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The Migrant Family Man: Masculinity, Work, and Migration in Víctor Canicio's *Vida de un emigrante español*

El hombre de familia emigrante: masculinidad, trabajo y emigración en *Vida de un emigrante español*, de Víctor Canicio

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Abstract: This article analyzes the interconnections between migration and masculinity in *Vida de un emigrante español* (1979), by Víctor Canicio. This novel, based on true events, tells the story of a working-class man called Pedro Nuño, who displays a traditional conception of masculinity based on the importance of the heteronormative home, procreation, and sacrifice for his family. Pedro decides to migrate to Germany to achieve a better future for his family and feel more respected as a man by earning money and accomplishing economic independence. In this way, migration enhances his sense of masculinity. On the other hand, the novel also shows that migration may negatively affect men's traditional ideas of masculinity. Pedro and other male characters feel discriminated against and exploited in their jobs, lose their libidos, and experience insecurity, nostalgia and insanity. Finally, another consequence of migration is a slight change in the main character's conception of gender roles, since he ends up supporting a more egalitarian relationship with his wife.

Keywords: *Vida de un emigrante español*; Víctor Canicio; Spanish migration; Masculinity; Germany.

Resumen: Este artículo analiza las conexiones entre emigración y masculinidad en *Vida de un emigrante español* (1979), de Víctor Canicio. Esta novela, basada en hechos reales, narra la historia de un hombre de la clase trabajadora llamado Pedro Nuño, quien muestra una concepción tradicional de la masculinidad basada en la importancia del hogar heteronormativo, la procreación y el sacrificio por su familia. Pedro decide emigrar a Alemania para lograr un mejor futuro para su familia y sentirse más respetado como hombre al ganar dinero

y alcanzar la independencia económica. En este sentido, la emigración favorece su sentido de la masculinidad. Sin embargo, la novela también revela que la emigración puede afectar negativamente la masculinidad tradicional de los hombres. Pedro y otros personajes masculinos se sienten discriminados y explotados en sus trabajos, pierden su deseo sexual y padecen inseguridad, nostalgia y locura. Finalmente, otra consecuencia de la emigración es un ligero cambio en la concepción de los papeles de género del protagonista, ya que este termina adoptando una relación más igualitaria con su esposa.

Palabras clave: *Vida de un emigrante español*; Víctor Canicio; Emigración española; Masculinidad; Alemania.

INTRODUCTION

A man's work and the income and status he obtains from it have a significant influence on his conception of masculinity. Ava Baron mentions in this regard that workers obtain their gender identity from their work and, alternatively, infuse their work with gender values (1991: 38). Thus, gender is created and recreated in the workplace (Baron 1991: 39). In the case of masculinity, according to Victor Seidler, work is not just a source of pride for men, but the actual origin of masculine identity (1989: 151). Work is also essential for masculinities because, as James Catano explains, it has traditionally meant a separation from the domestic sphere of women towards the mythical masculine world of the working environment (2001: 9).

This conception of work as a key requirement for masculinity has its origins in the 19th century. Michael Kimmel points out that around 1830 "the market masculinity" appears, which implies that a man's masculinity depends on his success in capitalism, that is, his ability to accumulate goods, power and status (1994: 123). Thus, men identify their masculine worth with their economic achievements. A man who is successful in his job in the public sphere proves socially that he is superior to other men, since he has had to compete with them to succeed.

In the case of migrant men, the importance of work in their sense of masculinity is even greater since, as Hernán Ramírez points out, they cross international borders with the objective of finding a job and earning money (2011: 99). In a study on Latino men who migrate to the U.S., Cristina Alcalde explains that in order to counteract their feelings of vulnerability and lack of power caused by migration, men find in their work a source of self-esteem and a means to define themselves as "real" men who are able to provide for their families (2011: 456-457). This sense of familial responsibility stands out in the novel *Vida de un emigrante español: El testimonio auténtico de un obrero que emigró a Alemania* (1979), written by Víctor Canicio, a Spanish author who migrated to Germany in the 1960s.¹

¹ There were also young women who migrated to Germany with the aim of economically helping their relatives who remained in Spain. The documentary *El tren de la memoria* (2005), directed by Marta Arribas and Ana Pérez, offers, among others, the testimonies of Josefina Cembrero Marcilla and

Canicio's novel belongs to what Ana Ruiz Sánchez considers the first period of literary production of Spanish migrants in Germany. In this period, set between 1960 and 1979, authors led a life of isolation in Germany and wrote their works in Spanish with no aesthetic or literary aspirations; they dealt with topics related to the experience of migration and addressed a readership comprised of other Spanish migrants (2004: 7-8). María Nasarre Lorenzo points out that Canicio moved to Germany in 1960 in order to study German language and culture in Heidelberg and, therefore, did not migrate strictly for work-related reasons (2013: 89). In any case, there is no doubt that once in Germany, Canicio met many Spanish migrant workers and decided to convey their experiences in his works.²

Vida de un emigrante español records the story of Pedro Nuño, the pseudonym of a real working-class migrant man the author met in Germany. Once in Germany, Pedro leaves behind his past experience of poverty, feels more respected as a man by earning money and accomplishing economic independence, and achieves a better future for his family. In this way, migration enhances his sense of masculinity. He displays a traditional conception of masculinity based on the importance of the heteronormative home and procreation. For him, masculinity entails sacrifice for one's family. He even performs characteristics of "protest masculinity," such as aggression and violence. However, the novel also manifests how migration may affect negatively men's traditional masculinity. Pedro and other male characters feel discriminated against and exploited in their jobs, lose their libidos, and experience insecurity, nostalgia and insanity. Finally, another consequence of migration is a slight change in the main character's conception of gender roles, since he ends up supporting a more egalitarian relationship with his wife, as well as women's sexual education.

At the beginning of the novel, readers learn that Pedro Nuño started working when he was 12 years old due to his family's poverty. At 26 he marries a dressmaker; together they have two children, one of whom later contracts polio. In 1960, when the couple needs money, Pedro migrates illegally to Germany, leaving his wife and two children in Spain.³ In Ludwigshcim he starts working in a carpentry workshop, where his boss lets him sleep to increase his work productivity. After three years in Germany, his family joins him and they all move to an apartment together. By the end of the novel, Pedro complains about German society's rejection of foreigners, but also admits that he plans

Victoria Toro, who felt responsible for their families and played the role of the provider by sending remittances to Spain from Nuremberg.

² Víctor Canicio started writing about migration because a publishing house asked him to write three works about this topic after he won a literary contest at the end of the 1960s with a short story entitled "El españolito bueno" (Ruiz Sánchez 2004: 10).

³ Illegal migration to Germany was common among Spaniards. According to Antonio Muñoz Sánchez, between 1960 and 1974, 600,000 Spaniards migrated to Germany; 400,000 did so with an employment contract through the Spanish Institute of Migration, while the other 200,000 migrated after being invited directly by a German company, entered the country passing as tourists (as Pedro Nuño did), or crossed the border illegally on their own with the help of a trafficker (2012: 30).

to remain in the country until saving enough money to be able to live comfortably back in Spain.

THE FAMILY MAN'S MASCULINITY

Pedro presents several traits of masculinity usually associated with working-class men. Unlike hegemonic masculinity—the most culturally exalted type of masculinity in society, which only a minority of men embody—R. W. Connell classifies working-class masculinity as a “marginalized masculinity,” which refers to the masculinity of exploited men due to their social class and/or race (2000: 30). When analyzing working-class men, scholars usually emphasize their traditional masculinity. For instance, Connell points out that they are generally conservative in relation to gender politics (1991: 141). This conservatism appears in the importance they confer to the heteronormative family and their role as economic providers. Connell explains this situation by stating that the family offers working-class men economic and emotional support against the pressures of the labor market and their workplaces (2000: 107).

In Canicio's novel, Pedro's life revolves around his family and his role as a father. Paternity has traditionally been considered an indication of masculinity. For example, David Gilmore points out that in Mediterranean cultures men prove their masculinity by impregnating their wives and forming large and vigorous families (1990: 41). Ernesto Vásquez del Águila expresses the same idea in relation to Latin American societies: men are expected to impregnate women and become fathers to prove their masculinity and heterosexuality (2014: 114). In Paul Crossley and Bob Pease's opinion, the most important event in a man's masculinity is the moment he becomes a father and a family man (2009: 123). Fatherhood may also increase a man's self-esteem because it implies the continuity of his genes and the survival of his identity in his offspring.

Becoming a father may be the most significant moment in a man's masculinity, but it also implies some new responsibilities. For Pedro, forming a family means that he needs to earn money and provide for his wife and children. Gilmore believes that breadwinning is an essential aspect of masculinity in most societies (1990: 223). As Sara Willott and Christine Griffin explain, working-class men tend to embrace the role of provider because they are alienated from environments where they could have learned other gender alternatives and because they have less access to the economic, cultural, and social capital that would allow them to reconsider their traditional gender identities (2004: 65). In a similar way, David Collinson and Jeff Hearn argue that working-class men redefine their sense of dignity in a society that debases them by emphasizing masculine aspects that make them feel more appreciated, such as being the provider for their families (1996: 68). Thus, Pedro may accentuate his familial responsibility not only because he learned this value in his cultural context, but also because it acts as a mechanism to counteract his marginalization in the capitalist society.

From an early age, Pedro feels that he has to help his parents economically: “Yo siempre he visto la necesidad con que se tenía que vivir en casa, y ya he dicho que me hice mayor antes de tiempo por entrar a trabajar, a ver si nos lo pasábamos algo mejor” (29). He also acts as the head of the household for his brothers when their father is away for work-related reasons and their mother is sick in the hospital: “Nos quedamos los tres hermanos, que éramos unos niños, solos en casa, y yo era el que me encargaba de levantarlos por la mañana y de llevarlos a la escuela” (38). When Pedro gets married, he does not earn enough money to provide for his family, so he and his wife have to live in her mother’s apartment. Since he is unable to save any money for his family’s future, he decides to migrate to Germany: “Yo veía que en España no había porvenir, que estaba uno trabajando para nada y pensaba en un sitio donde se viviera mejor” (58). At the end of the novel, Pedro even says that if he had remained in Spain, he could have turned into a criminal, since by then he did not mind stealing: “robar ya no me asustaba. [. . .] Allí estábamos condenados a tortilla perpetua” (187).⁴

The unemployment and lack of job opportunities Pedro faces in Spain make him feel emasculated. Several scholars have pointed out that unemployment has a significant effect on men’s masculinity. For instance, Vázquez del Águila contends that men feel anxiety when they are unable to provide for their families (2014: 99). Other possible consequences of unemployment for men are depression, insomnia, lack of self-esteem, unhappiness, alcoholism, aggression, marital problems, and domestic violence (Deutschendorf 1996: 53). Mike Donaldson and Richard Howson claim that when men cannot provide for their families, they may lose the respect and even the obedience they received previously from their relatives (2009: 212). In interviews with unemployed men, Sara Willott and Christine Griffin found that they suffered from a feeling of impotence and inferiority. One of the men summarized it this way: “When you’re unemployed, you feel less of a man” (2004: 59). Some of these unemployed men even saw their wives as a source of pressure rather than support, which may explain why Pedro left Spain.

In Germany, Pedro achieves a better-paid job that allows him to save money, so his migration is successful in economic terms. In this sense, migration becomes a reinforcement of his masculinity, since it allows him to fulfill the role of provider. Spanish migrants moved to Germany with the intention of saving enough money to return later to Spain and live there more comfortably (Muñoz Sánchez 2012: 32). They chose Germany because that country offered higher salaries and many employment opportunities (Muñoz Sánchez 2012: 32). Pedro’s upward mobility becomes apparent when he stops living in his boss’s workshop room and gains independence by moving to an apartment after his family joins him in Germany. As time goes by, he is able to fully furnish the apartment and enjoy material things: “No tengo el piso puesto como un

⁴ Joan Prat i Carós confirms that Spaniards migrated to Europe during the 1960s mostly motivated by economic reasons: they left Spain because in their country they were condemned to live under misery and could not improve their economic situation (2007: 34).

capitalista pero me encuentro a gusto. Estoy en mi casa, me cojo un libro, me siento en mi sillón y lo leo cómodamente. O me veo mi televisor, que lo tengo en color también” (145). The repetitive use of the possessive form (“mi”) shows the protagonist’s pride for achieving these material goods.⁵ Nevertheless, the most obvious indication of his economic success is the purchase of an apartment in Spain. According to James Catano, the acquisition of an apartment is usually considered a key signal of masculinity as well as a symbol of upward mobility (2001: 138). Pedro even saves money to buy a store near the apartment, where he intends to start a business once he and his family return to Spain. In conclusion, as José Rodríguez Richart summarizes, in Germany Pedro Nuño makes significant economic gains (1999: 65).

In addition to economic success, Pedro becomes more cultured due to the circumstances of his migration. His experiences of isolation and suffering in Germany prompt him to start reading, and he finds ample opportunities to acquire knowledge through talks and courses in the Spanish Centre. He spends many hours reading and even writes poems and paints, turning into a self-taught artist. Pedro explains his increased interest in the arts as a consequence of migration:

Yo en la Emigración he ido cambiando mucho. Llegué acostumbrado a la vida de España, a la tertulia con los amigos y a la mujer siempre en casa. Aquí, en cambio, debido a que la sociedad alemana no te admite, a que vienes a ahorrar un dinero y no a malgastarlo [...] no me podía permitir yo el lujo de alternar. Me hice un hombre de casa. Los inviernos son largos y empecé a leer libros, los primeros de mi vida [...] Aprendí muchas cosas que no sabía (120-121).

As Pedro spends time at home in Germany becoming more cultured, he exchanges his previous public, street masculinity typical of Spain for a more private, domestic masculinity. The acquisition of cultural knowledge allows Pedro to feel more accomplished, although he complains about other migrants not understanding his wish to become more educated: “Y a más de uno que ha querido aprender algo, levantar cabeza culturalmente, le ha tocado oír, así sin más, lo que he tenido que oír yo: —¿Para qué lo quiere usted, hombre, tanta cultura? ¡Si a usted lo único que le espera ya es el cementerio!” (178). Pedro also wants to be more cultured to be able to offer a better future to his children.

Pedro’s efforts to improve his education and economic situation are the consequence of his understanding of masculinity as sacrifice. Sacrifice is usually connected to women, who for ages have placed their husbands’ and children’s needs ahead of their own careers and personal interests. However, sacrifice is also an important component of the family man’s masculinity. Gilmore even writes that sacrifice forms part of traditional conceptions of masculinity: “real men are those who give more than they take; they serve others. Real men are generous, even to a fault [...] Manhood therefore is

⁵ Pedro rejects the shacks and dorms where other migrants live, comparing them to overcrowded concentration camps (155).

also a nurturing concept” (1990: 229). According to Kimmel, since the 19th century, masculinity has been understood as a noble sacrifice that prompts men to bear difficult and unpleasant jobs in order to benefit their wives and families (1997: 97). Furthermore, working-class fathers usually put up with hard labor conditions by thinking that they are sacrificing for their children’s future (Donaldson 1987: 176).

Pedro follows this concept of masculinity because his primary reason for migrating is to be able to offer a better life to his son with polio. When a Spanish doctor tells him that his son will at best be able to work as a shoemaker, he decides to sacrifice himself in order to change his son’s destiny: “Yo tenía que sacar al niño mío de esa situación porque allí, en León, todo el que estaba cojo era o limpiabotas o zapatero. Mi hijo tenía que ser algo más. Bastante más que yo, además. Me decidí a emigrar” (61). Pedro wants to do his best to improve his son’s life because he feels responsible and guilty for his son’s illness. That is why Pedro suffers from psychosomatic spasms for the rest of his life: “Cuando me iba a acostar veía luces y, poco antes de quedarme dormido, me corría desde la frente hasta el occipital como una descarga eléctrica y sentía una especie de pinchazo. [...] Esta cuestión nerviosa me vino cuando le dio el ataque al niño y todavía hoy es hora de que se me vaya” (60). Pedro does not hesitate to spend his savings on having renowned specialists treat his son, both in Spain and in Austria.

Later on, Pedro decides to become an active member of a migrant parent association to ensure that his son and the other Spanish children are not discriminated against in the German school system: “la mayoría de los niños españoles no terminaba la escolaridad alemana. Muchas veces estaban allí de oyentes y sin que los maestros alemanes les hicieran apenas caso” (129). Pedro’s objective is that his son receives a good education so that he can find a good job in the future. In relation to this, Antonio Muñoz Sánchez points out that one of the most common worries among Spanish migrants in the 1970s was their children’s education, since they used to be placed at the lowest levels of the selective German schools, thus eliminating migrants’ dream of upward mobility for their families (2012: 39). For this reason, in 1973 Spanish migrants founded the Confederation of Spanish Parents Associations in the Federal Republic of Germany (Muñoz Sánchez 2012: 40). Pedro’s active participation in the parent association could make him feel more valid as a man, more useful and respected in the foreign country. Several researchers have pointed out that associations in foreign countries allow migrant men to strengthen their masculinity (Hondagenu-Sotelo 2003: 17; Smith 2006: 98). Another example of Pedro’s sacrifice for his children happens when he decides not to return to Spain yet so that they can finish their studies in Germany.

Pedro’s understanding of masculinity as responsibility for his family makes him reject the lifestyle of the single migrant men who act as playboys, see migration as an adventure, and take advantage of and make fun of other migrants.⁶ These migrants

⁶ Pedro complains about the selfish migrants who only searched for their own benefit: “Aquí en la Emigración todo el mundo ha intentado hacer lo que ha podido y los más vivos han querido siempre aprovecharse de las circunstancias” (89). Migrants’ savings also attracted the attention of people who

display a masculinity which opposes that of the family man and resembles the masculinity of Don Juan, since they mostly spend their time trying to seduce women. Pedro notes that among migrant men it was very common to talk about women and sex.⁷ He criticizes those migrants who only think of their pleasure and distances himself from them by emphasizing his modest sexual appetite. Thus, on most occasions he proves his ability to control his sexual instincts. Nevertheless, he also confesses that when he was living alone in Germany, he cheated on his wife and was about to end his marriage. He explains his love affair as a consequence of what he calls men's uncontrollable instincts and sexual needs, but he emphasizes that for the most part he did not lead a licentious life.

Pedro insists that his love affair was a temporary weakness and that as soon as his family joined him in Germany, he ended his extramarital relationship. This type of behavior is not uncommon in married men who migrate on their own. As Vásquez del Águila explains, men who live alone in a foreign country tend to think that it is acceptable to cheat on their wives, though they still expect their wives to remain faithful to them (2014: 198). Pedro tries to convince the reader that his adultery was an insignificant event in his life and that his real commitment to his family compensates for this moment of sexual weakness. In this regard, Vásquez del Águila argues that people in his home nation allow the migrant man who is responsible and provides for his family some questionable behaviors such as infidelity (2014: 112). Pedro demonstrates that he is not interested in seducing women like a Don Juan, but rather in working hard to take care of his family, so despite his love affair, he keeps his respectable masculinity mostly intact.

PROTEST MASCULINITY

Vida de un emigrante español shows how migrant men may turn to violence and aggression to compensate for the exploitation and discrimination they suffer in their workplace and host society. This type of hypermasculine behavior has received the name of "protest masculinity" (Broude 1990: 103) and is the result of the feelings of impotence men experience due to their social status, race or national origin. Thus, when men lack economic or social power, they may react in a violent and hypermasculine way in order to prove they are still masculine. Migration can spark the emergence of protest masculinity, which, as Raymond Hibbins and Bob Pease note, may take the form of domestic violence against migrant men's wives (2009: 2-3). Cristina Alcalde also points out that

wanted to trick them: "Con la Emigración se han intentado hacer los negocios más raros que uno pueda imaginarse. [...] Se sabía que los emigrantes reunían un dinero y todo el mundo se aprestaba a sacárselo. Bancos, cajas de ahorros, inmobiliarias, fondos de inversión, misteriosas cooperativas de esto y aquello" (158).

⁷ However, the protagonist also points out that migrant men never were able to put their sexual wishes into practice due to German women's lack of interest in them.

the violence that migrant men exert over their wives can work for them as a proof of their masculinity (2011: 459).

Pedro's expression of protest masculinity is more moderate and corresponds to what Gregory Wayne Walker calls "disciplined protest masculinity," which implies solidarity among male workers against their factory managers, as well as a rejection of extreme manifestations of masculinity and chauvinism (2006: 9). Pedro's protest masculinity reveals itself mostly in two behaviors: social commitment, which includes the confrontation with his bosses; and violence or aggression when he feels disrespected by other men. Thus, his violence is not portrayed in the novel as gratuitous, but as a response to other people's exploitation and attacks.

Pedro's social commitment initially leads him to join the Communist Party in Germany: "En la Emigración yo me había dado cuenta de la situación en la que me encontraba y de que había que hacer la guerra a los que me habían arrastrado a ella. Yo creí que el Partido Comunista era el más adecuado para combatir a los que nos explotaban" (99). According to several scholars, Spanish migrants gained social awareness in Germany; Germany became a school of democracy for them (Muñoz Sánchez 2012: 37; Sanz Díaz 2001: 319). However, Pedro quickly feels disappointed by the Communist Party, which he accuses of only caring about money and of not really changing migrant workers' situation. For this reason, he finally decides not to be a member of any political party. Despite this, he explains that he is always ready to do social and ideological work and complains about other migrants' lack of political interest. Carlos Sanz Díaz confirms that many migrants felt apathy or even rejection towards politics and union activities, and suggests that one reason for this could have been their fear of suffering reprisal from Francoist forces when returning to Spain (2001: 322).

Pedro's social concerns manifest in the constant arguments he has with his workshop boss. Pedro feels that his boss behaves in a dictatorial way: "Simplemente para decir aquí el que mando soy yo y tú tienes que hacer lo que yo te ordene" (123). Thus he decides to rebel against what he considers abuses of power by, for instance, leaving the workshop and looking for another job in a factory. However, in his new position, he also experiences humiliation: "Yo en la fábrica me veía como en una cárcel" (125). Pedro's continuous job changes are evidence of his fight against the exploitation of the working class.

Pedro's protest masculinity is also manifested in his violent responses to perceived offenses. Migrant men in foreign countries where they do not fully understand the language experience vulnerability, and it is not uncommon that this feeling of insecurity causes them to become overly sensitive and consider normal situations offensive. On other occasions, of course, they are clearly attacked as a result of xenophobia and racism. Their sense of masculinity may prompt them to resort to violence as a compensation for their feeling of helplessness and lack of integration into the host country. Pedro confirms this when he describes fights between Spanish migrants and migrants from other nations. For instance, there are quarrels between Puerto Rican soldiers and Spanish migrants in a bar managed by Spaniards. These fights start as a consequence

of protest masculinity, as well as national feelings and patriotic pride. Spanish migrants fight not only to prove their masculinity and feel more valid as men in a society that discriminates against them, but also to defend the Spanish nation against the other foreigners' mockery.⁸

A similar incident happens when Pedro fights with a workmate, a Yugoslavian man who was constantly trying to offend him by making fun of Spain and Spanish values such as the Catholic religion: "Cuando yo entraba a trabajar por la mañana ya se hacía el yugoslavo la señal de la cruz. Se ponía la mano en la frente y se la bajaba hasta los huevos, creyendo que es que me ofendía. [...] empezó a meterse con el sistema español y a comentar que si éramos fascistas" (146). Pedro's conflicts with his Yugoslavian coworker become so unbearable that Pedro finally attacks him with a chisel, intending to kill him. Although the Yugoslavian coworker survives, Pedro is fired from his job. From Pedro's perspective, his violent reaction is justified because his coworker threatened both his masculinity and Spanish identity. Pedro is compelled to act violently because he feels offended and emasculated.

Pedro is aware that migrant men need to find spaces of belonging that allow them to counteract the isolation they otherwise experience as individuals in Germany. According to Pedro, Spanish migrants display protest masculinity in the only two places where they can exert some power, their homes and the Spanish Center:

[E]l español, marginado en la sociedad alemana, tenía que desahogarse en el Centro, puesto que no podía hacerlo en ningún lado. En la fábrica no es escuchado, en un bar alemán si levanta la voz se le echa con cajas destempladas. Sólo le quedan entonces dos refugios donde demostrar su autoridad: en la familia, a fuerza de voces en la mayoría de los casos, o ir al Centro a decir: —¡Coño! ¡Esto es un trozo de España nuestro! (135).

FEELINGS OF INFERIORITY AND MASCULINITY IN CRISIS

Migration can destabilize men's power and make them feel helpless and vulnerable (Alcalde 2011: 456). After visiting Spanish workers in Germany, journalist Ángel María de Lera indicated the profound crisis that men who migrate experience: "La sensación de impotencia y de inferioridad no abandona nuestro ánimo [...] la vida circula alrededor de nosotros, pero como una corriente que nos margina, convirtiéndonos en un islote solitario" (1966: 33). Canicio's novel shows how migration can negatively affect men's self-esteem and masculinity, since migrant men suffer the discrimination of German society, both in their daily lives and in their workplaces. A migrant man's sense of inferiority stems from his status as a foreigner, but also from his social class and the type of work he does in the factories.

⁸ In *El tren de la memoria*, one of the Spanish migrant men offers a similar testimony when explaining that Spanish men had to be in a group in public spaces such as the streets and bars because there were Germans who always wanted to start a fight with them: "Te insultaban, pues tú ya tenías que formar la pelea".

Several scholars have pointed out that work, in addition to being a source of prestige and appreciation for men, may also produce a feeling of emasculation. This situation occurs most commonly in factory workers who have to bear poor conditions, long hours, and dull mechanical labor. Mike Donaldson states that working produces self-esteem in men, yet at the same time, that work, which tends to be boring, repetitive, and humiliating attacks their masculinity (1987: 167-168). Michael Kimmel argues that this experience of emasculation through labor began with the Industrial Revolution, when most men stopped working in their own businesses and started laboring in factories or companies under the control of managers who must be obeyed (1997: 83).

In *Vida de un emigrante español*, Pedro complains about migrants' mistreatment and exploitation. He explains that many migrant men suffer physical injuries in their workplace and then are sent back to their home countries without any kind of compassion.⁹ He also reveals that his boss exploited him because he paid him half the salary a regular German worker earned. Furthermore, Pedro had to put up with his boss's insults and disdain for foreigners, who he considered inferior people: "¡Tú qué hablas! —me gritaban—. Si has venido aquí a matar el hambre, si en tu tierra no tenéis más que pulgas [...]" (83). The protagonist summarizes his work life by describing Germans as "verdaderos vampiros" (86).

In addition to economic exploitation, Pedro suffers social discrimination from Germans in his daily life. He believes that he has been mistreated: "Durante muchos años he sido el clásico ciudadano de segunda clase. No he tenido derecho a voz ni a voto. He sido discriminado y marginado por una sociedad que no me admitía, que no me daba posibilidades de integración" (186). Pedro argues that Germans despise foreigners and tells two stories to illustrate the xenophobia he suffered: once when he is driving, a German falsely accuses Pedro of denting his car and Pedro wrongly receives a ticket; another time, a German man threatens to report him to the police because Pedro's children are walking on a public field. Pedro also explains that after the economic crisis of 1973, migrants have become the target of violent attacks and even homicides due to the rise of unemployment in Germany. The constant xenophobia migrant men have to face affects their self-esteem and masculine image.

During migration, Pedro displays certain attitudes that have traditionally been considered non-masculine, such as fear and lack of confidence. He reveals insecurity in his everyday life—for instance, when he decides not to enter into bars because he feels he is going to be the center of attention: "A un bar alemán no puedes ir. Todos te miran como si fueses un bicho raro, me parece a mí, o es que tengo complejo" (130).

Another aspect that calls into question Pedro's normative masculinity is his lack of libido in Germany. Previously I mentioned the love affair he had before his wife joined him in Germany, but later on in the text Pedro admits that the stress experienced dur-

⁹ In the novel *Hemos perdido el sol* (1963), by Ángel María de Lera, this situation happens to the character Lucio, who loses his hand to a hammer and is sent back to Spain because he is unable to work anymore (435).

ing migration has reduced his sexual appetite: “Es por los problemas que tenemos, las preocupaciones y ese estado de inseguridad permanente. Se te crea una angustia psíquica que lo primero que afecta es a la cuestión sexual y nos hace impotentes casi” (131). Pedro also reveals that he has never been able to flirt with women. Although he wants to present himself as a prudent man, his lack of sexual interest may create some doubts about his masculinity.

Furthermore, when he has the opportunity to have sex, he does not seem to be able to consummate the act. For instance, the only time he goes to a brothel in Germany, he cannot have intercourse with the prostitute because he is unable to have an erection. Pedro blames the prostitute for this, but it seems that his masculinity and sexuality may be threatened when women take the initiative in sex: “ellas están en plan déspota y en el momento en que vas con una mujer a una habitación y le ves despotismo... Luego está que el aparato no se te levanta por órdenes, que se te levanta por algo más y a esa mujer entonces le coges rabia” (92). This explains why, later on, when a German woman flirts with him and brings him to her apartment, he only kisses her and does not go any further sexually. It is possible that he felt uncomfortable because the woman took the lead in their sexual encounter or because he was afraid of not being able to satisfy her. In this regard, Stephen Whitehead and Frank Barret point out that men tend to experience anxiety in relation to sex due to their fear of appearing incompetent and, consequently, not masculine enough (2001: 19). To avoid these problems, many migrant men refused to have a relationship with German women, since German women’s more liberal and modern understanding of gender and sex would conflict with migrant men’s more conservative views of women.

The crisis in migrant men’s masculinity may also be apparent in their sometimes childlike behaviors. Ángel María de Lera confirms this attitude in his trips throughout Germany: “No cabe duda que todo hombre, al ser transplantado tan bruscamente a un país cuyo idioma, costumbres y clima le son desconocidos, se infantiliza. Tiene que empezar por aprender cómo se llaman el pan y el agua, a qué hora se come, cómo adaptarse a las nuevas temperaturas... La lejanía de la familia le desarma” (1966: 38). According to Lera, migrant men’s infantilization becomes evident in the dramatic way they react when facing problems that, back in Spain, they would have considered insignificant.

In Pedro’s case, he is treated like a child by Germans. For instance, his boss’s family finds him exotic and every time relatives visit their house, they show him off as if he were a rare species: “A lo primero, en el taller, yo era la novedad. Y parecía como si tuvieran un juguete. Cuando venía algún pariente, algún sobrino de los dueños, lo primero que les enseñaban era el negro. [...] Así de exótico les resultaba yo a la gente” (76). The migrant is here orientalized, identified as a childlike and immature Other who is used as an entertainment.

In addition to infantilization, migration causes psychological experiences of nostalgia and even madness in some men. Madness is considered incompatible with values of hegemonic masculinity such as reason, composure, and sanity. Nostalgia also enters into conflict with one of the key characteristics of hegemonic masculinity, the ability

to endure stressing situations, both physically and emotionally (Beneke 1997: 36). In Canicio's novel, Pedro's brother goes crazy with nostalgia in Germany, so after two years living there, he has to return to Spain: "tuvimos que obligarle casi a regresar a España porque si no se vuelve majareta. [...] Al final sentía unos dolores por todo el cuerpo que no podía ni trabajar casi. Pasar la frontera y desaparecerle fue todo uno, así que se conoce que, en el fondo, se trataba de un trastorno psíquico" (98). Pedro reveals that one needs to be emotionally strong to be able to bear migration, since this experience can make men turn crazy or sick. Pedro also tells the case of another migrant man who suffered from migraines and stomachaches as a consequence of "el mal de la emigración" (180). When narrating these stories in contrast to his own life circumstances, Pedro portrays himself as a strong and masculine man who has been able to endure the numerous disadvantages of migration.

However, like the nostalgic migrants, Pedro also wishes to eventually return to his country: "siempre hemos estado en plan medio provisional, unas veces más y otras menos, pero pensando constantemente en volver" (80). His objective is to save money in order to live comfortably back in Spain. This wish to come back to their home countries is common in migrant men and can be explained in part as a result of the emasculation they experience in the host nation. Thus, once they achieve their economic goals, they desire to return to their home country to recover their lost masculinity and to feel more appreciated as men.

Patricia Pessar points out that whereas migrant women's aim is to settle down in the host country in a more or less permanent way due to the increased freedom they enjoy there, men prefer coming back to their home country in order to recover the status and masculine privileges they have lost during migration (2003a: 29). On this note, Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo indicates that migrant men express nostalgia for their country because of their loss of public and domestic power (2003: 8). Pedro's repeated desire to return to Spain can be explained by his need to recover his masculine prestige, especially because he would return with enough money to live comfortably and be respected by other Spanish people.

NEW CONCEPTION OF GENDER ROLES

Migration can make men more open to accepting new gender models, since in the host country they are usually exposed to a more egalitarian conception of men's and women's roles. In a study about Mexicans living in New York, Robert Smith analyzes the situation of a migrant man who, as a consequence of his migration, adopted a more flexible masculinity, including a more active involvement in his daughters' education and more equality in his relationship with his wife (2006: 105-106). Though scholar Bob Pease also explains that some migrant men in Australia decide to abandon patriarchal attitudes, he finds that most migrant men who change do so unwillingly and the majority reject any change related to their gender ideology (2009: 94).

Migration causes Pedro to slightly modify his views on men's and women's respective roles. Pedro realizes that women do not receive a good sexual education in Spain and complains about Spanish parents not allowing their daughters to be free. He summarizes women's situation by saying that "[l]a mujer española es mártir de la casa" (161). He even admits that women have been doubly exploited during migration, not only by the host nation, but also by the men from their own country: "Si nosotros, los varones, los del sexo masculino, nos hemos visto explotados y marginados, el sexo femenino lo ha sido doblemente porque, además, nos ha tenido que sufrir a nosotros. Yo he procurado cambiar un poco en todas estas cosas, aunque también se ha de considerar que tengo más defectos que virtudes y que me han criado como me han criado" (168). These opinions show that despite the traditional gender education he received in Spain, in Germany Pedro has gained a more open and flexible understanding of gender roles.

However, in regards to housework, the protagonist reveals a higher resistance to gender equality and change. Hondagneu and Messner note that during migration, the distribution of domestic work between men and women is more balanced than in their home countries and men do certain chores that their wives used to do previously (1994: 212). Pessar also states that men who migrate alone learn to do household tasks by necessity and that afterwards, when their wives join them, they are more willing to help their wives at home (2003b: 826). Overall, according to these scholars, migrant men seem to be more open to participating in housework in the host country.

Pedro does not completely follow this tendency, since he struggles with doing household tasks. For example, he gets angry when several members of his political party encourage him to help his wife at home. It is true, though, that his opinion about housework has changed slightly during migration. Before, he thought that men who did the dishes were "maricones" (169), while now he admits that they are not that, but "gente más culta y más civilizada en este aspecto" (169). However, he only helps around the house when his wife asks him. He also confesses that he does not know how to cook or buy groceries. While at the end of the text he theoretically has a more open mind toward the equitable distribution of the household tasks, his tangible progress on making changes in his own actions at home is limited.

CONCLUSION

Vida de un emigrante español is a novel where masculinity and migration are clearly interconnected. Pedro is a working-class young man who decides to migrate to Germany to be able to fulfill his role as a family man, especially as an economic provider. In this way, his traditional masculinity, understood as sacrifice, prompts Pedro to leave his country. During migration he experiences some social and economic realities that reinforce his sense of masculinity and others that have the opposite consequence and make him feel emasculated. In Germany he saves money and forges a better future for

himself and his family, fulfilling his goal in migrating. Yet as a reaction to his marginalized position in German society, he also adopts some behaviors of the disciplined protest masculinity, such as exaggerated displays of masculinity in arguments with his boss and a fight with his coworker.

Along with these typical performances of normative masculinity, Pedro's story reveals that migration can cause feelings of emasculation in men. While, in Spain, Pedro felt humiliated due to his lack of work opportunities and reduced earning potential; in Germany, though he gains employment, the discrimination and labor exploitation he suffers also create fissures in his masculinity. Furthermore, in Germany Pedro displays some behaviors that have traditionally been considered unmanly, such as fear, lack of sexual appetite, and infantilization. Another consequence of migration on Pedro's masculinity is that he gains a more egalitarian conception of the relationships between men and women, although he continues to show resistance towards the equal distribution of housework. In conclusion, Canicio's novel demonstrates how migrant men were able to fulfill their role as heads of the household by earning money in their host nation, but also how many sacrifices they had to endure: constant threats and attacks to their traditional sense of masculinity, as well as discrimination from a society that considered them second-class citizens.

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