

Migration, Discrimination and Exclusion in *Ceniza en la boca* by Brenda Navarro

Cándida Elizabeth Vivero Marín

Gender Studies Center, University of Guadalajara, Guadalajara, Mexico

Email: elizabeth_vivero@hotmail.com

How to cite this paper: Marín, C. E. V. (2024). Migration, Discrimination and Exclusion in *Ceniza en la boca* by Brenda Navarro. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 12, 33-44.

<https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2024.127004>

Received: June 5, 2024

Accepted: July 8, 2024

Published: July 11, 2024

Copyright © 2024 by author(s) and Scientific Research Publishing Inc. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

Abstract

In Mexican literature written by women migration is a recurring topic. In the eyes of Magdalena Mondragon, Guadalupe Nettel and Brenda Navarro, migration is linked to discrimination and exclusion, as these phenomena occur in the host countries. In the case of *Ceniza en la boca* (2022), the rejection of lesbian characters who suffer a double or triple discrimination adds up to these problems. In this work, female migration is approached from a gender perspective, aiming to raise awareness of the problem and to allow migrant women to be heard.

Keywords

Literature, Mexico, Women, Migration, Discrimination

1. Introduction

In recent Mexican literature written by young women, migration is a recurring topic. Novels such as *El cuerpo en quenací* [*The Body Where I Was Born*] (2011) by Guadalupe Nettel (1973), *Casasvacías* [*Empty Houses*] (2020) by Brenda Navarro (1982) or her most recent book, *Ceniza en la boca* [*Mouth Full of Ash*] (2022), describe the discriminatory and exclusionary practices that female characters suffer from in European countries (mainly France and Spain).

In *Mouth Full of Ash*, these aspects are displayed in an open and clear way, including the subjection to sexual exclusion, as the lesbian characters are doubly rejected (by their own family and by Barcelona's society, where most of the story takes place).

This work analyzes from a gender perspective the discrimination and exclusion to which female migrants, male migrants and lesbian female characters are subjected in an allegedly inclusive and diverse society, such as Barcelona city.

2. Migration and Literature

Migration is a long-standing global phenomenon. In the history of mankind, movements of human groups have been recorded since ancient times. Migration to other territories or continents, to other countries or to other cities within the same country is a constant that is frequently repeated. In global terms, migration nowadays represents a significant relocation of people to countries deemed more developed or with a better economic development. Europe, for instance, witnesses the migration to its territory of a considerable amount of people seeking to improve their life conditions or fleeing from armed conflicts. A similar situation happens in the border between United States and Mexico, where thousands of immigrants, not only from Mexico but from other countries from the Caribbean, Center and South America, embark on the tortuous travel towards U.S. territory.

The causes of migration, as has been pointed out, are multiple, but they rule out the following: forced displacement due to criminal groups, expulsion from the territory due to armed conflicts, the precariousness of life due to low income, inability to find work, family reunification.

Thus, the migration phenomenon is not only present at a social, but also at a literary level, as there are many novels and short stories that portray, from different standpoints, the challenges, obstacles and vicissitudes that migrants must go through in their quest to find better living conditions. Hence, migration has been a central topic for many female and male writers of Mexican Literature who attempt to recount the problems arising from this situation. In Hector A. Reyes Zaga's article "Cartografías literarias: anotaciones a propósito de la novela de migración mexicana" ["Literary Cartographies: Annotations on the Mexican Migration Novel"] (2019), the author points out that "the most appropriate way to explore the novel corpus of Mexican migration must be through the practice of a historiographic exercise associated to the different "real" phases of Mexican migration to the United States." (p. 149)¹

For this reason, Zaga divides migration novels in six stages going from 1900 to 2008, granting them the name suggested by Jorge Durand when referring to the waves of the migratory movement:

According to Durand, the migration relationship between Mexico and the United States can be analyzed in the light of six big stages that correspond to six different migratory policies, models and patterns: the latching stage (1900-1920), the deportations stage (1921-1941), the seasonal Mexican workers stage (1942-1964), the illegal immigrants era (1965-1985), the bipolar stage (1986-2007) and one last stage that began on 2008 and is still to be defined (Durand y Massey: 47-48). Out of the six stages, three seem to group together the totality of the production of migration novels written in Mexico: the latching stage, the seasonal Mexican workers stage, and the illegal immigrant's stage. (2019, p. 149)

¹Translator's Note: All the translations of citations by Susana I. Sevilla Beltrán, unless otherwise noted.

While it is true that the categorization proposed by Durand, and taken up by Zaga, refers only to migration to the United States and not to migration to other regions or places in the world, it is also true that such prospect gives us an idea of the vitality of such phenomenon and demonstrates how Mexican literature, mainly narrative, has been pierced by it. In the case at hand, in the novel *Mouth Full of Ash*, the destination of the migration is Europe, specifically Spain and, in such case, it is also possible to observe the close relationship existing between the production of literary works and the flow of migrants to the old continent. In this sense, according to Claudio Bolzman, such migration can be categorized as follows:

The first category (the “Europeanized”) would be conformed [...] by the economic elites that used to travel to Europe as a rite of passage, in search of their roots and their ancestors’ cultural sources; the second one (the “identity searchers”) is comprised by the exporters of the new Latin-American cultural production towards the European continent: the “boom” writers; later on, the “exiled” (people from Chile, Uruguay, Argentina...) arrived in old Europe, searching for political asylum and, after them, the people defined by Bolzman as “relocated” or “survival experts”, comprised by male and female marginalized workers who, not being able to make a living in their own countries, tried to build a better destiny for themselves in Europe. (Bolzmann cit. by [Andrés-Suárez, 2004: p. 13](#))

It is evident, then, that although the reasons for migrating to the United States and Europe are different, there is a rallying point where both phenomena share certain traits in terms of the population and their migration purposes. As a result, in the end, the flow of people to other countries shares the same circumstances: trying to make a living in countries where people believe they will have a better future and a higher quality of life. Admittedly, this is an ideal that is not fulfilled in most cases, or at least not as fully as originally planned, since migrants face the reality of a precarious life and the enormous challenges of finding a decent and stable job, especially when they are migrants who enter the destination countries irregularly.

If we add to this what [Gurieva and Kinuen \(2014\)](#) point out regarding the lack of adaptation due to not adequately assimilating the values of the destination country, the migration problem becomes more complicated. Therefore, it is not surprising, as Gurieva and Kinuen maintain, that a high percentage of migrants return to their homes, thus becoming re-immigrants (176).

In such context, women have gradually incorporated to this phenomenon, as they are no longer the housewives waiting for remittances to be sent or for their partner to return. Now, they are also migrants, with all the risks that this entails: “displacement of low-income women is undoubtedly rooted in both economic and social factors, like family reunification, but is also based in gender factors, like the escape from a repressive society, violence, and the search for autonomy.” ([Rodríguez Hicks, 2009: p. 140](#))

Migrant women from all latitudes face a higher degree of insecurity and the

risk factor they are exposed to in terms of sexual violence is way higher too. Moreover, among the different collectives, that of female illegal immigrants is the most exposed (cf. Mora cit. in Benítez Eyzaguirre, 2010: p. 53). Migrant women are highly vulnerable as, apart from being pierced by a whole system of exclusion derived from patriarchal oppression that establishes a system based on inequalities and inequities, they are also impacted by a series of determining factors such as their ethnicity and socio-economic status (ibidem, p. 52). Many of these women have even suffered, from their countries of origin, workplace bullying, sexual harassment and discrimination in their workplaces, which is why many choose to seek better working conditions in other latitudes without imagining that they will also suffer mistreatment whereas happens, for example, in private banking (Milon, Al-Amin, & Saha, 2022: p. 689).

Thus, migrant women, particularly illegal immigrants, suffer from a series of difficulties that deepen and exacerbate gender differences, making their journey and stay a harder process to solve, as it brings together different aspects such as those mentioned above.

Consequently, female migration as a social phenomenon becomes an intricate labyrinth posing difficulties at several levels. One of them is, undoubtedly, the rejection migrant women suffer both from their origin and destination communities, as they are often victims of greater exploitation than their male counterparts. Notwithstanding this situation, the increase of migrant women has brought with it the feminization of migration, which means a greater number of women who cross borders to become part of precarious work conditions that focus on reproduction:

The feminization of migration, in turn, creates an internationalized reproduction: the request for workforces is persistently published at a lower price and less regulation of its rights and composition, resulting in a more feminine option. Women—now in an environment with a higher degree of exclusion—also contribute to this situation and to the unequal distribution of benefits in the host societies, by once more being responsible for reproduction (Benítez Eyzaguirre, 2010: p. 102).

Thereupon, far from escaping from abuse and exploitation circumstances, migrant women reinsert themselves in unequal systems that condemn them to suffer from oppression. Benítez Eyzaguirre argues, therefore, that the sexist concept permeates the legal formulations of the host countries and that, as a result, women are once again subjected to gendered views that perpetuate the roles traditionally assigned to them, with the difference that women tend to send remittances more constantly and have greater savings capacity (cf. 2010, p. 102).

Having said that, how is this female migration represented in literature written by women? The following section will address this point.

3. Female Migration in Literature Written by Women

As noted above, migration literature has specific features, as it reflects the mi-

gratory flows that have taken place over time. The key characteristics of migration novels are, among others: the representation of the problems of assimilation and adaptation to the new environment, the inability to communicate adequately in the destination language, family problems raised by separation and conflicts intergenerational due to different growth conditions with respect to the culture of origin.

In the case of migration literature written by women, this characteristic remains, although a singular feature is added which, according to Lucia Benítez, has to do with the fact that the “collective concept of personal identification” remains (2010, p. 115). As a result, the depiction on female migration refers to a bigger group that reflects its needs based on individual stories that are shaping a distinct and differentiated identity which transforms the personality and the social environment. Literature, therefore, “gives voice, life and body to women in such a way that they find in literature not only a means of expression, but also the content of their own identity” (Cereceda cit. by Benítez Eyzaguirre, 2010: p. 124). In this way, female writers who address women’s migration portray both an interior and exterior change, by restructuring their identity and acknowledging them as the main characters of their own stories. Also, the metaphors, images, icons and other discursive and rhetorical elements employed by these writers have “significant political and economic repercussions” (Gregorio cit. by Benítez Eyzaguirre, 2010: p. 125), as they influence the way in which women are represented, the cultural constructions that are built, and the social imaginary where those migrant women insert themselves:

The gender condition acquires new dimensions when it is assembled between literature and migration. When these two experiences begin, these women see how other possible horizons open. At the same time, they strengthen their own awareness under the pressure of worlds that are repeatedly hostile when they express or mobilize themselves to find their own way. (Benítez Eyzaguirre, 2010: p. 126)

Gender, migration and literature interrelate in the recreation of possible worlds where these complex realities are reflected, leading women to become aware of their status and motivating them to wish for a different reality that they strive to implement.

This interaction is also present in Mexico, and female writers tend to represent these possible worlds from a critical standpoint. In such a way, the first Mexican novel about migration written by a woman is *Tenemos Sed* [*We are Thirsty*] (1956), by Magdalena Mondragon. This novel revolves around the migration of a nuclear family. The family’s tragic fate is scarred not only by their detention, but by the loss of the youngest daughter, which, according to Reyes Zaga, turns death into the protagonist by confronting the reader “with all those stories of death and suffering recounted to the family by other immigrants captured before them.” (Reyes Zaga, 2019: p. 157).

Therefore, Mexican migration literature written by women sheds light on the

most prominent aspects of female migration, namely:

a) representation of women as a continuous moral and economic support for the family; b) migration of women and its ambivalent gender role in the era of contemporaneous globalization; c) questioning of national identity and modernity principles in rural zones of Mexico; d) representation of women in Mexican literature as an active subject in the private and public spaces, which drifts apart from the traditional devoted mother/femme fatal role. (Rodríguez Hicks, 2009: p. 141)

Hence, migration literature written by women confirms social change in respect to the reasons why women migrate. This literature demonstrates that women are no longer secondary characters who accompany men on their journey. Instead, they position themselves as the protagonists of their own stories, where their desire of fulfilling the “American dream” or the “European dream”, as appropriate, is recounted. Likewise, in some texts that are part of the migration literature written by women, language is given a special treatment. Such is the case of *Campeón Gabacho* [*The Gringo Champion*] (2016), by Aurora Xilonen, who, according to Reyes Zaga, illustrates the multiple voices and language registers that are part of the way in which immigrants speak, as she vividly portrays the jargon and other different combinations and puns created in this mix of cultures: “The author, in this way, achieves her purpose of transforming the Mexican migrant’s oral tradition into a written image, seducing the reader not only with what she says, but with the way in which she says it” (2019, p. 166).

In this manner, Mexican female writers, especially those born from 1970 on, are each time more interested in this subject, as it is often themselves who have experienced migration from different regions of the world. To illustrate this last affirmation, Cristina Rascon has depicted in her short stories the experience of building a dialogue with multiple cultures in spaces as far as Japan. In her text “Diálogos” [“Dialogues”], part of her short stories book *El aguaestáhelada* [*The Water is Cold*] (2009), she reflects a frenzied exchange of viewpoints and of different ways of speaking in an incidental encounter between people from different parts of the world. The objective is, therefore, to portray the sense of fluidity of society nowadays, where multiple life purposes can coexist and have a conversation.

In the context of family repercussions resulting from women’s migration, Guadalupe Nettel recreates in her novel *The Body Where I Was Born* (2011) the intimate atmosphere of an urban environment where the maternal grandmother takes care of her granddaughter and grandson when their mother migrates to France. In this “imposed” coexistence, the generational differences between granddaughter and grandmother are made evident, mostly when it comes to gender perspective. Estranged, not only epochally but emotionally, the grandmother exerts control over her granddaughter, trying to impose on her certain conducts and ways of behaving “in accordance” to her age and sex. In the second part of the novel, they have frequent confrontations and, as time goes by, the

distance between them grows, as the grandmother is determined to control her granddaughter's nightly outings. Without a proper and adequate solution, this situation goes on until the granddaughter, being an adult, is capable of processing what she went through and accept that her mother's migration (and the time she spent with her in France) was an episode that helped her mature in a particular way, as it allowed her to experience conditions as a migrant that changed her perspective.

In more recent years, Sylvia Aguilar Zeleny's novel *El libro de Aisha* [*The Book of Aisha*] (2021) also recounts the family rupture and conflicts resulting from her older sister's migration. In this case, the nuclear family must accept and learn to coexist with her sister's new identity, as she not only converts to the Islam, but also changes her name for Aisha. Her sister's migration to Europe, along with her conversion, disrupts the family members, as she has adopted new costumes, traditions and a new language, and expects her family to go through the transformation required for her and her husband to live in accordance with their world view. As in the previous case, the conflict is not resolved in a positive or encouraging way, as even when Aisha separates from her husband, she is still living away and maintains a peculiar relationship with her family of origin.

In the spirit of migrations that result in profound family changes, the following section will analyze Brenda Navarro's novel *Mouth Full of Ash* (2022).

4. Migration and Family Repercussions

Brenda Navarro, born in Mexico City in 1982, is the author of the novels *Empty Houses* (2018), which won the Tigre Juan Award in 2020 and was translated to seven languages, and *Mouth Full of Ash* (2022) that has earned her favorable reviews. Brenda Navarro then recreates, in her two novels, the conflicts that female characters must overcome in highly distressing environments. Her academic training (she is a sociologist and economist with a Master's Degree in Gender Studies from the University of Barcelona), as well as her writing interests, allow her to account for complex worlds where human relationships are pushed to the limit without any possibility of overcoming them with full satisfaction. However, its approach to the most stark human condition allows one to immerse oneself in complex worlds that manage to forge a psychology of resilience in some of its characters, such as Jimena, as we will see later.

In *Mouth Full of Ash*, Navarro recreates the life of a family that must reconstruct itself after the son commits suicide. It is written in first person by the protagonist who recounts the ruptures experienced by the family before and after the event takes place. Having been left at their grandparents' care, the protagonist and her brother undergo their mother's migration to Spain. After some time, she takes them with her to Madrid, where the three of them suffer from discrimination for being migrants. In such a hostile environment towards foreign people and specially towards those coming from Latin America, Diego decides to take his own life, without previously having shown any clear or obvious symptoms of his mental discomfort. While it is true that their relationship with their

mother is by far not the most desirable, it is also true that both women (Diego's mother and sister) are taken aback by the surprising event and endeavor to understand the reasons that led Diego to such tragic outcome. On a mission to take her brother's ashes to Mexico, the protagonist embarks on a return journey amidst the emotional pain of being reunited with her grandmother and the double grief that she will experience after being truly separated from her brother. In the end, the infinite repetition of the suicide scene (Diego jumps off a building) ruthlessly consumes her, suggesting that, no matter how hard she tries to get past the experience, misfortune will accompany her for the rest of her life.

So, the story, which revolves around the tragic event, is gradually threaded through analepsis that refer to Diego's suicide. As a result, parallel to each progress, there is a setback that repeatedly refers to the event as if it were a never-ending nightmare. And it is in such sea of memories always returning to the beach of despair, that the mother's migration plays a paramount role as she unleashed the first grand physical and emotional rift, that can never be countered, despite the family's reunion. Thus, as mentioned in the previous section, it is the mother who undertakes the provider role after the father's death. When unable to find work conditions that allow her supporting both her children, she decides to travel alone to Spain. Her motivation, as already stated when discussing female migration, is driven by the need for survival, as she wants to provide a better future for her children. Aware of the detachment and the impact it will have on her children, the mother speaks clearly with them before departing, letting them know she will be gone for a long period of time, but reassuring them that, once she settles in her new home, they will all be reunited again. Although being the eldest, her daughter is still a child and the emotional strength that this situation demands from her speaks of the empowerment that the mother wants to transmit to her daughter. However, it also portrays the gender role imposed to her, as she makes her act as a family pillar. The daughter is therefore forced to assume a family responsibility at a young age, which after certain time will result in the overprotection she exerts over Diego, as she thinks taking care of him is her duty. In this way, their mother's migration determines a particular way of interaction between siblings, and the protagonist, from one day to the next, becomes a little mother for Diego:

Ok, let's see. Sit down. You must be a strong woman... because you are already a woman, am I right? Yes. Yes, you are. I am leaving, and both of you are going to stay, but it won't be forever. Nothing lasts forever, as I have told you before: this will be temporary and, in some time, you will join me, and everything will be alright [...]. Have you thought of Diego? So young, so helpless and such a good child. Have you noticed? When you were his age, you were already playing by yourself and he is so dependent, just like his father, they are both the same... well, not the same because we will bring this one up differently, won't we? (Navarro, 2022: pp. 16-17)

As evidenced above, the mother passes on to her daughter not only the re-

sponsibility of taking care of her younger brother but also of educating him, since she, not being present, deposits in the hands of the protagonist all the weight of her brother's upbringing so that he turns into a good man, different from the already deceased father. The transmission of such activities will leave a significant and definite mark in the psyche of both the protagonist and her brother, since Diego will now be tutored by both mother and sister and, when the disagreements and arguments between mother and son occur, he will gradually distance himself from his sister to the point of no longer confiding his fears or concerns to her. The consequences of their mother's migration will therefore be permanent and their reconciliation will be impossible to achieve, since their emotional bond will be permanently broken: "I hate you and you hate me, and we hate each other and you hate my brother and the fact that he won't let you sleep, and you hate everything: you hate yourself, my grandparents, your dead husband, and me. You hate me, that is why you leave your son with me [...]" (Navarro, 2022: p. 17).

So, the supposed well-being that would result from the mother's migration is not met. On the contrary, her migration aggravates the insurmountable differences between mother and children and, even when they achieve a better quality of life economy-wise, it will not be enough to heal the serious repercussions of their separation. The mother, far from having a better coexistence with her daughter and son, practically loses communication with them, which evinces a definitive rupture.

4.1. The Daughters and Sons of Migration

As for the rejection, exclusion and marginalization suffered by the daughter and son, it is to be said that they experience these problems around most people but, primarily, at school. Especially Diego is victim of bullying and, when defending himself from attacks and insults, he is expelled from school. Madrid, being a cosmopolitan city, is erected as a place of exclusion towards migrants, especially Latin Americans, and nor Diego nor the protagonist can fully integrate into society. In fact, rejected because of their migrant status, they both make use of their limited emotional resources, but they cannot successfully integrate into the social circles around them. Even when the protagonist moves to Barcelona and becomes part of a collective of Latin-American migrant women, this is not enough for her to find a place where she can develop her skills. The same thing happens to Diego who, being a bullying victim, experiences the cruel rejection of his classmates, which adds up to the distance between him and his mother and other emotional problems that lead him to make a fateful decision. The novel, in this way, openly denounces the marginalization and exclusion suffered by migrants and, in the case of the protagonist and her friends, also that suffered by women: "the family living in the grandmother's apartment and the Mexican woman working for them as it used to be more than five hundred years ago. Catalans, Spanish, Andalucians, they were all the same to me and, for them, all of us women were the same. No more, no less." (Navarro, 2022: p. 78)

So, the daughters and sons of migration cannot integrate and the disdain they feel for the Spanish people and, in general, Europeans, is rooted in the contempt they suffer from. The rudeness they are treated with, people thinking that all Latin-Americans are the same, the acknowledgment that all the migrant women are “cousins” notwithstanding their own nationality and, all in all, the set of implied agreements on the treatment of migrants and the way they are addressed are evidence of a society incapable of self-criticism. By contrast, all the behaviors against migrant women and men seem to strengthen the idea that it is them, the foreign people that arrived legally or illegally to the country, who are wrong and should change their ways. Consequently, far from integrating them, society in Spain condemns them to marginalization: “They were right and everyone else was wrong. And if that fact was not respected: guilty, guilty, to the defendant’s bench” (Navarro, 2022: p. 176). Therefrom, as it happens with Diego, the daughters and sons of migrants end up expelled, on the streets, with no job opportunities and, therefore, condemned to be part of the ranks of crime or permanently expelled from the territory. The latter shows that Diego has not been able to integrate into the destination culture, since he has not been able to assimilate the factors that influence the integration of migrants into local life, as proposed by Gurieva and Kinunen: the ability to accept and adapt to the values, customs and traditions of the destination culture, as well as the knowledge of the language and the ability to find work and make contacts (180).

But, if apart from rejection we were to add the ingredient of not being subject to heteronormativity, what would the consequences be?

4.2. Non-Heteronormativity and Double or Triple Discrimination

The novel *Mouth Full of Ash* incidentally addresses a very specific problem: double or triple discrimination towards the people that do not adjust to heteronormativity. Such is the case of other gender orientation that appear in the text as, pushed away by their own families, they suffer from social rejection first, followed by rejection because of their sexual preference. In fact, one of them, Jimena, is stabbed by her own mother when declaring herself sharing other gender orientation. Such eviction among a lesbophobic environment leaves a mark in Jimena to the degree that she severs all ties and bonds with her mother and tries to find in Spain a safe place to fully live her affectivity and sexuality: “We have been together in many things, she told me. I saw her when she got here and she was still afraid of her mother because she stabbed her when she declared herself sharing other gender orientation, this is why she came here” (Navarro, 2022: p. 50).

However, Jimena, who at some point becomes one of the leaders of the collective, fails to escape the triple discrimination she suffers in Spain for sharing other gender orientation. Although she does not face the same scenario that she used to live at home, her sexuality is once again a reason for exclusion as, deep down, Spanish society continues to perceive same gender orientation as a negative thing. The empowerment that Jimena achieves is not enough to deal with

this situation either and, as a result, she suffers from discrimination for being both Latin-American and of other gender orientation. The place she thought would give her a warmer welcome than her home country turns into a hostile territory that excludes and condemns her to marginalization. It could be said, then, that her sexaffectivity places her in an even more vulnerable position compared to the rest of women and that such vulnerability makes of her a double victim of the heteropatriarchal system. Thus, Jimena represents an entire community whose rights to a violence-free life continue to be diminished or nullified.

Despite the mistreatment she experiences, Jimena achieves overcoming the psychological and emotional damages and is even considered by the protagonist as a mother, fact that makes evident her resilience capacities. And even when the double or triple discrimination does not disappear, Jimena puts it in the background and achieves living a happy life: “For Jimena it was all about laughter and cuddles” (Navarro, 2022: pp. 180-181).

5. Conclusion

Brenda Navarro is a writer that can transport the reader to borderline situations as, from her first novel on, she has been able to represent the deepness of the human soul. With her novel *Mouth full of Ash* and by portraying the trauma suffered by a family of a young man that commits suicide, she once more makes evident this feature of her writing.

In this text, the discrimination and exclusion that migrants undergo are depicted in a raw manner, with no euphemisms. And, among these rejections, the lesbophobia experienced by Jimena, a woman expelled from her country after her mother’s parricide attempt, is addressed.

Nevertheless, Spain, particularly Madrid and Barcelona (where the stories take place) are not unrelated to this lesbophobia that revictimizes those who dare breaking the heteropatriarchal pact. Consequently, Diego, Jimena and even the protagonist and her mother must confront mockery and scorn. And even when Diego is not able to overcome them, Jimena does, and achieves being a happy woman amidst adversity. *Mouth Full of Ash*, then, raises small glimmers of hope that provide a small break in a stifling environment.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

References

- Andrés-Suárez, I. (2004). *Migración y literatura en el mundohispánico [Migration and Literature in the Hispanic World]*. Verbum.
- Benítez Eyzaguirre, L. (2010). *Mujeres migrantes africanas. Literatura, género, Migración [African Migrant Women. Literature, Gender, Migration]*. Universidad de La Frontera.
- Gurieva, S., & Kinunen, T. (2014). Social-Psychological Model of the “Migration Circle”:

- Potential Emigrants, Migrants, Remigrants. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 2, 174-182. <https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2014.211023>
- Milon, M., Al-Amin, M., & Saha, S. (2022). Workplace Bullying, Sexual Harassment, Discrimination: A Bane for Female Employees' Career in the Private Banking Industry of Bangladesh. *Journal of Human Resource and Sustainability Studies*, 10, 689-704. <https://doi.org/10.4236/jhrss.2022.104040>
- Navarro, B. (2022). *Ceniza en la boca [Mouth Full of Ash]*. SextoPiso.
- Reyes Zaga, H. A. (2019). Cartografías literarias: Anotaciones a propósito de la novela de migración Mexicana [*Literary Cartographies: Annotations on the Mexican Migration Novel*]. *Mexican Literature*, 1, 142-170. <https://doi.org/10.19130/iifl.litmex.30.1.2019.1162>
- Rodríguez Hicks, S. A. (2009). El espejismo del desierto: Migración femenina en la literatura Mexicana [The Mirage of the Desert: Female Migration in Mexican Literature]. *Philology and Linguistics*, 2, 139-150. <https://doi.org/10.15517/rfl.v35i2.1146>