

The Darkening of the Other: Demarcating Difference in *Cantar de Roldán*, *Cartas marruecas*, and *La reina del sur*

Amy Margaret Weil

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Committee I. Chair, Dr. Sarah Sierra  
Committee I. Member, Dr. Elizabeth Austin  
Committee I. Member, Dr. María del Carmen Caña Jiménez

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ABSTRACT

This thesis analyzes the research of various historical and literary theorists in relation to identification of Otherness in three Spanish works: *Cantar de Roldán*, *Cartas marruecas*, and *La reina del sur*. Throughout the thesis, I analyze how the discourse of identification of Otherness has progressed throughout these three works. Each work was chosen as a cultural artifact of its time. I begin the thesis with *Cantar de Roldán* and analyze how variation in faith served as primary demarcation of Otherness. I then analyze *Cartas marruecas* and how race also becomes an identifier of Otherness; I end the thesis analyzing *La reina del sur* and the role of racial discourse as the primary identifier of Otherness.

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## Introduction

There are silenced voices that serve as objects of Otherness against which the dominant and hegemonic voices can uphold their sense of superiority. In *Cantar de Roldán*, *Cartas marruecas*, and *La reina del sur*, frequently, the Other is portrayed in the guise of the dark skin of the Moorish invader that has long affected the Iberian imagination as shown throughout literary history. The last novel, *La reina del sur*, considers the representation of the Other through the use of the darkness as an identifier of Otherness. The Mexican protagonist, Teresa, aligns that Otherness with the cultural legacy of the Invading Moor. The thesis follows a gradual development of discourse of Otherness that traces how authors first marked religious distinctions and then shifted to marking racial differentiation as Otherness in these texts. The thesis will look at *Cantar de Roldán*, *Cartas marruecas*, and *La reina del sur* and how each specific text develops the identifier of Otherness in ever-greater reference to skin color and darkness as an indicator of the “lesser” developed side of the authors’ definition of self. Each text is representative of popular discourse of each time period that circulated within Spain. I will use these three texts to identify these discourses of identification.

The term “Moor” is used throughout the thesis. “Moor” is an outdated term with racial undertones used in older centuries in Spain; I will also use the term Muslim where appropriate. In general terms, I will show that the reliance on establishing an “us” vs. “them” binary becomes increasingly based on racial distinctions and is a human phenomenon rooted in fear. As I will show, the original distinction of Otherness was religious adherence; I will show this develops into distinction based on outward appearance. The underlying significance of this discourse reveals an imagined need to

protect against what was perceived to be a contagion of the Other. First, I will highlight the historical contexts of the three works in order to establish their relationship to one another and their place within Spain's complex history. Then, I will analyze each work in detail, utilizing theorists such as Hayden White and Edward Said, to show the relationship between these selected literary pieces and a discourse of power that exalts the whitening of identity as the marker of self.

The history of the Iberian Peninsula serves as a critical part of understanding the context of the three works. It is a past laden with conflict, as control passed from one group to the next. A particularly significant event in the Iberian Peninsula was the conquest of the Roman Empire and the introduction of their laws and customs—which included spreading the Christian faith. In 476 A.D., the last Roman emperor fell and the Visigoths began to take control of the Iberian Peninsula. In 589 A.D., the Visigoth King Recaredo converted to Catholicism; thus he continued the presence of Christianity in the Peninsula. For the next hundred years or so, the Visigoth rule persisted. That particular time period was rather unstable with constant battles. While the Iberian Peninsula struggled with stability, the Islamic Empire was flourishing. In 711, the first Muslims entered the Iberian Peninsula (originally as allies for the Gothic king), and by 732, had conquered the Peninsula up to the Pyrenees and the Picos de Europa. During the Muslim invasion, some of the Gothic nobles took refuge up north, on the other side of both mountain ranges, thus creating refugee communities of Christians. Several years after the initial invasion of the Moors, the Reconquest began in 718 with don Pelayo in Asturias. These Gothic refugees of Christian communities eventually became centers of resistance and propagated anti-Muslim sentiments. As quickly as the Muslims took control of the

Iberian Peninsula, the northern territories slowly began to reclaim their part of the peninsula, with their final victory and ultimate expulsion of the Muslims in 1492 with the falling of Granada (Muñoz and Marcos). Over a course of 700 some years of Muslim occupation, Spaniards both internalized many of the Arabic customs as well as demonized particular behaviors. It is perhaps in this complex relationship that the image of the Moor has become such an emblem for Otherness that in reality reflects a strong notion of Spanish identity. Daniela Flesler highlights the lasting effects of the Moorish invasion:

Este “ancestral imaginario negativo hacia lo árabe y musulmán” en España tiene una de sus primeras manifestaciones textuales en el intento de explicar la derrota visigoda del año 711 frente a los invasores procedentes del norte de África. La historia que surge alrededor de estos hechos ha sido llamada “la leyenda de la pérdida de España,” título que evidencia una toma de posición ideológica con respecto a quiénes eran los verdaderos “dueños” de la Península y quiénes los usurpadores. (76)

This defensive mentality pervades throughout *Cantar de Roldán*, *Cartas marruecas*, and *La reina del sur*; and, although the manifestation varies throughout each work, the implications associated with skin color emerges and becomes more prominent while maintaining the image of the Moor as the negatively perceived Other. Each of the three works serve as cultural artifacts reflective of each of their specific time periods.

The first work that I will study is *Cantar de Roldán*. This epic follows the story of the Christians’ victory over the last Saracen stronghold. There are a few important things to note about this particular text: First, the epic was originally written by a French author

and later translated into Spanish. The significance of the epic cannot be overlooked.

Carolina Brown Ahumada cites the ideas of Cesare Segre in relation to the importance of the epic: "...la épica tendría que ver con una representación de mundo en un momento determinado de la historia de una comunidad; cuando los límites entre lo individual y lo colectivo no se encuentran diferenciados." In this particular epic, Otherness appears as the Moors who are being expelled from the Peninsula. The text represents the cultural imagination rather than a direct portrayal of the historical event. Juan Victorio explains, "[t]res siglos separan los acontecimientos históricos de los episodios literarios, margen más que suficiente para poder adular lo que sea necesario y poder presentar un relato cuyo significado va mucho más allá del simple acontecimiento" (14). Despite originally being written by a French author, the purpose of choosing *Cantar de Roldán* as the first work in the thesis is because its derogatory discourse in relation to the Other marks the beginning of this series of texts' associating racial differences with religious differences as opposed to focusing on current Spanish national boundaries; additionally, as Brown Ahumada writes above, the epic focuses on the collective. She later continues: "Dicha colectividad puede ser expresada en términos espaciales, aunque se trata más de una patria que de un espacio geográfico o zona de expansión. Una 'patria' en el sentido moral, cultivada y cuidada por generaciones, vivida como una relación dinámica entre el ambiente natural y las modalidades de vida." Therefore, *Cantar de Roldán* is focused on a broader base—not Spanish identity at this point, which had not formed as it is known today, but as a more European idea. Boundaries, at the time of *Cantar de Roldán*, were more fluid, based on the vestiges of the Roman empire. *Cantar de Roldán* serves as a

cultural artifact highlighting the differences between the Christian and those who were considered “Other”.

Additionally, *Cantar de Roldán* was part of an oral tradition. This is significant because, in general, oral tradition reflects the specific culture at the time of its writing. As Siân Jones and Lynette Russell explain, “Oral traditions were routinely collected and used to attribute chronology, function and/or cultural affiliation [...] Yet as a result, oral traditions became appropriated into the developing scientific epistemology of the nascent discipline, which sought to produce totalizing narratives, frequently framed by the idea of a national community” (271). Therefore, although the origin is French, the theme was one that reflected the concerns of the audience, which would also include the boundaries of what is modern-day Spain.

Specifically, the epic shows the close relationship of empire and religion; as the first work in the thesis, it allows readers to see the diachronic development of how racial discourse was at first secondary or even tertiary in defining who was positioned as the Other. What specifically is the Other? For this thesis, the working definition of the Other comes from Suzanne Conklin Akbari. She writes: “The feared and hated “other” is understood as being different from “us” not only in religious terms, but also in ethnic, [...] racial terms difference of faith and diversity of skin color appear as two sides of a single coin, each aspect reinforcing the other” (1). It is important to note here that the Other depicted in the aforementioned literature is written from a perspective in which “I” is located in Europe—specifically, peninsular Spain. From this “I” perspective, the “Other” in the three books include those who have not originated in the Peninsula. Also, it is important to note that this thesis will be focusing on three separate works as opposed

to Spain as a nation. Additionally, the centuries in between the actual events and the writing serve to show the purpose of the writing of *Cantar de Roldán* in medieval times: not historical fact, but rather, with an ideological purpose. Hayden White explains this phenomenon:

As thus envisaged, to *historicize* any structure, to write its history, is to mythologize it [...] History, Lévi-Strauss insists, is never only the history *of*; it is always also history *for*. And it is not only history *for* in the sense of being written with some ideological aim in view, but also history *for* in the sense of being written for a specific social group or public. (103)

In the time of *Cantar de Roldán*, that specific social group was the Christians. During the time of the Reconquest, they were attempting to expel the Muslims once and for all as part of the larger conquest of the Crusades. About *Cantar de Roldán*, Andreas Kablits writes that the epic "...aims at transforming the text into a seamless praise of Christian glory..." (121). It is also crucial to note that at the time of writing *Cantar de Roldán*, racism had not become the principal form of social/cultural discrimination. Rather, skin color acted as a secondary difference. As I will discuss in Chapter 1, the theory of myth from Roland Barthes examines the importance of the meaning of words and their associations with his use of myth. In *Cantar de Roldán*, the Other is an established binary difference based on religion and then racial distinctions become secondary or tertiary.

By the time of the writing of *Cartas marruecas* in the late eighteenth century, a sense of a national identity had formulated in Spain. In this epistolary novel, religious difference is not an insuperable obstacle for acculturation; however, the socially-

constructed categories of racial identity begin to assert themselves as demarcation of Otherness as opposed to a secondary or tertiary markers as in *Cantar de Roldán*. *Cartas marruecas* was written by José Cadalso and published posthumously in 1789. Between the time of writing *Cantar de Roldán* and *Cartas marruecas*, Orientalism had become a field in itself. Officially, the formal existence of Orientalism is said to have begun in 1312 (Said 49). Edward Said writes of the tension with the Other in *Orientalism*: “Not for nothing did Islam come to symbolize terror, devastation, the demonic, hordes of hated barbarians. For Europe, Islam was a lasting trauma. Until the end of the seventeenth century, the “Ottoman peril” lurked alongside Europe to represent for the whole of Christian civilization a constant danger...” (59). Throughout *Cartas marruecas*, while Cadalso does intend to solidify what it means to truly be Spanish, that is not the focus of this thesis. The focus of *Cartas marruecas* for this thesis will be to reveal that in the cultural discourse the demarcation of race has become a primary marker of Otherness. It is an epistolary novel, primarily written between a young Moroccan, Gazel, telling his Moroccan mentor, Ben-Beley, all that he has learned as he attempts to integrate into Spanish society with the help of a model Spanish citizen, Nuño. As with *Cantar de Roldán*, *Cartas marruecas* serves a specific purpose for a specific audience. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Spain was often depicted as a cultural extension of Africa by the rest of Europe, as exemplified by Montesquieu’s claim that Europe began at the Pyrenees. It is from this perspective that Spanish literature, specifically Cadalso’s text, may assert suggestive connections that imagined Spain as culturally united to Europe rather than Africa. Throughout the work, Cadalso Gazel’s voice to articulate an awareness of his Otherness, specifically in terms of the color of his skin. The influence of

Orientalism becomes clear, as "...the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience" (Said 1). For Cadalso's cultural portrayal of Spain, this separation between the Spanish nation and Africa was necessary because of the shared complex past. Flesler explains: "Moroccan immigrants, in the Spanish collective imaginary, thus become the embodiment of everything there is to fear from their history, the ghosts of a past that has not stopped haunting them, the return of the repressed" (80). Therefore, throughout *Cartas marruecas*, Cadalso closely associates skin color with Otherness. There are cultural differences between Gazel and Nuño, but Gazel can assimilate to the culture; ultimately, it is Gazel's dark skin color that denotes him as Other. Said later writes: "It is therefore correct that every European, in what he could say about the Orient, was consequently a racist, an imperialist, and almost totally ethnocentric" (204). This necessary marking of the Other will be seen in Gazel's inability to fully integrate into Spanish society because of his Otherness, of which his skin color denotes.

The final work I will examine in this thesis is *La reina del sur*, a narco-novela written by Arturo Pérez-Reverte in 2002. Again, readers will see the connection between Orientalism and the importance of separating Spanish culture from other cultures; once more, race plays a critical role in this separation. *La reina del sur* is written from the first-person perspective of an investigative reporter working on a story on the elusive Teresa Mendoza, a kingpin wife turned drug trafficker from Mexico. Throughout the reporter's experiences, readers grasp a clear separation between Spain and other countries. Once more, race becomes a signifier of the Otherness and the effects of Orientalism remain. Said writes:

Orientalism is never far from what Denys Hy has called the idea of Europe, a collective notion identifying “us” Europeans as against all “those” non-Europeans, and indeed it can be argued that the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures. (7)

*La reina del sur* in particular highlights the importance of national boundaries and separation from the non-European and serves as the most recent cultural artifact which now has race as the initial designation as a character’s Otherness and behavior. As I will examine, Teresa’s dark skin, which originates in Latin America, is associated with her illegal activities. She is portrayed negatively throughout the novel. Teresa is often first designated by her racial characteristics as opposed to recognizing her as a unique person. Following the pattern I will establish in *Cartas marruecas*, her race serves as a designation of savagery. White writes the following about uncivilized, or savage, peoples:

The notion of “wildness” (or, in its Latinate form, “savagery”) belongs to a set of culturally self-authenticating devices which includes, among many others, the ideas of “madness” and “heresy” as well [...] they do not so much refer to a specific thing, place, or condition as dictate a particular attitude governing a relationship between a lived reality and some area of problematical existence... (151)

Thus, Teresa Mendoza and Others in *La reina del sur* serve to show a 21<sup>st</sup>-century cultural artifact in which racial designation of the Other is now at the forefront, something that had not been seen in *Cartas marruecas* and *La reina del sur*. The moral judgments become part of the characterization of race within these texts.

The parallels between the use of race as a physical identifier and that of the us vs. them binary also parallels the theory of Michel Foucault. Chloë Taylor quotes Foucault as saying that racism is “primarily a way of introducing a break into the domain of life that is under power’s control; the break between what must die.” Taylor then elaborates with her own thoughts:

Racism allows the biopolitical state to divide the species into races, into ‘the race’ and sub-races, and into fit and unfit specimens of a race. This, in turn, allows the biopolitical state to designate certain populations or segments of its own population as a danger, and thus to warrant that population’s death or enslavement, political or otherwise, in the name of the protection and management of life. (753)

This relationship between race, power, and determination of the Other resides in these three works.

It is also important to note that the three works I discuss throughout this thesis are all written by male authors; therefore, Otherness is articulated in a specifically gendered way. These three male authors sustain similar portrayal of Otherness in terms of skin tone as overwhelmingly negative. Female and specifically feminist authors such as Emilia Pardo Bazán and others do confront Otherness in a distinct way; nonetheless, looking at Otherness in specifically gendered ways is not the primary aim of this

investigation. This thesis is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather a comparative study of the three different texts and three different approaches to construction of Otherness.

Although all three texts are from different time periods, the difference in time shows how pervasive this common theme is throughout the thesis: all three of these works reflect the association of Otherness and skin tone in their specific time periods. The gradual transformation of the connotations associated with race will become clear throughout the three works. Chapter 1, *Cantar de Roldán*, explains how Otherness is first designated by deviances in faith as race is a secondary or tertiary indication of Otherness. In *Cartas marruecas*, visible traces of race have become connected with culture and religion as opposed to a secondary demarcation. In *La reina del sur*, racial discourse comes to the surface; specifically, the physical appearance of the Other's race becomes the primary evidence of Otherness and additionally has adverse associations with the Other's skin tone. The discourse of race in the three works, written in specific contexts as cultural artifacts from those times, will show how the association of Otherness and skin color has changed throughout the centuries. Literary manifestations of this process express a clear disdain for the Other in terms of skin color while constructing a sense of superiority as the "I" of Europe. Spanish culture sought to identify with this solidarity of Europeanness. This desire to separate from the Other and to make skin color a central marker of difference remains constant in all three works, while represented in historically diverse ways.

## Chapter 1: *Cantar de Roldán*

First and foremost, it is important to explain the particular choice of text for this chapter. I have chosen this text because of its popularity during this particular time period to show the beginning of the identification in discourse as to what constituted Otherness in what is now Europe. The events that happen in *Cantar de Roldán*, along with the perspective from which it is written, not only presents a physical battle, but creates an ideological battle, which will resurface throughout not only this work, but also in *Cartas Marruecas* and *La Reina del Sur*. The events that happen in *Cantar de Roldán* are not events that will stay in the eleventh or twelfth centuries—the events represent an ideological trend of identifying Otherness based on specific criteria that continues to manifest itself throughout various time periods.

To provide some historical context, *Cantar de Roldán* is an epic poem written at some time in the eleventh or twelfth century; while the exact date of publication is unknown, the oldest known manuscript is the Digby 23 manuscript in Oxford's Bodleian Library, most likely written in the second half of the twelfth century (Victorio 18). Additionally, the epic is not an accurate representation of historical facts. The epic, following a hero and his miraculous acts, is similar to that of *Cantar de Roldán*. According to J.J. Duggan, medieval epics were first oral traditions and then later written down, as with *Cantar de Roldán* (80). As stated in the introduction, the oral tradition acted also as a reflection of the culture of the time.

In terms of actual events, “lo primero que debemos aclarar es que la campaña de los francos en España no fue una guerra santa” (Brown Ahumada). As a summary of the history that Brown Ahumada provides, Charles I, or Charlemagne, crossed the Pyrenees

with Suleimán, the Muslim governor of Barcelona, Gerona, and Zaragoza in order to ask for help against the emir of Córdoba. Charlemagne agreed to help and intended to put Suleimán on the throne in order to annex the Iberian Peninsula south of the Pyrenees to France to protect the Christian people. Charlemagne prepared an army to invade; however, Zaragoza rebelled against their Christian king and against their emir. Charlemagne then had to bring his troops back across the Pyrenees. In August of 778, the rearguard of the French army did suffer a surprise attack from another Christian group on its retreat (Brown Ahumada). These facts from 778 demonstrate that the Christians and Muslims were working together and that the original events were not a holy war. As Brown Ahumada states, “la historia indica que la Batalla de Roncesvalles fue en realidad un combate entre un grupo formado por una alianza de cristianos-musulmanes contra otro grupo cristiano: los vascones.” However, “[e]ste modesto suceso militar sufrió una transfiguración poética a tal grado que lo relegó por los siglos a la imaginación épica cristiana [...] la campaña del 778 se ve ‘apropiada’ por la mentalidad cruzada, no sólo como guerra santa, sino que además, como una lucha metafísica entre el bien y el mal” (Brown Ahumada). *Cantar de Roldán* is not an accurate representation of history, yet manages to create a divisive chasm between Christians and the Other through its appropriation of the event for cultural purposes. This chasm between Christians and the Other is initially depicted as a deviance in faith that posits a specific ideal and boundary intermingled with physical markers. José Manuel Pedrosa also makes the observation that the character of Roldán and his heroic actions did evolve throughout the peninsula as well. According to Hayden White, this is history’s very purpose: “Pragmatic histories produce the same kind of pictures of the past, but, rather than do so in the interest of

*knowing* the whole past (which predominates in Universal history), they strive to *serve* the present, to illuminate the present by adducing to it analogies from the past, and to drive moral lessons for the edification and instruction of living men” (99). The author of *Cantar de Roldán* did not focus on historical accuracy, but rather a lesson and inspiration for Christians of the time. David Aberbach writes:

The overall picture given by European poetry from *The Song of Roland* (c. 1100) to Njegoš’s epic, *The Mountain Wreath* (1847) suggests that although the medieval defeat of Christianity by Islam was only part of a complex shifting relationship extending from the birth of Islam to the modern period, this defeat had lasting consequences and was crucial in the emergence of European cultural nationalism. Poetry, while contributing to the image of Christian Europe united defensively against Islam, also helped to define and consolidate the idea of a Europe of nations. (605)

Even more specifically, Aberbach writes about the particular success of *Cantar de Roldán* within this context: “Yet, by the late thirteenth century the Crusaders had lost: many had indeed perished by the sword, and the Holy Land was again in Muslim hands. It may be partly for this reason that *The Song of Roland*, [...] became the single most widely read, recited and translated medieval poem, as an inspiration in defeat...” (606). White affirms that the practice of history was to write events in such a way that served contemporary understandings of the world, supporting the teleological view of the formation of collective identity. He writes: “Men looked at the world in ways that conformed to the purposes which motivated them; and they required different visions of history to justify the various projects which they had to undertake in order to realize their

humanity fully” (332). Aberbach writes: “Neither literary scholars nor scholars of nationalism have recognized fully the panoramic scale and significance of vernacular national poetry—or poetry ultimately seen as national—deriving from the medieval Muslim conquests of Christian territories, in the Middle East and Europe, and the centuries of rivalry that followed” (604).

Contextually, it is also imperative to note that medieval writers firmly believed in God’s omnipotence. Suzanne Conklin Akbari writes: “This erasure of human agency in the construction of systems of geographical knowledge underlines the extent to which standard categories and hierarchies were thought to be simply received from above rather than constructed on earth” (22). In other words, the medieval author of *Cantar de Roldán* believed that he was not just writing of his own power, but the physical boundaries that he describes are boundaries that have already been created by God. The Christians, then, act as God ordains. This belief of an omnipotent being also immediately helps to create the “us” vs. “them” mentality, or in this particular thesis, the appearance of the Other in shape of the “Moorish invader”. God’s chosen people, as represented in this text, are Christian, the “us” in the intention to create the Other. The Christians fight to expel “them,” or as it shall be further known throughout this thesis, the Other, the ones who were believed at the time to have originated from outside of modern-day Spain. As Foucault highlighted throughout his studies, war was a continual part of society that reflected the constant ebb and flow of power (Taylor 750). Taylor describes Foucault’s ideas: “...the ‘perpetual war’ discourse rejects these unified and tripartite ways of picturing power and declares that society is divided into *two* parts: them and us, oppressor and oppressed. Soon, these binary parts are theorized as races” (750). At the

time of *Cantar de Roldán*, these races would specifically include those of North African descent, or the Saracens, against the modern-day European, who were at that time considered simply the Christians. There is a clear emphasis on difference of religion for demarcating identity; this, however, merges into identification of the Other based on physical and behavioral traits that are treated as morally inferior and even at times degenerate, which serves as justification for the expulsion of the Other. Therefore, in the epic written centuries after the historical event on which it is loosely based, there is a focus on the final push to expel the Saracens from the Peninsula, not just physically but also culturally because of a fear of a perversion of faith that they might introduce into the Peninsula. Specifically, there are two battles: one battle that takes place at the foot of the Pyrenees and another that focuses on expelling the Saracens from their last stronghold, Zaragoza. This theme of expelling the Other (the non-European) serves as Christian propaganda; it is not historically accurate, but still told to the masses (as Aberbach previously explained) as a cultural counterattack on Islam.

Throughout *Cantar de Roldán*, the author focuses on differences of the Saracens, a representation of the non-European, because of the dangers that their pagan faith were believed to represent to Christians, not only as a belief system, but also through their perceived degenerate behavior that impedes or destroys development. In *Orientalism*, Edward Said highlights the importance of the Orientalist's emphasis on characteristics divergent from Christianity:

And so, indeed, is the Orientalist attitude in general. It shares with magic and with mythology the self-containing, self-reinforcing character of a closed system, in which objects are what they are *because* they are what

they are, for once, for all time, for ontological reasons that no empirical material can either dislodge or alter. The European encounter with the Orient, and specifically with Islam, strengthened this system of representing the Orient and, as has been suggested by Henri Pirenne, turned Islam into the very epitome of an outsider against which the whole of European civilization from the Middle Ages was founded. (70)

Furthermore, the enumeration of divergences is necessary in order to continue the binary of us vs. the Other. Said continues: “The construction of identity—[...] involves the construction of opposites and “others” whose actuality is always subject to the continuous interpretation and re-interpretation of their differences from “us”. Each age and society re-creates its “Others” (332). In this particular epic, the Saracen represents the Other. Conklin Akbari defines the Saracens and their bodies as such: “Saracen bodies—that is, the bodies of people of those nations identified as owing allegiance to the so-called “law of Muhammad”....” (156). Notice that the term “Saracen” does not designate someone from one specific Muslim nation, but rather there exists the possibility of a Saracen being from any one of many nations. The important thing to note here is the faith of the Saracen. Saracens are those that owed allegiance to the laws of Muhammad—not the laws of God. In *Orientalism*, Said also adds further significance to the term Saracen: “For indeed the Saracen does boast of tracing his race’s line back to Eblis, the Muslim Lucifer” (101). Even centuries later, the implication of the Saracen in European history remained. For example, in the fifteenth century, Dainotto quotes Ludovico Ariosto, who used various negative terms to describe the Saracens, such as

“haughty”, “uncanny” and “rascal”; as a philosopher, “Ariosto’s [Europe] was the old antithesis of east and west, of Christianity and Islam” (Dainotto 43).

In terms of creating an image of the Other, the significance of language cannot be overlooked in forming the us vs. the Other binary. In relation to language, according to Ferdinand de Saussure, the past is presented to audiences through various signs, composed of something signified and a signifier (Saussure 40). Many of the signs have been already determined by history. And, even more significant than signs, especially in *Cantar de Roldán*, are myths. According to Roland Barthes: “myth is a system of communication, that it is a message” (54). Furthermore, “the language of myth is not arbitrary, it is motivated, ideologically loaded, and responsible for transforming ‘history into Nature’” (Barthes 53). Barthes himself gives an example of myth and its implications: he describes a picture he sees in *Paris-Match*; it is a young black boy “in a French uniform [...] saluting with his eyes uplifted, probably fixed on a fold of the tricolor” (58). Barthes then goes on to explain that this image has two levels of meaning, the second level of meaning being the myth. The first level is just as it seems: a French soldier saluting the flag. However, the second level, or the myth, is that “France is a great Empire, and that all her sons, without any color discrimination, faithfully serve under her flag, and there is no better answer to the detractors of an alleged colonialism than the zeal shown by this Negro in serving his so-called oppressors” (58). The example of Barthes in explaining myth is significant especially for the language chosen in *Cantar de Roldán* because the language acts as a tool in which to disseminate certain ideas. Jeffrey Nealon and Susan Searls Giroux write: “We have no access to the past that is *unmediated* [...] The past is available to us only through representations—words, images, symbols—

whether these derive from film, advertising, legal records, oral history, or personal recollections [...] we have no access to a past “reality” that is not already a representation” (108). The language of *Cantar de Roldán*, then, propagates a particular message to the masses. As Barthes writes, “[m]ythical speech is made of a material which has *already* been worked on so as to make it suitable for communication: it is because all the materials of myth (whether pictorial or written) presuppose a signifying consciousness, that one can reason about them while discounting their substance” (55).

Through language, then, the author of *Cantar de Roldán* manages to create a particular myth about the Otherness of the Saracens, which is similar to the racism that we can see in other works such as *Cartas marruecas* and *La reina del sur*. Of particular importance is the myth of the monstrosity of the Other. In order to create distinctions between the Christians and Saracens, the author manipulates the text to show various ways in which the latter differ from the former—not just in faith, but also in skin tone and geography. The significance of monstrosity is explained by Jeffery Jerome Cohen:

Representing an anterior culture as monstrous justifies its displacement or extermination by rendering the act heroic. In medieval France the *chansons de geste* celebrated the crusades by transforming Muslims into demonic caricatures whose menacing lack of humanity was readable from their bestial attributes; by culturally glossing “Saracens” as “monsters” propagandists rendered rhetorically admissible the annexation of the East by the West. (7-8)

By representing the Saracens as monsters, not just in faith, but in numerous other aspects, the author of *Cantar de Roldán* makes them appear less than human and subsequently

inferior. This discursive presentation of the Other assists in further justifying their expulsion and distances the Peninsular Christians from the Other. By highlighting the differences between the Christians and the Saracens, not only do audiences see a clear Other and a dehumanization of the Saracens, but this also closely relates to a moral judgment based on perceived cultural and racial differences. Cohen writes: “In medieval France the *chansons de geste* celebrated the crusades by transforming Muslims into demonic caricatures whose menacing lack of humanity was readable from their bestial attributes; by culturally glossing “Saracens” as “monstra” propogandists rendered rhetorically admissible the annexation of the East by the West” (8). Even before the writing of *Cantar de Roldán*, physical differences were used to demarcate Otherness. Cohen highlights the work of the Roman naturalist Pliny: “[Pliny] assumed nonwhite skin to be symptomatic of a complete difference in temperament and attributed Africa’s darkness to climate; the intense heat, he said, had burned the Africans’ skin and malformed their bodies (*Natural History*, 2.80). These differences were quickly moralized through a pervasive rhetoric of deviance” (10). Therefore, not only were Christians expelling the Muslims because they believed that all was under God’s control and part of His plan, but it also becomes, to them, the good and right thing to do. By moralizing differences, the Other became seen as inhuman—further justification for the degradation of the Other through accentuating their discrepancies with a perceived Christian norm.

One of the specific myths, then, seen through language is the implication of skin tone; in other words, Otherness appears in terms of skin tone. Although racism was not existent at this particular point in time, these variations in physical characteristics were

associated with the pagan faith<sup>1</sup>. The contrast in physiognomy acted to further accentuate what made the Saracens the Other. This is an early phase in the foundation of difference through skin tone, and throughout this thesis I will be examining how this further develops through distinct times in textual representation. To further explain this concept of the relationship between faith and skin tone, Conklin Akbari describes the role of race in relation to the Saracens:

It is beyond doubt that there is a value in recognizing the foundations of modern racism in medieval texts. It is vitally important, however, to first develop a clear understanding of how categories of bodily diversity function within specifically medieval systems of knowledge [...] Within the medieval discourse of bodily diversity—in sharp opposition to modern racial discourse—corporeal difference is not an either/or, black/white dichotomy. Rather, it is a continuum, with the monstrous races found at the fringes of the ecumene located on one end, and the normative European body on the other. Saracen bodies are located along this continuum, which is why the Saracen body is so variable in the literature. (159-160)

In other words, the Saracens were physically described in a way that served a specific purpose of establishing taxonomy of human traits within a specific hierarchy that places white Christians at the top. The Saracens' physical descriptions mattered because the author showed how this particular group of people was different, and therefore seen as inferior, to European Christians. By exemplifying these physical differences, authors (and

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<sup>1</sup> “Whiteness produced itself, that is, as invisible or as effacing its own characteristic value, in the same way, say, that a unit of currency seems only able to gauge the value of other things without expressing anything about itself” (DiPiero 155)

in particular, the author of *Cantar de Roldán*), were able to immediately argue that the Saracens were dangerous outliers. Their physical attributes identified them as Other, even before learning anything else about Other cultural markers. Their physical appearances let audiences know that they were not Europeans; therefore, they came from somewhere else, that fact implying (to some) that they should not be there. Christian audiences listening to *Cantar de Roldán*, as it was a story to be told, would have made the association that a pagan faith is indicated by a difference in skin tone, amongst other characteristics. But, a pagan faith did then come hand in hand with a darker skin tone. Brown Ahumada elaborates: “El discurso y la actitud manifestada en estos textos poéticos sigue vigente en el pensamiento occidental: ese Otro es distinto y, por lo tanto peligroso. El Otro debe ser asimilado, reducido, domesticado o, en su defecto, exterminado” (1). Brown Ahumada’s use of the word “defecto” here signals the notion of how differences acknowledged through physical attributes replaced ideological or religious diversity as a sign of inferiority. The dark skin indicates, in the text, a sign of the inhuman qualities perceived to characterize the Saracens and signals their “natural” or “inherent” non-visible defects. Just as their pagan faith is seen as full of evil, their skin tone marks them—to a Christian audience—as separate from God. Brown Ahumada writes:

Las características físicas de los ‘sarracenos’ están directamente relacionadas con sus nombres. Muchos poseen un tamaño y una fuerza física que excede a las capacidades humanas; Chernublo de Montenegro es capaz de acarrear un peso mayor que el que pueden soportar cuatro mulos de carga. De algunos se dice, explícitamente, que son gigantes. Su rostro

también es pintado de manera brutal y amenazadora, [...] el espacio que hay entre sus cejas puede medir más de medio pie [...] Las características físicas de los ‘sarracenos’ apuntan hacia la barbarie y la animalidad. (7)

In other words, these physical characteristics become associated with the myth of Saracens as a little bit less human. Their animalistic or inhuman characteristics, again, portray them as Other in relation to the perceived autochthonous inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula. Again, although racism is not yet an institution at the time of this writing, it is interesting to note that physical attributes began to be connected to perversions of the Christian faith. This war to win Zaragoza and this particular epic centralizes the discrepancies in faith—which faith is right and which is wrong; the epic highlights which faith must persevere and which must be expelled from the Peninsula. However, the differences in physical appearance, as can be seen in the verses that I will mention below, become attached to the differences in religion. These variances perpetuate a particular myth about the Saracen people. The skin color, size of the nose, and ears all become physical attributes connected with the false faith of the Other in this text, they become identifying markers of the Other.

Yet another manner in which the author of *Cantar de Roldán* magnified the Otherness of the Saracens through language was through the descriptions of their land. By designating a Christian space and Other space and noting significant variations, the author creates a distance between Christians (not yet the nation of Spain) and themselves. As regards the construction of Otherness in connection with geography, Said writes that “this universal practice of designating in one’s mind a familiar space [...] is a way of making geographical distinctions that *can be* entirely arbitrary” (54). Said uses the “word

“arbitrary” here because imaginative geography of the ‘our land—barbarian land’ does not require that the barbarians acknowledge the distinction” (54).

The first indication as to which lands were barbaric is the physical descriptions of the Saracen lands. These lands are described in terms of lacking the vital elements not only for a flourishing society, but also for mere survival. For example, Canto LXXVIII reads:

Se dice que en la tierra de donde éste procede  
el sol no brilla nunca  
ni nunca cae la lluvia, ni se forma el rocío  
y no hay ninguna piedra de otro color que negra;  
otros dicen también que allí el diablo mea. (76)

Immediately it is clear that this particular land has absolutely no redeeming qualities. It is the land of Chernublo de Monegro, a Saracen. First, this particular land is a place completely void of life offering no substantive materials necessary to sustain a healthy society. The sun never shines in this land, but if God is the center of the universe, and therefore the giver of life, which He does through the sun, it seems as if God has chosen to not give life to that particular land. He ignores this land (Monegro), which again, only magnifies that the Other exists in the periphery of life-giving resources. It is implied that if God chooses not to be present, then the territory associated with a lack of God is not holy. Furthermore, not only is there a complete lack of sun, there is no rain nor dew. Dew requires heat, which requires the sun. Even the smallest bit of water is not present in this place—which, again, implies a complete lack of life. Referring to the drowning scene above, the excess of water that causes the Saracens’ death can be symptomatic of a life

lived outside of God's graces. Extremes in terms of a complete lack or an excess define the life of the Other. Of course, Chernublo de Monegro has survived, but it is a life of extreme hardship to survive in a territory of lifelessness. Additionally, the barren nature of the land suggests that Chernublo de Monegro and others managed to survive the land's desolation and lifelessness in part due to non-human characteristics; in other words, their monstrosity allows them to survive. This discourse allows for a clearer break between self and Other—especially when the Other is not considered to be quite human, but rather some lower organic creature, an animal or something of the sort. The lifelessness of the territory represents a Hell on earth. It is an evil land, devoid of God and His goodness. The Saracens came from these lands, which through metonymical association implies that they are also from Hell.

Another description to show the hopelessness in these worlds of the Other comes from the description of another Saracen, Marganice (in Spanish, Marsil). The author writes:

...Se ha fugado Marsil,  
aunque allí se ha quedado el califo su tío:  
señor de Cartagena, Alfrera, Garmalía,  
también de Etiopía, esa tierra maldita.  
Toda esa gente negra está en su señorío:  
grandes narices tienen y largas las orejas,  
y suman entre todos más de cincuenta mil.  
Fieramente cabalgan y con un gran furor  
y van gritando el grito de guerra de paganos. (CXLIII)

Andreas Kablitz writes: “As these verses suggest, *tere maldite*, even the country, where the pagans live, represents a perverted nature” (S154). The perverted nature of their origins further justifies the Christians in expelling the Saracens from Christian lands. Their depraved land, the origin of the Other, is a land that corrupts the truth and can infect all aspects of life. The inhabitants of such a land are contaminated and threaten the natural and “blessed” conditions of the Christian inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula. In order to protect an extensive contamination of land and people, the Other must leave. Kablitz continues to elaborate on the importance of the description of the Saracen lands: “The world of the pagans is a place of fallen Nature [...] What deflects this potential equivalence is their failure to believe as the Christians do in their lack of faith, they pervert Nature” (S155). Kablitz submits that through the Saracens’ pagan faith, it is not just that Nature is perverted, but rather the Saracens assert their perversion on the land. Non-Christians exercise powerful and destructive forces on their lived environment and thus the text advocates that Christians cannot allow this kind of destructive pagan behavior in their own lands.

The significance of these variations in land between the godless and God-favored further serves to distinguish Otherness. Said explains the utilization of highlighting stark oppositions, such as those between lands, between the two groups as:

...the culturally sanctioned habit of deploying large generalizations by which reality is divided into various collectives [...] each category being not so much a neutral designation as an evaluative interpretation.

Underlying these categories is the rigidly binomial opposition of “ours”

and “theirs” with the former always encroaching upon the latter (even to the point of making “theirs” exclusively a function of “ours”). (227)

Even the names of the Saracens perpetuate the danger of their false beliefs and continue to direct audiences to the need to remove them from the peninsula. The names themselves serve as myth—the names of the Saracens have a second level of meaning apart from identification of characters. Brown Ahumada highlights some of the Saracen names:

Los sarracenos que enfrentan a Roland en el campo de batalla, llevan por nombre Falsarón, Malprimis, Malcuidant, Malcud, Aelroth, Chernublo, Abismo, por sólo nombrar algunos de los muchos presentes en el cantar. Sorprende la cantidad de nombres que comienzan con la partícula ‘Mal’, significativo en cuanto complementa y reafirma una serie de atributos atribuidos a los ‘sarracenos’ a lo largo del relato. Lo mismo podría decirse del nombre Falsarón, que evoca a la idea de mentira y falsedad, o Abismo, palabra que puede asociarse a la perdición o al mismísimo infierno. (7)

Brown Ahumada points out that the names of the Saracens are yet another contributing factor in showing how they are “bad”. Linguistically, just with the root of some of their names being “mal”, the name indicates a malevolence to audiences; at the time of *Cantar de Roldán*, audiences were hearing the text. Before hearing a physical description or knowing what the specific character does in battle, audiences already know that this character contains some evil; they are aware that this person is not a Christian, because that is the ultimate signifier of a character’s reputation. Presumably, then, that character is

also a Saracen. Saracen equals bad; having bad in the name aligns the identity of the person with a negative social identity.

One name in particular, *Abismo*, closely relates with the descriptions of the various worlds from which the Saracens come and points out to their evil beliefs rooted in their origins. The lifelessness of the territories described above, especially that of Chernublo de Monegro, suggest a Hell on earth. There is no life to be found, nor is there any water or sunlight to give life. The name *Abismo* also suggests that the Saracens come from this sort of hell on earth. *Abismo*, signifying abyss, represents an eternal darkness. There is no end to an abyss; there is no light; there is only finality. One could even say that this name represents the end of life for a Saracen. They come from lifeless worlds and will end in a lifeless abyss, void of light.

Yet another interesting name that Brown Ahumada also highlights is the name of Falsarón, which reiterates to audiences the false nature of these pagan people. Falsarón is described physically as the one whose forehead is so large that one can put half of a foot between his two eyes (XCIV). Interestingly, even his physical characteristics seem unbelievable, in correlation with his name. As Ahumada mentions, his name invokes the feelings of lies or falsehoods. Although not directly named “mal”, or “bad”, as some of his fellow Saracens, his name holds a very significant indicator to audiences. By naming him Falsarón, audiences understand that his belief systems are not those of the truth—or, his belief systems are not those that correspond with Christianity.

Further differentiation from Christianity perpetuates the inherent Otherness of the Saracens. Apart from physical characteristics and geographical boundaries, the author also highlights the involvement of the Christian God and the Saracen gods in death to

underscore the disparity between the two faiths. The author uses Roldán's death to first remind Christians of the promises and blessings that they will receive. The death of Roldán begins to establish this contrast by focusing on the benefits of embracing the "true faith":

Allí el guante derecho le está ofreciendo a Dios  
y el ángel San Gabriel lo toma con su mano.  
Su cabeza inclinada le sostiene en su brazo:  
Con las manos unidas se dirige a su fin.  
Allí le envía Dios al ángel Querubín,  
también es enviado San Miguel de Peligro;  
juntamente con ellos se acerca San Gabriel  
y el alma del buen conde llevan al paraíso. (CLXXVI)

In these verses, the author claims that Christianity fulfills the Biblical prophecies because of the way in which the angels take care of Roldán. They are bringing his soul to Heaven, to paradise after a life well-lived in the light of the true God. God, then, directly intervenes in the death of Roldán to portray how the gifts of a faithful life manifest in the afterlife. He sends not one, not two, but three angels to assist in bringing Roldán to paradise. He ensures that Gabriel interacts directly with Roldán by taking his hand; there is a very human and interactional tone with Gabriel here. The supernatural has come down from heaven to answer the prayers of a man that is dying. The ill and dying are attended to during life and in death—this is particularly important in constructing the benefits of a Christian life while confronting the human fear of death. The interactional nature of the Christian God assists in diminishing the naturally expressed fear of the great

beyond. Furthermore, the soul of Roldán is immediately taken to paradise, as seen in the last line. Here is no waiting for Roldán's soul; there is no purgatory in this epic or anything of the sort. There does not appear to be any sort of punishment. In fact, Roldán's soul is taken to heaven by three different angels. To the medieval writer, Roldán's death depicts the hope of life after death.

On the other hand, the author describes the opposite experience for the Saracens, showing the fallacy in the pagan god that they serve. The Saracens must consistently deal with the absence of the gods that they follow. The Saracens were angry that their gods were unable to come to earth as God and the angels did for Roldán. CLXXX begins: "Hizo por Carlomagno allí Dios un milagro,/ pues se ha quedado el sol parado en su carrera". The opening line shows that the Christian God is active with his followers realizing miracles for them. CLXXX continues with the death of the Saracens:

Los paganos huían, van detrás los franceses [...]

Les han cortado el paso, les cortan los caminos,  
aguas del río Ebro tienen allí delante:

las aguas son profundas, temerosas, corrientes  
y no hay ninguna barca, ni nave, ni chalana.

Los paganos invocan a Tervagán, su dios,  
y se lanzan al río, mas no se salvarán: [...]

allí se ahogaron todos con angustioso afán.

Here, the contrast between God and the representation of the pagan god, Tervagán, manifests itself: God quickly answered the prayers of Roldán, as He had done throughout the Bible, a point Roldán reiterates often in the text. In contrast, numerous pagans pray to

Tervagán with no response resulting in a physical and spiritual death as all of their souls descend to hell. They all drowned, and not for lack of their own effort to save themselves through prayer. According to the author, they prayed to Tervagán, but their god did not respond. There is also no mention in this part of the text to what happened to their souls—the author conspicuously excludes any reference to paradise or Heaven, as the author did with Roldán. Audiences know that Roldán’s soul rises to Heaven, but there is no mention of souls or an afterlife for the Saracens in this particular point of the text. The author confirms, with this contrast, the popular belief that Christianity was the only correct belief system by emphasizing God’s active role in the life of the faithful whereas the pagan gods reveal their inability to attend to their followers, thus further exposing their false existence. Furthermore, Christians, as demonstrated with Roldán’s soul, imagine an afterlife where their souls ascend to Heaven. In *Cantar de Roldán*, the Saracen faith is misrepresented in such a way that it appears as if the pagans have no such promise of an afterlife. The death of the Saracens is what Christians want to stop: a death without promise of Heaven is a death removed from God. This kind of separation from God cannot be permitted on the Peninsula. From the Christian perspective, the only option is to purge the Peninsula of the useless idolatry. Lastly, the author manipulates these scenes of death in order to offer audiences a negative rendition of what happens to the Saracens’ souls after death.

*Cantar de Roldán* focuses on the dichotomy between Christianity and the pagan religion of the Saracen to repeatedly direct audiences to what they believed was the true God and the true religion. The additional variations between the two groups (skin tone, geography, and namesake) are not the focal point of *Cantar de Roldán*; but rather, these

serve as further indicators to audiences of the danger that the Saracens pose to the Christian borders of the peninsula. The additional variations become associated with later representations of the Other, as will be seen in later texts. The events and ideologies presented in *Cantar de Roldán* continue to underscore the mentality of what constitutes the Other at this particular point in history. In particular, *Cantar de Roldán* shows how skin and bodies come to be identified with the malignant Other, and this text begins to shape that association of skin color with aspersion. While *Cantar de Roldán* does emphasize a religious disparity, more importantly, *Cantar de Roldán* emphasizes the significance of the difference in skin color as a negative aspect of the Other. Alberto López Bargados highlights the implications of the beginnings of the battles of ideology set forth in medieval literature:

Para contar la contrahistoria de España, probablemente no encontraremos un sujeto más propicio que el “moro”. Identificada desde la Baja Edad Media, y durante siglos siguientes, como el enemigo próximo, los cronistas de la memoria histórica española abundaron en el recurso negativo del vecino musulmán para construir el relato diurno y triunfante de las monarquías ibéricas unidas a la fe verdadera, primero, y más tarde al destino imperial de la corte católica. (74)

The need to identify and expel the Other, associated with various physical deviances continues to manifest itself in the second and third texts I analyze and prefigures more blatant racial tones. Throughout *Cantar de Roldán*, skin tone remains secondary to religion as a marker of difference; in *Cartas marruecas* and *La reina del sur*, it is a primary marker of difference.

## Chapter 2: *Cartas marruecas*

Centuries after *Cantar de Roldán*, the cultural impact of the Conquest and Reconquest remained in the diachronic development of whitening in literary discourse, which I am showing through these examples. In concentration on the selected three texts, we see that in *Cantar de Roldán*, the initial indicator of Otherness centered on faith as a primary indicator and race as a secondary or tertiary indicator to support the marking of the Other. By the writing of *Cartas marruecas* in the late eighteenth century, a transition had begun that placed race in a more prominent position for identifying the Other. As a brief summary, *Cartas marruecas* utilizes letters to tell the story of a young Moroccan's journey through Spain as he attempts to learn about the culture. What he learns is told in these letters to his Moroccan mentor.

At the time of writing, the emphasis on science and particularly on the taxonomic identification of species and types in the eighteenth century initiated the racial discourse that established external characteristics as signs of moral value. It was at the time of the and the , during which there was more of a focus on science and understanding in an attempt to rid Europe of the dark times of the Middle Ages. France was a central force in the Enlightenment, and the impact of the Enlightenment is clear in *Cartas marruecas*. To begin, Kitts quotes Kant as describing the Enlightenment as “man's release from his self-incurred tutelage [...] resolution and courage” (Kant 85). She then highlights Foucault's beliefs in relation to Kant: “Foucault picks up on this idea of the ‘resolution and courage’ required to engage in an active, constructive, and productive way with the present and adds this idea of bravery or ‘heroism’ to his own discourse on modernity... (Kitts 43).

The *hombre de bien* discussed in *Cartas marruecas* is of direct relation to this resolution and courage; I will discuss the specifics of the *hombre de bien* a few paragraphs later.

At the time Cadalso was writing *Cartas marruecas*, signs of racism in its modern forms had become more prevalent in cultural discourses and is evident in his text. It is not to say that minority populations had not suffered discrimination, but the factors that determined the inferiority of the Other had not emphasized racial differences as much as cultural or religious distinctions. Charles Montesquieu, whose theory I will discuss later, believed in climatology; specifically, that "...the excessively hot south of Spain and Italy produced a similar breed of humans: savage, non-European, and with a brown skin" (Dainotto 61). The implications of Otherness presented in *Cantar de Roldán* resurface more prominently in *Cartas marruecas*, in associating darkness with malevolence and destruction. Cultural inferiority, then, derives from a non-white race, typically read as non-European, but we will see that this is complicated in terms of Spain and Cadalso's argument. Cadalso uses *Cartas marruecas* to instill a pride in an emerging national Spanish identity; however, I am analyzing *Cartas marruecas* to show the emerging racial discourse. Racial determinants, then, regulate the value of the culture in the discourse of eighteenth century Europe as evidenced in Cadalso's text. He conjures the trauma of Spanish history, specifically, the violent wars of the past history to support the racial discourse. As Daniela Flesler writes:

Este "ancestral imaginario negativo hacia lo árabe y musulmán" en España tiene una de sus primeras manifestaciones textuales en el intento de explicar la derrota visigoda del año 711 frente a los invasores procedentes del norte de África. La historia que surge alrededor de estos hechos ha

sido llamada “la leyenda de la pérdida de España”, título que evidencia [...] a quiénes eran los verdaderos “dueños” de España y quiénes los usurpadores. (76)

Cadalso carefully attempts to establish a unique Spanish identity while at the same time keeping Spain within the boundaries of Europe and not on the outside of its borders.

Cadalso uses vocabulary, as I will show, that demonstrates that demarcation of Otherness can also be done through physical appearance. Throughout the novel, references to the past and the derogatory tone of Otherness are pervasive. Gazel, as the foreigner, recognizes these implications of the past. Not only does he mention them in the very first letter, but in the third letter as well he writes: “En los meses que han pasado desde la última que te escribí, me he impuesto en la historia de España. He visto lo que de ella se ha escrito desde tiempos anteriores a la invasión de nuestros abuelos y su establecimiento en ella” (7). Gazel’s use of the words “nuestros abuelos” also demonstrates who was responsible for that invasion, and it separates Gazel from the Spaniards. His Moroccan cultural identity descends from the bellicose and heretical invading Saracens that had been imagined and constructed in history as the evil, albeit essential, Other in defining Spanish identity. The lasting trauma of the past that Flesler describes continues to be a part of Spanish memory in this novel. Additionally, the impact of the Other (specifically, the Moors) is also seen in this novel. However, identifiers of the Other become explicitly more racial.

Because this thesis focuses on the development of identification of Otherness in terms of race, I will be focusing primarily on how darker skin becomes more prominent than in the *Cantar* to identify the inferior Other. It depends on insisting that the binary

centers on the same relationship of superiority and inferiority, identifying a Eurocentric whiteness against a darker Other. Cadalso's *Cartas marruecas* highlights the necessity of a whiter Europe as evidenced by Kant. In the time between *Cantar de Roldán* and *Cartas marruecas*, Europe, and consequently Spain (now its own independent nation), experienced critical cultural shifts and was striving for a uniform identity. Roberto M. Dainotto explains: "Unity, in turn, meant the implicit institution of some standards of Europeanness: if Europe was a person, then it had, like a person, one character, one way of life, one "genius", and one mode of conduct" (40). In the European sense, it had been established that the East and West were fundamentally different, as previously established in *Cantar de Roldán*. The main focus of identifying Europe and the Other depended strongly on binaries. To reiterate what Said explained in *Orientalism*, Europe was employing:

the culturally sanctioned habit of deploying large generalizations by which reality is divided into various collectives: languages, races, types, colors, mentalities, each category being not so much a neutral designation as an evaluative interpretation. Underlying these categories is the rigidly binomial opposition of "ours" and "theirs" with the former always encroaching upon the latter (even to the point of making "theirs" exclusively a function of "ours"). (227)

As Europe had been establishing the oppositional Other, what constituted true Europeanness became more complex. Dainotto writes:

the Europe-versus-Orient paradigm may be overlooking a supplementary and modern genesis of Europe. In the same eighteenth century in which

the idea of Europe seems to solidify, and in which Orientalism [...] is established as an academic discipline, Europe starts conceiving a *new* logic for self-definition that renders the Other superfluous. (53)

Dainotto then further explains that at this point in history, the self-identity of Europe must go further than just a perspective of opposition. He states: “In order for European theory to dispense of the absolute Other, a different rhetoric of antithesis between what Europe is (identity) and what it is not (difference) must [...] be organized. Difference has to be translated from the radical Other onto a negative part, or moment, of the European self” (54). Much to the horror of Europe in the desperate attempt to find its true identity, it became clear that Europe was its own Other. Montesquieu, as previously mentioned, was an influential thinker in this theory. As Dainotto states:

Montesquieu’s temperate (climatologically and therefore politically) zone is not Ibn Khaldun’s Mediterranean, but a European north comprising England, Holland, Germany, Belgium, and France [...] In a way, both the extremely cold north of Lapland and Siberia and the excessively hot south of Spain and Italy produced a similar breed of humans: savage, non-European, and with a brown skin. (60)

Unfortunately for Spain, by falling into this category of Other, the nation suddenly had to prove itself as part of Europe. For with these new developments in the Eurocentric mindset, “...the Orient *was* the south, and Europe’s Other was to be found, as in a nightmare, within Europe’s own borders” (Dainotto 55). Or, even more bluntly: “The south was a deficiency of Europeanness; put differently, it was its past” (55). Therefore, Spain did not always compare with its European counterparts. Dainotto asks the critical

question at that time: “Could eighteenth-century Spain [...], alleged to be behind by now in both scientific instruments and books, be considered fully European?” (40).

Additionally, Montesquieu had previously published his own epistolary novel, *Persian Letters*, in which two Persian noblemen travel throughout Europe, and at one point, stop in Spain (and give a scathing criticism of the nation). Cadalso also had to respond to that criticism as well as the perspective of the rest of Europe that Spain was considered Other, as proposed by Montesquieu.

Spain not only needed to prove that it was not the Other, but also needed to find its own identity. Susan Martin-Márquez describes the ideological conflict within Spain:

Thus, as many other modern nation-states were being formed for the first time, Spain embarked upon what might be termed second-wave nation building, with significant sectors of the population promoting an iconoclastic view of the national past (drawing, perhaps, upon centuries of doubts), even as adherents to tradition scrambled to shore up their more hegemonic understanding of history” (17).

Spain in particular had a very complex and diverse past as compared to other newly formed nations; the “second-wave nation building” reflects Spain’s efforts to create a national history that accurately reflected its diversity (both racial and religious). Within this very context of the desperate search for identity and worthiness to be considered European comes the writing of *Cartas marruecas*.

As a religious context, Cadalso writes *Cartas marruecas* at the end of the eighteenth century; the Reformation and the Counterreformation had already taken place in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. At the time of *Cartas marruecas*, Christianity

is fully established in Europe and chasms between various sects of Christianity are beginning to emerge: “As the Orthodox Church had split Europe between east and west, Protestantism was now parting Europe between the reformed churches of the north and the Roman Catholic ones of the south. The Catholic south took, in Protestant eschatology, the place of antithesis once assigned to the Muslim of the east” (Dainotto 44). Spain, then, was demarcated from the rest of Europe not only by their darker skin but their difference in sect of Christianity.

Within the context of Spain rejecting the discourse from writers of Northern nations that designated Southern Europe as inferior and, for all intents and purposes, culturally outside of European borders, Caldaso produced his *Cartas marruecas*, which was published posthumously in 1789. Jesús Cañas Murillo discusses the background of the book. It was written in different stages; the first parts being written while Caldaso was living in Zaragoza, between the end of 1768 until January of 1770. He wrote another part of the novel in 1768, and the end of the novel in 1774, while living in Salamanca. It had many titles before its current *Cartas marruecas* (Cañas Murillo 209).

*Cartas marruecas* is an epistolary novel that displays an exchange of letters among three characters: Gazel Ben-Aly (hereafter referred to just as Gazel), Ben-Beley, and Nuño Núñez (hereafter referred to as Nuño).

As one of the three main characters, Nuño’s significance lies in his credentials as a Spaniard. Jesús Cañas Murillo describes the Spanish protagonist as epitomizing the essence of the emerging nation: “Nuño Nuñez es un militar español maduro, admirador de las grandes hazañas que protagonizaron los ejércitos de su país, y de las personas concretas que se encargaron de realizarlas [...] A través de él Caldaso suele transmitir su

visión personal de la realidad [...] Representa al militar intelectual e ilustrado de su tiempo, defensor de cambios que lleven a la mejora de su mundo” (216). He is the ideal Spanish citizen and proves to the rest of Europe that Spain shares the essential qualities of Europe such as the use of reason, signs of advanced civilization, and notion of a national consciousness. This last category indicated a higher level of development in the taxonomy of organized collectives during the eighteenth century (tribal organizations would constitute an example of a less developed collective entity). For example, Kant had created taxonomy of various European nations and their peoples in *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*.

The other central character, Gazel, serves as a reminder that Otherness persists and his physical appearance becomes intertwined with culture as the measure of one’s ability to assimilate into Spanish culture. I will show this throughout this chapter. Gazel acts as a constant reminder of the ignorance of the Other and of his steadfast outsider status, indicated not just by his Moroccan outsider status, but most importantly, by the darker color of his African skin. Not only does this variation in skin tone separate Spain from the Other of Africa, but it reaffirms Spain’s place in Europe as it separates the nation from the darker-skinned southern Europeans of Montesquieu’s theory. Barbaric and cultural underdevelopment mark the African identity, which begins to appear as exchangeable with racial markers of darker skin. Ben-Beley, Gazel’s Moroccan mentor references their reputation of barbaric people when he writes to Gazel “sin duda tendrás por grande absurdo lo que voy a decirte, y si publicas este mi dictamen, no habrá europeo que no me llame bárbaro africano...” (54). Darker races become linked with barbarism throughout the text.

As a quick context for Ben-Beley, he serves mostly as the recipient of the letters from Gazel. As Cañas Murillo describes, “Ben Beley es otro marroquí, pero éste anciano, bondadoso, sabio, erudito, juicioso, buen educador, respetuoso de las costumbres, culturas, y pensamientos ajenos, nada sectario, de recto criterio, buen consejero y amante de la verdad. [...] A través de él se va a proporcionar doctrina positiva a los lectores...” (217). It is interesting here that Ben-Beley is described as “respectful of the customs”; yet, Nuño, the Spaniard, serves as the voice of truth. Kitts writes: “...much of what Gazel writes in fact derives from Nuño and represents the latter’s views” (38). Although Ben-Beley is older than Nuño, he still is not the ultimate voice of reason. That responsibility and distinction is reserved for Nuño, the Spaniard, whose perspective indicates that the geographical terrain imbued with Christian ideals and reason is a land of truth. Cañas Murillo explains: “Pero, en estas circunstancias, el *hombre de bien* realiza un ejercicio de autoafirmación” (221). The *hombre de bien*, according to Kitts, is as follows: “The *hombre de bien* is debated, defined, and represented as an example to aspire towards. The *hombre de bien* is constructed through the discourse of the three correspondents and represents the ideal identity of the modern (male) citizen of Spain, as one who regulates his own conduct—[...]—and thereby influences and regulates the conduct of others” (37). The *hombre de bien* is a reflection of the Enlightenment as Cadalso uses the idea of the *hombre de bien* to solidify the the national carácter of the Spaniard through reasoning between the three characters. Nuño both describes the ideal man but also confirms himself as one of those men as he describes throughout the letters what it means to truly be Spanish.

By writing *Cartas marruecas* as an epistolary novel, Cadalso gives the allusion that characters represent their own experiences without an omnipotent narrator, although this does not remove his authoritative control over the text. *Cartas marruecas* does fall into the imitation of literature de viajes, but is not actually one. Cadalso used the format of *Cartas marruecas* to examine his respective culture. As Landry writes, “The epistolary form is writing as an exchange, and Cadalso literally exchanges his own voice for that of a Moor in Spanish clothing so as to reflect on his own nation” (253). Additionally, the remnants of the battles centuries before lingered in Spanish identity<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, the conflict of Spain’s exclusion from the rest of sophisticated Europe and the search for identity reappears consistently throughout the novel and serves as “...Cadalso’s search for the truth of Spain...” (Landry 251). Cadalso seeks to identify what he considers an authentic Spanish culture, which he opposes to the many imported customs that had adulterated the essence of the national character. Cadalso condemns customs from both Northern European (specifically France) and African (although typically Moroccan in relation to Gazel) in his discursive quest for what is authentically Spain; however, this is more complex than simply denouncing what he would call “feminized” and luxurious behaviors (French customs) or antiquated and unchanging (Islamic and geographically African customs). In relation to Northern Europe, in spite of denouncing what he considered the weak and feminized French customs, Cadalso also subtly claims them as extensively part of all European nations. Gazel reiterates this statement when he notes the

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<sup>2</sup> As critics have well noted (Flesler) the battles continued to inform the collective imaginations: “Los marroquíes se encuentran con la Resistencia de una imagen de ellos mismos construida a través de más de mil años en la literatura e historiografía españolas [...] el “moro” como amenaza y peligro sigue siendo real para muchos habitantes de la Península” (74).

indistinguishable characteristics of luxuries between all nations, and specifically mentions many French things that the Spanish have borrowed. He writes: “...retrocediendo dos siglos en la historia, veremos que se vuelve imitación lo que ahora parece invención” (Cadalso 66). He then describes some specific luxuries, saying, “Copiemos los objetos que nos ofrecen a la vista” and describes certain luxuries, including many French ones that are also considered luxuries in Spain: “luego una bata de mucho gusto tejida en León de Francia; lee un libro encuadernado en París; viste a la dirección de un sastre y peluquero francés [...], va a comer en vajilla labrada en París o Londres las viandas calientes” (Cadalso 66).

Regarding the Islamic shared past, on the other hand, Cadalso establishes a more imposing cultural fissure between his nation and Africa (to reiterate, Africa is constituted as the image of Otherness and Spain’s close relationship to Africa, both geographically and culturally, relates to its Islamic shared history). Quoting Thomas O. Beebee, Landry adds: “Cadalso has no wish to raise Islamic culture above the Spanish—nor even, as he could, to recognize the distinctly Islamic aspects of Spanish culture” (94). This desire to ignore Islamic culture was not just unique to Cadalso, but rather it formed part of a forged cultural memory that persisted amongst writers. Susan Martin Márquez writes the following about Spanish culture post-Reconquista: “José María Perceval has noted that the physical expulsion of the Moriscos was followed by their metaphorical expulsion from the field of history as well, as they were subjected to “an official unremembering”. The ceremony held every January 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Alhambra Palace in Granada to mark the end of the Reconquest celebrated, paradoxically, the definitive absence of the Moors, not the

legacy of their nine-centuries-long presence, so vividly inscribed in the ornately decorated walls of the palace itself” (16).

Throughout the novel, there are subtle references to the dichotomy of the white skin of the Spaniards versus the darker skin of the Other (now also including the Other of Latin America). One of the most prominent reminders of the significance of skin color is Gazel’s fruitless yet continued attempts to fully assimilate into Spanish culture. Gazel pointedly asks Nuño questions about Spanish culture in his attempt to assimilate, and while he is able to learn some of the cultural traditions, his outer appearance excludes him from becoming fully Spanish. In the first letter of the novel, from Gazel to Ben-Beley, a strong inclination to fit into Spanish culture pervades his writing as he describes what actions he takes in order to appear Spanish: “Me hallo vestido como estos cristianos, introducido en muchas de sus casas, poseyendo su idioma, y en amistad muy estrecha con un cristiano llamado Nuño Núñez [...] Procuraré despojarme de muchas preocupaciones que tenemos los moros contra los cristianos, y particularmente contra los españoles” (5). Gazel’s attempt to understand Spanish culture continues to be overshadowed by his Otherness indelibly marked by his African body. Landry writes: “Gazel exchanges his outer Moorish garments, while his African body remains alien in its constitution once set in the European context. His intention is not to assimilate, but rather to pass unnoticed...” (252). I extend that to the notion of race as evidenced through the dark skin tone of his African body; Gazel will always be “[d]emarkated by difference...” (Landry 252). His outward appearance will always undermine his ability to understand Spanish culture because he cannot fully go unnoticed.

Through Gazel's inability to fully assimilate because of his African body, Cadalso asserts a clear and noticeable separation between Africa from Spain to further prove the latter's European character. Lastly, Gazel's use of the word "los moros" does contain racial undertones.<sup>3</sup>

Gazel's difference in skin tone also closely connects with the theme of colonization seen throughout the novel. Gazel's interest in assimilating Spanish culture as part of his growth and education is a striking example of Eurocentrism, which Elizabeth Scarlett defines. Quoting Edward W. Said, she defines Eurocentrism as a drive that "accumulated experiences, territories, peoples, histories...studied them, classified them, verified them...but above all...subordinated them to the culture and indeed the very idea of white Christian Europe" (65). This colonization of the outsider is seen in Gazel's first few actions. He attempts to simulate the appearance of the white European; in this particular case, the Christian, in order to fit in.

And, Gazel himself serves as the colonized. The dark color of his African skin becomes associated with colonization. Elizabeth Scarlett writes: "Postcolonial theory also makes us aware, however, that the author's perspective as an outsider vis-à-vis Morocco, and specifically as an outsider from Spain, is bound to condition his use of North African characters. They are "colonized" so that the author may analyze his own culture as if he were viewing it from the outside" (65). His idea of colonization and the darker, less-developed Other also appears in his explanation of Spain's colonization of the Americas.

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<sup>3</sup> Bartels, Emily C. *Speaking of the Moor: From "Alcazar" to "Othello"*, 2008. University of Pennsylvania Press, p. 6-7.

Racism is also subtly displayed throughout the novel in the various “historical” accounts told from Nuño to Gazel. *Cartas marruecas* dedicates several letters to the theme of colonization. Through this theme, readers become aware that the racism is not just directed towards those from Africa, but from the Americas as well, which further separates Spain from any type of Other and reiterates its place in Europe. By the time *Cartas marruecas* was written, terms such as “savage” and “Indian” already had become associated with race because of previous writings of famous explorers. For example, Jan Carew writes:

After visiting Brazil and other countries of the Americas, Vespucci, writing about his voyages, borrowed from the venomous pool of Jewish stereotypes and attached these borrowed grotesqueries new racist configurations of the savage, the infidel, the cannibal, the Indian male endowed with an enormous phallus and unbridled sexual energies, and the Indian female, a mindless, sexual object and a sensuous plaything exciting the basest of men’s orgiastic passions. These distorted images, which had previously been used to portray Jews and conquered Moors in Spain and Portugal, and assorted infidels, were deftly readjusted to include Indians, and, immediately afterwards, Africans. (36)

Later, relating these ideas of savages and the Indians to race, Carew writes:

Columbus’ voyages gave the European the symbols he needed to define a vast pool of labour that happened to be predominantly brown or black. The concept of the ‘white man’ came into being simultaneously with that of the ‘black man’. Both were part of an ideological accommodation that

the Columbian era made necessary when the central focus was on the Europeans exploiting Indians, Africans and Asians. (53)

In the first part of her study of Columbus, Carew simply states: “The name ‘Indian’ and the image of the Indian, therefore, were like fruit from the same trees of ignorance, racial arrogance and their attendant bigotry” (5). Therefore, as Gazel describes the colonization through the eyes of Nuño, the association between terms such as “salvaje” and “indios” had negative implications as far back as from the “discovery” and Conquest (Cadalso 20).

Additionally, when describing the Conquest, Gazel mentions “los compradores blancos y los comprados negros”, referring to the conquerors and the conquered by their skin tones (Cadalso 20). As Spain is the conquering nation, the superiority lies with those associated with whiter skin tone. Additionally, in telling the story of the Conquest of the Americas, the Spanish historical perspective is what is told and presents the Conquest as necessary and honorable. According to Hayden White, this manipulation of perspective is what readers should expect. White writes the following about the depiction of history: “A historical narrative is thus necessarily a mixture of adequately and inadequately explained events, a congeries of established and inferred facts, at once a representation that is an interpretation and an interpretation that passes for an explanation of the whole process mirrored in the narrative” (31). He later continues: “There are many histories that could pass for novels, and many novels that could pass for histories, considered in purely formal (or, I should say, formalist) terms. Viewed simply as verbal artifacts histories and novels are indistinguishable from one another” (122).

In prefacing the history of the colonization of the Americas in Carta IX, Gazel writes to Ben-Beley: “1.º Acepta Hernán Cortés el cargo de mandar unos pocos soldados

para la conquista de un país no conocido, porque reciben la orden del general bajo cuyo mando servía. Aquí no veo delito, sino subordinación militar y arrojo increíble en la empresa de tal expedición con un puñado de hombres tan corto, que no se sabe cómo se ha de llamar” (20). This language portrays the horror the Spaniards felt in the violence the Aztecs were committing; more importantly, it reemphasized the idea that they were rescuing savages from their continued abominable actions. Spain is portrayed as rescuing savages from themselves or eliminating those who endanger civilized people through perverse customs and behaviors, as was similarly portrayed in *Cantar de Roldán* (although in the earlier text the boundaries were presented as Christian and thus protecting the lands from the dangerous non-Christian Other). Cadalso is writing to instill pride in the Spanish nation; however, Cadalso still separates the Spanish nation from the barbaric Other. Gazel writes with what he claims to be an exact transcription of what Nuño had said. Nuño, then, the ideal Spaniard, is the voice of reason and authority in this letter relating the (hi)story of Cortés and his men. Scarlett highlights this important fact: “Unlike other issues that are treated from a multiplicity of perspectives in the *Cartas*, when speaking of Spanish history the presumed authorial spokesman Núñez does lay claim to absolute truth and this truth is not challenged by his Moroccan interlocutors” (69). It is paramount to note that this history is not disputed—this history shows the cultural mindset at the time the novel was written; it is a reflection of the belief and pride in Spain’s past in the ability to conquer the savage; specifically in this case, those with darker skin as described by the great explorers. This “absolute truth” presented through the voice of Nuño as authoritative Spain is metonymically associated to the ‘correct’ ideological presentation of Spanish history, culture, and identity. The conquest was not a

humanitarian crime; it should even be celebrated for this “arroyo increíble”. As the Christian warriors in *Cantar de Roldán* had to protect the peninsula from those perverting the faith, which could endanger the land, it was necessary for Cortés to conquer those with darker skin and expel the savage customs they practiced. In spite of the absorption of indigenous peoples of the Americas into a Spanish identity, as conspicuously noted in the colonial social structure, skin color established a strong hierarchy placing those of darker skin well below the white Creoles. It becomes an inescapable mark of difference that becomes more prominent in the eighteenth century in literary and philosophical discourse such as established by Kant in his evaluation of people based on external and visible differences. Kant emphasized both the internal, and even more significantly for the purpose of this thesis, external differentiators of humans.<sup>4</sup> Kant begins his human taxonomy with five different categories: “1) The character of the person, 2) the character of the sex, 3) the character of the nation, 4) the character of the race, 5) the character of the species” (195). Others to emphasize you are reading the duality of his discourse as both defending Spain but also rejecting that Spain is entirely Other meaning non-European.

In his description of the conquest of the New World, Nuño shows the significance of Cadalso’s discourse. When discussing specifically the conquering of Peru, Nuño writes: “Sí, amigo, lo confieso de buena fe, mataron muchos hombres a sangre fría; pero a trueque de esta imparcialidad que profeso, reflexionen los que nos llaman bárbaros la pintura que he hecho de la compra de negros, de que son reos los mismos que tanto lastiman la suerte de los americanos” (22). Again, Nuño refers to “la compra de negros”

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<sup>4</sup> Kant, I. *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. 1798. Southern Illinois University Press, 1996.

without any other identification of who they are as people. “La compra de negros” simply identifies them as blacks, using skin as their mark of identification. Cadalso uses skin color as a marker of identity. Although a small detail, it is significant.

Furthermore, even though Cadalso rejects the slave trade as barbarous, he seems to be supporting Kant’s idea that certain people defined by skin color are more susceptible to becoming enslaved, which ironically Kant had suggested in terms of Spain. What Cadalso claims, though, is that the superior white European, with full access to reason, should denounce slavery as a barbarous act committed by enlightened Europeans. While he places Spain on a moral high ground in terms of the slave trade, he does not place black Africans on the same developmental scale as white Europeans, as was common in Europe at the time. He is demanding instead that Spain is recognized as a member of superior white Europe (a leader in fact among nations) that must protect the less-civilized Other. This argument also underscores that judging Spain for the violence of the Conquest is anachronistically inaccurate. The conquistadors served the same purpose as protecting the savage and less-developed cultures, but in that case, from themselves.

The cruel treatment of those conquered, in fact, is less important in Nuño’s retelling of history. What emerges as more relevant is that color was used to distinguish between different groups of peoples. Underscoring these conquests is the binary of the white European against the dark Other. In this vein, Nuño connects the history of the Conquest to the defeat of infidels that have been conquered by Christianity. The seventh part of the story describes some of the interactions with Montezuma. Gazel repeats to Ben-Beley Nuño’s description in letter IX: “Pero lejos de aprovecharse del concepto de

deidades en que estaba él y los suyos entre aquellos pueblos, declara, con magnanimidad nunca oída, que él y los suyos son inferiores a aquella naturaleza y que no pasan de la humana. Esto me parece heroísmo...” (Cadalso 21). In this section, as throughout this entire letter that tells the story of the conquest, once again the inferiority of the Other is made clear. Throughout the letter, there are consistent references to “los indios” and again demarcating those in the Americas by their skin color, describing them as Indian, reiterating the already existing mentality of Europeans of white vs. Other, as shown by Carew’s statements (Cadalso 21). Although subtle, it is an indication to audiences that their skin tone is part of what established the otherness of the indigenous people. Those in the Americas discovered by Cortés were not quite human, and the destruction of their empires was necessary because they were not Christian and therefore less human; their subhuman characteristics also further Cortés’s glory. Therefore, racism replaced other markers of difference, but all the while remained reliant on the binary of civilized vs. savage and righteous vs. sinful. Some of these previously explicit binaries from *Cantar de Roldán* became more implicit as race became more significant in this text, leading to the more contemporary ideas seen in *La reina del sur* of a more covert racism. Through acknowledging them as less than human, Cortés makes himself that much greater of a conqueror. Scarlett writes: “...Cadalso idealized a mythic Spanish past, most obviously in Núñez’s admiration for Cortés (IX)” (69). This idealization of the conquest, and conquest in general of the Other, now identified throughout the story by skin color, continues to remind audiences of the greatness of Christian Spain and the whiteness of the Christian conqueror. In *Cantar de Roldán*, the primary binary of Christian (with the secondary physical characteristic of whiteness) vs. non-Christian (with the secondary

physical characteristic of darkness) shifted in *Cartas marruecas* to a binary that more closely resembles White (with the secondary characteristic of Christian) vs. Dark (with the secondary characteristic of non-Christian) as the emphasis on difference begins to change.

The history of Cortés, then, shows the shift from *Cantar de Roldán* from religious variations in subhuman beings were alongside the differences in skin color to skin color variations alongside religious differences in *Cantar de Roldán*. Cadalso primarily identifies those in the Americas as “indios” or “salvajes”, indicating their darker skin tone. While the telling of history did focus on difference of faith, the referrals to the indigenous as “indios” shows that skin color is beginning to lead as a marker of difference and location on sociocultural hierarchy of value based on the civilized and developed behavior of the Spaniards, which then also reaffirmed Spain’s rightful location within European boundaries. Ciara O’Hagan writes: “Such a depiction of the Native Americans not only heightens Spanish racial and cultural superiority, buy also underscores the legitimacy of Cortés’s conquest by presenting it as the moral rescue of a degraded people” (67). O’Hagan concisely sums up the Spanish mindset presented in letter IX—Cortés was a hero whose actions in Mexico were completely justified—and right. Originally, these discriminatory actions were based on religion; However, skin color became an indicator of uncivilized and uncultured behaviors indicative of the non-European, or non-Eurocentric Other.

Referring to the beginning of this chapter, Montesquieu clearly had expressed a theory that civilized European nations were those of the north with southern nations, and specifically Spain with its close historical connections to Africa, were underdeveloped;

or, as Kant had claimed, in decay and therefore closely related to the savage non-Europeans. Dainotto quotes Montesquieu as saying, “You will find, in the climates of the north, peoples who have few vices, many virtues, and much sincerity and candor. As you move toward the countries of the south, you will believe you have moved away from morality itself” (61). Cadalso attempts to both acknowledge this theory while defending and highlighting the Spanishness of the Andalucians. About Andalucía and its inhabitants, Cadalso writes: “Los andaluces, nacidos y criados en un país abundante, delicioso y ardiente, tienen fama de ser algo arrogantes pero si este defecto es verdadero, debe servirles de excusa su clima, siendo tan notorio el influjo de lo físico sobre lo moral” (45). He then continues: “La viveza, astucia y atractivo de las andaluzas las hace incomparables. Te aseguro que una de ellas sería bastante para llenar de confusión el imperio de Marruecos, de modo que todos nos matásemos unos a otros” (46). Cadalso intentionally reassures audiences that even physically, Andalucians are part of the Spanish nation. He underscores their physical appearance as justification for being part of Spain. Furthermore, he both acknowledges and negates Montesquieu’s theory of Spain not quite sufficing as part of Europe. He recognizes that those in Andalucía can be arrogant, and it is a defect, but he takes the responsibility of that behavior from the culture; scientifically, it’s not their fault. It is also imperative to note that Cadalso first describes Andalucians as born and raised in Spain, conspicuously omitting any reference of a relationship to Africa in terms of their origins, so as to distinguish Spain, and specifically Andalucía, from their Other counterpart. As the last Muslim stronghold, Andalucía has sustained strong influences on literary imagination. Furthermore, it must be remembered that the cosmopolitan spirit of the eighteenth century lessened the

regional identity of specific areas of the nation in favor of embracing a centralized and uniform character identified as Castilian. This is true even for the gaditano Cadalso who envisioned a centralized and uniform cultural identity for Spain.

Yet another theme that is prevalent throughout *Cartas marruecas* is the recurring idea of the non-European as a perpetual outsider. Although Gazel has come to Spain to learn its cultures, customs, religion, and language, he will never quite fit in with everyone else. In *Cadalso's Cartas Marruecas*, Sally-Ann Kitts, in her commentary of Hall's evaluation of the text, writes: "Hall emphasizes two key aspects that are central to the success of Cadalso's *Cartas marruecas* in departing his own and his country's identity: firstly the view that our identities are not fixed but produced, created, and constructed by our actions; and secondly the role that 'discourse' has to play in that construction" (37). While Kitts makes a valid point about the construction of identity, *Cartas marruecas* seems to disprove this idea, simply because of the treatment given to Gazel. By all accounts, it seems as if Gazel has created a Spanish identity—but he cannot fully construct this new identity, for he is from Morocco, and that remains his most essential characteristic. In letter XI, Gazel articulates his evening with Nuño at a tertulia: "Nuño me llevó anoche a una tertulia (así se llaman cierto número de personas que concurren con frecuencia a una conversación); presentome el ama de la casa [...] –Señora—dijo--, éste es un moro noble, cualidad que basta para que le admitáis, y honrado, prende suficiente para que yo le estime. Desea conocer a España..." (26). Once more, the undertones of the constant reminder of Gazel's otherness is subtle, but substantial. Nuño makes a point to introduce Gazel as a Moor.

Gazel continues to relate his experience, reiterating his standing as the marginalized entity: “Aquella primera noche causó un poco de extrañeza mi modo de llevar el traje europeo y conversación, pero al cabo de otras tres o cuatro noches, lo era yo a todos tan familiar como cualquiera de ellos mismos” (26). In this description of the tertulia, Gazel shows a repeated effort to integrate into Spanish culture with both language and physical appearance. At first, even though he is dressed and speaks like a Spaniard, it is still strange because of his outer appearance and he is still treated like an outsider. Although at the end of this passage he is comfortable with everyone, his outsider status remains a defining characteristic. He is like one, but still an outsider (and therefore inferior) because, physically, he is still a deviation from the Spanish and European norm. By dressing like a Spaniard, Gazel participates in a sort of cultural cross-dressing. In Ian Russell’s *Dressing Up Anxiety and Pleasure: Cultural Drag in Galdós’s Aita Tettauén*, he explains the implications of cross-dressing: “Drag always hints at the very attribute it seeks to cover or brashly makes visible its outlandishness” (630). Later, Russell writes: “Specifically, drag highlights the visibility of the subject as foreign, falsified, or artificial in a way that passing obscures” (633). This distinction is necessary, because it shows that his identity as a Moor and an African continues to be his defining characteristic. He can be like a Spaniard, but he will always be different. The very beginning of the epistolary novel highlights Gazel’s Otherness: “Como los autores por cuales he leído esta serie de prodigios son todos españoles, la imparcialidad que profeso pide también que lea lo escrito por los extranjeros” (Cadalso 12). Nuño believes Gazel’s Otherness to be an attribute. Cadalso does not focus necessarily on the connotation of Otherness, but rather just the glaring detail of Gazel’s identity in his

Otherness. To borrow from Russell's concept of cultural drag within the context of *Cartas marruecas*, the identifier for Gazel's Otherness comes in his cultural cross-dressing, as he manipulates his physical appearance through clothing as an attempt to assimilate. As Russell points out, this physical deviance from the norm merely heightens the awareness of his Otherness.

Later in *Cartas marruecas*, there are two sequential letters that demonstrate the rigid parameters of how one is identified in Spain; specifically, how an individual's identity is viewed in Spain. First, in letter XXV, Gazel is writing to Ben-Beley, telling him about the confusion with how people are addressed in Spain; specifically, he uses the example of Pedro Fernández, and the diverse ways of addressing this one man: "Pedro Fernández; [...] el señor Pedro Fernández; [...] don Pedro Fernández" (44). When Gazel asks Nuño about this, Nuño responds: "No importa—[...]---Pedro Fernández siempre será Pedro Fernández" (44). This is significant because it contradicts Kitts' modern-day statement that identity can be completely constructed; here, Nuño suggests that essential identity never changes. This is particularly damning for Gazel, as he attempts to learn from the Spanish. No matter how he is addressed or how he attempts to blend in, according to Nuño's logic, he will always be Gazel, the dark-skinned African. While not all Moroccans are dark-skinned, popular thought, such as the work by Montesquieu, did depict Africans Other; one of the "Other" characteristics being darker skin. Gazel cannot deny who he is, regardless of how he changes his behavior. At first glance a rather insignificant passage, but what this means for Gazel, or anyone trying to change their identity, it seems as if it may be impossible alter cultural categories. As with cultural cross-dressing, Gazel remained Other specifically because of his physical attributes. This

situates Spain in the discourse of the text as both superior and at the center in terms of assessing cultural values with a diminishing status that centrifugally emanates beyond Spanish boundaries. While Cadalso rejects certain European customs as effeminate, Europe is clearly attached to the Spanish center. Saracens and their dark skin, in spite of the close geographical proximity to Spain, lie beyond civilizing boundaries and are outsiders; the Other mentality constructed in *Cantar de Roldán* because of difference in religion has transcended a particular time in history to coalesce with race as a defining and inescapable characterization of Gazel, not as an individual, but as a representation of non-Spanish.

Overall, *Cartas marruecas* serves two distinct purposes. First, to prove the worth of the Spanish identity in a larger Eurocentric world; additionally, to show the transition from using faith as a primary indicator of difference to using skin tone as an equally important identifier of difference, for both those from Africa and from the Spanish colonies. Gazel, for example, will never fully go unnoticed in Spain, simply for his African looks. His outer appearance, connected now in the Spanish mindset to his underdeveloped and degenerate characterization inherited from his ancestors, cannot be fully welcomed into the peninsula. This idea is most poignantly established through the depiction of an African culture and, now with the added description of the dark-skinned savages in America, that has not changed over centuries thus presenting the same threat to Spain from earlier periods. No matter how hard Gazel attempts to go unnoticed in Spanish society, his skin and outer appearance demarcates him as Other. Nuño, the sole authority on all things Spanish and Christian, points out Gazel's Otherness. According to Nuño, Spain has always been a dominant force in the world, both militarily and

intellectually. The Other serves the purpose of locating Spain within the boundaries of Europe, and yet race is implemented to make mark the frontier between inside and out.

### Chapter 3: *La reina del sur*

For the final chapter in the thesis, I have chosen to highlight a modern *narconovela*: *La reina del sur*, written by Arturo Pérez-Reverte in 2002. As defined by Amanda L. Matousek, a *narconovela* is "...any fictional novel somehow related to the criminal drug-trafficking movement. This includes works where drug trafficking is at the center of the narrative, as well as those where its effects are more abstract and its presence more meditative" (121).

*La reina del sur* follows the story of a young Mexican woman, Teresa Mendoza, told from various perspectives, but, predominantly, from that of a Spanish reporter interviewing Teresa. The general premise of the novel follows Teresa from a precarious and dangerous life in Mexico as the girlfriend of a lowly drug dealer to her rise as the "Queen of the South" in Spain as one of the most prominent drug lords. In the beginning when a drug deal goes awry, her husband is murdered by the crime boss and she is forced to flee, barely escaping death. She escapes to southern Spain where she builds her own drug empire establishing a strong international network of contacts through the underground, including drug contacts from Morocco and Russia and establishing herself as *la reina del sur*. Most of the novel takes place in Spain, with the beginning and a few flashbacks taking place in Mexico.

Throughout the *narconovela*, the narrator establishes substantial evidence that underscores that the modern indicator of Otherness is skin color. As I have shown, with each subsequent text I have analyzed here, beginning with *Cantar de Roldán*, skin color became more prominent in the identification of the Other. In the first work, it served as a secondary or tertiary demarcation of Otherness with faith as the primary signal of

difference. In *Cartas marruecas*, culture and skin color were both significant in identifying the Other, but skin color started to emerge as a primary identifier. In *La reina del sur*, skin color is the primary identifier of Otherness. This development for these specific cultural artifacts during specific time periods seems to follow White's ideas of history and its impact: "They [Marx and Nietzsche] saw clearly, in a way that Michelet, Ranke, Tocqueville, and Burkhardt only glimpsed, that the way that one thought about the past had serious implications about the way one thought about one's own present and future" (278). The implications of *Cantar de Roldán* and *Cartas marruecas* and the representations of the past, with the relationship of between race and Otherness, culminates in *La reina del sur* where ultimately Otherness is first and foremost demarcated by difference in skin tone still, while continuing to maintain the negative connotations first recognized in those of another faith, as seen in *Cantar de Roldán*.

As a contrast to *Cartas marruecas*, at the time of writing of *La reina del sur*, there is no longer the search for an identity as a nation; rather, Spain is looking to protect it. Mikaela Rogozen-Soltar explains Spain's current European standing:

...declaring Spain's categorical shift from a "country of emigration" to a "country of immigration" tells a straightforward story of progress in which Andalusia and Spain have officially joined Europe. [...] Andalusians now cooperate with the European Union (EU) as members of Europe to patrol Europe's southernmost borders. These are no longer conceptually located at the Pyrenees or the northern border of Andalusia, but rather in the Mediterranean, a militarized sea space heavily patrolled by the EU,

Spanish, and outsourced North African and West African border police.

(881)

Rogozen-Soltar describes a position in which Spain is now conceptually considered part of Europe and not its internal Other.

Furthermore, *La reina del sur* occurs in a context in which Spain is part of the modern globalized society. Spain is no longer considered Other, and the numerous characters from varying countries shows that Spain is involved in the greater global context. Additionally, immigration has become a central focus to political, economic, and social concerns. To show the growth of immigration in Spain in recent times, Rafael Muñoz de Bustillo and José Ignacio Antón write: “...while in 1996 barely 1.5% of total population was non-national, in 2009 12 out of 100 residents in Spain is foreign” (661). In terms of the implications of these rising numbers, Muñoz de Bustillo and Antón explain:

Such a relevant shift has also been accompanied by a growing concern among the national public opinion about the social and economic implications of this impressive raise of immigration flows. In fact, according to surveys carried out before the financial and economic crisis busting, the massive and recent arrival of foreign workers was seen at the time as the major problem faced by Spaniards. (662)

Flesler further highlights the modern country of Spain and the implications connected with the massive immigration of the twenty-first century. She writes: “Aunque no se trata de un fenómeno totalmente nuevo, el incremento numérico y creciente visibilidad de minorías étnicas y raciales está produciendo una serie de cambios en la sociedad

española” (73). In one particular article, Jorge Soto-Almela and Gema Alcaraz-Mármol compare two Spanish newspapers, *El País* and *El Mundo*, of differing political leanings, to get a general idea of how immigrants are portrayed throughout Spain. In introducing their study, Soto-Almela and Alcaraz-Mármol make some general observations about the attitudes towards immigrants in modern Spain:

In the case of Spain, data conclude that xenophobic feelings are partly rooted in the negative picture the media build of immigration. The last report published in 2014 [...] reveals that almost 22% (21.6%) primarily related the word “immigration” to some kind of negative concept or threat such as economic or working threat, illegality, irregularity, crime, inequality, problem, or even excessive flow. (149)

Interestingly, Soto-Almela and Alcaraz-Mármol even highlight one specific study by Checa and Arjona (2011) that studies the “evolution of Spaniards’ opinions about immigration between 1997 and 2007, and the role of the media in this process” (150). Soto-Almela and Alcaraz-Mármol explain: “The role of the media was analyzed within six sociological parameters. Accordingly, immigrants were seen as negative elements, and attitudes on immigration showed the negative sentiment that is notably found in the media. The authors concluded that the media are one of the main instruments in creating public opinion” (151). This is particularly relevant to *La reina del sur* because it was published in 2002 during this period of increasingly negative perception of immigrants in Spain. Additionally, the events are filtered through the perspective of a Spanish journalist interviewing Teresa Mendoza as she discusses her move from Mexico to Spain, which also reveals this same pejorative depiction of the Other as evidenced in *Cantar de Roldán*

and *Cartas marruevas*. In discussing their findings, Soto-Almela and Alcaraz-Mármol underscore the common attitudes towards immigrants in modern day Spain: "...the two newspapers under study portray immigration as a phenomenon in which illegality, secrecy, and irregularity are the rules rather than the exceptions" (161). Interestingly, as this chapter will show, these are three adjectives that describe actions taken by Teresa Mendoza and various Moroccans throughout the novel. Additionally, the authors note: "Both newspapers pay considerable attention not only to the lack of legal authorization, but also to the problem of immigration, which is sometimes put on the same level as crime and lack of public safety [...] Moreover, immigration is portrayed as an expanding phenomenon that must be fought, stopped, or controlled" (161). Lastly, the authors offer some final remarks: "The way immigration is portrayed by two of the most important mass media in Spain is not related to the different ideology that each of them represents. It does not seem to be a question of political ideology, but a systemic social feeling, a general and generalized perception" (163). I posit here that echoes of this negative perception of the immigrant. Other in the media appear in the text of *La reina del sur*; yet as I have previously shown, is not isolated to this particular moment, but has formed part of the cultural construction of outsiders in these representative literary works from distinct historical moments.

Immigration, however, resonates throughout *La reina del sur* more explicitly than in the previous works. Bobowik et al. discuss the experiences of immigrants: "Thus, being a member of ethnic minority frequently involves being marked with a social stigma and experiencing discrimination. European surveys indeed confirmed that immigrant and ethnic minorities feel stigmatized, particularly Sub-Saharan (41%) and North Africans

(36%)...” (2). Therefore, Moroccans, being from the North of Africa, would fall into this category. Flesler articulates Spanish society’s apparent continued distaste for the Other; specifically, for the Moroccan: “De estos inmigrantes, los marroquíes son percibidos, en gran parte, a partir de las pautas de un viejo discurso bélico que los presenta como “moros”, identificándolos con los ancestrales enemigos de España” (73). As I will be show throughout this chapter, the portrayal of Morocco and its people is unfavorable from the Spanish perspective, as their dark skin denotes them as Other.

In terms of Latin Americans immigrating to Spain, academic studies report mixed findings in terms of their assimilation into Spanish culture. However—it is important to note that in these studies, this ease of assimilation is in relation to other immigrants. Which, as seen above, the general attitude towards the Other at the time of writing *La reina del sur* was negative. In their study, Bobowik et. al wrote that Sub-Saharan and North Africans felt more discriminated against “...compared to Latino immigrants in Spain” (2). Antonio Izquierdo Escribano and Raquel Martínez-Buján also note that Spanish people generally have a more positive notion of Latin Americans than other immigrant groups: “The Spanish electorate perceives Latin American immigrants to have a lifestyle that is closer to their own, which makes their integration easier” (109). In spite of such studies, there are also those that have an opposite viewpoint: “Teresa, como muchos otros latinoamericanos que emigran a España, personifica a la indiecita sudaca, mestiza que viene con una estela de malas costumbres a corromper y malear a la prodigiosa sociedad española” (Vergara-Mery 205). Although, it is important to underscore once more this perception that Spanish population generally has towards immigrants is in relation to other immigrant groups—overwhelmingly, regardless of the

country of origin, research shows that the Spanish attitude towards immigrants in general tended toward negativity at the start of the twenty-first century.

It is within these anti-immigration sentiments that Pérez-Reverte writes *La reina del sur*. In this particular *narconovela*, skin tone is a driving force of separating Spain from its Other counterparts. The connection between race and demarcation of Otherness is evident within the first few pages of the novel. Teresa's Other status is initially marked through physical deviations from the European Spaniard.

Additionally, it is crucial to note the wave of racial identification that occurred in Spain once its empires had been lost. Amy Kaminsky highlights three different periods in Hispanic racial formation: "the Imperial, the post colonial, and the expatriate" (7). Specifically, I am focused on Kaminsky's analysis of racial formation in the postcolonial moment, which she states: "...begins with that nineteenth-century independence from Spain and continues through the present. It refers geographically to Spanish America" (7). At one particular point, Kaminsky describes Spain's goal toward "a great and inclusive Hispanic race, first under the protection of Empire (as José Piedra argues), and later as an affirmation of independence" (8). She then writes: "*Hispanidad* wills a whitening first of Spain and then of what Carlos Fuentes has called Afro-Indo-Ibero-America" (8). Later, she explains: "Whereas the Imperial moment is characterized by the incorporation of the racial other into the expansionist Imperial body and the postcolonial moment by assimilation into the new national body, the expatriate moment is characterized by the crossing-or shifting-of boundaries so that "Hispanic" becomes the name of the alien, menacing the body" (24). Kaminsky's study is imperative because it demonstrates this very specific type of identifying someone by his or her race as

connecting it with country of origin. “Hispanic” serves commonly as a cultural and linguistic identifier of someone originating from Latin America, but it is the outward appearance that demarcates Otherness.

The novel begins with a reporter interviewing Teresa as he tries to uncover a particular part of her life that was missing from his report. He initially states: “Confirmé que a los treinta y cinco años era vagamente atractiva. Menos, quizás, que en las fotografías recientes y en las que yo había visto por aquí y por allá...” (18). He then comments on previous images of her captured on video: “Y en todas, ella, con su distinguida apariencia actual, casi siempre vestida de oscuro y con gafas negras, subía o bajaba de automóviles caros, se asomaba desdibujada por el grano del teleobjetivo a una terraza de Marbella...” (18). He reveals that Teresa unexpectedly shares a photo with him of herself when she was younger: “Observé que, pese al maquillaje vulgar, excesivo, las pupilas oscuras tenían una mirada inocente, o vulnerable; y eso acentuaba [...] las antiguas y rebajadas gotas de sangre indígena manifestándose en la nariz, el tono mate de la piel, la arrogancia del mentón erguido” (19). The most telling description of Teresa is the photograph of her younger self that focuses on skin color, which marks her as someone from another place. She is not different amongst her own people in Mexico, but she has been marked as different in contrast to a perceived whiteness of Spain. Most importantly, the writer remarks that the photo accentuates her indigenous blood. This is a paramount distinction because it signals that she is from the Americas and not from Spain; her skin is that of the indigenous, implying that it is darker than the white European. As shown in *Cartas marruecas*, the indigenous people in Mexico, where Cortés conquered, were seen by the *conquistadores* as barbarians who had not achieved

the same level of civilization or even humanity as the Spaniards—their variation in skin color was a marker of their difference and inferiority. Referring to them as “indios”, as stated in Chapter 2 of this thesis, was a way to mark them by their skin tone (Cadalso 20). In this novel, commenting on indigenous blood, the writer essentially manages to remark that Teresa is a second-rate and underdeveloped citizen because, although descended from Spanish-speakers, she is neither European nor white. Although there are many other conditions that make her different from Spaniards, the ultimate damnation for her character comes in her darker skin tone, and most importantly, her indigenous blood. Indigenous blood associates Teresa with the uncivilized, unfaithful, barbaric peoples of the past. Vergara-Mery, in explaining the significance of her indigenous ancestry, writes: “...Teresa aprende y sobrevive y escapa el proceso típico de depuración y de españolización de lo americano (en donde España civiliza al indio)...” (206). Again, the history of Spain manifests itself in the modern perception of the Other as a being that requires Europeanization. Teresa, centuries after Hernán Cortés and his conquering of Mexico, is now primarily identified by the journalist by her dark skin. Her indigenous heritage, and therefore skin tone, suggests that she is deviant from this Europeanization, and Spain has an obligation to colonize her as it did her people. Teresa, with her indigenous blood and dark skin, is marked as the Other. Additionally, the reporter makes note of her dark eyes. Physical attributes of darkness, such as her eyes, serve as yet another reminder of her Otherness because of the association with darkness. Even her Latin American counterparts recognize the significance of race. At one point, Pote Gálvez, a fellow Latin American who found Teresa in Spain, refers to the cartel back in Mexico as “Raza de allá” (357).

Additionally, Marta Cruz-Janzen supports the idea of the negative connotations that come with the darker skin tone of Latin Americans:

It is herein countered that in-group Latino racism has existed for generations and has been historically supported and cemented through institutions created in Spain and later Latin America. Spain established Whites as superior beings and rulers over all non-White persons throughout its domains. So-called pure Whites became the elite and continue to be considered superior to all interracial Latinos. (6)

The central figure throughout the novel, Teresa Mendoza, demonstrates the significance of color through her continued association with darkness—both in her physical attributes and lawlessness. One of the ways in which Pérez-Reverte does this is by first highlighting the lawlessness of the Other and the superiority of Spain in *La reina del sur* through his election to use non-European characters as the principal source of evil.

Dosinda Gacía-Alvite describes this internationalism:

...Teresa, con sede social en el Peñón de Gibraltar y con un negocio tapadera en Marbella, establece relaciones comerciales con las mafias gallegas y francesas, se alía con la mafia rusa, y negocia con la N'Drangheta italiana, que controla el tráfico marítimo de cocaína hacia el Mediterráneo oriental. Estas conexiones internacionales flexibles ofrecen ejemplos muy significativos y simbólicos de la globalización de mercados contemporáneas. (84)

Apart from the Galician man in the novel, every character that participates in a culture of illegality and behaviors reserved for those on the social periphery are from different

countries; conveniently, not Spain. These characters are referred to throughout the novel primarily by their nationality as opposed to their names; Pérez-Reverte continually refers to Teresa as “la Mejicana”, creating a physical image of her as opposed to getting to know her character personally. By using Mexican as Teresa’s primary identifier, Pérez-Reverte ensures that her physical appearance, and therefore darker skin tone, is of paramount importance in her characterization. Pérez-Reverte also uses darkness as a primary indication of Otherness with the various foreigners, as well. When Teresa is at a party with Pati’s family, she notes their physical appearances first and foremost: “...observar con atención [...] camisas abiertas sin corbata, chaquetas oscuras, buenos zapatos y relojes, pieles bronceadas y no precisamente de trabajar en el campo” (Pérez-Reverte 248). Here, both skin tone and clothing bear the label of dark, alerting readers to their Otherness.

Additionally, when talking about fashion throughout the novel, Pérez-Reverte makes it a point to acknowledge that the clothing of the Other is also dark—another physical demarcation of Otherness tied to obscurity. Structural categories begin to establish a dichotomy between good and bad. Teresa represents the dark side and her skin and clothes further reiterate this Eurocentric designation. When shopping with Pati, Pati tells Teresa to pair her jeans “...con chaquetas oscuras” (Pérez-Reverte 288). Not long after, Pati explains: “La ropa puede ser estado de ánimo, carácter, poder. Una viste como lo que es o como lo que quiere ser, y justo en eso está la diferencia [...] Y tú sabes, Mejicana. No he visto a nadie que mire como tú. Perra india” (Pérez-Reverte 289). Again, Pérez-Reverte uses this particular scene to reinforce the fact that Teresa was, in

fact, the Other through the use of darkness—both in her clothing choice and skin color, as Pati observed.

Christopher A. Bail found that Spain amongst other countries (referred to as Set A) historically on the periphery of the European Union share some common characteristics: "... (2) They [...] recently began receiving considerable immigration. Nevertheless, (3) immigrants remain a small proportion of the overall population. Therefore, (4) discourses about immigrant integration are relatively unsophisticated compared with those in the old immigration countries of Western and Northern Europe" (54). Bail then remarks: "It remains to be determined why racial and religious boundaries are stronger than average in Set A [...] The results might also suggest that antiracist discourse has not yet permeated the periphery of Europe as thoroughly as it has Europe's core" (54). Here, Bail demonstrates the relationship between immigration and racism in these peripheral European nations. Because Spain correlates with the category of a country who has only recently been experiencing an immigration boom, it has already been established that there are anti-immigration sentiments that permeate throughout the country, but Bail also makes it clear that racism permeates throughout Spain. Pérez-Reverte utilizes primarily foreign characters to carry out illegal activities, with the exception of the Galician. In the context, then, of this novel and at the time the anti-immigrant sentiments and the close relationship with racism, the identification of the criminal through nationality also denotes an implicit racism.

Not only does Teresa's dark skin from Latin America mark her as Other and carry the implications of an uncivilized people, but also much of the novel takes place in Morocco and focuses on certain Moroccan characters that are associated with the

physical marker of darkness. Moroccan immigrants, due to Morocco's complex history with Spain, as I have pointed out throughout the three chapters, have a complex relationship with Spain. In attempting to explain this complex relationship, María Soledad Saux elaborates:

It is said that Spain, especially Southern Spain, suffers from a sort of “trauma” since it was “recovered” from the Moors in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The Moors are encountered in Spain still today with a mix of fear, scoff, disdain and admiration. On one hand, they embody the enemy, who conquered and subjugated the peninsula for 800 years [...] On the other hand, they contributed to shape the land with their culture—in those days, far more developed than the Europeans. (60)

With this complex history, Morocco is associated throughout the novel with darkness, further contrasting the light seen in Spain. Morocco appears throughout *La reina del sur* as a threat and as the place of illegal activity. Flesler highlights the significance of the continued perception of Morocco as the enemy: “Este lenguaje que habla del “moro” como el enemigo por excelencia de España tiene una larga historia, una historia que se ha nutrido a su vez del miedo que la supuesta amenaza del moro provoca...” (74). More specifically, she writes: “Both literary representations of the arrival of Moroccan immigrants in Spain and social confrontations between them and Spaniards are structured and determined by the perception of their common past as trauma, a perception that has transformed this past into a phantasmagoric presence in the present” (81). The medieval expulsion of the African Other, along with modern anti-immigration mentalities, continues to express the desire to expel the Moroccan and correlate physical darkness

with Morocco's designation as Other. Although, once more, throughout *La reina del sur*, darkness is overwhelmingly found in descriptions of the Moroccan people, their activities, and their land. In *Cantar de Roldán*, opposing religious beliefs created the foundation for the need to expel the non-European. In *La reina del sur*, explicit religious differences do not act as the primary justification for the xenophobic attitudes, but rather the xenophobic attitudes developed in the Middle Ages are reinforced through focusing on physical representations of darkness.

As skin color serves as an identification of people, so do the physical landscapes as well. There is a striking resemblance between the descriptions of Morocco as seen from Spain in *Cantar de Roldán* and descriptions of Morocco as seen from Spain in *La reina del sur*. In *La reina del sur*, the description is as follows: "...y desde la escalera se veían los tejados de la ciudad, el minarete rojo y blanco de la mezquita central, y a lo lejos, en Marruecos, la sombra oscura del monte Gurugú" (96). Again, in *La reina del sur* as in *Cantar de Roldán*, Morocco is covered by a shadow. It is a land of darkness; the mountains hide the sun. There is an absence of light, which indicates an absence of life, which Teresa also described in Sinaloa. The literary image promotes the idea that evil resides in darkness, represented as the violence in the Other's world. Life does not exist in the Other's world, whether through lack of sustenance, as in *Cantar de Roldán*, or lack of a respect for life in Sinaloa. The continued presence of darkness, though, in Morocco is further showing the negative view and the negative attitudes towards Spain's neighbor through the use of purely physical observations. Continuing descriptions of Africa as seen from afar in *La reina del sur* continue the pattern of highlighting the darkness and lack of positive attributes of Morocco. The narrator describes the

background of a Morocco consistently immersed in darkness: “Y allí estaban, con el atardecer agrisado por el levante que peinaba borreguillos de espuma blanca en el mar, frente a la playa de los Lances y la costa hacia el Atlántico, y el Mediterráneo al otro lado, y África oculta en la neblina que la tarde oscurecía desde el este, sin prisas...” (165). Africa, seen from the coast of Spain, is a place physically shrouded in darkness and lack of light, implying a lack of reason.

The narrator’s variations between Morocco and Spain do not just highlight physical contrasts, but also contrasts in human behaviors to show Spain’s superiority. The references to the Strait of Gibraltar in the novel are unique in that it places the events in an area of both literal and figurative tension. Figuratively, it places the reader directly in between the two countries, in a small geographical area where both countries can be seen. Historically, it puts the reader in the middle of a centuries-long tension between Morocco and Spain and through which many immigrants enter in this particular space of Gibraltar. Lara N. Dotson-Renta identifies this tension:

This fluid dynamic has taken on new complexities, [...] with the effects of mass communication, burgeoning migration, blurred borders, and increasing polarization along religious lines. [...] the mounting trepidation with which ‘east and west’ view one another has had far reaching implications on the links forged *entre dos orillas*, or between two shores. (430)

As Dotson-Renta shows, this short stretch of water epitomizes the conflicted relationship between Spain and the Other; it both unites and separates Spain from Morocco; it exists as needed chasm from the Other so that Spain can establish a greater distance between its

association with Africa and its connection with Europe. Although a short distance, it also represents the centuries of conflict between Spain and Morocco, which is directly associated with Gibraltar itself as a contested and yet fluid space. Each shore is completely different from the other, despite their close proximity to one another.

Darkness is a clear physical marker of Morocco. Teresa observes Morocco from the shore: "...y desde la escalera se veían los tejados de la ciudad, el minarete rojo y blanco de la mezquita central, y a lo lejos, en Marruecos, la sombra oscura del monte Gurugú" (Pérez-Reverte 96). Teresa sees this difference while on the Strait of Gibraltar:

De las dos orillas, la norte era más tranquilizadora, incluso si caías en manos de la ley. Había abogados, jueces, normas que se aplicaban por igual a los delincuentes que a las víctimas. Pero el lado marroquí era distinto: ahí la pesadilla rondaba todo el tiempo. Corrupción en todos los niveles, derechos humanos apenas valorados, cárceles donde podías pudrirte en condiciones terribles (136).

Even in illegal activities, Spain appears more civilized than Morocco from the vantage point of the waters. It is interesting to note that in this particular passage, as Teresa contemplates the two lands on either side of her, she only names Morocco, but does not name Spain. To the north lies the idea of an accepted norm and truth unnecessary to label; to the south is the anomaly and degeneracy, a darkness, which must be named. In the land to the north there is order and criminals are treated in a just and civilized manner. Teresa enumerates many functions of the legal processes in place intended to help everyone, ranging from criminals to victims. To the south, Morocco, things are different. Teresa uses the verb "pudrir", to decompose, which implies deplorable conditions and an

interminable length of time of suffering. This suggests that within the corrupt systems of Morocco everything is putrid and imposes decomposition on the body and spirit of people immersed in this world. She mentions “*corrupción en todos los niveles*”, signaling that it is all pervasive and even contagious. Corruptions seeps out of all Moroccans, not just criminals. Readers can infer which shore is better—and it is not the shore to the south.

Manolo Céspedes, one of the many characters who knew of Teresa’s infamy in Spain, describes his first interactions with Dris to the writer, identifying the tavern owner first with his nationality, identifying him as an outsider, before anything else: “...me vi ante un rifeño de nacionalidad española que hablaba un castellano perfecto” (77).

Although at first glance this may seem to be a somewhat positive compliment of Dris, there is one description that stands out: although Dris is of Spanish nationality, he is still a rifeño, meaning he is from Rif in Morocco. Dris cannot be separated from his Moroccan roots; he is first and foremost identified by his national origin. Although he speaks perfect Spanish and is of Spanish nationality, he is still identified as someone from Rif. Later, in conversation with Céspedes, this rifeño identification is recurrent: “Sí, bueno. Ya sabe—el rifeño lo observaba como si intentase recordar cuanto sabía realmente, y luego desvió otra vez la vista, incómodo—. Gente de allí. —Allí es Marruecos.—apuntó Céspedes...” (83). Céspedes refers to “Gente de allí”, or people from Morocco, indicating that “people from there” are not able to fully assimilate to Spanish society, reflective of Gazel’s experience in *Cartas marruecas*. Being Moroccan denotes an inability to fully become Spanish. Spain distances itself from their neighbors by consistently referring to them by their difference. First, Dris, although previously

recognized as one who speaks Spanish perfectly and someone who is of Spanish nationality, still is referred to throughout as “el rifeño”, continuing to serve readers a reminder of who Dris is, referenced as his essential identity, an inescapable marking. Every time he is referred to as “el rifeño”, readers are reminded that Dris is not considered truly Spanish. Additionally, when Dris refers to people as “gente de allí”, Céspedes immediately clarifies for readers who those people are—people from Morocco. There is a clear separation of Spanish and Moroccan people here. Those people, people from there, not from Spain, are Moroccan. They are the Other; they do not belong; they will never be Spanish. They are first and foremost people identified by their national identity and noticeably of different race; contextually, as shown in the beginning of this chapter, Moroccans and North Africans in Spain primarily experienced the racial tension from Spaniards amongst immigrant groups. Therefore, the demarcation of Dris as rifeño is a racially charged term.

Furthermore, not only is Dris referred to as “el rifeño” throughout the novel by Spaniards, he also runs a business that is operated by night and a business in a shadier part of Melilla; the theme of darkness associated with Morocco persists. Darkness directly denotes Otherness; it continues to be the primary identifier. As Teresa and Dris both have physical identifiers with their skin tone, Teresa’s dark dress and the physical darkness in which Dris operates reaffirms this focus on darkness as the primary indicator of Otherness. Dris, although he has some positive attributes, is overwhelmingly seen as an outsider, an Other who runs a business that is not quite legitimate. The constant identification of Dris as a Moor is a contemporary attitude of the Spanish, according to Flesler, who reminds readers that their modern physical appearance is a reminder for

Spanish people of their “moro” heritage (73). *Cantar de Roldán* identified the Other primarily based on different religions which, over centuries, transformed into highlighting racial differences: now, continually referred to as “el rifeño”, the physical darkness has become the identifier of Other. The resentment held towards the Other based solely on religion has not dissipated; rather, the prejudice remains, albeit in a modified and racialized form that correlates dark skin color of Moroccans as representing a retrograde and less-civilized. In part, Moroccan practices are presented as unchanging over a long historical period, leaving the people immersed in a worldview harking back to the belligerent Middle Ages. In contrast, in this novel, Spain and its inhabitants are portrayed as a modern and constantly progressing nation embracing change and, as such, achieving greater civility, which the author brings into sharp relief by using lighter images in relation to Spain.

Lastly, as a significant characteristic of the novel, the country of Spain emerges victorious. Teresa is caught by Spanish authorities, and although her drug trafficking was successful, she did not have the power to elude them. As a civilized nation, Spain managed to contain the threat of evil and lawlessness that she saped. The idea of Spain as an untarnished society is shown throughout the novel. There is a pride that permeates the novel of the systems set in place to deal with criminals, and pride in how Spain treated all people with civility, including criminals in the system. Teresa may have been able to outrun authorities for some time, but she inevitably lost. This ending highlights two things: first, Spain’s power and authority over the Other is not to be forgotten. Secondly, Spain will remain victorious in expelling those who come to change the peninsula for the worse. Teresa completely disappears at the end of the book—she is to

be forgotten: “De Teresa Mendoza nunca más se supo. Hay quien asegura que cambió de identidad y de rostro, y que vive en los Estados Unidos. Florida, dicen. O California. Otros afirman que regresó a Europa [...] pero en realidad nadie sabe nada” (542). Teresa, once a powerful force in Spain, has become a forgotten chapter of the past. She is just another among the many uncivilized people ultimately conquered and silenced by Spain and buried in cultural memory as another example of the degenerate Other. She no longer exerts any power over Spain or its people. Spain won against the destructive force of the Other. Throughout the novel, the most prominent physical demarcations of the Other was darkness, whether by skin tone, clothing, or physical location. Darkness directly related to illegal activities and showed Otherness. Therefore, not only were illegal activities stopped in the novel, the darkness of the Other was also removed and remained outside of Spain’s national borders.

Overall, *La reina del sur* serves as a culmination of the development of using darkness to identify Otherness. As the relationship between skin color and religious diversity appeared in *Cantar de Roldán*, *Cartas marruecas* demonstrated that darker race was slowly becoming more significant in demarcating the Other as opposed to difference of religion. In *La reina del sur*, the origin of the illegal activity in Spain was the Mexican Teresa Mendoza with her indigenous heritage, darker skin, and darker clothes, supported by other characters with additional dark physical features, whether those features be of land, of origin, and/or operation as well. Darkness, not religion, became the sign of the Other in this particular cultural text. Throughout *La reina del sur*, it becomes clear that those with darker skin, who come from imagined darker worlds (specifically in this case, the Latin Americans and the Moroccans) serve as the breeding grounds for evil. In this

novel, Spain is a flourishing nation, no longer directly expelling the Other based on faith, but rather protecting the borders of the nation from the darker Other.

## Conclusion

After studying these three works, it has become clear that an identification of the Other, or the non-European, is an underlying theme throughout Spanish literature spanning from medieval times to contemporary literature. While this method of identification has manifested itself throughout the different literary works with a focus on deviations from the ideal European, the way in which it manifests has been different. But, the common thread remains: there were clear identifiers that related to darkness throughout all three works.

The first work, *Cantar de Roldán*, managed to show how and why this marker of Otherness may have begun. The events set forth in this work reflect the attitude of a people for centuries to come. *Cantar de Roldán*, originally framed as a religious war in which it was Christian duty to expel the Muslim, created a strong division of Europe versus the Other that continues to permeate Spanish literature. There were various strategies employed in *Cantar de Roldán* that argued the peninsula's superiority to those not from the peninsula (remembering that at the time of the writing, Spain was not the modern-day country of which we are familiar). *Cantar de Roldán* focused on identifying Otherness primarily through religious deviations, whereas skin tone acted as a secondary or tertiary marker of difference.

First and foremost, the writer of *Cantar de Roldán* highlighted not only religious difference, but also how the will of God played into those differences. It was the holy duty of the Christians in Europe to expel the Saracens from their land. So, first by framing the expulsion as necessary and ordained by God, the necessity to identify the Other because of religious differences was completely justified. The author then used

other techniques to have skin tone accompany religious differences to further highlight the Otherness of the Saracens.

The use of skin tone served to reiterate to audiences the deviation of the Other from the Christian. This is not yet modern racism, as this concept in its contemporary usage had not yet developed, but rather a way to show audiences how different these Others were. A second difference that the writer highlighted was the differences in land. The Christian land was clearly the peninsula; it was a land of greenery and life. However, all of the descriptions of the land of the Saracens were completely opposite: they were lands of darkness, with difficult conditions for life. The author made clear to audiences that God's favor was not in the land of the Other.

In terms of difference of religion, the author showed audiences how God favored His own people and how the pagan gods did not help their own people; the pagan gods even allowed their own followers to drown. They never interacted with their people, they never came to their rescue, and ultimately, their absence led to lost battles for the Saracens. Once more, with the sharp contrast between the Christian God and the pagan gods, audiences knew which one was the correct one to follow, which was the primary purpose of the authorship of *Cantar de Roldán*. The sentiments expressed in *Cantar de Roldán* evidenced a mindset that would persevere in Spanish literature throughout centuries. *Cantar de Roldán* focused on the expulsion of the Non-European, or the non-Christian in this case, and highlighted the numerous differences that made the non-European not as worthy as the European Christian; namely, faith and then skin tone. This sentiment of unworthiness, now with skin tone as an equal indicator of difference as

opposed to a secondary indicator, became more visible in *Cartas marruecas*, by José Caldaso.

At the time of the writing of *Cartas marruecas*, the Muslims had been expelled completely from Spain for just over two hundred years. However, the dislike for the non-European and the pagan was clear in the pages of *Cartas marruecas*, although expressed differently than in *Cantar de Roldán* that reflects the historical moment by bringing the identification of physical appearance to the forefront *with* religious and cultural differences.

One of the first strategies creating the us vs. them binary through use of physical attributes in *Cartas marruecas* was through the presentation of characters. The ultimate source of knowledge in *Cartas marruecas* was, to no surprise, a Spaniard. Nuño guides Gazel in knowledge of Spanish culture; and, although it is also a harsh criticism of elite Spanish culture, it still shows how Gazel would be completely inept without Nuño's guidance. Gazel is a young man, still very much developing as a person, and it is convenient that he chooses to complete this development as a Spaniard. Gazel is identified as an outsider because of his skin tone, as Travis Landry had highlighted, Gazel's physical appearance relegated him as the Other.

Furthermore, the theme of colonization is present, using physical appearance to demarcate the savage Other that Cortés conquered. This one letter recounting the conquest of indigenous peoples reveals the persistent attitude that the Other was noticeable by their darker skin, noted as "indio" and "salvaje". Again, as in *Cantar de Roldán*, faith also demarcated the indigenous as Other; however, the description of the

Conquest in *Cartas marruecas* highlighted physical deviances just as much as religious deviances.

The last novel, *La reina del sur*, by Arturo Pérez-Reverte, completes the development of the identification of the Other through physical differences; specifically, focusing on the darkness of the Other. *La reina del sur* finally presents physical appearance (specifically, darkness) as the primary indicator and judgment of Otherness. One of the strategies that Pérez-Reverte uses, similar to Caldaso, was the trope of the foreigner entering Spanish borders and specifically identifying the foreigner based on outward appearance and associating the foreigner with darkness. It was important time and again throughout the novel to identify those as just that, foreigners, as the majority of characters were referred to by their nationality as opposed to their names and their operations in darkness. Their nationalities became their identity, and most of them were not Spanish.

This was particularly important in *La reina del sur* because the entire book focused on drug trafficking throughout southern Spain and Morocco. First, through the use of many different characters, Pérez-Reverte delimits a clear separation of Spain from illegal activities of the non-European by indicating their dark skin tone and having the illegal activities take place in the shroud of darkness. Additionally, Morocco was physically described very similarly to the land of the Saracens in *Cantar de Roldán*: as a lifeless land. Throughout the novel, the characters primarily identified it by sight by the darkness in which it remained.

Lastly, as in *Cartas marruecas*, characters were consistently reminded that they were not Spanish and would never truly be Spanish, because of their Other, darker

physical appearance. Even in the narration of the story of Teresa and her ascent to the role of drug queen of Spain, Pérez-Reverte reminds the reader of (through the use of subtle vocabulary and the use of the physical identifier of darkness) the true identity of the characters. Ultimately, *La reina del sur* suggests to readers that the non-Spaniard can be quickly identified by physical attributes, as Teresa and her drug empire relied on the association with darkness. Finally, it is no mistake that the Spanish authorities catch up with Teresa; it is no mistake that at the end of the novel she is rumored to be in a different country. She, just like the Other in *Cantar de Roldán*, was expelled.

Moving forward, the significance of this thesis lies in the significance of discourse.

Initially, I began this thesis trying to prove the evidence of racism in various texts, but as I further researched these three works, racism was not the focal point, but rather, a racial discourse became evident throughout the three works. In the future, this thesis can be used to show the significance of discourse in texts; specifically, when referring to race. As the twenty-first century moves towards equality in race, hopefully this thesis can be used to show the impact of racial discourse in the literary tradition.

Overall, it has been interesting to see different author techniques and how the Other, or the non-European, is represented and identified in different literature from various centuries in Spain. As stated in the beginning of the thesis, the main goal was to follow a diachronic development of racist discourse in these three literary texts. This paramount, consistent thread remains: in these specific works of literature, the contempt for the non-European is clear and the identification of the Other has gradually evolved into a primarily physical demarcation. Once focused on variance of faith, the us vs. them binary in these three specific cultural artifacts has become a binary focused primarily on

variance in physical attributes, a demarcation that is, essentially, an element in a system of power.

## Notes

1. “Whiteness produced itself, that is, as invisible or as effacing its own characteristic value, in the same way, say, that a unit of currency seems only able to gauge the value of other things without expressing anything about itself” (DiPiero 155)

2. As critics have well noted (Flesler) the battles continued to inform the collective imaginations: “Los marroquíes se encuentran con la Resistencia de una imagen de ellos mismos construida a través de más de mil años en la literatura e historiografía españolas [...] el “moro” como amenaza y peligro sigue siendo real para muchos habitantes de la Península” (74).

3. Bartels, Emily C. *Speaking of the Moor: From “Alcazar” to “Othello”*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.

4. Kant, I. *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. 1798. Southern Illinois University Press, 1996.

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