Mobility, Survival, and the Female Body in Laila Lalami’s *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*; in: *Memory, Voice, and Identity: Muslim Women’s Writing from Across the Middle East*, Routledge 2021.


**Abstract**

This article examines the complex network of mobility, survival, and the female body in Laila Lalami’s debut novel *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* (2005). The main aim of this article is to investigate the impact of mobility on the development of the female identity and body. To do so, the paper tracks the identity trajectory of two female characters who transgress cultural and religious boundaries through their acts of mobility. To understand the relationship between mobility and identity, this paper examines the role that the mobile body plays in reshaping the female identity, particularly when a woman moves involuntarily. More importantly, the paper investigates how mobility marks the female body; how the female body responds to certain acts of mobility, allowing for a distinct ‘bodily identity’ to develop. To further emphasize the link between mobilities studies and feminism, this paper also examines whether Middle Eastern conventional gender roles support or hinder the transformation of mobile female subjectivities. The focus of this article lies more on the broader framework of mobility, rather than migration, since the identities of the characters in question are reshaped by their movement both inside and outside their home country.

**Keywords:** Boat people, Corporeal identity, Migration, Mobility, Survival, the Female body.