those spiritual and cultural ceremonies and clothing as weird. So, they want to destroy them, "The commissary was saying something about the urgency of destroying the heathen idols in temple" (Lalami, 2014, p. 41).

The Indian tribes move along the coasts and settle near the sources of food. They hunt animals, gather fruits and store drinkable water. They also exchange goods with each other, and the Castellians look odd between them,

He was a Carancahua. Like the other tribes in this area, the Carancahuas were hunters and fishermen who moved their camp with the seasons. In the winter, they picked oysters, fished for trout and perch, or waded into the bays to pull out the edible roots that grew in them (Lalami, 2014, p. 185).

The three cultures come into contact in the New World. Each of them has to interact, communicate with the other. They meet in a place where everyone sees the other's culture, behaviour, language as strange or meaningless. In this sense, Bhabha argues,

Cultural diversity is also the representation of a radical rhetoric of the separation of totalized cultures that live unsullied by the intertextuality of their historical locations, safe in the Utopianism of a mythic memory of a unique collective identity. Cultural diversity may even emerge as a system of the articulation and exchange of cultural signs in certain early structuralist accounts of anthropology" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 34).

The one who misses something would neglect it. The Castellians do not have any kind of ceremonies. They do the same thing with the Indian's culture. As Bhabha explains that sense of difference in cultures at the moments of encounter and clash, "For they all recognize that the problem of cultural interaction emerges only at the signficatory boundaries of cultures, where meanings and values are (mis)read or signs are misappropriated" (Bhabha, 1994, p.34). The Indians' statues and customs seem odd to the Castellians that is they do not appreciate it and ignore its values.

Mustafa becomes the bridge that reaches the cultures all together. He is the translator, communicator and interpreter for both the Indians and Sevillians. This hybrid character shows at the early pages of the novel and early time of his life that he is able to learn foreign languages that he is able to adopt with environments, and most of all accommodates with people's differences. He showed mastery in language skills and linguistic performance. He learned as a child in Azemmur many words of the Portuguese language. Then in Castile, he learnt Spanish, and later in the New World, he succeeded to communicate, understand and assimilate with Indians' environment and culture.

After the terrible experiences the Castellians and Mustafa face in the New World, at early times of the expedition, they gradually die either by hunger and thirst, or by diseases or direct confrontation with Indians as mentioned before, the four survivors become slaves for an Indian tribe and they get food and shelter.

The Carancahua cacique, after a week of being hospitable with the four survivors, decides to make them work and hunt to earn a living. The Carancahuas' Indians teach them how to hunt and gather blueberries, and how to do other works.

But when the Yguaces took us on a hunt the next day, I discovered that unlike other tribes with whom I had lived they ran after the deer for great distances, sometimes for as long as three or four hours, before attempting to spear them. If it was arduous work, at least it did not require as much skill with a bow and arrow (Lalami, 2014, p. 273).

Mustafa explains how each tribe is different in its way of life: how they hunt, what they wear and how they celebrate. But at the end of the story, when he reaches the tribe of Hawikuh, he tries to escape from the friar Marcos de Niza. He says,

Ahku said that he had to consult with the tribe's elders before he could make a decision. All the Indians I had met in this continent decided their affairs by consultation, so this did not surprise me. It was a practice I admired, though I hoped the cacique would make up his mind soon, because the friar was only three weeks away from the gates of Hawikuh (Lalami, 2014, p. 409).

The three cultures clash in a place that is never merciful to those who disrespect it, to those who come with unwelcomed intentions to rape, steal, and exploit its wealth, and to those who adopt the idea of superiority and a view of disgust for its people.

The four survivors have to initiate, assimilate, and encounter with the natives. They spend eight years moving among the indigenous tribes. Eventually, they learn to communicate with the natives' tongue, dress like them, and eat their food.

Renee Green, the African-American artist, reflects on the need to understand cultural difference as the production of minority identities, because they have rich and ancient traditions and rituals that are almost vanished nowadays:

" Multiculturalism doesn't reflect the complexity of the situation as I face it daily. . . . It requires a person to step outside of him/ herself to actually see what he/she is doing. I don't want to condemn well-meaning people and say (like those T-shirts you can buy on the street) 'It's a black thing, you wouldn't understand.' To me that's essentialising blackness"(Bhabha, 1994,p. 03).

The quote above indicates the struggle that minority population face daily, It is probably similar to Mustafa's case; he is not white like his masters, and the Indians

feel his difference from the colour of his skin. Green argues the difficulty that a black person faces even in daily normal situations.

Every person produces an aspect of culture that can help forming a part of an identity. Green here argues that individuals produce the difference in cultures. And Mustafa's character gathers the many aspects of the three cultures to introduce a sense of difference and encounter with other groups.

The identities of Estebanico, Dorantes, Castillo and Cabeza de Vaca become hybrid and ambivalent; they are obliged to mimic, accommodate, and adopt many aspects of the natives' culture. Thus states Marwan M. Kraidy "Hybridity (...)captures the spirit of the times with its obligatory celebration of cultural difference and fusion" (M. Kraidy, 2005, p. 1). They wear the same clothing, eat the same food, and practise the same activities. The Indians are different and they do not have that idea of superiority over the others and they are not greedy towards gold and other luxurious products.

Estebanico has an intelligent sight. Because he easily learns, he is the reason that makes his companions use their previous knowledge to help him cure the sick Indians; without which they would be killed by the non-sick Indians. In every case he remembers how his mother healed his illness using herbs like *zaatar*, garlic, onion... and stories. And he also remembers how he saw, in his childhood, a healer doing *hijama* for his father to cure his back's pain and he applies it to one of the tribes' chief. To relate to that, Mustafa narrates, "Castellio relied on memories of his father's practice in Salamanca. Dorantes and Cabeza de Vaca used soldier's remedies they had

learned when they fought in their king's wars. As for me, I used what I had learned growing up in Azemmur" (Lalami, 2014, p. 289)

In her interview with Cassandra Christopher, Lalami answers the interviewer's question on the role of religion in the book and in her life by saying,

I knew because of the time and the place that he had, that religion was going to play an important role in his life. In the beginning of the book he is more religious but he's never, he's not the most literal-minded person in terms of religion. As he falls into bondage and he comes to America and he sees that there are all these alternate modes of thinking about the world, I think makes his views of religion more complex. And it seemed like a very natural growth for anybody who has gone through those experiences (Christopher, 2016, p. 52).

Lalami focuses on the change in behaviours and ways of thinking when one leaves his hometown, especially in the case of the slave Mustafa who has no control of his life or his actions.

The author needs to realize the differences, the struggles and the complexities people face all around the world. Hence, she narrates people's life, suffering and attitudes in Azemmur. Besides, she portrays life of Sevillians when Mustafa is bought there; how they live, and interact with each other. Besides, she tells of how Indians cooperate with their nature, how they respect each other's rituals and how they exchange goods from each other.

4. The Real Power of Storytelling

Behind every success or failure there is a story, “Listen, my mother said. Let me tell you a story” (Lalami, 2014, p. 65). Heniya, Mustafa's mother, keeps telling him stories that nourish his imagination. Those stories are the seeds of his life and the fuel to his adventures. In every event or situation of his early childhood, Heniya narrates a story either real or imagined, either long or short and either to teach, to guide or to redirect. Through these stories, Mustafa extracts a moral or figures out his mistakes. Mustafa's stories turn in circle; he narrates events before narrating his birth. He starts with the story of La Florida, the story of his birth, the story of Apalache and Aute and what he has witnessed of torturing native Indians. He returns to narrate how Azemmur, before his birth, is captured by Portugal. Mustafa is the narrator of his own story; he declares that he had written this novel after a long time of its original time, and that he tries to remember every detail. So, if he has forgotten something, it is not intended.

Mustafa, the son of a notary and a storyteller mother, learns how to value both written and oral stories. Because at an unexpected period of time, they are the reasons of one's survival, continuity and success, "My mother had accustomed me to fairy tales in which it was easy for me to imagine myself, so I remained quiet as I thought about the Story of the Embroiderer and the Sultan" (Lalami, 2014, p. 70). Even though his father is not much like his mother he keeps narrating the story of how he lost an arm, "Let me tell you, Mustafa, he said. He launched into the Story of How He Lost His Arm—an account of the events that had taken place on the day I was born and that in my mother's telling I had come to know as the Story of My Birth" (Lalami, 2014, p. 75).

For Mustafa, storytelling is a tool for survival, surviving his death as a slave and surviving the colonial erasures of his identity. Lalami uses this narrative to the death of the real character Mustafa. Through writing a story, she makes him alive, known and glorified for he is the first African to discover the New World. Without the writing of this story, Mustafa's personality would be buried under the ashes of history, forgotten among the papers of stories and betrayed in the shadow of memories. At the beginning of the story, Mustafa, through the pen of Lalami, announces the importance of storytelling for him. He writes that Cabeza de Vaca is his rival storyteller. He announces, again, and negates his death in the original account of Cabeza de Vaca's Relation.

At the beginning of the novel, Mustafa declares his real name followed by his father's and grandfather's and city's names: Mustafa ibn Muhammed ibn Abdsalam Alzemori, as a weapon to fight colonial discourse. Later on, he mentions the foreign name the Castellians have given him: Estebanico.

Mustafa's mother tells him that stories had been always there, and that everything had happened to son of Adam. "If only we listened to stories" (Lalami, 2014, p. 72). His mother keeps insisting on the importance of listening to stories, because behind them there is always a lesson to learn and only clever people can understand. Through stories Mustafa succeeds to heal himself and then heal other people of their pain; either he listens to the stories of the sick people or he narrates a story to reduce their pain, "If I was confronted with an illness I did not recognize, I listened to the sick man or woman and offered consolation in the guise of a long story. After all, what the sufferers needed most of all was an assurance that someone understood their pain and that, if not a full cure, at least some respite from it lay further ahead. This, too, was

something I had learned in the markets of Azemmur: a good story can heal" (Lalami, 2014, p. 296). Mustafa knows the importance of listening to others and in return never refuses to deliver back a story.

Calling the name of God upon the patient before me, I asked for a cup and, heating it over a fire, I placed it on the cacique's back, causing the skin under it to lift and stay trapped. After a few minutes, I released the skin gently and started the process again. All the while, I told a story, to distract the Susola chief from the pain and also to entertain his kin, who sat all around us in the hut (Lalami, 2014, p. 293). Mustafa receives an invitation from a neighbouring tribe to help its cacique who suffers a back pain, Mustafa relies on his memory and old stories to cure the man who after three days gets better.

Words can cause wounds as they can heal them. A good word is never harmful. But hurting words can kill people's hearts. Lalami, by her stories in the name of Mustafa, is committed to the power of words to bring about change and to revolt against all kinds of colonial disempowering, because in the case of Mustafa, a word and a story becomes a weapon that is never broken, "All I knew was that the weight on my chest no longer felt as heavy, because my mother's stories always entertained me, and, by so doing, soothed me" (Lalami, 2014, p. 71).

Mustafa liberates himself through writing stories, and this case is similar to Antara ibn Shadad, the poet from the pre-Islamic Arabic poetry. Antara's mother was a slave, and he could not inherit his father's social position due to this fact. So, he used his poetry to revolt, transform and liberate his status (Cluston, 2009, p. 88-97). Mustafa

uses stories to recreate his sense of self in exile as he finds in them a remedy for his soul.

The Moor's spotlights the importance of individuals' life, not only names. Unlike De Vaca's text, *The Moor's* brings small details into light. For example, Mustafa begins with the story of La Florida when he narrates the arrival of the expedition's members, then he returns to narrate the story of his birth as a representation of individuals' bodies with collective bodies in a foreign land.

Lalami's work presents the picture of storytellers and highlights the importance of stories in real life. First, stories are boats for salvation; as Mustafa starts his journey in the wild lands, he finds in the stories an amiable companion which reminds him of knowledge he needs or stores information through them. In addition, people learn through tales. In his childhood, Mustafa's mother tells him a story whenever he faces a trouble. Moreover, he remembers tales on healing processes; he uses his mother's remedy, *zaatar*, to cure Dorantes's stomach ache. Finally, stories bring back Mustafa to his past memories and home despite the far distance; the feeling of nostalgia is reduced through those memories and tales.

Lalami concentrates on the life of Mustafa's life under the shadow of his master Dorantes. But Mustafa defends himself by telling his own account as he improves his status. This narrating act is in overall an act of protection and revolution over the colonial obliteration of culture and names. His weapons of salvation are his language skills, linguistic performance, and his narrating talent helps him to interact and communicate with the indigenous people more than his companions. Mustafa,

hereupon, collects his linguistic abilities with the cultural ones. Furthermore, survival is a social need to continue to exist; one may use all his skills and abilities.

The result of colonial erasures is mainly colonialism, which denies individuals and groups who are weak and not allowed to narrate their own stories; like when the four survivors reach the city of Tenochtitlan, the Castellians were invited to tell their journey's events in the joint report, while Mustafa was not. This act insists again on the importance of one's ability to narrate his own story with his own words and style. Although Estebanico was given many roles as he is the guide of his companions in the wilderness, and to be the shaman. He is not given possibility to speak, while others are.

Mustafa travels through space and time using his memory and narration although he is not able to move to Azemmur physically. He plans to return home, but after his long journey he becomes able to find home after he acquires a high stability and sense of self. Lalami proves again how language can suppress people's lives as it can honour them.

The novel offers cooperation between stories and language. In other words, how can one narrate a story manipulating letters. Just as those letters betrayed Mustafa in the original account of Cabeza de Vaca, the same letters constitute his own story. Mustafa informs readers about the stories he has heard about native Indians before he even sets foot on their land. This kind of stories creates what can be called a methodology, or a warehouse for future expectations leading Mustafa's imagination far from reality.

I was also curious about this land because I had heard, or overheard, from my master and his friends, so many stories about the Indians. The Indians, they said, had red skin and no eyelids; they were heathens who made human sacrifices and worshipped evil-looking gods; they drank mysterious concoctions that gave them visions; they walked about in their natural state, even the women—a claim I had found so hard to believe that I had dismissed it out of hand. Yet I had become captivated. This land had become for me not just a destination, but a place of complete fantasy, a place that could have existed only in the imagination of itinerant storytellers in the souqs of Barbary (Lalami, 2014, p. 6).

Mustafa's stories depend on knowledge and memory. He inherits knowledge and memory from his hometown and they extend through his transatlantic journey from Azemmur to Seville and La Florida. He uses narratives to redirect his life path, his consciousness and correct his decisions. He redefines who he is revolting against what the Castellians have made him declaring that his name is Mustafa.

The novel gives rise to the sense that Mustafa is competing with Cabeza De Vaca or taking his revenge for his omission in the latter's text. Mustafa writes, "Whenever I told stories around the campfire, I sensed that Cabeza de Vaca was anxious to rival them with his own, for he was a gifted storyteller (Lalami, 2014, p. 230). When Mustafa and his companions went to the Avavare tribe and when Mustafa was more fluent than his friends, he was the one who narrated stories about their journeys from the beginning until the end of their living with Indian tribes.

Mustafa's narrative style proves that he is a professional storyteller, and that he has knowledge of Shehrazade's collection in *Arabian Nights*. As she presents a series of stories within stories (Rawther, 2020, p. 266). Therefore, Mustafa's narrative leads readers to recognize how people are different, how their stories vary, and how

communities' knowledge systems are contradictory. In the last chapter, when the four survivors start mixing with the native tribes, Mustafa gives every tribe a chapter title: "The story of Carancahuas, The story of the Ygaces, The story of the Avavares (...)" to present each tribe's story, each tribe's traditions and each tribe's name, in other words, to present diversity just like the format of Shehrazade in *Arabian Nights* (Muhsin Jasim and W. Dulcken, 2007, p. 85).

Lalami invents the presence from the absence. She creates a story from the residues of history. She replaces the pages which are folded within Mustafa's story, and which are forgotten within his adventures. She puts in the centre accounts of those who were alienated, and which colonialism tried to burry. Mustafa mediates between language, stories, and memory to create an imaginative journey through time and place.

Fiction portrays a modern space of conspiracy and modification to re-inhabit the illusion and the narratives of "East" and "West" with reformulated and unforgotten voices of the subaltern, for the myth of weakened, uncivilised, and marginalized East. Writing becomes a political act in itself, by presenting to us what have been in the past. Fiction invents opportunities for what is in the present and what might be in the future. Lalami offers a historical fiction that turns across slave account, chronicle, and travelogue to create an alternative narration for the subaltern.

In an interview with National Public Radio, Laila Lalami asserts that the "closest we come to truth is in the form of fiction." (Christopher, 2016, p. 51). Lalami here assures that fiction is one of the various paths leading to truth, the truth is mixed with imagination. In the same interview, Cassandra Christopher asks Lalami, "You said at

the reading that you set up the book especially like an Arabic travel narrative from the time period. Was it just the time period that had you form it that way? or did something about the form of calling the chapters, “The Story of...” make you choose that? (Christopher, 2016, p. 56). Lalami answers that it is a combination of things, and that Mustafa is writing about something he is the only one to know about it. The book is written, as Lalami says, in the form of stories to facilitate for her the manipulation with the chronology of events, and also because chapters are a modern way of writing.

Lalami declares that when she wrote the novel as Ibn Battuta the Moroccan traveller who, at young age, visited many cities and returned home an old man and wrote about his journeys. She says in this interview that she wanted to write like his style and the style of Shehrazade in *Arabian Nights* as stated before (Christopher, 2016, p. 57).

Lalami says that she has read the chronicle of De Vaca where Mustafa was mentioned in few words, and he was also mentioned in a short Relation written by Marcos de Niza who had lied in narrating the events. Lalami says,

So he said that he had last seen him when he was going forward, and that Estebanico had been killed because he had made some demands. And when I looked at that I thought, come on man, how do I know that he died, and plus I don't want him to die. So it was again, that was a plausible ending so I went with that. I thought that that would be a more interesting way to end the story (Christopher, 2016, p. 56).

She declares that she wants an alternate ending, an ending better than the one of de Niza.

He ran away in great fright when he saw us. Our thick beards and unusual colors must have scared him, or perhaps he had heard the stories that had been spreading for a while now, stories that grew more terrifying with each telling, of sharp-toothed and bloodthirsty aliens who snatched away children that strayed too far from their homes (Lalami, 2014, p. 284).

Stories are spread all around the world, even to frighten kids who play far from home or who disobey their parents.

Mustafa and Oyomasot go the Hawikuh to warn its people of the danger coming to them by the white men. Ahku, the tribe chief, answers him that he and his men will stop them. The conversation goes long. And Mustafa keeps convincing Ahku, "But they cannot be fought with weapons, I said. I explained to Ahku that the white men's weapons were far more powerful than anything he had ever seen and that his only means of salvation was to create a fiction. A story? Ahku asked" (Lalami, 2014, p. 412).

Mustafa asks the chief of Hawikuh to tell a wrong story to white men to through their attention far away from the tribe, because they are going there to spoil their gold. The cacique finds the idea of little strange, "Ahku laughed. Why do you want us to tell him we killed you? Do you think your tall tale is going to frighten this man away? (Lalami, 2014, p. 413).

The reason behind the coming of the Spanish to the New World is a story, an exaggerated story and a promising tales of wealth and richness. They overheard stories about the seven cities of gold in Cibola, where doors and windows are made of gold... only gold. And so Mustafa comments on this, "It was a tall tale that brought

him here in the first place, I said. Nothing else, I was certain, would put a stop to Father Marco's advance" (Lalami, 2014, p. 413). There is a kind of wisdom or moral that can be extracted from these lines: believing many stories, or particularly the wrong ones, can lead people to certain death, if not, then to huge danger.

Again, on the significance of tales and stories, Mustafa writes, "Estebanico would be laid to rest. But Mustafa would remain free to live a life of his choosing" (Lalami, 2014, p. 407). Mustafa challenges the Castellians who deleted his origins by deleting the name they gave to him, and announces his real name with which he will spend the rest of his life.

CONCLUSION

The present study has investigated how marginalized cultures and identity are shaped by the pre-colonial, colonial, and postcolonial experiences of postcolonial groups. Postcolonialism as a term has been used to describe period after colonialism. Some critics claim that Postcolonialism refers to the historical period after independence, while many others argue that it deals with all that concerns the postcolonial societies since the moment of colonization until nowadays.

Postcolonial writers have produced literature that rejects the notions of Eurocentrism and imperialism, because they share postcolonial backgrounds and witness the same experience and are committed to postcolonial changes. Their works concern all that is related to identity in a way or another. They refuse the colonial legacies not only because they persecute their communities, but because they deform and spoil their cultural identity.

Identity is a key concept to postcolonial studies. It has been the focus of many colonial and postcolonial works. Many postcolonial writers like Ngugi wa Thiongo, Chinua Achebe, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and Laila Lalami are committed to the portrayal of identity crisis in their works. When identity is damaged, their personalities are damaged. People of the third world are often the ones who suffer these troubles in identity, and they are torn apart between two worlds. They face the feeling of distortion as they try to choose which world to engage in.

Naming has been a serious concern for colonial rulers, who, by changing colonized peoples' names, reach a higher and powerful position. The colonial manipulation with names and naming shakes the balance of power for sure turning it into the colonizer's pan. Because names are a key element to personal identity, they are essential and it is important to preserve them. Names of people and places form a part of social and cultural significance. Between these names and the history of those, there is a life that is never gone.

Ambivalence, mimicry, hybridity and unhomeliness are postcolonial key concepts initiated by Bhabha. These concepts are related to the shift in identical behaviours and attitudes, where they find themselves obliged to make those changes in identity to fit in the discourse of the majority. They become hybrid and suffer that distortion in identity, and with all that, they are unhomely.

Before colonialism, the colonized people had their own traditions, ceremonies, rituals and beliefs, but after the coming of colonization, their world and culture fall apart. They lose their lands and homes for the colonizers and eventually they face the unhomely feelings and lose their sense of belonging to a specific place or community.

This novel tackles the intercultural interaction and cultural difference among the characters. It reveals many social, political, and cultural to portray the impact of colonialism on the indigenous population and to portray the tormented lives they gain after that dangerous infection. Also, the novel presents an insight of disgust over the other races, and by this they embrace the idea of Eurocentrism.

The current study examines Lalami's commitment to bring to light the sides, aspects, and the traditions that were ignored by the colonial powers. Lalami as a modern writer returns to old century, and highlights how the Arabic culture is rich and beneficial. Also, she shows how Indian's culture seems meaningless to the Castellians, and how it is unique with the different ceremonies and distinctive customs decorated by animal feathers.

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المخلص

اشتهرت ليلى العلمي بدفاعها عن ثقافة الأخر في روايتها «مارواه المغربي» (2014)، كما احتجت العلمي على المركزية الأوروبية في الكتابات الغربية من أجل إعادة كتابة التاريخ وحياء تراث الشعوب المستعمرة. يسلط البحث الضوء على الحقائق الاستعمارية، وأهمية الهوية والتهجين في حياة الأفراد، وكيف ترتبط هذه المفاهيم بالوضع الذي تمر به الهوية في ظل الكولونيالية وما بعد الكولونيالية، كما تهتم الدراسة بالمواجهات الثقافية بين الشخصيات. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تقدم الرواية، على عكس الأعمال الأخرى التي تتبنى المركزية الأوروبية، نقطة تحول في تغيير سلوك المستعمر في الأرض المستعمرة. تركز هذه المذكرة على تأثير الاستعمار على المستعمر، وتسلط الضوء على الاختلافات والتفاعلات الثقافية، كما تبرز أهمية رواية القصص في حياة الشخصية الرئيسية "مصطفى" وحيات الآخرين. تنقسم هذه الدراسة إلى فصلين: الفصل الأول بعنوان السياق الاجتماعي التاريخي والإطار النظري، بينما يتناول الفصل الثاني دراسة مشكلة الهوية في الرواية باستخدام المنهج ما بعد الكولونيالية في البحث.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الفعل الثقافي، ما بعد الكولونيالية، التسمية، التهجين، التقليد