

INTRODUCTION

This issue of *the Vanderbilt e-Journal of Luso-Hispanic Studies* explores representations of migration in recent Latin American and Peninsular cultural production through the interrelated phenomena of mobility and boundaries. While recent migratory patterns signal the decreasing significance of national borders, these borders are also increasingly guarded and defended. Examples of anti-immigrant discourse abound in the current political climate of the United States, from the recent Arizona law SB1070, which labels immigrants both as “illegal” and a threat to “safe neighborhoods” to anxieties about “anchor babies” born to “illegal” immigrant women hoping to attain citizenship through their children. “Illegal” immigrants migrating from the global south to the north, moreover, are often forced into precarious work conditions that reflect their experiences in the destination and the risk those lacking in citizenship assume despite their ability to cross national boundaries. The increasing incidence of prostitution by undocumented immigrant women often trafficked by illegal networks in Spain exemplifies this idea. Hence, while the imagination allows migrants to re-conceptualize and reposition themselves in new ways, they often have preexisting models of being or stereotypes imposed upon them once they arrive in the destination; and the nation-state retains much of its organizational power and continues to bear upon collective formulations of identity and belonging. This phenomenon also operates in reverse; the autobiographical literary works *We Came All the Way from Cuba so You Could Dress Like This?* by Achy Obejas and *L'Últim patriarca* by Najat el Hachmi attest to the crises immigrants experience when established norms safeguarded in the origin crumble in the United States and in Spain respectively owing to the new opportunities and concomitant identities afforded by migration.

The issue emerged from the following questions: How do representations of migration account for the possibilities and limitations that structure and complicate mobility? What representational economies and practices are used to depict migration? How do migrants portray themselves or enter into a dialogue with the cultures that represent them?

The essays that comprise this issue address these questions masterfully in relation to literary and cinematic works that interrogate contemporary Latin American migration to the United States, recent migration to Spain, and Spanish migration to the Moroccan Protectorate during the Spanish Civil War. As the five essays in this edition show, cultural production has the potential to destabilize entrenched forms of knowing and narrating the world. The essays that follow, thus, not only relate how migration and mobility are represented in contemporary Latin American and Peninsular cultural production, but also the ways in which these texts counter official discourse regarding migration and migrants and can provide sites of resistance from which one may interrogate the political platforms and processes that produce restrictive identities, rigid nationalisms, and Otherness.

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