



# Strategies of Resistance to the Patriarchal Coercion in Najat El Hachimi's *The Last Patriarch* (2008)

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**Abstract**— *The focus of this paper, which is in the mainstream of cross-cultural representation, is on the resistance strategies used by Anglophone Arab women immigrant writers. Writings from the Arab diaspora in particular lay the way for challenging the binary opposition between various cultures, genders, races, nationalities, and so forth as well as the culture of exclusion and oppression. This paper argues that Arab women Diaspora writing commit itself seriously to the marginal and the oppressed where authors express their abilities to engage consciously in a political contest and willed protest against Orientalism and Patriarchy. Through a textual analysis of Najat El Hachimi's Novel entitled *The Last Patriarch* (2008), this study attempts to trace the ways in which Arab female diasporic writers aim to go beyond the politics of exclusion, surpasses gender and sexual stereotypes and resists patriarchal regime in its many multiple forms and institutions. Therefore, Theories of feminism, postcolonialism and identity are used to analyze double oppression and identity formation in a context of precariousness.*

**Keywords**— *Identity, Resistance, Representation, Diaspora, Hegemony and Patriarchy.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Anglophone Arab literature in general and, Arab women's literature in particular, witnessed unprecedented change in content and quantity after the Twin Tower collapse. The September attacks brought about great political, social, cultural changes to the situation of Arabs in the West and America in particular since it reshaped their identities, destabilized their sense of belonging and created an agony and hostility against them. At the same time, it shaped their literary developments. Lisa Majaj as cited by Jameel Alghaberi in his article on "Arab Anglophone Fiction: A New Voice in Post-9/11 America" affirms that, Arab Anglophone fiction "reflects in part the shifting historical, social, and political contexts that have pushed Anglophone Arab writers to the foreground, creating both new spaces for their voices and new urgencies of expression, as well as the flourishing creativity of these

writers"<sup>1</sup>This new burgeoning literature stands as a mirror that reflects Arab immigrants' anguish, anxiety and unfulfillment as well as their quest for an identity which converges distinct cultures and languages. This literature presents a voice of truth which negotiates Orientalists and Patriarchal stereotypes and introduces Arabic culture to Western readers.

During the last decades, Anglophone literature was marked by a significant contribution of Arab women writers to carve out creative spaces fostering a better understanding of their experiences, lives and identities as immigrant Arab women from purely feminist and womanly perspectives. Diasporic Arab women writers committed themselves to reflect a genuine representation of women's lives, identities and experiences beyond the androcentric patriarchal codes and colonial models which demean them as obedient, submissive, ignorant and under the mercy of men. These

<sup>1</sup>Jameel Alghaberi, "Arab Anglophone Fiction: A New Voice in Post-9/11 America," *Contemporary Literary Review India*, 5:3 (2018), p. 39.

writers transform their marginal position into a space of resistance and strategically reflect their multiple consciousness of the social, economic, and political corrupted values and attempt to change them. The increasing publications of Arab women diasporic writings were simultaneously followed by increasing scholarly and academic interests. The basic focus of Arab women diaspora writings speaks within the thorny event of 11/9. These texts were created from the viewpoint of the hybrid as well as from the effective experience of social marginality.

Within the postcolonial and diaspora studies, Arab women's diasporic literature ought to be read as a literature of resistance, exile, home and identity making. Speaking of the concept of 'Resistance' many critics within postcolonial studies argue that it constitutes any opposition to, or subversion of, dominant authorities. For instance, Raby Rebecca asserts in her article "What is Resistance?" that limiting the scopes of resistance entails more than defining it. Resistance for her "is an integral part of power relationships, of domination, subjugation and as such may be viewed from different ideological viewpoints."<sup>2</sup> Resistance is a prevailing feature of most of the Arab female diasporic literature which, recently, knew phenomenal improvement and thematic changes that emanate from the author's social, economic, political and psychological status.

On the one hand, the selected writer I examine in this study make use of her imaginings and creative allegories to resistance and transform the mythical depiction of the patriarchal discourse on Arab Muslim women. On the other hand, despite living in the diaspora, they imaginatively revisit their homeland and culture in an attempt to affirm their stance on the cultural stereotypes attached to Arab women in Arab culture as well as combat the dominant patriarchal institutions. In this paper, resistance takes the form of consciousness raising and inflaming the intellectual world on the necessity to reread and revisit the typical definitions of otherness and traditional structures of power relations pertaining to gender, sexual different religion and culture. It aims to examine the ways in which Arab women Diaspora writers, namely Najta El Hachimi, resist the pre-conceived stereotypical Oriental discourse and, in this respect, language functions as a mode of transformation, subversion and resistance.

Through language, Najat El Hachimi endeavors to articulate a fluid identity that refuses to dwell on margin. She expresses an outlook on women's situation, status and subordination in the Arab world as well as Western world. Therefore, this writer articulates a feminist stance vis-à-vis women's gender identity, oppression and enslavement. Like the African feminist, El Hachimi believes that "Patriarchy is the single most life-threatening social disease assaulting the male body and spirit in our nation. Yet most men do not use the word "patriarchy" in everyday life. Most men never think about patriarchy."<sup>3</sup> This paper, thus, tend to explore in depth the resistance of patriarchal mentality and the forging of a new path away from unjust power systems in the literary work of the Moroccan Spanish author, Najat El Hachimi. The textual analysis and language investigation of *The Last Patriarch* will show how patriarchy and resistance are enacted, problematized and negotiated so as to articulate a female identity that contests essentialization, homogenization and champion openness and cultural diversity.

## II. SUBVERSION OF GENDER ROLES AND RESISTING THE PATRIARCHAL MENTALITY

*The last Patriarch* (2008), published in 2008, is the title of an interesting novel written by Najat El Hachimi; a Moroccan Spanish author, who was awarded the most prestigious Catalan literary prize, and the Ramon Llull prize Najat El Hachmi. *The Last Patriarch* is a narrative about modern immigration, from Morocco to Catalonia, and the clashes of cultures, identity and feelings involved. The story spotlights on an immigrant Moroccan family that moves from a conservative traditional bound village in the north of Morocco (Nadour) to live in a different modern northern Spain. It is told from the perspective of the anonymous daughter of the patriarch of the novel, Mimoun. This novel is divided into two parts; the first of which is centered on recounting the story of Mimoun's childhood in a Moroccan Rif Village, where he fails the test to become another great patriarch who would carry on what his ancestors began long ago. In the first part, El Hachimi presents the last Patriarch as a character that breaches all prospects of procrastination. El Hachimi documents Mimoun's upbringing among his three sisters and mother where he was allowed to do whatever he wants. While his mother and sisters lead an obedient life, he is free to become a tyrant driven by his desires. Mimoun invents ridiculous stories to justify his

<sup>2</sup> Rebecca Raby, "What is Resistance?" *Journal of Youth Studies*, 8:2, (2005), p. 155.

<sup>3</sup>Bell Hooks. (2015), "Understanding Patriarchy" retrieved on (April 16, 2017), from

<http://imagineborders.org/pdf/zines/UnderstandingPatriarchy.pdf>

behaviors and believes his fantasies. El Hachmi draws a conclusion that Mimoun is not typical of Moroccan man.

The second part of the novel revolves around the experience of immigration, alienation, deterritorialization and cultural encounter. Narrated from the perspective of Mimoun's daughter, the story recounts the way Mimoun's daughter is moved by the culture, life style and language of her adopted land. She finds refuge in its literature and is obsessed with acquiring Catalan language. In the diaspora, the narrator (Mimoun's daughter) comes into conflict and fluctuation between two cultures and realizes how difficult it can be to seek liberation against a tyrannical father. Mimoun, as Najat El Hachimi intended to shows stands to be the last patriarch.

Before delving in the analysis of the way El Hachimi depicts the patriarchal social and cultural boundaries that bound Moroccan women's live and relegate them to the status of inferiority, it of much importance to provide an overview on the Moroccan masculinist perception of women's identities, gender roles and attributes. In this regard, perhaps Fatima Sadiqi's contributions to this field is very relevant. In her article Sadiqi affirms that, "Moroccan culture is of a type that strongly constrains the behavior of men and women through a space-based patriarchy. The strength of this control comes from the fact that it is channeled through powerful social institutions".<sup>4</sup>Culture and Moroccan culture in particular is a learned behaviour and a social heritage that is transmitted to each generation where the newly born is taught to adhere to certain cultural norms and fit in different aspects of the dominant culture that expects from them to fulfil its standards as gendered being. The Moroccan social organisation is headed by the father and the male lineage which makes of it a typical patriarchal where women roles are related to their reproductive function.

Sadiqi identifies the eight basic paradigms that make of the Moroccan culture a strong disciplining system and a primary factor of women's subjugation. Among the patriarchal paradigms identified by Sadiqi there are (i) historical heritage and tradition, (ii) orality, Islam (iv), (v) multilingualism, (vi) social organization, (vii) economic status, and (viii) political system. All these channels perpetuate the same stereotypical agenda and consequently make women's contributions to development, roles and status secondary when compared to their male counter-part. For instance, according to Saqidi the historical memoirs and records document and immortalize Moroccan women's

subordination. These historical records are transmitted through generation and, in Sadiqi's words, "deepened the gap between the two sexes."<sup>5</sup> Besides, as Sadiqi manifests, Moroccan culture is overwhelmed with gender stereotypes that constitute permanent male-based group mindset. "Most of the stereotypes about women in Moroccan culture are negative. In general, female talk, attributes, actions, and habits are more negatively depicted in Moroccan languages than male talk, attributes, actions, and habits." <sup>6</sup>She adds that the female sex is socialization within the rigid system of kinship relations to believe that they are weak, emotional, patient and obedient. These stereotypes and cultural beliefs are commonly respected by all members of society and any approval or violation is followed by sanction. These penalties and rewards for conduct concerning social norms are constructed by the traditional authority to discipline the members of a given society. They also help in insuring diffusion of culture and thus secure the authority of the dominant groups. Furthermore, Moha Ennaji advocates the same stance arguing that cultural hurdles and patriarchal traditions contribute extensively to women's invisibility in most of the productive and influential positions because of the increasing rate of illiteracy among women (illiteracy is more widespread among women (60%) than among men 40%). Ennaji maintains that, "Illiteracy and lack of information prevent women from invoking their rights or reporting crimes against them, such as rape, child abuse, sexual exploitation and domestic violence"<sup>7</sup>

That is, within the Moroccan cultural system, women's freedom, and equality according to many men present a real threat to the patriarchal social fabric and men's status quo. This fact conceals the heterogeneity, productivity of Moroccan women, at the same time, lead to different forms of cultural, institutional, physical and verbal violence against women. However, in the recent decades, things have begun to change in Morocco as women's issues have recently become more public and political. Women's case is no longer private and perhaps Ennaji seems to be optimistic since Moroccan women's emancipation becomes the subject matter of decision-makers, social organizations and NGOs that attempt to change the status quo and guarantee equal right for women. Moha Ennaji sums up that "As a consequence of the advocacy of women's groups, the Moroccan government has recently launched a campaign to fight against poverty and illiteracy among rural women, which had a great impact on poor women's welfare and people's attitudes toward women in general and toward

<sup>4</sup>Fatima, Sadiqi (2011), "Women, and the Violence of Stereotypes in Morocco," retrieved on (Feb, 15, 2019), from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/308674628>p.3.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p.15.

<sup>7</sup> Moha Ennaji, "Women, Gender, and Politics in Morocco," *Social Science*, 5:75 (2016), p.4.

their political participation.”<sup>8</sup> Women's rights and equality in Morocco issues that impose themselves not only in the political scene but rather most of Moroccan feminist writers take it as a holy responsibility. In the case of the Moroccan Spanish writer (Najat El Hachimi) she is aware of the fact that Moroccan women are still in need to be more integrated socially, politically, and economically in order to strengthen the democratization path of the country. That is, in her novel she exhibits her stance on patriarchy as the most dominant and oppressive social network in Morocco and how this social structure has a far-reaching drawback on the lives to its inhabitants.

The relevance of Najat El Hachimi's *The Last Patriarch* emanates from her pursuits to follow the trajectories of postcolonial feminists 'critique and their endeavor to interpret and analyze the status quo under which Arab women are left subordinated and marginalization. Najat El Hachimi strives to posit her own position of the institution of patriarchy, and the patriarchal legacy performed in the diaspora aspiring to forge a counter representational discourse to resist the embodiments of oppression in North of Morocco. She interrogates the very mechanics of despotism and the marital lows that are transmitted through various symbiotic forms. El Hachimi follows the footsteps of Chandra Mohanty's philosophy of opposition against racism, sexism, colonialism and potential alliance and collaboration across divisionary boundaries. Mohanty notes that “the practice of solidarity foregrounds communities of people who have chosen to work and fight together. Reflective solidarity is crafted by an interaction involving three persons: ‘I ask you to stand by me against a third.’”<sup>9</sup> Clearly, Mohanty's argument revolves around the Western exoticizing of third world women but also it delineates the socio-cultural and political discourses of subordination that, according to her, will be mitigated and eradicated through collaborative international efforts.

The Moroccan regularity of oppression and inequalities are a legacy of both the existing cultural structures and colonial system of domination. As such, *The Last Patriarch* can be approached as a postcolonial text that handles issues of identity and immigration that are recently the backbone of academic debate. El Hachimi's novel, narrated from the perspective of Mimoun's daughter, recalls Mimouna's birth, childhood and adolescence that are based on the privileges of patriarchal culture that strengthens men's power over women. El Hachimi constructs two

versions of patriarchy; one that is dominant and authoritative in his relations to his family and the second is the one El Hachimi constructs as the last patriarch who fails and declines all the archetypes and paradigms of masculinity. El Hachimi uses an ironic language and goes beyond taboos while drawing an image of the character of Mimoun (the last patriarch). El Hachimi wants her story to be rooted in real social, daily and simple happenings which concerns the majority of Moroccan youth who were brought up to be patriarchs.

In this specific case, El Hachimi recreates the history of the last patriarch of a Moroccan Berber-family, the subsequent immigration to Catalonia in search of promotion and social progress and the process of integration in the context of Spanish state all from a gender perspective. The story all the time alludes to Mimoun with great ironic charges as the ‘the great patriarch’ with a clear intention to a creation and a destruction of the prototypical character of fiction. In her attempt to describe Moroccan patriarchal coercion, El Hachimi chooses to address a number of specific issues. First, she discusses the inequality in the status of women in Moroccan society, with a particular attention to the question of sexuality. Second, she deals with the contours of the family and the social structures and the bureaucratic paralysis, religious hypocrisy and government corruption. By so doing, the author predisposes the conditions under which Moroccan women live and in which patriarchy descends.

While paving the way for her destructive representation of patriarchy, the author puts us in a real life personalization of most Moroccan under fatherly-inherited decree. She seems to sympathize with all the females in the story and with ‘mother’ Mimoun's wife in particular who leads a pathetic gloomy life and who has to endure the absurdity, disorder and brutality of her husband. In both the homeland and the diaspora, Mimoun's mother, as most women of the Rif village, were seen slaves rather than wives or mothers. “By now grandmother was quite used to hearing herself rebuked like this”<sup>10</sup> as if to say disgrace was part of village women's lives. Grandmother's life will be even worse with the birth of her first son since she will drop into an all-encompassing scenario of anxiety. While she was delivering him, her midwife prophesies the dilemma she is getting into; “a bad omen, daughter when children are born without pain. If they do not hurt when re born, they ‘ll hurt you the rest of your life.”<sup>11</sup> To reflect her judgments towards

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>9</sup>Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (United States : Duke University Press, 2004), p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> Najat EL Hachimi, *The Last Patriarch* (London: Serpent's Tail press, 2010), p.7.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

Moroccan patriarchy, social and religious hypocrisy, El Hachimi exhibits the way masculinist culture gives males many privileges that are sanctioned for female counterpart. By virtue of his masculinity, Mimoun exploits these privileges. For instance; Mimoun has total freedom to exercise his sexuality with women who offer themselves to him in the village, the city and in Spain while loses mind only to imagine that his sister wants to accompany a boy to the city.

We'll go to the city, I'll cover you in jewels of gold, we'll go to the city, she didn't see him standing himself to kick the living daylight out of her. He caught her by surprise and pushed her so hard that her face hit the ground and whenever she tried to get up he knocked her back down again.<sup>12</sup>

As the song indicates, the city is a zone of liberation that every girl in the village dreams to go to. However, in such a patriarchal culture, girls dreams must not go beyond marriage and the household as the dream of liberation threatens the family's honor. In most traditional societies, men's and the family's honor is related the chastity of their daughters and in the case of Mimoun, his honor will only be tarnished if one of family female relative loses face. While obsessed with the honor of his sister, and later with his wife he allows himself to enjoy many sexual intercourses with women in the village. After his marriage was arranged and he got back from Spain, he returns back to his mistress Fatima who he used to plant his seed in. He endeavored to know whether his fiancée is still loyal to him and that no gossip of her honor resonates in the village. Asking Fatima while having sex with her she said,

What the hell do I care about your blockier, Mimoun, don't you know that girl's more like slaves than wife? But I've not heard any scandal about her, although right now I'd love to be able to tell you I have, she continued as she let him lift her skirt up in that secluded corner.<sup>13</sup>

As far as domestic and gender-based violence is concerned, El Hachimi describes Moroccan women's situation from a factual perspective through the character of "mother" and daughter. She gives images of violence to delineate the fact of the tradition gendered structure that dominates most of Arab-Islamic societies. El Hachimi sketches incidents of violence mainly domestic one. Mimoun proved to be a typical tyrannical character against his wife. He starts biting

her few days after their marriage preventing her from going out of his household. When mother happens to be out of her house, Mimoun becomes furious about, "what did I tell you? Doesn't what I say count? And mother head was already on the croon"<sup>14</sup> the rate of physical, oral and psychological abuse increased dramatically when Mimoun's daughter was born, the result of which he suspects that his wife betrayed him with his uncle and he loses trust in her ever. When his family joined him in Catalonia, violence reached its extreme scale as Mimoun deals with everything with violence "mother always says she can't remember what instrument he used or how he heats he"<sup>15</sup>

By providing these lively accounts of the lives of women under traditional beliefs, El Hachimi aspires to criticize the destructive rule of the patriarch ideology that dominated Arab region and even recycled and perpetuated in the diaspora. Perhaps, she wants to answer Merniss's interrogation of "why dose patriarchy assumes the guise of legality in Arab countries, whereas in the developed countries it is acknowledged that its very structure is incompatible with the aspiration of democracy."<sup>16</sup> To El Hachimi, it is essential for women to mitigate the violence and victimization preyed upon them to channel heterogeneous modes of empowerment that trespass geographical territories to build a more tolerant and peaceful societies based on mutual respect. El Hachimi's intention of recreating the antiquity of patriarchy is carried by two main characters; Mimoun whom she represents as a failure patriarch and his daughter as a revolutionary character who will put an end to her father's authority.

For the time being, the aim is to analyze the way Mimoun fails to be a prototypical father figure in the sense that the author limelight the deficiencies, the vulnerability and the proclivity of the character whose mouthpiece discloses his refusal of his ancestor's paradigms of masculinity. El Hachimi's familiarity with Moroccan culture and the rhetoric of representation in male centered literature enables her to forge a counter representational discourse to confront and defy all forms of oppression. Throughout her politics of representation, the author uses a deadpan sarcasm to dramatize the fall of the last patriarch. Mimoun is, first, introduced as "son of Driouach, son of Allal, son of Mohammed, son of Mohand, son of Bouziane who we shall simply call Mimoun,"<sup>17</sup> an indication of his disidentification.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 96

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>16</sup>Zahia Smail Salh, *Gender and violence in Islamic Societies: Patriarchy, Islamism and Politics in the Middle East and North Africa* (Great Britain : CPI Antony Rowe, 2013), p. 61.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. vii .

The character of Mimoune, conversely, does not resemble his ancestors neither in their attitudes of manhood nor in their beliefs in the cultural privilege given to men like himself. From his childhood up to his adolescent, Mimoun leads an unpleasant life and always in search for his destiny and identity. Perhaps, being abused by his father "his father warned his sister, his mother and finally reached the end of tether, threaten the little".<sup>18</sup> Mimoun's life was extremely influenced as his father kept trying to inculcate in him norms of responsibility as the epitome of patriarchal authority. Mimoun insisted on maintaining his own personal interpretation of masculinity. Mimoun who "was dark-skinned like so many baby boys who are born ugly"<sup>19</sup>, a reference to the ugliness of patriarchy, fails the traditional standards of masculinity (emotional, weaker, more wicked, hard-working, patient, and obedient) First, out of envy, he killed his little brother (rival number one) because he took all the attention of the sisters and mother. Later on, when Mimoun enters school, he quits quickly as he becomes irritated by having to get up early every morning, going to go school and the teacher's biting. Despite his father's eagerness and insistence that "his first-born son to devote himself to medicine as at least one of his children could abandon life in the fields and enter a profession as respectable as that of doctors"<sup>20</sup> Mimoun drops out of school leaving no choice to his father but to send him to work in house construction where he would fail again.

Grandfather sent Mimoun to work for Rahj Moussa, Mimoun fails to prove his abilities as a man as he could not endure the difficulties of the duty assigned to him. He fought with Rahj Moussa's children bringing lots of shame to his father who "must have felt embarrassed face to face with the man who'd trusted him and allowed his son to work with his two boys."<sup>21</sup> Extremely irritated and embarrassed, his father returns home for Mimoun, who locked himself in his room and refuses to come out for fear his father kills him. The grandfather broke into Mimoun's room to be surprised that Mimoun "brought a tightly clenched fist from behind his back and hit his father's nose as hard as he could."<sup>22</sup> a son hitting his father has been the most unspeakable deed that, "was to turn the natural order of things upside down"<sup>23</sup>

It should be noted that the discourse of masculinity has been demolished by the character of Mimoun as he is

represented as a male who excels only in bringing disgrace and destruction to people around him. The protagonist's deviation from the norms of masculinity is immeasurable since he could not comply with gender roles neither in his homeland nor in the receiving land Catalonia. To put it otherwise, when his mother, the primary gatekeeper of patriarchal in the family, arranged his marriage with a cousin who has been properly trained to be totally submissive to the manipulation and abuse of men, Mimoun decided to head toward Spain still looking for his destiny and economic promotion. In Catalonia, he could not control his lasciviousness and started approaching his boss's wife "who started to show up in the final stages of the building of her new house"<sup>24</sup>. Mimoun whose knowledge of cultural differences is feeble imagined that his boss "probably couldn't satisfy her [...] and he must have plotted to leave him alone with his wife"<sup>25</sup>. Mimoun thought of taking revenge from the exploitive boss who employs Mimoun for long hours. After the sexual encounter between the Western lady and the Moorish guy, Mimoun discovered that "in Spain they don't want people who spy petrol over the house who employed them"<sup>26</sup> the result of which Mimoun was expelled back to his provincial capital "empty-handed on the event of his wedding"<sup>27</sup>

The great patriarch of the novel cannot handle a single matter without the help of his family specifically his older sister who say that when she saw him come in, Mimoun started crying like a child"<sup>28</sup>. She helped him to recover his health while his father had "to sell some land [...] to pay for the dowry"<sup>29</sup>. The patriarch of the novel has always been an unbearable burden on his family, as he could not depend on himself. He could never accomplish a single task he was destined to do even when it comes to performing his marital duty as a real man. He felt extremely confused in front of his inexperienced wife in their first marriage night. Highly embarrassed, "he opened the door and said come in; I don't know what's wrong with me. I can't do it sister, I can't"<sup>30</sup> he could not show everybody he was a real man and his wife was a woman you rarely found nowadays"<sup>31</sup>.

It should be noted that Mimoun is met by different episodes of failure and spends his entire life looking for his destiny, selfhood and a shore of identity to settle in. This attempt corresponds to his great sense of insecurity in the

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p.7.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p.11.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p.20.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p.36.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p.36.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p.74.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p.80.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p.87.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p.91.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 92.

family and in borderland. His family in general and father in particular could not accept him the way he is and attempted to inculcate in him the standards of masculinity and made of him another great patriarch. In the borderland, additionally, Mimoun meets humiliation and rejection, as he could not adapt to the new culture. Being torn between his father's wish, cultural prerogative and compulsion and his own interpretation of himself, Mimoun decided that his destiny is stay in Catalonia definitively "people said Mimoun would never come back, that he 'd 'abandoned or 'abdicated his role as head of our family as well as a son, brother or father".<sup>32</sup> However, the young patriarch repeats the violent behavior on his wife and daughter after they join him in Spain. After they had married, they immigrate to Barcelona where the marriage goes sour due to Mimoun's excessive jealousy, which he alleviates with the use of increasing brutality. In Catalonia, Mimoun begins to seek out a series of lovers while he forces his wife to remain in the house, a pattern that recalls the behavior of other patriarchs in previous migration narratives. It is safe to say that El Hashimi's sarcastic style and the ironic tone she used while portraying the life of the last patriarch proved to be an effective mechanism of resistance.

### III. CONCLUSION

El Hachimi uses her creative imagining to recreate the history of patriarchy and champion feminist's ideals. Her portrayal of her and other female characters as oppressed is mainly meant to make the invisible visible and later, in the second part of her novel, El Hachimi gives us a different portrayal of her female protagonist (Mimoun's daughter) as revolutionary character who seeks liberation and whose scopes of resistance go beyond patriarchal dominance. This, in fact, reveals the power of art and literature in generating a historical, a social, a culture and political changes. That is, *The Last Patriarch* is to be read as a craft of resistance against essentialist positions and fundamentalist premises within the context of Moroccan society. It explores the way literature subverts and challenges dominant discourses and opens multiple venues of communication and negotiation. El Hachimi is aware of the fact that her novel is, sometimes, read a piece of writing which is in favor of Western life style, culture and democracy and that gender is the divisionary line between Europeans and non-Europeans. However, it seems to me that El Hachimi is, in fact, in favor of a home of democracy and equality which has the ability to adopt its member beyond gender and racial hierarchies. Thus, El Hachimi's novel does not seem to be in favors of European culture over

that of her motherland but she portrayed a revolutionary character who opposes domination wherever it is and who occupies an ambivalent state and liminal position to construct her won hybrid identity. El Hachimi, scrutinizes every aspect of patriarchal culture and explores the extent to which Arab women are made invisible, submissive and marginalized from domains of life because of the cultural system and she attempted to change this history.

By mapping out the general conditions of women's life under patriarchal rule and the way this system of oppression limits women's abilities and increases their marginalization, El Hachimi reflects her own feminist consciousness and deep understanding of the cultural aspects that foster and encourage stereotypes on Moroccan women. It appears clear that El Hachim is more concerned with rise of feminist consciousness in Morocco. She has provided an analytical study of the Moroccan socio-cultural network which has allowed her to go beyond tracing origins to analyzing the play of power exercised by patriarchy and the active strategies to combat this power. El Hachimi succeeded in constructing a character who refuses to be another patriarch and whose daughter celebrates her freedom from all the cultural chains of Arab Muslim society. The second part of the novel revolves around the process of immigration and Moroccan women's experience of relocation, adaptation to a foreign environments and pursuits of liberation. While dealing with Moroccan women's alienation, it seems that the author fosters a radical way to destabilize the patriarchal thinking and creates an alternative to change the patriarchal law, perception of women bodies and sexuality. In the following section, the focus is centered on the representation of women as agents of change whose obstinacy defies the patriarchal dominance that are maintained by male characters.

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 138.

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