THE PROBLEM OF IMMIGRATION AND CONTEMPORARY SPANISH DETECTIVE FICTION

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Abstract

“The Problem of Immigration and Contemporary Spanish Detective Fiction” examines the viability of the detective genre as a forum to dispute the commonly held perception of contemporary immigration to Spain as a problem. Focusing first on popular series of the Transition and Disenchantment periods that followed the death of Francisco Franco, I identify the detective novel, and in particular the hard-boiled variety on which the Spanish tradition is based, as an ideal space for discussions of otherness.

In the 1990s, as large-scale immigration to Spain became an increasing reality, North Africans, Latin Americans, and Eastern Europeans joined minority groups already marginalised within Spain and became the focus of well-known authors such as Jorge Martínez Reverte, Arturo Pérez-Reverte, and Andreu Martín and relative newcomers Yolanda Soler Onís, José Javier Abasolo, Lorenzo Silva, and Antonio Lozano. All use the conventions of the detective genre—suspense, pursuit, intrigue—to address misconceptions about immigration and to reveal that the ultimate culprits in these stories are ill-willed traffickers, corrupt security agencies, and the widespread apathy of parts of the Spanish population and its
government. Through the twists and turns of their storylines, these politically committed authors show that while immigrants may be forced to inhabit Spain’s underbelly, they are not single-handedly responsible for Spanish society’s perceived demise.

My dissertation is informed by a multi-disciplinary approach that draws on media, cultural, socio-anthropological, and postcolonial studies. The connection between crime literature and the mass media is especially intriguing given the latter’s power of influence over the conceptualisation of immigration. The detective texts juxtapose the media of the post-modern electronic information age, which is by definition frontier-less, with a nation designing ever-stronger borders. While analysing the various borders that divide a national and global society in the entangled tale of immigration to Spain, and the discursive roles they play within the codified genre of crime fiction, I argue that these authors use the conventions of their medium to provide internal views of the process of immigration as an alternative to the voyeuristic daily reporting that otherwise threatens to desensitise the Spanish public to the topic altogether.
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Introduction

November 1, 1988: a Spanish journalist investigates the appearance of a corpse on the Los Lances beach of Tarifa, Cádiz on Spain’s southern coast. In the initial stages of decomposition, parts of its flesh eaten by the Mediterranean Sea’s creatures and saline waters, the body is evidence of what will become a defining polemic in Spain at the turn of the twenty-first century. The journalist will conclude that the deceased man had fallen victim to the injustice of the immense disparity of wealth and opportunity between the First and Third Worlds. Spanning only thirteen kilometres at its narrowest point, the Strait of Gibraltar becomes the scene of serial criminal activity where organised human traffickers profit from thousands of young men and women who risk their lives in hopes of a better future for themselves and their children. For too many, however, the Strait becomes a final resting place. The journalist will eventually come to realise that this young man’s body is only the first example of a powerful will to conquer the social, economic, and political abyss that separates the poor from the rich, the South from the North, and developing from developed nations. The journalist will learn that this man is the first of many who will never be identified, who will never receive their last rite of passage, and who will be eternally mourned by their loved ones who nevertheless continue to hope that one day they will return happier, healthier, and wealthier than when they left.

This immigrant’s story, while similar to that of so many others who have tempted fate trying to reach the Spanish coast clandestinely, is only one of the innumerable tales describing contemporary immigration to Spain. Other immigrants
sell all their possessions in order to travel from Latin America under the guise of
tourism; others still dare to hide for days in trucks that depart from Eastern Europe in
hopes of being safely unloaded on the southwestern side of the Pyrenees.
Immigration to Spain, while growing in proportion and importance, remains shrouded
in mystery for autochthonous Spaniards who, as recent members of the group of
receiving rather than emitting nations of migrants, are unprepared for the influx of
workers, many of whom differ from them racially, linguistically, culturally, and
religiously. The surprise and mystery combine to create fear, a sentiment that
characterises both the migrant’s experience and that of the receiving country whose
citizens struggle to understand their role in the process and its impact on their
national conception of identity. As a variety of platforms emerge in Spain to
acknowledge and to address the growing concerns over the reception and
integration of immigrants, contemporary Spanish literature enters into the mix as one
forum in which alternative perspectives on the migratory phenomenon can be
brought to the forefront.

Detective fiction is a particularly important site for the thematic development
of tales of immigration. A popular genre that enjoys significant readership in Spain,
the novela negra depicts the underbelly of society and takes place in miserable
locations that are only too common to those involved with clandestine immigration.
The darkness, deviousness, and death that characterise the novelistic genre—and
which its name insinuates—lend themselves well to the exploration of questions of
identity, xenophobia, hatred, and crime that can result from the movement of
humans across national and continental borders. Like the journalist who comes upon
the corpse of that young North African man in Tarifa in November of 1988, the detectives of the Spanish novela negra will uncover that the reality of illegal immigration is far more complex than one might imagine. As I argue in this dissertation, the intricacies of this process are slowly revealed in detective tales of immigration as their writers show that immigrants are not always the criminals and autochthonous Spaniards are not always the victims; rather, politically committed authors of the novela negra use the literary conventions of their genre—suspense, pursuit, intrigue—to address misconceptions about immigration and to reveal that the ultimate culprits in these stories are ill-willed traffickers, corrupt security agencies, and the widespread apathy of parts of the Spanish population and its government. Through the twists and turns of their storylines, authors José Javier Abasolo (1957- ), Antonio Lozano (1956- ), Andreu Martín (1949- ), Jorge Martínez Reverte (1948- ), Arturo Pérez-Reverte (1951- ), Lorenzo Silva (1966- ), and Yolanda Soler Onís (1964- ) show that while immigrants may be forced to inhabit Spain’s underbelly, they are not single-handedly responsible for Spanish society’s perceived demise.

Immigration and Spain

In just a few decades, Spain moved from being a country of net emigration to one of the countries in the world with the highest influx of migrants in terms of its

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1 The journalist’s name is José A. Carrizosa and his article “Encontrados los cadáveres de otros tres marroquíes cuya lancha naufragó en Tarifa,” published in the Spanish daily El País on November 4, 1988, is among the first of thousands of Spanish newspaper reports that would be published from 1988 to the present day on the sinking of rafts in the Strait of Gibraltar and the resulting death of young African migrants. For more on the specific connection between the mass media, immigration, and the detective novel, see Chapter 3.
population. After the 1973 World Oil Crisis and the reduced need of the wealthiest countries for imported labour, in which Spaniards played a considerable role, emigration from Spain quickly tapered off and many Spanish emigrants living abroad returned to their homeland. The period of political transition to democracy following the death of Spanish dictator Francisco Franco in 1975 coincided with migratory rates that were almost in balance. Spain’s entry into the European Economic Community in 1986, which in 1993 would become the European Union (EU), and the resulting economic growth of the country would turn Spain into a net receptor of migrant labour.

The national origin, linguistic background, gender, and religion of immigrants in Spain is varied and the make-up of immigration has changed somewhat since it began to increase in the early 1990s. According to the Spanish Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE), while only 0.52% of Spain’s population was foreign in 1981 (198,042 foreigners counted in the census), the figure jumps to 360,655 or 0.91% of the population in 1991; in 2001, the INE census counted 1,370,657 foreign residents (3.33%); and in 2007, 4,482,568 or 9.93% of Spain’s population was foreign. In little over twenty-five years then, Spain has gone from being a country with a negligible foreign population to one in which foreigners make up almost one tenth of the country’s total population. These statistics, however, do not tell the entire story, not even numerically, since the figures only reflect those foreign residents of Spain that were counted by the INE’s census under the category of foreigners with a work permit. These data do not include foreign residents of the following three categories:

2 Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent statistics referring to immigration in Spain cited in this introduction are from the Instituto Nacional de Estadística, <http://www.ine.es>.
foreign-born naturalised Spanish citizens; foreign-born descendants of Spaniards who have maintained the Spanish citizenship of one of their parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents; undocumented foreign residents in Spain with an “irregular” status often referred to as “illegal.” All of these types of foreign residents, like those counted by the Instituto Nacional de Estadística’s censuses, share the fact that they are immigrants in a foreign country to which they must adapt.

While migration is an ever-increasing reality throughout the world at the beginning of the twenty-first century, each location faces a specific set of challenges resulting from the already-existing history, language, religion, and culture of the receiving society and the characteristics of its new residents. Spain’s situation is unique in many ways insofar as it holds a long, intimate, and sometimes violent relationship with some parts of the world from which many of its immigrants hail. While the perception in Spain may be that immigration developed overnight (a sense that has been systematically described in terms of an invasion or avalanche), in reality, migration to Spain, and in particular the country’s reception of and reaction to its immigrant population, should be considered within the framework of a former colonial power whose ties to Latin America, and to North and West Africa, have contributed to the reverse flow of current migratory patterns.

One major factor has led to the treacherous nature in which thousands of North and Sub-Saharan Africans have risked their lives in attempting to reach Spain clandestinely: the country’s geographic location. At the southern tip of the European Continent, the Iberian Peninsula is not only in great proximity to the North of the African Continent, its Spanish enclaves of Melilla and Ceuta border directly with
Morocco and the Canary Islands are only 108 km from the northwest mainland African coast. Furthermore, Spain and Morocco straddle the international border with the greatest difference in per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the world; while Spain’s per capita GDP for 2006 was 27,000 USD, Morocco’s was only 4,400 USD, which makes Spain’s over 6 times greater than that of its North African neighbour (the United States’ per capita GDP, at 43,000 USD, is only 4 times that of Mexico, at 10,600 USD, in 2006).\(^3\) Spain’s southern location, however, is also the predominant factor motivating citizens of other EU member-states such as the United Kingdom and Germany to immigrate to Spain for its warm weather, sunny beaches, and lower cost of living, all of which present an attractive option for retirement. These foreign residents, however, despite their large numbers and proportion, rarely figure in considerations of the statistical increase in immigration over the last thirty years because their ethnicity, religion, and wealth do not seem to present a threat as opposed to other resident communities. The disconnect between the actual proportion and make-up of immigrant communities in Spain on the one hand, and the perceived invasion of a threatening mass of migrants on the other, is one of the several misunderstandings about the process in Spain that are addressed in contemporary fiction dealing with the phenomenon and which I analyse with respect to the detective novel in this dissertation.

Legally, immigration to Spain is regulated in three ways: Spain’s Civil Code; the country’s immigration policy called the “Ley de Extranjería;” and bilateral agreements between Spain and emitting nations of immigrants. In terms of attaining

\(^3\) For statistics relating to international per capita GDP, see the CIA’s *The World Factbook* for 2007 at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>.
Spanish citizenship, Spain follows the *ius sanguinis* tradition, in which citizenship is transmitted through the family. According to Article 17 of the Civil Code, one is Spanish if one is born of a Spanish mother or father. Spain also adheres in part to the *ius soli* concept of citizenship since one is also automatically Spanish if one is born in Spain to foreign residents and at least one of the parents was also born in Spain. In addition to these automatic forms of attaining Spanish citizenship, there remain various other methods by which it may be acquired. In general, to apply for Spanish citizenship, one must have resided legally (with a residence permit) for ten years. Application for citizenship is permitted after a shorter period for the following groups: political refugees (5 years); citizens of Ibero-American countries, as well as Andorra, the Philippines, Equatorial Guinea, and Portugal (2 years); Sephardim (2 years); those under the guardianship of a Spanish citizen or institution (2 years); widows or widowers of Spaniards (1 year); anyone born on Spanish soil (1 year). Residents in Spain who hail from another EU country immediately share many of the same rights as Spaniards including voting privileges and the right to run for municipal office.

Once again, it is imperative to consider the situation of the immigrants that have arrived in Spain by irregular means and who do not fall into any of the above categories. The legal situation of such immigrants is largely coordinated by the controversial *Ley Orgánica sobre Derechos y Libertades de los Extranjeros en*

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4 See Article 17 of the Spanish Civil Code at [http://civil.udg.edu/normacivil/estatal/CC/1T1.htm](http://civil.udg.edu/normacivil/estatal/CC/1T1.htm).
España y su Integración Social, commonly referred to as the Ley de Extranjería. The policy was first drawn up in 1985, on the eve of Spain’s inception into the European Union, and was criticised for its emphasis on policing rather than legal procedure, a focus suggesting the country’s desire not to be seen by its Western European neighbours as the gateway to Europe. Over the years, the policy has undergone significant changes under the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) including the introduction of laws addressing integration, increasing immigrants’ rights, and establishing a general principle of equality with Spanish citizens. Many of these changes have been subsequently reversed under periods of the centre-right Partido Popular’s (PP) administrations, who considered the PSOE’s reforms to be an encouragement of unwanted immigration, a phenomenon commonly referred to as el efecto llamada. The current application of the Ley de Extranjería is that which was approved on December 30, 2004 by the PSOE administration.

In coordination with reforms made to Spain’s immigration policy, there have been six periods of amnesty since 1985 during which undocumented immigrants residing in Spain could apply for legal status. These periods of regularización, which took place equally under socialist and PP administrations, are indicative of the need in Spain to regulate those labourers that have been so important to the growth of Spain’s economy—especially in the construction and real estate industries. Doing so has not only allowed immigrant workers to have recourse to social security and health care but to contribute to those systems; despite concerns over the drain on

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6 For further reading on the Ley de Extranjería see the texts edited by Antonio Colomer Viadel, Emigrantes y estabilidad en el Mediterráneo: la polémica Ley de Extranjería (2001) and María Ángeles Sánchez Jiménez, Derecho de extranjería: un análisis legal y jurisprudencial del régimen jurídico del extranjero en España (2005).
such systems by immigrants, current statistics indicate that immigrants actually contribute more to social security than they receive from it (Giménez Romero 145). Despite this, the general perception in Spain about the impact of immigrants in the country is often plagued with misconceptions and misunderstandings that have led many to conceive of it as a detriment.

**The problem of immigration**

Immigration to Spain is consistently seen as a problem (Gímenez Romero 31-6). In this dissertation, I address immigration not as a problem (problema), but as a polemic (problemática), an approach that is in line with current socio-anthropological studies on the topic. Portraying immigration as a problem, as is commonly done in the mass media, is in itself problematic since such categorization implies the existence of a “solution.” Immigration to Spain, however, is not something that must be solved; rather, it is a reality that needs to be understood and coordinated to meet the needs of both migrants and Spanish society. In addressing the polemics surrounding immigration in Spain, I will concentrate on the manifestations of the current migratory phenomenon as it is thematically represented in the Spanish detective novel. This focus is motivated in part by what I consider to be a necessary move from problem to polemic and by the contributions that contemporary texts of this literary genre are making to that shift.

One of the starting points of this dissertation is that xenophobia in Spain is not a new phenomenon. To this end, I will analyse how three major marginalised autochthonous groups—Gypsies, Jews, and members of the historically recognised
autonomous communities—have been portrayed in the *novela negra*. I will then focus my attention on the continuation of such prejudice as it has been directed at Spain’s new others, immigrants. It should be noted that the three major minority groups I identify in the first chapter, and those in the subsequent chapters, do not form a comprehensive list. Javier García-Egocheaga has dedicated his book *Minorías Malditas* to the historical and contemporary reality of some of the least recognised, long-existing minority groups\(^7\) in Spain who remain a testament to the history of racism in that country, accompanied by a sustained negation of prejudice:

> En efecto, negar que aquí somos racistas es una creencia generalizada entre los españoles. Y de ahí, que muchos de nosotros—rendidos ante la evidencia contraria—, lo achaquemos a un novedoso comportamiento social, casi como si de una moda se tratase, debido a los cambios que la creciente inmigración está operando en España. Ahora veremos que no es así, que en este país, como en todos, los comportamientos xenófobos siempre han existido y que hemos omitido o silenciado una parte de nuestra historia. \(8\)

Understanding the continued negation of Spain’s history of xenophobia is of utmost importance in a study that explores the present-day collective conceptualisation of immigration to that country.

A second premise of my study is that literature, in particular genres such as the *novela negra*, whose tradition is a popular one, has the ability to engage with discourses taking place outside of its literary limits in other media—academic, mass communications, political, etc.—on a particular subject. In the case of the detective

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\(^7\) These groups include the Agotes, the Quinquís, the Vaqueiros, the Pasiegos, and the Maragatos.
novel, such a claim is based in part on the genre’s close association with journalism, making its pages, plots, and themes a natural extension of the platform on which social and political topics such as immigration are discussed. The association between journalism and the *novela negra* will be addressed in Chapter 3, where the border between the two media will be deconstructed as part of an analysis of the several perceived and concrete borders that delineate immigration in contemporary Spain.

**The Spanish Novela Negra**

*Un cartel discreto anunciaba una serie de actos sobre la ‘novela negra’. Con un aplomo etílico, Carvalho se mezcló con los que esperaban el comienzo de uno de los actos. Se los sabía de memoria. Tenían ese aspecto de huevos cocidos que tienen los intelectuales en todas partes, pero en este caso adaptados a la española: parecían huevos duros con menos densidad que los huevos duros de otras latitudes. Sobrellevaban el peso de los huevos sobre los hombros con el lógico exhibicionismo, pero también con esa inquietud subdesarrollada de que el huevo peligraba.*

— Manuel Vázquez Montalbán’s *Los mares del sur.* (25)

For the purposes of this study, I have carefully considered the various terms used to refer to the detective variety of Spanish fiction. It is useful to identify the subtle yet important differences between the various genres and sub-genres in order to understand my choice of the term *novela negra* in reference to the majority of the texts considered in this dissertation. In the Spanish detective literary tradition, the terms *novela criminal, novela de detectives, novela policiaca* and *policial,* and *novela negra* are frequently used synonymously. Critics specializing in the topic, however, forcibly distinguish between them, though using a variety of criteria. In
1986, Salvador Vázquez de Parga coined the term *novela criminal* in his text *De la novela policiaca a la novela negra: los mitos de la novela criminal* to refer very generally to the genre that includes novels dealing with crime and mystery. In his subsequent critical text on the subject, *La novela policiaca en España*, Vázquez de Parga specifies that while no one term has become popularised to the point of comprising all the evolutionary varieties of this narrative, the term *novela policiaca* has been the most generalised (18).

For the study of contemporary Spanish detective fiction that deals with immigration, the term *policiaca* is problematic for two reasons: the first is the insinuation of police participation in the investigation, which is for the most part inaccurate given the predominance of independent, private investigators; the second is the *novela policiaca*’s association with the literature of Francisco García Pavón (1919-89), whose novels were published during the Francoist regime. In García Pavón’s texts, criminality is predominantly perceived as it was by the dictatorial regime—that of the reds, the separatists, and other enemies of the nation—and crime is represented in such as way as to legitimise the repressive methods used by members of the regime. Consequently, detective literature of the post-transition is better characterised in opposition to the *novela policiaca*, since it serves as a medium to question state-sponsored police procedure. For Joan Ramon Resina, detective fiction of the Disenchantment period and beyond is better denominated as *novela criminal* and the difference between these later texts and those of García Pavón are an important connotation of the term (44). José Valles Calatrava, on the other hand, denotes as *novela criminal* all the works of García Pavón, Juan Madrid
Muñoz, Andreu Martin Farrero and Manuel Vázquez Montalbán (22). By not distinguishing between the relative political legitimisation that characterises the first author from the emphasis on social criticism that defines the work of the latter three, Valles Calatrava fails to identify an important shift in Spanish detective fiction, which now functions as a barometer for social concerns in a contestatory manner rather than as a manifestation of a state-driven, top-down critique of the “problems of society” that dominated Francoist crime literature.

It is therefore in order to reinforce the presence of a critical view of Spanish society in contemporary Spanish texts of detection that I will use the term *novela negra* in this dissertation. This genre is unanimously considered a transposition of Anglo-American and French literary influences. It is through the *roman noir* (named as such in part because of the black covers of the detective series first published by Gallimard)⁸ that Spain arrives at the term *novela negra*, but it is mostly from the United States that Spanish detective fiction borrows the literary tradition and formal conventions that define it. It is important to differentiate between the origin of the term *novela negra* and that of its literary tradition since in the United States, *black novel* designates a type of literature written by an African-American writer and does not have any necessary association with the detective genre. Reciprocally, the *novela negra* does not necessarily dramatise issues of race, although the two do coincide in texts dealing with the social reality of contemporary immigration to Spain. The thematic focus of race and racism in *noir* detective fiction is not unique to Spanish literature. In *Multicultural Detective Fiction: Murder from the “Other” Side*,

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⁸ In parallel fashion, the detective genre in Italy is named *il romanzo giallo* in reference to the yellow colour of the crime series’ covers first published by Mondadori.
Adrienne Gosselin edits a collection of essays that specifically address this intersection. Of particular interest to those interested in Hispanic crime fiction is a chapter by Tim Libretti that deals with the detective novels of Lucha Corpi, a Chicana writer whose texts address the polemics of identity and representation of Mexican-Americans.

Various critics have identified the intimate connection between the conventions of the Spanish *novela negra* and the hard-boiled American detective novel (Craig-Odders 9, Colmeiro 212, Pérez 15). For Javier Coma, the *novela negra* is a specifically American genre (11) that distinguishes itself from other crime fiction because of its critical and realistic nature. It is a genre that has developed in formal and ideological opposition to the traditional, British *whodunit* epitomised in the writings of Christianna Brand, Agatha Christie, Edmund Crispin, Michael Innes, Dorothy L. Sayers, and Josephine Tey in the so-called Golden Age of mystery writing (1920s, 30s, and 40s), and to the *locked-room mystery* typified by Arthur Conan Doyle’s detective pair, Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson.⁹ Coined in 1971 by Tzvetan Todorov in *Poétique de la Prose*, the *whodunit* is ordinarily categorised as escapist literature whose plots are motivated predominantly by the desire to resolve the novels’ enigmas. In contrast, the American-born *hard-boiled* text is, for Coma, a more serious literary form whose detective plot is a pretext for critical social commentary. The detective novels pioneered by Caroll John Daly, popularised by Dashiell Hammett and refined by Raymond Chandler, epitomise the Anglo-American *hard-boiled* tradition. These authors from the northeastern United States wrote in the

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⁹ Another important differentiation between García Pavón’s detective novels and those of the post-transition is his use of a more traditional, British crime fiction structure with a police detective who is head of the Tomelloso local police, Plino, and his investigative sidekick, don Lotario.
1920s about the increase in civic crime rates, urban vandalism, and drug consumption. It comes as no surprise, then, that the Spanish boom of the *novela negra* took place in the Disenchantment period following the 1975 political transition from the Francoist dictatorial regime to democracy, a period characterised by similar social conditions. In this way, the hard-boiled detective novel serves on both sides of the Atlantic to confront the brutal reality of urban crime and is marked by its critical dimension (Macklin 51).

As José Colmeiro states, the *novela negra* is “… un tipo de literatura que reacciona absorbiendo y reflejando de una manera crítica las características de esa realidad cotidiana” (211). The first, most famous, and arguably the best writer of the contemporary Spanish *novela negra* was Manuel Vázquez de Montalbán (1939-2003). Montalbán’s detective, Pepe Carvalho, always accompanied by his friend, Biscuter, is the archetype of the Spanish private eye whose constant adventures served as a vehicle for Vázquez de Montalbán’s social critique of Spanish society and the world in general at the end of the twentieth century. Criticizing the problematic transition to democracy in *Asesinato en el comité central* (1981), the impact of the 1992 Olympics on Barcelona in *Sabotage olímpico* (1993), and the overall state of globalised modern society in *Milenio Carvalho* (published posthumously, 2004), Vázquez de Montalbán’s Carvalho series exemplifies the power of the Spanish *novela negra* to act as a widely accessible platform on which to critique current social conditions.

While Vázquez de Montalbán is the most famous, he is certainly not the only successful crime series writer, nor is he the only one to have been widely translated.
Juan Madrid (1947- ) and Andreu Martín (1949- ) have both been very prolific writers of the novela negra and their works have enjoyed massive success. Juan Madrid is one of Spain’s most popular detective fiction writers with his two serial protagonists, Toni Romano and Manuel Flores, and has transported his Spanish urban detective tales to the television screen with the Brigada Central series. Andreu Martín is considered by many fans of the genre to be its master. He has also been one of Spain’s writers of the novela negra who has been the most defiant in response to literary critics who wish to reduce detective fiction to the class of sub-literature:

Como que soy totalmente partidario de la literatura de género, diré de entrada que, en mi opinión, hay grandes obras de la historia de la literatura que pertenecen a algún género literario. A mí me resulta embarazoso identificar literatura de género con subliteratura. De hecho, hay muchas novelas que no pueden inscribirse en ningún género y no pasarán tampoco a la historia de la literatura. También hay otras que ya forman parte de la historia perteneciendo a un género de modo indiscutible. De ello hay ejemplos a patadas. La identificación del género negro con la subliteratura es como una ofensa y me despierta cierto rechazo. (Costa Vila 56)

Fortunately, and as I will demonstrate in the following chapters, the box-office and literary critical successes of the contemporary novela negra indicate that crime fiction is no longer merely a peripheral genre. Instead, and in particular in Spain, it has gained much acclaim, a fact made evident by the recent creation of literary

Two other writers who have contributed to a more widespread acknowledgment of the Spanish detective genre as serious literature are Arturo Pérez-Reverte (1951- ) and Jorge Martínez Reverte (1948- ), both of whom are also very well known in Spain for their journalistic writing. Pérez-Reverte, while more famous for his Capitán Alatriste adventure novels set in the Spanish Golden Age, has had large success with his crime story La Reina del Sur, a novel widely translated and one that I analyse in this dissertation. Martínez Reverte has brought to Spanish readers his famed detective Julio Gálvez, himself also a journalist. Like Vázquez Montalbán’s detective Carvalho, Julio Gálvez’s adventures have served to chronicle and to critique many of the popular concerns of a post-1975 Spanish society including the violent impact of the terrorist organization ETA in Gálvez en Euskadi (1983). Today, the genre continues to reflect the concerns of the Spanish public; as the worry over immigration, and its perceived association with crime and terrorism rises, so too does the frequency of its treatment as the primary storyline of detective fiction.

**Immigration in the Spanish Novela Negra**

In this dissertation, I examine the viability of the detective genre as a forum to dispute the commonly held perception that contemporary immigration to Spain is a problem. Focusing first on popular series of the Transition and Disenchantment
periods, I argue that the Spanish *novela negra* is an ideal space for discussions of otherness. As a genre that is inherently violent, the detective novel connects contemporary texts on immigration to Spain’s historical experience with violence and links issues of racism and national identity at the turn of the twenty-first century with processes already existent in the Spanish collective consciousness.

In Chapter 1, I consider the roles minority populations in Spain play in the *novela negra* and in particular whether these marginalised groups are consistently characterised as being on one side of the law or the other. For my analysis of the Spanish Gypsy in the detective novel, I look at the contradictory *gitano* detective Manuel Flores, a rogue cop in Juan Madrid’s *Brigada Central* series of fourteen novels published between 1989 and 1990. I also look at how the contemporary *novela negra* portrays members of the historically recognised Autonomous Communities. To this end, I examine the threatened and sometimes threatening nature of *catalanitat* in Maria-Antònia Oliver’s *Antípodes* (1988), *Estudi en lila* (1985), and *El sol que fa l’àncex* (1994); I consider the portrayal of the *gallego* with Manuel Reigosa’s investigative team Nirvardo Castro and Carlos Conde in *Crime en Compostela* (1984), *O misterio do barco perdido* (1988), *A guerra do tabaco* (1996), and *Narcos* (2001); and I suggest that Jorge Martínez Reverte’s portrayal of informant Sara Goicoechea in *Gálvez en Euskadi* (1983) offers a glimpse into the complexity of Basque identity and nationalism. Finally, I consider Manuel Quinto’s *El judío errante*, where the character of the Wandering Jew serves as an example of the religious *other* in Spanish contemporary detective fiction.
In my second chapter, I show how the increasing reality of large-scale immigration to Spain has meant that North and Sub-Saharan Africans, Latin Americans, and Eastern Europeans have now become the *novela negra*’s protagonists. I consider the texts of well-known detective fiction writers with Jorge Martínez Reverte’s *Gálvez en la frontera* (2001), Arturo Pérez-Reverte’s *La Reina del sur* (2002), and Andreu Martín’s *Aprende y calla* (1979), and those of some of the genre’s relative newcomers including José Javier Abasolo’s *El color de los muertos* (2005), Lorenzo Silva’s short story “Un asunto vecinal” published in *Nadie vale más que otro* (2004), Antonio Lozano’s *Donde mueren los ríos* (2003), and Yolanda Soler Onís’s *Malpaís* (2003). I argue that these writers use their medium’s conventions to unveil not only the identity of the criminals in their detectives cases but also to shed light on some of the harsh realities behind contemporary immigration to Spain. I specifically identify five commonly held misconceptions about immigration that these authors address in their novels on the topic: 1- that the proportion of immigrants as a percentage of the total population of Spain is very high; 2- that female immigrants naturally and/or willingly choose prostitution as their trade; 3- that immigrants steal jobs from autochthonous Spaniards; 4- that corruption of authorities dealing with immigration at the various levels—legal, political, judicial—exists only in the countries of provenance; and 5- that immigration is temporary.

The connection between crime literature and the mass media is especially intriguing given the latter’s power of influence over the conceptualisation of immigration. Chapter 3 discusses how detective texts dealing with the topic of immigration juxtapose the media of the post-modern electronic information age
(which is by definition frontier-less) with a nation designing ever-stronger physical and economic borders. In this chapter, I analyse the various borders that divide a national and global society in the entangled tale of immigration to Spain, and the discursive roles they play within the codified genre of crime fiction. By bombarding the public with daily images of ships crammed with faceless dark-skinned men arriving on Spain’s southern coast—the most relevant border in this discussion—the mass media have militarised immigration. In my readings of the detective texts mentioned above as well as Antonio Lozano’s *Harraga* (2002), I show that immigrant protagonists take agency in their detective tales and in so doing challenge the conception of immigration as a threatening mindless mass.

Finally, Chapter 4 of this dissertation deals with the actual journey undertaken by the immigrant in the detective story. While never claiming to “understand” the plight of the Latin American, Sub-Saharan, or Maghrebian economic migrants, their condition of poverty, exploitation, or subalternity, contemporary Spanish detective fiction authors place their narrators, detectives, or other protagonists in representative physical circumstances that economic migrants regularly endure in their long journey to the perceived Promised Land. By narrating in remarkable detail from that perspective the obstacles they are forced to surmount, these authors lead crime fiction readers through horrifying situations and locales that would likely never enter the realm of their life experience. In so doing, their texts provide readers with a point of view, or POV, as seen through the immigrant lens. I argue that these writers of the *novela negra* use the codes of their medium to provide internal views of the
process of immigration as an alternative to the voyeuristic reporting that otherwise threatens to desensitise the Spanish public to the topic altogether.
Chapter 1: The Other as Essential Character in the Spanish Novela Negra

Since its birth in the 1950s,¹ the Spanish detective novel has been a fitting space in which to address questions of marginality and identity. In this sense, it is very much a continuation of the hard-boiled American tradition, born in the 1930s, on which it is based. Marginality is a staple of the hard-boiled genre and characterises the four protagonists of the detective story: victim, criminal, informant, and detective. Given the underworld they inhabit, it is to be expected that the first three characters be marginal, whether for social, economic, or ethnic reasons. The hard-boiled detective, however, even in the American conception, also suffers a degree of marginality. This element is most often exhibited as social ineptitude and isolation.

Since the death of dictator Francisco Franco (1975), contemporary Spanish literature has been inflected by the country’s political and economic transition to a democratic constitutional monarchy and by the completion of a centuries-old process of decolonisation overseas. During the literary phase accompanying this transition, the Spanish detective attains an additional dimension of marginality than that of his/her American cousin. This extra facet arises from the need to redefine Spanish identity and readdress issues concerning colonial domination within the Spanish state’s borders; I refer here to the centralist heavy-handedness that for four decades negated most regional manifestations of culture in what were to become the

¹ Most critics agree that the first truly Spanish sleuth appeared in Mario Lacruz’s El inocente in 1953 (Hart 25). The success of the genre in Spain, however, was not evident until the 1960s, when the publishing house Tesoro established a collection titled La Novela Negra, which marked the first boom of the detective novel in that country.
Autonomous Communities of Galicia, Catalonia, and the Basque Country. In accordance with this renewed cultural diversity, the Spanish sleuth is woman as well as man, gay as well as straight, and speaks Galician, Catalan, and Basque as well as Castilian. While s/he steps out of the shadows and forges steadily ahead, the new Spanish detective is drawn toward cases with cultural or linguistic commonalities thereby further shedding light on the inequalities that persist in those communities.

Exclusion from the mainstream because of economic or social status, gender, religion, or ethnicity, then, is a pervasive topic in the Spanish novela negra. By outlining some of the specific tensions of identity already present within Spain, a country with significant cultural and ethnic diversity, and the ways in which these tensions manifest themselves in the Spanish hard-boiled text, I will demonstrate in this chapter how the detective genre serves as a milieu for discussions about identity in the Iberian Peninsula. The existence of others within the country and their representation in detective fiction lays the groundwork for a similar dialogue concerning others from without. The Spanish Roma, or gitanos, members of the historically recognised Autonomous Communities, and Jews are others within Spain, both before and since the major wave of North African, Latin American, and Eastern European immigration that began in the 1990s. Structurally, lines are drawn in detective fiction to separate characters and activities as lying within or outside the

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2 In a move to decentralise the state in order to prevent post-dictatorial separatist backlashes, Spain’s 1978 Constitution recognised seventeen Autonomous Communities. The above-mentioned three, however, received a de facto recognition as “historic” communities, having previously enjoyed the designation “historic nationalities” in the Spanish Second Republic (1931-39). This distinction delegates more functions to the regional governments and, of even greater interest here, points to a foundation for a “national” identity within the Autonomous Communities that is continually renegotiated within the framework of the larger Spanish nation-state. Andalusia, while never recognised as a historic nationality, was in 1980 also granted a higher degree of autonomy.
law. In parallel fashion, the Spanish *novela negra* explores thematically the boundaries that delineate membership to social, ideological, or ethnic groups as well as the forces that circumscribe affiliation and exclusion from them. These boundaries, like the identities of the characters that negotiate them, are malleable; the need to re-assess identity continuously marks the Spanish detective genre as it, like the political period that forms its backdrop, undergoes a period of transition. Through the texts I have selected for this chapter, I hope to bring to light the symbiotic relationship between structure and theme in the *novela negra* as a medium for exploring questions of identity in contemporary Spain: as a genre, the detective novel is structured to determine the identity of the characters involved in the crime being investigated; thematically, individual and group identities in a complex society such as that of contemporary Spain are in a constant state of flux. As I shall demonstrate in subsequent chapters, the pursuit of identity in the detective novel with regard to historically marginalised groups in Spain is then extrapolated to include the pursuit of identities with the globalised context of immigration. I do not intend this sampling of works to be comprehensive, nor strictly representational; rather, I make my case through a broad overview of relevant series combined with the detailed analysis of select key texts.

Difference, in its racial, social, political, and religious manifestations, has persisted as an important theme in Spain’s long history and the abolition of difference can be identified as a driving force in the country’s most bellicose, and therefore most collectively traumatic, periods. During the Reconquest and Inquisition, the abolition of mostly religious, but also racial, difference inspired not
only seven centuries of battle but volumes of cultural production broaching the topic of identity. During the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), the (in)tolerance of cultural pluralism became a matter of life or death as Nationalists sought to oust the democratically elected Frente Popular government so as to impose a monolithic model of culture replacing the disruptive “differences” that modernity had posed (Graham 96). In the Post-Francoist period, issues over “difference” are ever-brewing and traces of the varied approaches to the question can be found in all forms of cultural production, of which the novela negra is a fine example. The treatment of the Gypsy\(^3\) in the Spanish detective novel stems in part from the contradictory role the Gypsy has maintained as both the folkloric source of Spanish, or at least Andalusian, identity, and, as Roma, as an autochthonous people despised and shunned with remarkable openness. In Juan Madrid’s famed *Brigada Central* series of fourteen novels, the contradictions inherent to the Spanish Gypsy identity are played out in the series’ detective Manuel Flores. As a state police officer who is also *gitano*, Flores is plagued with internal battles and must continually negotiate between the legal codes he enforces and the inherited codes of his people. For their part, Catalans, Galicians, and Basques represent another manifestation of otherness with regard to the historical centralist conception of Spanishness as their regional leaders strive for a greater public role for regional language and culture as well as to have their regional histories acknowledged vis-à-vis the central, Castilian-Spanish

\(^{3}\) Below, I will distinguish between the terms “(Spanish) Roma”, to be interpreted as the actual population of Romani origins living in Spain, which the Spanish Government estimates to be between 600,000 and 650,000 (Open Society Institute 286), and the “(Spanish) Gypsy”, an idealised, sometimes demonised figure, conceived throughout hundreds of years as a foreign and exotic presence (Charnon-Deutsch 4). The Spanish Roma, together with the Roma from the South of France, belong to a group known as *calé*, which, in general, adopted the language, customs, and religion of the majority population among which they live.
historiographic canon. Here, I see the threatened and sometimes threatening nature of the Catalan, Galician, and Basque character in the Spanish detective novel exemplified in Maria-Antònia Oliver’s sleuth Lònia Guiu, Manuel Reigosa’s investigative team Nirvardo Castro and Carlos Conde, and Jorge Martínez Reverte’s informant Sara Goicoechea. In the last case, the reader learns of the Basque separatist movement not from or even through the detective Julio Gálvez, who is relatively ignorant on the subject, but through his mysterious Basque accomplice, the etarra Sara. Finally, in Manuel Quinto’s El judío errante, the character of the Wandering Jew serves as an example of the religious other in Spanish contemporary detective fiction. This text’s narrative also points to the continued resonance of Spain’s centuries-long historiography of invasion, reconquest, and expulsion in the present formulation of Spanish identity. In this case, a Jewish character reminds the Spanish reader of the fate many Spanish Jews suffered as victims of Europe’s most malevolent inquisition. As I will point out in subsequent chapters, the battles over territory, religion, and purity of blood played out in Spanish detective fiction dealing with intra-national others continue to be relevant themes in texts of detection that broach the topic of international others, i.e. immigrants.

My purpose in analyzing the works of Madrid, González Reigosa, Oliver, Martínez Reverte, and Quinto in this chapter is threefold. First, I demonstrate that the Spanish novela negra is predisposed to the presentation and development of characters that are others in Spanish society, be they others from within or from without; otherness in Spanish detective fiction can be seen in part as a consequence of market-driven exoticism that has a longstanding tradition in hardboiled crime
literature. Second, I show that the position *internal others* occupy in contemporary Spanish detective fiction is influenced by periods of social, political, and economic transition and disillusionment in the same way that the representation of immigrants in the *novela negra* at the turn of the millennium will be seen to be shaped by the tensions of a post-September 11 and a post-March 11 Spain with a specific role to play within the European Union. Finally, I establish that the fundamental issues concerning the reception, integration, and representation of *others* are common to those whose provenance is from within or without the borders of the Spanish state. As shall be seen in the analyses that follow, these issues manifest in the Spanish *novela negra* as themes relating to the movement of goods and people, personal and political transition, and individual and collective memory.

**Flores, el gitano**

In his very successful detective fiction series titled *Brigada Central* (1989-90), Juan Madrid (1947- ) brought Spain one of its most contradictory and exciting characters: Manuel Flores. In both printed and televised versions, the reader/viewer follows the exciting life of a *gitano*-turned-cop who left his shanty of La Mina, Barcelona for the Special Investigations Unit of the police force in Madrid. Throughout the brilliantly written series of fourteen novels, the protagonist finds himself having to address many and diverse forces that tug at him. He struggles

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4 The televised series of *Brigada Central* ran on the state station TVE in 1989 with the screenplay co-written by Juan Madrid and Pedro Masó, who also directed. A second season, titled *Brigada Central 2: La Guerra Blanca*, ran again on TVE in 1993. The sequel was not based on any of Juan Madrid’s novels but on original screenplays written by the same co-author team.

5 In serial order and published in 1989: *Flores, el Gitano; Vistas al mar; Último modelo; Pies de Plomo; Asuntos de Rutina; Noche sin final; El ángel de la muerte; El cebo; Antigüedades; Desde el pasado*. Published in 1990 are: *Potitos; El hombre del reloj;* and *Turno de noche*. 
between two often-opposing codes of conduct that govern his life: the legal code of the state that he defends as leader of the Grupo Especial on the one hand, and the inherited Romani code that continues to govern the life of his loved ones on the other. Like the shantytown in which Manuel Flores grew up, the detective is always on the very margins of society, a fact that the narrator spells out explicitly: “el gitano Flores, un policía límite en una sociedad también en el filo de la navaja” (Flores 5). Even as leader of the most prestigious division of the central brigade, Flores is unable to dissociate himself completely from his origins. Throughout the series and cases that he and his group investigate, Flores must address and come to terms with his past. He is plagued by contradictions and in the end allows his aspirations for the future and his quest for ultimate truth and justice to be overcome by the strength of race, blood, and personal relations. In these ways, Manuel Flores’s character development parallels Spain’s social and ideological transition to democracy, known simply as La Transición, as well as the country’s subsequent period of disenchantment, or El Desencanto. The series culminates with demotion, divorce, death, and a strong sense of what could have been.

Peripheral spaces dominate the descriptive landscape of the Brigada Central series: there are the shantytowns where Flores’s family and other neighbouring Roma families live; the municipal housing on the outskirts of Madrid that is home to many of the series’ criminals and informants; and entire neighbourhoods such as Madrid’s Lavapiés, which is not only a site of frequent delinquent activity, but is also one of Manuel Flores’s fellow police officers’ place of residence. This geographic

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6 Generally the transition is said include the twenty year period between 1973, year of the assassination of Spain’s president Luis Carrero Blanco, and 1993, signaling, with the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, Spain’s definitive participation in the new European Union (Vilarós 1).
cross-over/duality is not unique as many of the central brigade’s team members are migrants from peripheral Spanish towns who have gravitated, either through professional promotion or personal desire, toward the Spanish capital that is both the centre of government and the national police system’s centre of power. Manuel is from the La Mina neighbourhood of Barcelona; Carmela grew up in Lavapiés and her mother still runs a bakery there; Loren is from the seaside town of Alicante; Pacheco and his sister were among the few to emerge from their Paralelo neighbourhood of Barcelona without turning to delinquency; Marchena hides his shame at having a mother interned in a psychiatric institution; and Lucas conceals his homosexuality from his colleagues as long as he can. Whether geographic or social, marginality inflects the identity of each of the Grupo Especial's members. By migrating to the geographic as well as political centre of the country, these characters seek to overcome their social marginality in physical space. They, like Manuel, are haunted by their marginal pasts and seek to detach themselves from their provenances altogether, making the other members of the Grupo Especial, which Manuel Flores leads, their new family. On his first visit in ten years to his native Alicante, for example, Loren experiences the following: “Ése era su barrio. El territorio de su infancia. Lo miró por última vez y supo que no volvería jamás” (Vistas 78). The special group of the central brigade investigates national-scale crimes, often overshadows local police departments, and is even referred to in Ángel de la muerte, the series’s eighth instalment, as “la policía de la policía” (139), which alludes to its role of cracking down on internal corruption. Once again, the periphery is in constant juxtaposition with the centripetal forces that both assert the centre’s
distance from it and reinforce its superiority. The title of Juan Madrid’s series reveals
the importance of the leitmotif of centrality and the resulting tension is a driving force
in each novel’s development.

In the first novel of the series, Manuel arrives at a shockingly poor
neighbourhood in search of some petty criminals involved in a large-scale drug ring.
Through the privileged view of the narrator, the reader is led to believe that the
shantytown is the same in which Manuel Flores grew up. While it becomes clear that
his was the La Mina neighbourhood of Barcelona rather than this shanty on the
outskirts of Madrid, the relation is not lost: Flores, now the leader of the police
department’s most prestigious special group, was raised in similar conditions to
those of the delinquents he pursues. He must continually re-evaluate his role in
society and put into question the heavy-handed approach of the institution he now
represents:

Las chabolas formaban una mancha al otro lado de la carretera entre
el descampado y el vertedero de basura. Antes eran alrededor de
treinta o cuarenta casuelas construidas con planchas de uralita,
recortes de lata, restos de construcción y cartones. Parte de ellas ya
habían sido demolidas y sus habitantes llevados a un barrio de casas
de cemento de diez pisos, todas iguales, que parecían cajas de
zapatos. (Flores 79)

The description of the ten-storey buildings continues in Último modelo:

El edificio tenía diez plantas y parecía una caja de zapatos puesta en
pie, al lado de otras cajas de zapatos semejantes. Fueron construidos
veinte años antes en un programa diocesano de erradicación del
chabolismo que no llegó a culminar […] el ayuntamiento había
construido otras, años después, con la misma forma y finalidad: meter
allí al aluvión de emigrantes andaluces y extremeños que acudieron a
Madrid en la década de los sesenta, buscando trabajo en la
construcción. No había apenas árboles, ni parques, ni lugares donde
pasear, como si sólo le hubiera importado acabar con las chabolas.
Cada planta del edificio tenía siete puertas. Cada una de esas puertas
correspondía a otras tantas viviendas, todas iguales, de sesenta y
cinco metros, quizá la cantidad de metros que los benefactores
consideraron idónea para que viviera una familia. Algunas de las
familias de ese bloque constaban de ocho personas y las había
mayores. (51)

The author does not dwell on the impoverished nature of the shanties, on the dirt,
scraps, and leftovers that make up their walls, but on how the centralised approach
to “dealing” with the problem of shantytowns during the early years of the political
transition was badly planned, mistakenly motivated, and ultimately, poorly executed.
As a result, the municipality’s desire to eradicate the eyesores led not only to the
destruction of many families’ homes, but also revealed that the strategies merely
scratched at the surface of the deep social problems that contributed to such poverty
and marginality. The superficial or even cosmetic approach to deep social issues is
a theme that will recur frequently in criticism of Spain’s dealing with the later
“problem” of illegal immigration. Like the underbelly of society that inhabits these
shanties in the late 1980s and 1990s, immigrants in Spain will be seen at the turn of the millennium as an amorphous mass that authorities seek to quantify, control, and contain. Through his raw depiction of some of Spain’s most depressed spaces, Juan Madrid alludes to the shortcomings of Spain’s political transition and the resulting disenchantment period, during which a lack of a significant political fissure with the previous totalitarian system left the country in a sort of masked continuum with leaders from the previous regime remaining in positions of power, but wearing new hats. He also reminds us of the country’s previous inability to cope with the massive migration from the countryside to urban centres of the 1960s and 1970s that resulted in the rushed construction of enormous dormitory communities with dreadful living conditions, insufficient health and education infrastructure, and worker exploitation (Borja de Riquer I Permanyer 264). Once again, a connection can be drawn between the ordeals faced by marginal, in this case migratory, communities within the country and those that will affect immigrant workers at the end of the century.

The social issues resulting from Spain’s political transition and disenchantment periods are ever present in Juan Madrid’s series and both stages see their reflection at the level of the diegesis. After the death of Francisco Franco, long-time critics of the dictatorial regime expected the wheels of change, set in motion in the previous decade, to accelerate and lead Spain to a drastically more progressive, modern, and transparent state of governance. The much-anticipated transition, however, left much to be desired, manifesting itself more in public social liberation and extreme partying that would be coined *La Movida*, than as significant
political change, which would take many more years to come to fruition. In _Brigada Central_, Manuel Flores epitomises the desire for transition as he adamantly strives to adhere to a way of life different from that which his Romani upbringing would prescribe. While Spain’s political transition involves, in its broadest terms, a change from a very centralised dictatorial regime to a more politically decentralised system, as a member of the Roma community, Manuel Flores seeks to move from the margins into a centralised space that, despite the aims of the political transition, maintains much of the state’s authority. In doing so, a figure that for centuries has been liminal in Spanish society demonstrates the country’s need for a bi-directional movement: central power delegated in part to the margins, and marginal, historically disempowered actors brought to the centre.

Spain’s rapid modernisation — condensing into thirty years (1960s-80s) the development that in other European countries had taken an entire century — obliged Spaniards to live in different time frames at once (Graham 312). One of the repercussions of this accelerated change was the creation of significant generation gaps. This would not be the first time in Spain’s recent history that the country’s youth would feel disconnected from its parents’ generation: there were those born at the beginning of the twentieth century who could not relate to the imperial nostalgia of those who had lived through the disaster of 1898; children born after the Civil War had trouble understanding the trauma and collective silence that continued to cast such a dark shadow over their parents. Victor Erice’s film, _El espíritu de la colmena_ (1973), demonstrates how incommunicability between the generations did not,

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7 For more on _La Movida_ see Gallero, Ingenschay, and Vilarós. The first two authors stress the innovative power of the movement, while Vilarós paints a more negative picture of the _movida_, signaling instead the movement’s lack of political motivation.
however, prevent the inter-generational transfer of suffering. In *Brigada Central*, the social manifestations accompanying the rapid economic modernisation can be seen to affect both the *payo*\(^8\) and Roma populations. Jorowisch, the head of the La Mina camp where Manuel’s father still lives, laments these changes to Rogelio:

> Tu hijo ha renegao de su raza y de ti, Rogelio. Para mí ha terminao, ya no existe Manuel Flores. Las cosas han cambiado mucho. En mis tiempos no hubiera pasao esto. Tu hijo no hubiera renegao de ti y mi Zacarías no te hubiera faltao. Mi padre me hubiera quemao la boca con un cuchara al rojo […] Mírala, una mujer hecha y derecha y ya ha despreciao a tres pretendientes. (*Flores* 138)

The disconnect between generations is equally apparent outside the Roma community. Doña Antonia, Carmela’s mother, also laments that this *Grupo Especial* officer has not yet married: “su hija no parecía tener demasiadas ganas de casarse […] los tiempos habían cambiado, eso lo sabía muy bien” (*Flores* 218). Carlos, a young, new member of the central brigade, defends Flores to his grandfather and demonstrates a higher degree of acceptance for *otherness* within Spain that is difficult to tolerate for those educated under Franco:

- ¿El Gitano?
- Sí abuelo, pero yo no lo llamo así. No me gusta. Es un policía de película, abuelo […] dicen de él cosas increíbles. Es frío como una piedra, ¿sabes? Pero es justo y buen compañero. Yo creo que si no llega a ser gitano, ahora seria lo que hubiese querido. (*Noche* 57-8)

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\(^8\) *Payo* means “white man” in Caló, the language of the Spanish Roma. Caló is a language that preserved the basic vocabulary of Romanes but adopted the grammatical structure of Castilian Spanish.
In Carlos’s admiration for Flores’s merit and in his ability to dissociate the *gitano*’s achievements from his ethnicity, the police officer recognises nonetheless that the prejudices ingrained in his country’s psyche have held Flores back from further professional advancement. In fact, Flores has to overcome numerous barriers in his career and many of his colleagues below him in the organisation resent that a Gypsy should tell them what to do. Still, the resistance the protagonist encounters is more complex than the xenophobia to which his fellow cops will admit: “Nunca le habían pedido su opinión sobre los gitanos, pero si se la hubiesen pedido, nunca aceptaría a un hombre como Flores como compañero” (*Flores* 183). What most aggravate Flores’s colleagues’ intolerance of him are his straight-edged, incorruptible standards that put truth and justice before anything else. Flores represents the will for change even while corruption indicative of previous regimes persists.

In *Brigada Central*, corruption is shown to be rampant throughout the Spanish institutions of law enforcement. In one case alone, Manuel’s *Grupo Especial* unearths an arms and drug-trafficking ring connecting Spain and the Middle East that is facilitated by an entire local police force (*El hombre* 20). The corruption comes as little surprise to Flores, who has had to fight such activities throughout his career. In this way, Flores follows in the footsteps of detectives such as Raymond Chandler’s Philip Marlowe or Dashiell Hammett’s Sam Spade, his American hard-boiled cousins. In the American model, the private eye is characterised as the sole defender of truth and upholder of justice. Often, s/he is placed in juxtaposition to the police force as a whole, which is traditionally portrayed as incompetent thereby reinforcing the detective’s superiority and justifying his/her working alone (Craig-
Odders, *Detective 4*). While Flores is a police officer, his unique position as leader of the Special Investigations Unit of the central brigade places him more outside the police circle than within it. In this way he is well in line with the hard-boiled tradition.

The most shocking case of police corruption for Manuel Flores involves his long-time mentor within the police force, the *payo* Blas, whom Flores affectionately calls *el Viejo*. Until his fall from the pedestal on which Flores has placed him, Blas fulfils the Roma detective’s need for an upstanding role model and father figure. It is to be expected that a police inspector who adheres to the highest standards for moral conduct should have issues accepting his delinquent father’s behaviour. Rogelio, who is often picked up for thievery and trespassing, puts Flores in an awkward position and forces his son to defend himself to his colleagues:

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Siempre la misma extrañeza, la media sonrisa cuando saben que el padre del inspector Manuel Flores, responsable del Grupo Especial de la Brigada Central, un policía de la elite, es gitano de pura cepa. Es el gitano Rogelio Flores, borrachín, pendenciero, bronquista, *trilero* y visitador asiduo [sic] de comisarías de policía y cuartelillos de la Guardia Civil. (Último 76)
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Since Flores cannot look to his own father for a model of comportment, he emulates Blas instead: “Muchas veces pensaba que la mitad de las cosas que hacía como policía eran para que el Viejo supiera que él era un buen profesional y que nunca defraudaría a la confianza que muchos años atrás puso en él, cuando apenas era chaval de veinte años que ambicionaba ser policía” (*El ángel* 35). Blas is an essential character in Flores’s transition from a peripheral world, in which he is only
seen through the stereotypes attributed to his people, to that of the highest strata of the Madrid police force, a rise in status that at the end of the 1980s would still be received with some reservation by the payo majority in the force. The culmination of this transitory process, however, is utter disappointment that mimics the country’s progression through its own transition and disillusionment periods of the previous decade. Manuel Flores discovers that Blas leads a corrupt group of police officers involved in trafficking and in that moment, his model of moral integrity is dissolved. As difficult as it is for Flores to expose his adoptive father, he goes to the press with the news of Blas and the other corrupt cops’ involvement in the scheme. Unable to endure the humiliation and inevitable reprimand, el Viejo commits suicide before the publication of the article (*El hombre* 164).

With the dissolution of Flores’s faith in the payo legal and moral systems, the protagonist is subsequently drawn closer and closer to his father and their background by ties he had until then fought to overcome. Blas’s death brings forth the culmination of Flores’s change in attitude toward his father. Whereas their relationship in the first half of the series is mostly characterised by Flores’s disparagement of his father and the latter’s disappointment with his son’s abandonment of Romani traditions, Flores increasingly appreciates his father’s pride in his culture and seems to come to terms with the fact that much of Rogelio’s activities will take place outside the (payo) law because the nature of his way of life is itself led outside of Spanish mainstream society:

Pensó en su padre de una forma cálida y cariñosa, como no recordaba que lo hubiera hecho nunca hasta entonces. Le gustó cuando lo vio en
su casa con el traje nuevo, orgulloso y digno, asumiendo su
responsabilidad en el robo de la iglesia, sin lamentaciones ni pretextos
inútiles. Nunca había tenido una imagen tan nítida de él.

(Antigüedades 146)

It is instructive to specify that while Rogelio’s delinquent activities frequently place
him in conflict with the Spanish legal system, he is nonetheless an observer of the
so-called Leyes Gitanas, which include among others: respect for the family as the
supreme institution of the Roma community; the acceptance of personal liberty as a
natural condition of each individual; and obedience to decisions made by elders
within Romani law. As Flores shifts away from the legal code of conduct into which
he strove for so many years to incorporate himself, disappointment with the
expected seal-proof nature of the system drives him to a return to the alternative
laws that govern his father and his people.

The issues of fatherhood and family that form some of the central themes of
Brigada Central symbolise on the microscopic level the questions of identity
surrounding the Roma community as a whole in Spain. For centuries Gypsies have
endured popular resentment for their perceived parasitic begging, thievery, and
vagabond lifestyle, yet Spanish processes of self-definition have included the
appropriation of the Gypsy identity as an element that makes Spaniards unique with
respect to the rest of Western Europe. As Jesús Torrecilla explains in España
exótica: La formación de la imagen española moderna, eighteenth century Spanish
resistance to the “invasion” of French ideas of the Enlightenment, considered by
conservatives as an afrancesamiento, located Spanishness in the lowest, poorest
classes, especially those marginal and semi-criminal groups such as Gypsies and toreadors (4). Since then, the critic points to a cyclic pattern of Andalusianism and Castilianism in Spain’s own conception of its Spanishness: Andalusianism of the nineteenth century; Castilianism of the Generation of ’98; Andalusianism of the Generation of ’27; Castilianism of early Francoism; and finally, the Andalusianism of interested tourism, which has lasted to this day (55). The alternative periods of imposed Castilianism had their own repercussions on the development of regional identities, as shall be discussed in the subsequent section on Spain’s detective fiction on Autonomous Communities.

Flores, like the Spanish construction of its Gypsy identity, is plagued by a series of contradictions, the most significant of which, for him, is the fact that he is both a gitano and a policeman for the Spanish state. Most characters he encounters, exemplified here by his fellow officer Garrigues, cannot wrap their heads around this reality, which they consider incongruous:

Sabes, eres un poco raro. [...] Me hizo gracia. Un poli gitano, y además, llevando el Grupo Especial de la Brigada [...] No sé. Me dio por pensar que a lo mejor el ministro era un aficionado al flamenco. Ya sabes. [...] ¿Y no cantas, ni bailas, ni tocas la guitarra? [...] Un robagallinas en la Brigada Central. Así está la policía. [...] ¿Es que no eres un robagallinas, gitano? (Vistas 121-2)

Garrigues’s reference to flamenco is particularly significant. The flamenco dancer is one of the most widely diffused images of the Spaniard outside the country and is the protagonist of the Españolada. This nationalistic genre of cinema, defined
generally by its exaggeration and deformation of the Spanish character through a reduction of the Spanish reality to the Andalusian one, was appropriated by the Francoist regime so as to project a strong sense of Spanishness in all regions of the country. Despite the decades of such propaganda that shaped the consciousness of several generations of Spaniards, and despite the even older exportation of a “Gypsyfied” Spanish identity to the rest of the world, Roma like Flores continue to be regarded as second-class citizens whose artistic traditions may be worthy of assimilation but whose race and ethnicity are despised. The gitano has been a representative of Spanishness in cultural manifestations ranging from Golden Age literature, with Cervantes’s “La gitanilla” (*Novelas Ejemplares*, 1613), to poetry of the Generación de ’27, and Lorca’s *Romancero Gitano* (1924-27), to post-Franco cinema, with Saura’s *Carmen* (1983) and *El amor brujo* (1986). Yet, the Spanish Roma, referred to frequently in Spanish historiography as egipcios, have been persecuted since Ferdinand and Isabella’s reign, who in 1491 decreed that they should either become sedentary and take up masters or be banished (Fraser 100).

In 1749, male Roma were seized and forced to work in naval arsenals as the government inaugurated a program of expansion calling on unskilled workers (Fraser 166). Currently, Spanish Roma are not recognised either as an ethnic minority or as one of the “peoples of Spain,” despite requests for political recognition and the legal protection of their identity, culture, language, and other minority rights.¹ The selective use of Gypsy traditions in the official characterisation of Spanish identity foreshadows the country’s contemporary dealing with immigration, where

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¹ For further information on the various non-governmental organisations involved in the cause, see the webpage for the UN-recognised Romani Union of Spain: <http://www.unionromani.org>.
there exists a similar dilemma over assimilation or expulsion in the form of repatriation. The contradictions seem absurd and yet are characteristic of industrialised nations’ response to immigration: immigrants are unwanted, but their cheap labour is aggressively recruited; they are labelled as criminal because they enter the country illegally, yet they are hired under those same conditions to profit the employer. The case of North African immigrants in Spain is particularly analogous to that of the Gypsies, since the presence of “Moors” in the Iberian Peninsula for over seven centuries and the unquestionable vestiges evident in Spain’s architecture, language, and, I would argue, culture, have not been sufficient to resist contemporary definitions of Spanishness as white, rather than Moor, or Christian, rather than Muslim.

Throughout Juan Madrid’s series, the physical attributes of his detective always precede him, making self-definition in terms other than race extremely difficult:

Flores no terminaba de acostumbrarse a que su aspecto inequívoco de gitano le gastara malas pasadas cada vez que iba a una dependencia policial donde no le conocían. De manera que sacó su carné profesional antes de que cualquier policía le empujara y dijera con malos modos que no se podía deambular por allí como Pedro por su casa. (Pies 71)

As much as Flores endeavours to attain the respect of his colleagues, he is never willing to conceal his Roma identity. While others insinuate, or simply blurt out, that
to be a good cop Flores must somehow no longer be a Gypsy, Flores’s responses suggest that the two are not mutually exclusive:

- No me ha dado tiempo de disculparme contigo, Manuel.
- ¿Disculparte, porqué? Garrigues.
- Por haberte llamado gitano.
- Soy gitano –dijo Flores y sonrió– Al menos medio gitano. (Vistas 150)

Flores’s allusion to being half-gitano does not refer to his blood, since both his parents were Romani, but to the fact that he has entered the mainstream Spanish society and abandoned in many ways the nomadic lifestyle to which his father still ascribes. Purity of blood, however, and the suggestion that behaviour and conduct are defined by it, is a theme that appears throughout the series and is used by members of both sides of Flores’s life, the gitano and the payo, to attack him for not belonging. Rogelio, Manuel’s father, is the first to point out the consequences of Manuel’s desire to abandon his Romani heritage: “Escúchame tú también, Manuel… Eres peor que los payos… Mucho peor… Porque no eres ni gitano, ni payo. No eres nada” (Flores 125). The detective labours to negotiate a space in which both aspects of his life can coexist harmoniously, but the difficulties are tremendous. The power of blood and the double nature of Flores’s life come together in his daughters, one of whom looks like his white wife, Julia, and the other who looks just like him (Pies 64). The two daughters seem also to have a stronger affinity for the parent they resemble suggesting that like attracts like and repels otherness. Rosa Montero has identified this phenomenon in the country as a whole, suggesting that Spain is still very tribal in that it looks out, first and foremost, for the good of the clan; the clan is more
important than the society’s health as a whole (318). In this sense, within the microcosm of their family unit, Flores’s daughters are playing out the dynamics that an increasingly diverse Spanish society experiences on a larger scale.

It is within this context that Manuel Flores attempts, against all odds, to move from one clan to another. At the beginning of the *Brigada Central* series, the protagonist expresses an adamant determination to sever ties with the poverty, isolation, and misery that would otherwise inevitably comprise his future. He wonders where his childhood companions, likely to have remained on the path drawn out for them, have ended up:

> Probablemente unos en la cárcel, otros muertos y los demás desperdigados por ahí o incapaces de salir del barrio de La Mina. Pero él sí que pudo salir, decir adiós a la miseria, a las humillaciones de los payos, a la cárcel… Él no tenía nada que ver con aquel niño Manuel, el del Rogelio… aquel niño murió. Manuel Flores era otra cosa, él era el inspector jefe Manuel Flores. (*Flores* 126)

His high hopes for complete separation and detachment from his past and Romani ascendance, however, are gradually diffused, as life experience makes him realise that familial and sanguine bonds are not easily severed. By the end of the series, Flores has broken the rules of the Spanish legal code he so adamantly defended in order to protect his father, adhering instead to the fundamental *ley gitana*: respect for the family and obedience of elders. As a result, he is demoted to the night shift of a small local police department and is again treated like a vagabond who managed
to get into the police force. One can conclude, therefore, that Flores never redefines himself within the limits of a personal identity that is strictly payo or uniquely calé. Rather, Juan Madrid’s protagonist, like the transitory, post-modern, Spanish state in which *Brigada Central* is set, seeks to negotiate conflicting forces: in Manuel Flores’s case, a Romani background is juxtaposed with a role as defender of the centralised, Spanish law; in the case of late 1980s and early 1990s Spain, an accelerated economic and political development is juxtaposed with a social modernisation that has had to play catch-up, a fact reflected in the country’s continued resistance to a plural view of its society. In *Culturas híbridas*, Néstor García-Canclini has identified a point of intersection between the development of hybrid cultures — whereby indigenous cultures respond to imported hegemonic cultural models — and an uneven development in Latin America. He insists that fragmentation and multiple combinations among tradition, modernity, and post-modernity lie not in not having modernised but in the contradictory and unequal manner in which emancipation, expansion, renovation, and democratisation have been articulated (329-30). In similar fashion, Spain underwent an accelerated development between 1973 and 1993 in which, it can be argued, the country reached modernity without modernisation. Such a multi-layered reality was a fertile environment for the development of cross-cultural identity formation such as the process experienced by Manuel Flores in *Brigada Central*.

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10 Spain’s 1978 Constitution permits Affirmative Action as per Article 9.2, which provides: “Corresponde a los poderes públicos promover las condiciones para que la libertad y la igualdad del individuo y de los grupos en que se integra sean reales y efectivas; remover los obstáculos que impidan o dificulten su plenitud y facilitar la participación de todos los ciudadanos en la vida política, económica, cultural y social.” However, the non-existence of an institute or commission financed by the Government to monitor and research human rights issues has made it difficult to reprimand infractions of Affirmative Action.
Detection in Spain’s Autonomous Communities

Since 1990, Spanish detective fiction written in the Spanish minority languages, Galician, Catalan, and Basque, has grown both in terms of the number of authors and of readers, a fact reflected in the annual increases in sales and repeat editions. Despite each region’s unique historical literary relationship with detective fiction, the three linguistic manifestations of the literary genre explore common themes of transition, migration, language, and marginality. Catalonia was the first to develop a true, local variant of the detective novel in the 1930s, when the dichotomy between Catalan civil society and Castilian public authority, along with the dramatic increase in wealth in the realm of weapons manufacturing, created the circumstances for spying, intrigue, and the need for secret services (Resina 30). Authors of Catalan detective fiction include, among many others, the first and most famous, Manuel de Pedrolo (1918-1990 with more than 72 novels published between 1949 and 1985, many of them of the detective genre), Jaume Fuster (1945-1998, publishing mostly between 1971 and 1996), and more recently, Maria-Antònia Oliver (1946- ). Basque detective fiction was the next to develop with the publication in 1955 of Hamabost egun Urgainen [Fifteen Days in Urgain] by José Antonio Loidi.

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11 The Federación de Gremios de Editores de España, in a study conducted in 2005 titled “Hábitos de lectura y compra de libros 2005: Informe metodológico y de resultados” found an increase in the percentage of Spanish readers for whom detective fiction was the preferred genre of literature: 7.7% in 2004 and 8.3% in 2005 (21). The equivalent study conducted specifically on Basque reading habits in 2003 found that 9.8% of the Basque reading public agreed. Significantly, the Basque study of 2003 was the first to differentiate between the categories “intrigue/mystery” and “detective”, indicating the growing importance of the specific genre (35). Finally, the equivalent Catalanian study of 2004, “Hàbits de lectura i compra de llibres a Catalunya: Any 2004” came to similar conclusions, finding that 11.5% of readers preferred the detective genre (22) and that the most bought category of books was the “intrigue/mystery/detective” one at 22.2% of total purchases (47). As of September 2006, there has not been an equivalent study on Galician reading habits. For more on these studies, see the Ministerio de Cultura’s webpage at <http://www.mcu.es/libro/plantilla?id=43&area=libro>.
Bizkarrondo (1916-99), and the genre has grown steadily ever since. Its corpus now includes the works of many authors including Txomin Peillen (1932-), Xabier Gereño (1924-), and the more contemporary Itxaro Borda (1959- and Jose Mari Iturralde (1951-). Galician detective fiction is the youngest of the group; its first detective novel, *Crime en Compostela*, did not appear until 1984. Since then, however, many young writers, such as Aníbal Malvar (1964-), Manuel Forcadela (1958-), and Diego Ameixeiras (1976-), have followed in the footsteps of the genre’s Galician father, Carlos González Reigosa (1948-).

While Barcelona, together with Madrid, continues to be a most frequent choice of setting for Spanish stories of crime and detection, other cities, including Santiago de Compostela, Lugo, and A Coruña in Galicia, as well as Vitoria, Donostia, and Bilbao in the Basque Country, have gained some ground as choices for a gripping setting in the contemporary Spanish thriller. In some cases these peripheral cities take centre stage and become the protagonists of their stories, more so even than the detective. This is certainly the case in the first two novels of Carlos González Reigosa’s Nivardo Castro series, where detailed description of Compostela’s ornate architecture supersedes the narration of the actual mystery or its resolution. By grounding their mysteries in the regional territory whose unique cultural and historical themes the authors wish to highlight, writers of Galician, Catalan, and Basque detective fiction instantly transport the reader to a space in which s/he may acquire a deeper appreciation of the various facets of the vernacular vis-à-vis difference and specificity. The pursuit of truth at the diegetic level, whether it be the identity of the criminal or reason for the crime, accompanies the more
Another important way in which regional detective fiction sets itself apart from its Castilian counterpart is, of course, through its language. Authors such as Carlos González Reigosa and Maria-Antònia Oliver consider themselves completely bilingual and are therefore faced with the choice of writing in Castilian or in their respective Galician or Catalan mother tongues. They must further decide whether or not to have their works translated. In choosing to write exclusively in a language other than Castilian, authors from the Autonomous Communities assign a greater degree of importance to the reclaiming of their national languages than to the repercussions of a reduced readership. These authors prefer to centre their work in a smaller market if it means that that centre is one other than Madrid. As González Reigosa eventually realised, however, limiting the readership of works that serve as a lens to the ideological and social realities of his Autonomous Community means a de facto exclusion of audiences that, in many ways, are the most sought after readers of regional stories. In other words, isolation is not the inevitable alternative to selling out. In a 2001 interview with El País, González Reigosa addresses his decision to have his work translated:

Hace un año se tradujo por primera vez Crime en Compostela, una novela de hace casi quince años (galardonada con el I Premio Xerais de novela en gallego), que, a pesar de su éxito en Galicia, no había sido traducida al castellano. Bueno, era una opción. Yo me resistía. Soy absolutamente bilingüe y pensaba que mantener la novela en
gallego era una manera de preservar su lectura en gallego y defender una tradición literaria. Ahora pienso lo contrario y creo que, como hace Manuel Rivas, hay que sacarla primero en gallego, y luego, seis o tres meses después, traducida al castellano. ("Carlos G. Reigosa construye")

González Reigosa, like Manuel Rivas (1957- ), who wrote O lapis do carpinteiro and is Galicia’s most famous and translated contemporary author, has found that the secret to finding a middle ground lies in publishing first in Galician and then in Castilian a short time after. One cannot help but suppose, nonetheless, that economic interest has contributed to González Reigosa’s decision. His Nivardo Castro series belongs, after all, to the detective genre, which is by definition a popular one intended for mass consumption: the greater the mass, the greater the consumption.

Unlike its Catalan and Galician counterparts, Basque detective fiction has not been widely translated. The individual concerns of each Autonomous Community are different and each has had a unique and varied history. It is safe to say, nonetheless, that bilingualism is a different breed in Euskadi than it is in the other two regions first and foremost because the coexistence of the two languages is marked at every turn by their complete lack of a genealogical relation. While the movement between Galician or Catalan and Castilian can be so fluid that at times the speaker does not realise that s/he is code-switching, the clash caused by the linguistic variation between Castilian and Basque, a language whose origins continue to be a matter of great debate, is a constant reminder of the specific
cultural differences that separate Basque country from the rest of Spain.

Furthermore, there was no standard variety of the Basque language used by its writers until 1968, when the Academy of Basque Language (Euskaltzaindia) adopted the so-called Euskara Batua as the standard unified Basque. In his dissertation on Basque detective and crime fiction, Javier Cillero Goiriastuena makes the astute observation that the relatively late standardisation of Euskara and, by extension, the late modernisation of Basque literature, were crucial factors contributing to the tardy development of a Basque detective genre (81). The late development of Basque literature explains, furthermore, the persistence of issues related to language and cultural definition as primary themes in the region’s contemporary fiction. In order to assert the permanence of a truly Basque literature and of Euskara as a valid language for its narration, authors of that region’s detective fiction have thus far refrained from delving into the added complications brought on by the question of translation.

Basque national and cultural matters, however, have been the subjects of detective fiction written in Castilian. Jorge Martínez Reverte (1948- ), author of the famed Julio Gálvez series,\(^\text{12}\) has dedicated Gálvez en Euskadi to the topic of Basque separatism and to the terrorist group ETA. Intra-national terrorism is the aspect of Basque reality with which Spaniards from outside the region are most acquainted and is therefore expected to take centre stage in a novel written in Castilian about the Basque Country. Through the fascinating character of Sara

\(^{12}\) In order of publication, the Julio Gálvez series includes the following novels: Demasiado para Gálvez (1979); Gálvez en Euskadi (1983); Gálvez y el cambio del cambio (1995); Gálvez en la frontera (2001); and Gudari Gálvez (2005). The last text revisits the relationship Julio Gálvez formed with etarra Sara Goicoechea in Gálvez en Euskadi, as she seeks the detective’s help to prevent her son from undertaking activities that will end in his death or incarceration.
Goicoechea, a young *etarra* that the detective Julio Gálvez befriends, Martínez Reverte goes beyond the expected and brings to the forefront a critical view of some of the internal struggles that characterise the nationalist movement. As a non-Basque writer discussing Basque issues, Martínez Reverte walks a fine line. On the one hand, he represents *etarras* to his public as real people who believe in their struggle and would do anything to avenge decades-old oppression; on the other, he is careful neither to claim to understand the subjects he depicts nor to defend their actions to a country torn by the violence ETA propagates.\(^{13}\) The same concerns over representation of the *other* in this text will be seen in subsequent chapters with respect to the representation of immigrants in Spanish detective fiction, as they too are portrayed by Spanish authors, at least for now, and not by their own hands.

The concern for language is, in the cases of Maria-Antònia Oliver’s and Carlos González Reigosa’s detective series, manifested at the diegetical level through discussions over dialectal variation and linguistic standardisation. González Reigosa’s Nivardo Castro series comprises four novels: *Crime en Compostela*, published in Galician in 1984 and in Castilian only in 2000; *O misterio do barco perdido*, published in Galician in 1988 and in Castilian in 2002; *A guerra do Tabaco* appeared in Galician in 1996 and in Castilian in 2001; and *Narcos*, published both in Galician and Castilian in 2001, reflecting González Reigosa’s aforementioned change of heart on the question of translating his works to Castilian. Maria-Antònia

\(^{13}\) On May 17, 2006, The Spanish Parliament approved a controversial resolution supporting Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero’s proposal to open talks with ETA if it agreed to give up violence. Previous attempts were made by Partido Popular leader and former Prime Minister José María Aznar in 1998, after an ETA-declared ceasefire, and by former socialist Prime Minister Felipe González in the late 1980s. Both efforts failed and many analysts would be surprised if the current proposal brought any success (McLean).
Oliver’s series, whose protagonist is the Majorcan Lònia Guiu, consists of three novels: *Estudi en lila* (1985), *Antípodes* (1988), and *El sol que fa l’ànec* (1994), translated into Castilian in 1989, 1990, and 1998, respectively. In both series, the detectives have left their hometowns for a larger metropolis to establish their agencies. Lònia Guiu works out of Barcelona and Nivardo Castro out of Madrid, and both the detectives’ cases bring them back to their smaller Balearic Islands and Galicia to solve crimes that are intimately related to their homelands and to issues concerning their people. They cannot help but establish personal relationships with the victims of their cases and in so doing are forced to negotiate between the forces that govern(ed) their former, pre-migratory, peripheral lives and their current, post-migratory, mainstream ones. Like Juan Madrid’s Gypsy detective Manuel Flores, Guiu and Castro are transported to the physical space of their childhoods and, thus, to a past with which they had attempted to sever ties. Both have emigrated and consequently developed a hybrid identity and, in Lònia Guiu’s case, a diglossia whereby she can alternatively speak in Barcelonese or Majorcan variants of Catalan: “[…] recuperant a consciència l’accent barceloni” (*Antípodes* 132). She nonetheless affirms her loyalty to Majorca and to its linguistic variation: “Si tenguessis les orelles una mica més esmolades, noi, no el trobaries tan perfecte, el meu barceloní. I a molta d’honra” (*Estudi* 8). As is the case whenever a speaker of a central, more standardised language comes into contact with a more marginal dialect, various Barcelonese characters condescend to Lònia about her way of speaking: “T’hi has fixat, Quim, que bé que parla el català, la Lònia. Quan és a Barcelona, però. Perquè quan és a Mallorca, parla un mallorquí que ni l’entens…” (*El sol* 27). Even within the
Autonomous Community of Catalonia, there exists a centre, in this case Barcelona, against which its periphery is constantly differentiated.

Nivardo Castro is far less assertive of his linguistic and cultural backgrounds than Lònía Guiu, but his partner in detection, the journalist Carlos Conde, more than makes up for his passivity. Unlike Nivardo, Carlos never left Galicia and dedicates his professional and personal lives to the promotion of Galician culture and language. He is far more confident in his ability to speak galego and represents the better Galician that Nivardo could have been, had he never emigrated (first to France and then to Madrid). Nevertheless, he is critical about the repercussions of his ideological and linguistic opinions and believes that all extremes are dangerous:

Mira que chamarlle polbo ó pulpo. Isto é o que peor levo da normativización lingüística. Non se decatan de que unha cousa así pode acabar cun idioma. Non se xoga coas cousas de comer. E outro tanto me pasa con raio do ata. Miña nai escacha a rir cada vez que oe na televisión ‘ata mañá’, ‘ata logo’, ‘ata… o carallo’. Pensa que todos nos volvemos tateos, e ten razón. Metéusellles nos miolos ós nosos filólogos que afora só saben galego eles e non os que sempre o falaron. E non hai quen se atreva a discutirles. Séntense custodios da pureza do que nunca existiu e, se te reviras, guíndanché un diccionario á cabeza e chámanché ‘castrapoirán’,14 inimigo do progreso e outras ladrases. (A guerra 31)

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14 The following explanatory note appears in the Castilian translation: “El que habla castrapo, es decir, el castellano gallegado o el gallego castellanizado” (34).
Linguistic standardisation, with all its problems, is nonetheless a positive indicator of the political tolerance of regional languages brought forth by Spain’s transition to democracy. Tolerance is not, however, synonymous with acceptance and the need to push further the envelope in the matter of linguistic diversity is developed in Oliver and González Reigosa’s series, like in Juan Madrid’s, through the trope of personal transition and disillusionment as a reflection of the country’s political equivalent.

A symptom of Spain’s political disillusionment is a collective memory that reflects an unwillingness to accept the reserved changes from dictatorial to democratic regimes. In the works of Oliver and González Reigosa, a painful collective memory is often accompanied by a deep personal nostalgia for a Romantic—though perhaps never experienced—historical regional grandeur that it was hoped the Transition would restore. Following the Stabilisation Plan of 1959, Francoist economic policy of the 1960s began a process of aperturismo after two decades of detrimental autarky. During this period, considered an important precursor to the subsequent Transition to democracy, a large part of the influx of capital came from the tourism industry, which in addition to foreign money became a source of foreign ideas. Large-scale resort development, in “the absence of a genuine regional and urban policy, alongside the political impunity of many municipal authorities which pandered to dominant economic interests” (Borja de Riquer i Permanyer 263), however, left much of the country’s coastline devastated. Only in

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15 Article 3 of Spain’s 1978 Constitution states the following: “1. El castellano es la lengua española oficial del Estado. Todos los españoles tienen el deber de conocerla y el derecho a usarla. 2. Las demás lenguas españolas serán también oficiales en las respectivas Comunidades Autónomas de acuerdo con sus Estatutos. 3. La riqueza de las distintas modalidades lingüísticas de España es un patrimonio cultural que será objeto de especial respeto y protección.” While progressive for officially recognising Spain’s languages other than Castilian, the Constitution’s clear geographical limitation of the “other Spanish languages” can be seen as supporting the subordination of the peripheries to the Castilian core (Mar-Molinero 337).
recent years has Spain’s Ministry of the Environment, in conjunction with environmental organisations, begun to address the erosion of Spain’s coasts in a concerted way. In Oliver’s and González Reigosa’s series, their narrators express a nostalgia for the untouched landscapes of their youth that this unregulated development all but destroyed:

[Nivardo Castro] deu en matinar no que cambiara nos últimos anos Las Palmas, unha cidade que ía xa camiño dos catrocentos mil habitantes. Nas poucas voltas que dera desde que chegara a Gran Canaria percibira diferentes os barrios de Arenales, Cidade Xardín, Lugo e Alcaravaneras, este xa nas mans do turismo, quizais por mor da súa esplendente e soleada praia. E tambén mudara o entorno das Canteras, pola zona de Guanarteme, chea de novas urbanizacións turísticas. (O misterio 48)

In Oliver’s Antípodes, Lònia Guiu collaborates with environmental activists to preserve the beaches of Majorca whose overdevelopment of hotel chains, a topic that is also central to the novel’s plot, has devastated the once pristine coastline:

“Feia nou o deu anys que no ens vèiem, en Pere I jo, i la darrera vegada que havia vingut aquí amb ell no hi havia porter automàtic. Les cases canviem, com hi ha món. La darrera vegada no hi havia timbre. Ni aquests alters xalets tan a la vora” (102).

Throughout, there exists a strong sense that with progress come waste and devastation and that no one, not even the protagonists of the series, has found a

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17 Nivardo Castro serves in the military in the Canary Islands during his youth and so experiences a type of return when, years later, he must go to Las Palmas for the investigation of one of his cases.
desirable middle ground. For the Autonomous Communities, the difficulties of such a process are compounded by the communities’ individual struggles to balance opposing issues of cultural preservation and modernisation (Craig-Odders, “Investigating” 45), both of which are manifested in the characters and plots of Oliver and González Reigosa’s series.

Balancing past and present, there and here, what one was and what one is, is an effort that can consume migrants, be they intra- or international, as they seek to consolidate their inherited histories with the new lives they have chosen or had imposed on them. In Spain, immigration is a relatively new concept and the country is still trying to define its official approach in addressing the phenomenon. It has many Western models from which to choose: French assimilation, British multiculturalism, the American melting pot, and the Canadian cultural mosaic. When migration in Spain was almost exclusively intra-national, however, less socio-anthropological research was directed at negotiating these identities. An Andalusian who moved to Catalonia to work, according to the Francoist State, shouldn’t have needed any guidance to assimilate, integrate, etc., because s/he was a Spaniard just like his/her new (Catalan) neighbours. The reality, of course, was much more complex than that which the Francoists might have liked. Migrants were faced, at times, with resistance from Catalans, who in turn struggled to locate themselves before a rapidly changing region. New hybrid identities developed from this intranational movement, revealing varying degrees of relevance of past and present, south and north, lo andaluz and la catalanitat. Xavier Rubert de Ventós points out that in today’s modern societies, identity is constructed from a multitude of
adherences, pertinences, and adhesions: “Vernacla i familiar en el seu origen, social i plural en el seu desplegament, la identitat es revela així, no ja externa, sinó també interna, íntima, essencialment comunitària” (46). Maria-Antònia Oliver’s protagonist, Lònia Guiu, carries out a process of communal self-identification in her life as a Majorcan migrant in Barcelona. Like the gitano Manuel Flores, she sees herself as neither strictly one nor the other “type” of catalana; rather, she develops her own version of what it is to live within catalanitat and reveals the need to acknowledge not only the reality of a plural Spain, but of plural Autonomous Communities. One of the characteristics that defines Lònia as a successful detective is her love for and ability to carry out car chases, an activity she thrives on for different reasons in her native Majorca and adopted Barcelona: “Palma és tan petita, que sempre vas a raure als mateixos llocs. Per això m’agrada. I justament pel contrari m’agrada Barcelona, vet-ho aquí” (Antípodes 141). The process is difficult and long lasting and both Lònia and Nivardo, as migrants who return to their homelands, suffer from a nostalgia akin to that which African and Latin American immigrants represented in Spanish detective fiction will experience. The referent of nostalgic contemplation is forever changing, however, as these migrants’ perspectives become evermore varyingly influenced and complex.

Migration is, in the strictest sense of the term, a movement of people from one place to another. In most cases, it is highly organised through a network of connected agents. Similarly, trafficking is the illegal movement of goods or people and often requires the complacency, if not cooperation, of authorities for its operation. Such is the case of illegal immigration, which at every turn is facilitated by
mediators on both sides of a border who profit from the desperation of others. The illegal trafficking of arms, drugs, and persons operates at the expense of lives because the worth of human life is in all these cases valued less than money. Oliver and González Reigosa’s detective series both develop stories related to illegal trafficking; their investigations uncover the disgusting greed that is rampant in their capitalist society. The Nivardo Castro series focuses primarily on the trafficking of drugs and weapons, as the titles of the last three novels, O misterio do barco perdido, A guerra do tabaco, and Narcos, indicate, while Lònia Guiu recurrently encounters human trafficking rings that exploit young women and children within and across international borders. In Estudi en lila, she uncovers an illegal Filipino immigrant ring; in Antípodes she breaks through a complex operation that sends Majorcan teenage women to Australia to work in whorehouses; and in El sol que fa l’ànec, the most revolting example of trafficking is discovered as young Eastern European children, some as young as three years of age, are found locked up, beaten, and raped by and for the pleasure of high-standing officials and authorities in the Balearic Islands. In each case, the detectives unveil what the police forces actively or passively keep hidden, and act once again as the sole upholders of truth and morality in their respective hard-boiled detective tales.

The movement of goods and people at the end of the twentieth century, in its regulated as well as illegal manifestations, is indicative of the fluidity that results from globalisation; likewise, identity becomes fluid and the systems of one-dimensional national definitions become obsolete. Now, citizens of the world like Manuel Flores, Nivardo Castro, and Lònia Guiu negotiate the need to differentiate themselves on
the one hand and assimilate, integrate, or *mélange* themselves with their new surroundings on the other. When, in *Antipodes*, Lònia Guiu runs away to Australia to flee the negativity of her life in Spain, she is disappointed to discover that negativity is present everywhere: “Havia anat a Austràlia a cercar tot el contrari del que tenia a Barcelona i, mira per on, hi havia trobat exactament el mateix. Una agència de detectius tan galdosa com la meva, una noia morta pels alters, però en realitat per culpa meva. I, per tant, una desesperació sense limits” (112).

**The Wandering Jew**

While the texts of Juan Madrid, Maria Antònia Oliver, and Carlos González Reigosa point to some of the negotiations that has led post-Transition Spain through a process of hybrid identity formation, Manuel Quinto’s *El judío errante* (1987) reveals that such processes include the consideration not only of synchronic realities such as ethnicity, language, and geographic location, but also of diachronic elements pertaining to the country’s historical processes of national identity formation, particularly insofar as these have been tied to religion. Such is the case of Spain, whose eight centuries of reconquest and subsequent centuries of oppression and violence toward religious and ethnic *others* reveal the importance Christianity played in the development of a Spanish concept of *self*. As an influential Jesuit commentator wrote in 1903 in the Jesuit intellectual journal *Razón y fe*: “This nation has Catholicism inscribed in its heart with letters of fire. Even more, Catholicism is so incorporated and connaturalized within its very being, that it cannot cease to be Catholic without, first of all, ceasing to be a nation” (Lannon 42). The imprints of
such a history, for much of which state, nation, and church have been inseparable, are long lasting and continue to be relevant to contemporary conceptualisations of identity within Spain.

In *El judío errante*, Manuel Quinto (1944-) turns once more to his editor-turned-detective Buenaventura Pals.\(^\text{18}\) The protagonist is hired by a mysterious, detail-withholding Jewish man to find Martin Heschel. Pals reluctantly accepts the job, being told only that the missing Jew was last seen in Cadaqués, the seaside town where he moved after losing his wife and retiring from his position as scientist and professor at the Universidad Complutense of Madrid. Pals quickly discovers that Heschel was a rarely seen but nonetheless well-known and often-spoken-of character to whom most inhabitants of Cadaqués referred as “el sabio judío.” It is striking that, despite holding titular designation of the novel and being the prime motivation for the detective investigation, the so-called wandering Jew does not appear until the tenth-last page of the 203-page novel. The character’s perpetual absence, or *deferral*, though, is the driving force for the development of the plot as well as the basis for the thematic dimension of the text based on *difference*.

Martin Heschel is never present because his existence is defined by the legendary Wandering Jew on which his character is based. The Christian legend of the Wandering Jew, known in Spanish as *La leyenda del judío errante*, has its roots in the New Testament, in which Jesus says to Peter about John: “‘If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!’ So the rumour spread in the

\(^{18}\) Buenaventura Pals first appears in *Cuestión de Astucia* (1985), Manuel Quinto’s first detective novel. He is also the protagonist of another short novel and four short stories published together in *Estigma y otras aventuras de Buenaventura Pals* (1999). In 1988, Manuel Quinto publishes *Estilo Indirecto*, which is narrated by a male character who is never named or identified but who readers of the Pals series may identify as the same protagonist.
community that this disciple would not die” (John 21. 22-23). Whereas the biblical reference does not refer specifically to a Jewish character, most subsequent versions emphasise this specific characteristic. The most important and widely distributed version of the legend is that which appeared in twenty seemingly unrelated propagandistic pamphlets published in 1602. Coinciding with Luther’s most anti-Semitic diatribes, however, the version of the legend attains a more negative, Christian, anti-Semitic nature than those recorded until that point. Due to the wide dissemination of the 1602 pamphlets, and their emphasis on the Jewish nature of the man who slights Jesus, the character’s religion becomes a more notable element of the legend when referenced in the Western canon.

The legend in these pamphlets, or chapbooks, goes as follows: a Jewish shoemaker named Cartaphilus refuses Jesus repose during his bearing of the cross and strikes Him with the palm of his hand. In response, Jesus banishes Cartaphilus from Israel, punishes him to wander the earth forever, and, by denying him death, also denies him eternal life. For being sentenced to a life of eternal roaming, the Jewish shoemaker becomes known simply as the Wandering Jew.¹⁹ The legend continues to disseminate throughout the centuries and while no one ever seems to have met Cartaphilus personally, the character seems to appear intermittently here and there. The very old and mysterious man is periodically seen by “someone,” always several degrees of separation from the so-called witness, and is constantly

¹⁹ It is worth noting that, in a similar fashion, medieval European myths and legends about the origins of the Roma take on a protoracism of Christian biblical genealogies. Some of these myths go as follows: the Roma are descendents of Ham and are therefore marked by the sins of Cain; having denied succor the Holy Family as it fled into Egypt, the Roma were cursed to wander the world to atone for their refusal; the Roma are forever cursed because they participated in the death of Christ by making the nails with which he was crucified (Charnon-Deutsch 5).
spoken about by many others. The mystery shrouding the figure of the Wandering Jew is a salient feature, along with his ancient and drifting qualities, and is one of the characteristics that make the legend so suitable for adaptation. Mystery, in fact, makes the Wandering Jew the ideal personage on whom to base Manuel Quinto’s Jewish character: Martin Heschel.

Like the legendary figure, Heschel is barely seen or heard by anyone in Cadaqués where he now resides. Yet, every citizen of the town interviewed by the detective Pals can refer to one or more occasions when s/he seemed to have seen him go by, or learned of his comings and goings. More than just small-town, humorous hearsay, these references emphasise the allusion to the legendary character. Like the Wandering Jew, Heschel is old, roaming, mysterious, and is plagued by the differences that separate him from the Christians that form the majority of his neighbours and former colleagues. He is different from them because of his religion, nationality, and ethnicity as an American Jew, and his difference is explored through the leitmotifs of confession and conversion. Both of these key religious rites play a role in the legend of the Wandering Jew, and in Manuel Quinto’s *El judío errante* they serve to contextualise a contemporary Spanish reception of Heschel within the national memory of a country with an important historical Jewish population and an infamous inquisition. It is important to note that while the action of this detective novel takes place mostly in Catalonia, Manuel Quinto’s text (written in Castilian) places little emphasis on a specifically Catalan reception of the Jewish characters in that Autonomous Community. This is not to say that Heschel’s less than welcoming reception would not be influenced in part by an
autonomous region that relies on a relative homogeneity that is different from the rest of the country. Still, the principal context within which Quinto places his character is that of a Spanish national history tied inextricably to Christianity. There are numerous specific references in *El judío errante* to the past presence of Jews in Spain and to their persecution during its inquisition: Pals notes the existence of a fifteenth-century synagogue in Aljama (17); the Luxembourgian Steiner comes to Spain with the primary purpose of studying historical Jewish monuments in that country (20). Quinto also uses linguistic cues to demonstrate that Jews and Judaism make up a part of Castilian historical consciousness, since even the culturally sensitive Pals uses the generic term *judío* interchangeably with *ladino* when referring to Steiner (107). *Ladino*, which refers to the language of Sephardic Jews, or *marranos*, who were expelled from Spain in 1492, is clearly an inappropriate designation for Steiner. Pals makes another reference to *marranos* when he reflects on there being a crucifix around Heschel’s supposed corpse: “¿Un crucifijo en el pecho de un hebreo legal? ¡Qué raro!” (120). The legality of the Jew refers to the fact that many *marranos*, or converted Jews during the Spanish Inquisition (1479-1808; 1812-1834), in fact continued their practice of Judaism in secret and lived, therefore, as “illegal Jews.” To refer to Heschel in this manner is, of course, completely anachronistic. Through confession and conversion, Heschel and Pals attain a solidarity that unites them as marginal characters and figures in transition. Each character undergoes a process of re-evaluation and renewal similar to the way in which the definitions of ethnic and religious identities have been re-examined throughout Spain’s history. By noting these periods of change, Manuel Quinto also
points to a new transition in the perspective on ethnicity and religious affiliation in contemporary Spain; at the very least, he is suggesting its imminence.

Despite his constant self-deprecation and reluctance to define himself as a detective, Buenaventura Pals shares a distinguishing feature with Raymond Chandler’s Phillip Marlowe: his seemingly uncontrollable need to be absolutely honest. He, like Marlowe, constantly surprises the undoubtedly intrigued reader with the number of details he reveals to those who might in the end be culprits in the crime he investigates. After each lengthy enumeration of events and despite the danger of jeopardising his investigation, Pals feels a certain relief and becomes reinvigorated to continue his investigation: “Steiner me escuchó sin interrumpirme más que para pedir alguna que otra precisión, un detalle aquí o allá. A mí el relato me liberaba de un peso interior, como en el sacramento de la confesión” (59). While Pals engages in the act of confession repeatedly, Heschel is only given one such opportunity at the end of the text. Once Pals concludes his investigation and locates Heschel, he requests a meeting with the wandering Jew, not in order to disclose his location to the Israeli and Spanish authorities who search for him, but to fulfil a personal wish in putting a face to the man that has been the source of such intrigue. Much to the surprise of the collaborators in the wandering Jew’s self-imposed disappearance, Heschel agrees to meet with Pals. When he does, he is impressed with Pals’s intuition that Heschel’s need to disappear was driven by a deep sense of guilt. For the first time, Heschel confesses his contribution to neurochemical research that ended up being the cause of a high number of deaths in Spain. After having developed a synthetic biocatalyst capable of inducing dangerous changes in
the human body, Heschel, as he puts it, had unintentionally contributed to the development of chemical warfare (197). Much like Einstein’s ingenious studies on the division of atoms that would then kill and permanently injure hundreds of thousands, this Jew’s research led to a high number of deaths in greater Madrid when a helicopter carrying samples of the agent crashed in La Alcarria. The toxic agent flowed uncontrollably through the waters of the River Tajuña killing a high percentage of the persons it infected. Unable to accept that he had contributed to this catastrophe and needing to re-evaluate the ethics of his research, Heschel went into hiding never to speak the truth to anyone; never, that is, until his complete and unexpected confession to Bueaventura Pals on a beach of the Costa Brava several months after he orchestrated his own disappearance. The event could be interpreted as an allusion to the supposed complicity of Iberian Jews in the Islamic Invasion of the Peninsula in 711. As the traditional national discourse, therefore, the defeat of the Christian Visigoths was due in part to Jewish participation. Now, in the twentieth century, Heschel (a Jew) contributes to what some might consider a modern massacre of the Spanish people (Christians). This allusion is of significance since the Islamic conquest of the Iberian Peninsula and the resulting Spanish Reconquest remain fundamental to contemporary discourses on Spain’s processes of nation-building and identity formation.

Heschel’s need to tell the truth, the driving force of his confession, is similar to Pals’s need to reveal the ultimate truth of his investigation. As a detective, Pals’s project is only complete once every unknown becomes known, once every detail is discovered and revealed. Just as Pals is driven to tell the truth by the literary
conventions that bind him as detective to reveal them, Heschel develops a need for confession driven by extreme sense of guilt and alienation. He chooses Pals to be his confessor because the detective has proven to be unbiased and determined in his own quest for the truth. Heschel’s confession connects him again to the biblical legend from which the detective tale gets its name: when, in the legend, the Jewish shoemaker is sentenced to an unending life on earth, thereby being denied eternal salvation, he is nonetheless given the opportunity to confess and convert and therefore renounce his unholy actions and past. He refuses, however, choosing to live out his sentence rather than accept the proposal made to him to convert to Christianity. Unlike the legendary character, however, Heschel confesses and undergoes a conversion as well. In her paper outlining the connections between the legend of the Wandering Jew and Israel Zangwill’s “The Big Bow Mystery,” Meri-Jane Rochelson identifies confession as a means for the marginalised Jewish character, Grodman, to try to re-enter the Jewish community from which he has alienated himself by committing the sin of murder (15). For this Jewish character, as for Heschel, the sin is not simply against his Jewish community but against humanity more generally. Like Grodman, Heschel confesses his crime against humanity, but unlike him, he chooses to dissociate himself from his previous life altogether, rather than re-enter the community relations that his actions put into jeopardy. Heschel, then, undergoes a conversion from his previous self to a more moral, honest, and modest one.

20 The refusal to convert in the legend of the Wandering Jew has been problematically used in anti-Semitic Christian discourses as a mythical foundation and explanation of the Jewish Diaspora.
Heschel actively converts, leaving his old ways for new, safer ones. Within a few short months and through a series of unplanned, unfortunate events, he finds himself a widower in a land that is not his own, guilty of contributing to the death of dozens of Spaniards, and retired from the science to which he had dedicated his career. This is a far cry from the life of a happy, married scientist whose work put him at the top of his field. The theme of confession, as I have shown, grounds this detective tale in the legend from which it draws its name, emphasising the religious difference between Jews and Christians. Conversion, on the other hand, serves to frame the story within the more specific borders of Spain’s national history and the role Jews have played in it. Conversion, in fact, was one of the crucial elements of the Spanish Inquisition, which served to safeguard the imperial identity of a Spanish Crown dependent on religious unity (Ucelay Da Cal 32). This period, in which Spain procured a self-definition as a Christian nation, ended what in Spanish historiography has been referred to as the peaceful coexistence of the Three Cultures: Christian, Jewish, and Muslim. It is worth noting that the third culture of this period, that of the Moors, is also represented in *El judío errante* through the character of Muley, Pals’s personal assistant. Muley is a recent Moroccan immigrant who is characterised as a stereotypical, excessively lascivious, and useless Moor (9, 27, 77). The application of medieval Castilian descriptors of Moors to twentieth-century characterisations of immigrants is a component of the anachronistic discourse that I will evaluate in subsequent chapters when I deal with North African immigration in detective fiction more specifically. Suffice it to say here that Muley’s small and humorous role in this novel is not inconsequential; rather, it completes the
author's allusion to the co-existence of the three cultures. That Pals befriends and defends Muley, much as he does Heschel, may be read as a move toward reconciliation with the inheritance of the country's historiographic rhetoric.

After the adoption of the Inquisition during the Catholic Kings' reign, Muslims and Jews were no longer to live peacefully under Christian rule. They were killed, expelled from the country, or forced to convert to Christianity. Converted Jews, or *conversos*, were often persecuted by pureblood Christian neighbours and authorities who constantly watched them in the hopes of catching a glimpse of a *falso-converso* practicing Judaism in hiding. The snooping neighbours and gossip-driven citizens of Cadaqués who spy on Heschel are a palpable reference to their historical counterparts. Pals describes one such neighbour in the following way:

Busqué por los alrededores alguna fuente de información y, después de varios frustres sonados, la hallé en la persona de una vieja sarmentosa de mirada inquisitiva, que simulaba afanarse a la puerta de su casa, unos pasos más arriba, en la calle perpendicular a la que era objeto de mi interés. Sus ojos pitañosos conservaban, empero, la chispa de una malicia y aguda curiosidad que la habían mantenido en pie, vivaz y liante, a través de los años. (30)

Buenaventura Pals, like Martin Heschel, undergoes a process of conversion. At the onset of the novel, he is the recently appointed owner and chief editor of a publishing house. Having dedicated his entire life to editing, and having worked extensively on detective stories, Pals is acutely aware of the nuances of the popular genre and is an adamant reader of mystery. Despite this, or perhaps because of it,
he is reluctant to accept the title of detective even though he is hired privately to investigate a disappearance, conducts this investigation, and resolves the mystery quite ingeniously. On one occasion, during a delirious state of self-consciousness that almost makes Pals quit as a detective, he is put back on track by three of detective fiction’s most famous personalities: Philip Marlowe, Sam Spade, and Lew Archer. In a brilliant metafictional moment, their voices appear out of nowhere to boost Pals’s ego and convince him that he is capable of the task at hand. Curiously, Pals refers to them as the “Santísima Trinidad,” or Holy Trinity (55-56). In doing so, Pals alludes to how untouchable these three characters are in the detective genre. At the same time, Quinto makes yet another reference to Spain’s history of Catholic persecution of Jews: by inspiring himself in the Holy Trinity, Catholic symbol par excellence, Pals is able to return to his persecution of the missing Jew, much like the Spanish Inquisition promoted the persecution of marranos. As his investigation progresses, however, and as he becomes increasingly motivated by his own quest for the truth rather than the money that is guaranteed to him for a successful outcome, the title of “private eye” begins to grow on Pals. Eventually, he becomes so comfortable in his new skin that he decides to close the publishing house that he had inherited and dedicate himself completely to the career of investigation: “A lo mejor me hago detective a partir de ahora” (76). Pals, like Heschel, converts quite drastically from a previous self and once again the detective and the subject of investigation are united. First, confession joined them as seekers of truth. Now, the process of conversion that each of them undergoes allows them to relate to one another as marginal characters.
Throughout the text, Pals’s first-person narration periodically refers to moments in his past that explain the detective’s self-identification as marginal: “Yo he siempre sido un fronterizo de la miseria” (13); “Siempre había vivido abandonado a las dos chupadas, cual colilla de Tabacalera. Entraba en los despachos y las secretarias me miraban de arriba a abajo desaprobadoramente. En las tiendas me servían el ultimo. Y nunca había ido a la iglesia, porque me imponían el lujo de los altares” (137). Most frequently, Pals refers to his marginality in a collective voice that identifies him with others who shared the socio-economic position of his youth: “Los pobres tenemos que confiar en alguien, de la misma manera que confiamos en el número que compramos para el sorteo de la lotería” (80); “Uno puede ser aprovechado, pero soy consciente de que lo único que nos vale a los pobres es el ingenio y la solidaridad” (169). By identifying his marginality with poverty and exclusion from the Catholic Church, and by emphasising the importance of solidarity among those who share his situation, Pals, like the detectives discussed previously in this chapter, demonstrates that he is a detective who will be sensitive to the questions of marginality of the character he investigates. In fact Steiner, Heschel’s Jewish friend who hires Pals for the investigation, states that his lack of prejudice toward the case was a contributory element to his selection of a detective: “Por eso lo escogimos. No se ofenda, pero usted no posee ideas preconcebidas…” (132). While Steiner’s statement refers primarily to Pals’s lack of experience as a detective
and how his ingenuity would be useful for the investigation proposed, his words also reveal how Pals’s background, rather than making him prone to stereotyping and judgement about Heschel’s culture and religion of which he knows very little, allows him to maintain an open mind, and in the end actually leads to a deep spiritual connection between detective and subject of investigation. Pals realises that to undertake the investigation is to demonstrate his solidarity with the missing Jew: “Un escalofrío en la espalda no supo acallar del todo el orgullo que sentimos los marginales cuando las fuerzas que ordenan el mundo occidental nos abren un resquicio en la puerta de la realidad” (15). Pals locates his and Heschel’s marginality within the frame of the Western world and in so doing points to the religious, cultural, and socio-economic agents that define their societal membership.

For Heschel and Pals, difference is at the centre of their self-identity; be it cultural, religious, or economic, they are defined not by who they are but by how they are different from the dominant classes in their societies. Steiner consistently insists on an us-versus-them discourse in his conversations with Pals. From the beginning, Pals is intrigued by Steiner’s dependence on the first-person plural:

Nosotros los judíos sabemos que todo en este mundo resulta arriesgado. […] Nosotros no sabemos si encontrar a Martin será o no peligroso. En todo caso no le pedimos que lo traiga, ni que lo saque de ningún sitio, ni que se enfronte a nadie. Sencillamente queremos que se mueva, investigue, lo

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21 Although Steiner only reveals these details post-factum, the primary purpose of the investigation was to have the hired detective “find” Heschel’s decomposing body in his Cadaqués home. As it would turn out, the corpse is that of a French gangster who had been in Heschel’s pursuit and Steiner planted his body there for Pals to find, report to the police, and therefore solve, incorrectly, the mystery of Heschel’s disappearance. An inexperienced detective such as Pals was just what Steiner needed for the task.
localice y nos diga dónde está. De lo demás, si se da la ocasión, ya no encargamos nosotros (14; my italics).

In each conversation, Pals is forced to wonder who makes up the plurality in which Steiner speaks and can only guess that his use of “we” refers either to Jews living in Spain or perhaps even to the Mossad. More generally, however, the use of the collective pronoun, placed always in stark opposition to the “they” in which these “we” find themselves, serves to create a difference, between the group to which Steiner and Heschel belong, and the Spanish milieu in which they must operate. Other authorities involved in the investigation refer to Heschel as simply extranjero, emphasising the difference introduced by Steiner. Once Heschel’s supposed corpse is found, a Spanish police officer insists that since he was a foreigner, Spain is not obligated to investigate the circumstances surrounding his death, but that his country’s embassy holds this responsibility (74). In other words, if he isn’t Spanish, then he isn’t Spain’s problem; if he’s not one of us, then they can take care of it. He is different; he is an other.

In light of the continual references to the cultural, religious, and national differences in El judío errante, and keeping in mind the traditional view of the detective genre as being escapist and therefore expected to be an unusual space for discussions of such issues, it may prove useful to consider the Derridian concept of différence/différance. Stemming from Saussurean linguistic principles, Derrida points out that a distinction between the two French words différence and différance can only be made in writing since their pronunciation is the same. The signification

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22 The subject of the essay L’écriture e la différance (1967), this term is of central importance in De la grammatologie (1967) and is also used in the final pages of La voix et le phénomène (1967).
can therefore not come directly from the signified but through an indefinite number of signifiers; in this case the written letters. The meaning, therefore, must undergo a process of movement between signified, signifier, and signification. The resulting deferral or delay (différance) is not simply a consequence of an already existing system of differences (différence) but represents the active production of differences. Différance, then, can relate to the textual productiveness of delayed and ever-deferred resolution, or in this case, the suspense of a detective novel. In *El judío errante*, difference and delay, theme and generic code, are united since the deferral of the mystery’s solution is maintained by the cultural, religious, and national difference of the missing Jew. When Pals leads the Spanish police to Heschel’s house to retrieve his supposed corpse, no one notices that a Jew was wearing a large crucifix around his neck.\(^{23}\) For Pals, however, this detail reveals to him that the real mystery has not yet been solved. In other words, his keen sense of Heschel’s religious difference makes him extend and otherwise concluded investigation. By prolonging the inquiry, Pals further delays the solution of the mystery and postpones the sense of resolution that readers of detective fiction seek: différence, therefore, leads to différance, and thematic and generic forces combine to make Manuel Quinto’s detective novel socially relevant and still thrilling to its readers.

**Conclusion:**

Regardless of the type of other being represented, religious, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, etc., the Spanish *novela negra* is a fitting space to pose, if not to answer,

\(^{23}\) The corpse is wearing a crucifix because it is not Heschel’s body but that of a French gangster who was killed in the missing Jew’s house and who Steiner would like to have mistaken for his disappeared friend.
questions relating to identity. A detective novel is, fundamentally, about identity. The point of an investigation is to discover the identity of a culprit, to put a name and a face to the agent that has caused the crime. Thematically, therefore, discussions of identity flow rather seamlessly from a genre that by definition seeks to resolve it. In the last quarter of the twentieth century, Spain underwent a significant political and economic transition whose lack of rupture with the previous regime, however, left much to be desired in terms of social and ideological transformations. The delicate negotiations of self-definition that resulted, both on the individual and community level, are heavily represented in the corpus of post-Franco detective fiction. As such, they point to the next generation of the novela negra, that which will be written in the first years of the third millennium, and which will expand the discussion of identity to include not only regional and historical characters within the myriad that makes up Spanish identity but also new Spaniards, those that arrive both through legal and irregular means to seek a better life in Spain just as Spaniards, as recently as the 1970s, flocked to neighbouring countries in search of better lives than those which were possible in their own country.
Chapter 2: Solving the Case of Immigration in Spanish Detective Fiction

Figure 1: Xenophobic graffiti in El Ejido, Almería in February 2000.¹

El Ejido, Almería, February of 2000: an immigrant man from Morocco undergoing psychiatric treatment is accused of stabbing a young Spanish woman in a local market resulting in her death. That night, dozens of mosques, long-distance telephone and internet establishments, meat shops, and North African restaurants are vandalised. Immigrants are persecuted and stoned, cars are set ablaze, and everywhere one can find fresh graffiti that reads “¡Fuera moros!” and “¡Muerte al moro!”, slogans that employ anachronic terminology reminiscent of the Spanish Reconquest of the Middle Ages. Because of the actions of one disturbed individual of North African provenance, an entire community is criminalised. The race riots in the Andalusian town of 50,000 Spaniards and the 15,000 Maghrebian labourers, who made the Almerian agricultural miracle possible, continue for several days and are met with the passivity or connivance of the local population, police force, and

municipal government. Despite a call by the Spanish foreign minister, Abel Matute, for the inhabitants of El Ejido to acknowledge that Spain is now a pluralist society and that immigrants are required to move the country forward, local authorities continue to collude with rioters.

One month later, local anti-immigrant sentiment remains unchanged, or even reinforced, as the Partido Popular obtains a major victory in municipal elections and increases its popular vote from 46 to 64 percent. The disconnect between the need for labourers to work for ESP 5000 a day under terrible conditions and the agricultural industry’s scorn for the fact that only immigrants are willing to do so is representative of a series of misconceptions about immigration, its process, its agents, and its need. As I will discuss below, the Spanish novela negra uses the suspense inherent to its literary code to show its readers that things are not always as they seem and thereby clarifies some of the popular misconceptions regarding immigration in Spain.

The Iberian Peninsula: A Land of Migrations

Throughout its long and diverse history, the Iberian Peninsula has been witness to the large-scale movement of peoples both extra- and intra-territorially. From the Phoenicians to the Carthaginians, from the Romans to the Visigoths, the territory that is now called Spain has been conquered, fought-over, lost, and re-conquered by groups of varying cultural, linguistic, and ethnic histories all of which have contributed to the diversity and complexity of the Spanish people today. The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were of particular importance in the process of
identity and nation-formation as this was the period in which Spain’s Christian identity was defined specifically in contrast to the Islamic identity of the Moors who had occupied much of the Peninsula from 711 onward. As a consequence of seven centuries of bloody reconquest, a rhetoric of hatred developed that became engrained in the country’s historiography since the marriage and subsequent rule of the Catholic Kings, Ferdinand and Isabella (1469). In the twentieth century, Spain has been witness to a bloody civil war, a cruel dictatorship, and a rocky democratisation plagued by the threat of nationalistic Basque terrorism and state-sponsored deaths squads by GAL, Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación, and many of these violent circumstances have themselves led to the movement of peoples. In short, migration is not a new phenomenon for Spain.

Spain’s history of migrating peoples is similar to that of its European neighbours. The country has, however, also experienced some very important differences, many of which are a result of its geographic location at the southernmost point of Europe. Being at the periphery of the continent has also meant being at the metaphorical periphery of European identity, seen historically by Northern European countries as an exotic, southern location more akin to Africa or its Latin American colonies than to the more developed and advanced countries of the North. This perception has not been lost on the Spanish intelectualidad and the concept has been frequently encapsulated in the phrase: “África empieza en los Pirineos.” Spain, like Portugal, was also among the very last Western European

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2 Popularly, the statement has been attributed to Alexandre Dumas, father, who supposedly came to the conclusion while travelling through Spain before the publication of De Paris à Cádiz (1854). Although it does not appear in the text and Dumas never admitted to having stated it, the phrase became a maxim for Spain and Portugal’s backwardness with respect to their northern neighbours.
countries to rid itself of totalitarianism in the twentieth century, further promoting its image as a rustic and traditional society. Its late democratisation and resulting delayed economic growth with respect to its neighbours to the north meant that Spain’s role within the continent was to be the provider of migrant workers. Thousands left their families behind for the hope of a better future than that which Francoism provided. Spain’s four decades of dictatorship, with its autarkic economic policy, meant utter poverty and isolation for much of the country, as well as a reduced standard of living in rural areas with respect to urban centres. This difference in turn resulted in the intra-national migration of many Spaniards from the desolate countryside to the cities of Madrid, Barcelona, and to a lesser extent Bilbao.

Common to these twentieth century migrations was one important key factor: regional economic disparity. This reality remains the single most important factor behind global migrations. Those in areas of reduced opportunity and with lower standards of living migrate to areas of prosperity where opportunity is greater. In turn, the growing areas need imported labour, since their economic growth requires more human-power than that which the local population can provide. This pattern has existed consistently throughout the twentieth century. The difference, however, has been the location of the border that separates the “have” countries from the “have-nots.” In the early 1900s, many Europeans, Spaniards included, left their countries for the Americas; the border, therefore, could be seen to lie between the Old and New Worlds. After the Second World War, Spaniards, Italians, Portuguese, and Greeks moved northward, namely to France and Germany, but also to Switzerland, the UK, and the Low Countries, to help reconstruct after the
devastations of the war; at this time, Spain was south of the border between opportunity and despair, which very clearly separated Northern and Southern Europe. The largest number of Spanish emigrants to seek work in Europe did so in the 1960s and 1970s. Today, the border between prosperity, growth, and work, on the one hand, and poverty, stagnation, and mass unemployment, on the other, has moved further south, separating Africa and Latin America from all of Western Europe. Now, Spain is among those “have” countries, whose economic growth and development requires the import of extra-territorial labour. No longer a provider of workers, Spain has become a receptor of migrants for its own economic miracle, begun, in large part, because of the economic liberalisation that accompanied democratisation after 1975. Spain’s entry into the European Union (1985) was a crucial factor, not only in the development of the country as a growing economic power, but in defining the specific role that Spain has had to play within Europe with respect to the admittance of non-EU migrants. Unfortunately, the rapidity with which Spain moved from being a country of emigration to one of immigration has resulted in some growing pains as the country seeks to find its place both as a multicultural society and as a member of the EU, with a set of common cultural characteristics. As I discussed in Chapter 1, Spain’s society is diverse given the existence of the historically recognised regions of Catalonia, Galicia, and the Basque Country, and the numerous marginalised Roma who continue to be a formally un-recognised group that further contributes to the complexity of the country’s identity formation. Today, immigration from Latin America, Eastern Europe, and North and Sub-
Saharan Africa create some additional pressures on the already thorny conception of nationhood.

Like its European neighbours, for whom economic immigration is a much older reality, Spain has had its share of xenophobic uproars that are at once symptomatic of the difficulties facing a country dealing with a new “foreign” reality and a consequence of an established historiography and rhetoric that have included the glorification of the Spanish nation on the basis of its ousting of the barbarous, Islamic Moors, figures that are pointed to today as precursors to the current North African immigration. This association is problematic, of course, because many Spaniards perceive the new, very specific, reality of immigration to Spain as an invasion similar to that which, for example, Tariq led in 711. The fear related to this sense of invasion is worsened by misconceptions that link immigration to unemployment, drugs, and prostitution without an understanding of the complexity of the laws, networks, and organisms that are responsible for the chaos created by the migrants that arrive on Spanish territory illegally. The tensions associated with these misconceptions are tangible and manifest themselves daily in citizen interactions, in newspapers and on television screens, and in political discourses at the national, regional, and, most definitively, local levels.

**Addressing the Unaddressed: Immigration in Literature**

One way or another, the literature of a nation reflects within its pages the social issues that concern that country and thus serves as a cultural manifestation of the occurrences affecting its readers. The issue of immigration is no exception.
Throughout Europe, immigration has become the subject of narrative, poetry, and drama, making its way also into screenplays and television. Whether the topic is the main focus of the work or its reality is simply felt through the presence of an immigrant character, a racist comment, or a passing remark, the issues surrounding immigration are becoming ever more relevant in written works. In France, where immigration from Algeria and Morocco has been a reality since *les trente glorieuses*, an entire generation of artists, including writers of fiction, known as *Les Beurs*, has dedicated its work to the topics of immigration and xenophobia.³ Due to France’s earlier experience with immigration in comparison to Spain, and the already existent second and third generation French citizens whose parents were of African descent, the country’s literary scene includes a new perspective on the topic of immigration: that written by the sons and daughters of those who had to endure the difficulties of leaving, settling, and adapting, all of which continues to be relevant to the lives of those generations already born in France.⁴ The problems of marginalisation, prejudice, and ghettoisation, have led to the kinds of riots seen in the Paris working-class suburb of Clichy-sous-bois in November of 2005. One contemporary French author of Moroccan descent who has dedicated a novel to the shared immigrant experience in Europe is Mahi Binebine, whose novel *Cannibales* (1999) recounts the tumultuous events that lead up to and comprise the dangerous voyage from Tangier to the southern coast of Spain in a small boat, a fact that is reflected in the 2000 translation of the novel to Spanish titled *La patera*. England’s canon of immigration

³ For more on *Beur* literature see Alec G. Hargreaves, Michel Laronde, and Madjid Talmats with Nora Merniz.
⁴ For more on second and third generation immigrant literature in France, see Odile Cazenove’s *Afrique sur Seine: une nouvelle génération de romanciers à Paris* and *Immigrant Narratives in Contemporary France* by Susan Ireland and Patrice Proulx.
literature includes authors such as the greats Joseph Conrad, V. S. Naipaul, and Salmon Rushdie as well as the lesser-known Pakistani-born Hanif Kureishi and Monica Ali of Bangladeshi origin.

In Spain, due to the recent increase in relevancy of the topic on the national scale, literary works dealing with immigration as a major theme began to surface only around 1994. Authors of fiction dealing with the subject of African immigration to Spain include Lourdes Ortiz (Fátima de los naufragios, 1998), Adolfo Hernández Lafuente (Aguas de cristal, costas de ébano, 1999), Nieves García Benito (Por la vía de Tarifa, 1999), Andrés Sorel (Las voces del Estrecho, 2000), Juan Pedro Aparicio (La gran bruma, 2001), and Miguel Naverros (Al calor del día, 2001). Two authors who have addressed Eastern European immigration are Eduardo Mendicutti and Lorenzo Silva with their novels Los novios búlgaros (1993) and Algún día, cuando pueda llevarte a Varsovia (1997), respectively. Some of these texts are biographical, others take on the form of a coming-of-age novel, but the variety that is of greatest interest here is that of the extremely popular detective novel, a well-established genre in Spain and the genre of choice for many socially engaged authors seeking to shed new light on the subject of immigration to Spain.

Unveiling Truths: Immigration in the Detective Novel

That the novela negra has served as a barometer for the social concerns of Spanish society has been well documented (Coma, Hart, Resina). As I discussed in

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5 The first texts dealing with immigration in book format were mélanges works that combine literary and journalistic strategies. See for example Pascual Moreno Torregosa and Mohamed El Gherby’s Dormir al raso (1994), Rafael Torres’s humorous Yo, Mohamed. Historias inmigrantes en un país de emigrantes (1995), and Sami Naïr and Juan Goytisolo’s now canonical El peaje de la vida: Inmigración o rechazo de la emigración en España (2000).
the previous chapter, the Spanish detective genre attained its highest growth in the first decade of the transition to democracy, a period of liberalisation that finally permitted an open critique of the previous decades of authoritarianism, as well as an expression of the growing popular disenchantment with political change. Not coincidentally, these issues were both those that most worried the Spanish public and that most pervaded the Spanish detective novel (Craig-Odders 418). In a 1988 interview with Jordi Costa Vila—at a time when the novela negra still seemed to be suffering from an identity crisis, tossed around between critics who could not decide whether it should remain in the category of lowly dime, sub-literature or whether it had evolved enough to be classified as Literature with a capital “L”—Andreu Martín explains that for him the genre of choice was clear, regardless of what “class” people wanted to place detective fiction. For him, the novela negra was the best genre because it permitted him to tell the stories he felt needed to be told and reach readers in a direct way:

Si hacer literatura significa mimar mucho la forma prescindiendo del fondo, en el género policiaco los autores hacen poca literatura y se dedican más a contar historias. La génesis de la literatura está precisamente en contar historias. Después de esa premisa esencial, lo que hay que hacer es contarlas lo mejor posible. La historia siempre está en primer lugar. La historia condiciona la forma. Yo parto de mis argumentos como si fuesen algo real que alguien me explicó una vez. Entonces, el desafío del escritor es llenar los huecos cuando está
tratando de dar verosimilitud y una buena dimensión a la historia. Hay que buscar la forma literaria más adecuada. (56)

Today, the genre continues to reflect the concerns of the Spanish public: as the worry over immigration, and its perceived association with crime and terrorism, rises, so too does the frequency of its treatment as the primary storyline of detective fiction. These stories are deeply engaged with the daily reality of contemporary immigration to Spain and serve as a platform for critique of the various institutions involved in its regulation. Their authors have been explicit about the role they feel the detective novel in particular plays in this respect, not only as a reflection of society’s woes but as an active voice in solidarity with immigrants that seeks to alert its readers to perspectives they may not have considered. In an interview with World Literature Today, Lorenzo Silva states: “Some people would say that crime stories are just a game, but I don’t agree with that assessment. A good crime story is a medium for social criticism and, with its power of seduction, is perhaps one of the most efficient ways to reach the reader” (94).

In his search for North African characters in the Spanish detective novel from 1977 to 2000, Daniel Gier found that these immigrants appeared sporadically as marginalised characters in the works of Manuel Vázquez Montalbán (1939-2003), Juan Madrid (1947- ), Andreu Martín (1949- ), Alicia Giménez Bartlett (1951- ), Patxi Andión (1947- ), Carlos Pérez Merinero (1950- ) and José Luis Serrano (1960- ), but were never the central figures in this genre. In Spanish detective novels published since 2000, however, the opposite has been true. In fact, the year 2000 serves well as a marker of when immigrant characters truly become protagonists in an ever-
growing number of contemporary Spanish detective novels. Their increasing protagonism is also reflective of the fact that immigration from the Maghreb only began receiving substantial public attention in the second half of the 1990s. It is worth noting that in limiting his study of immigrant characters in the Spanish detective novel to North and Sub-Saharan Africans, Gier has contributed to the already existent, disproportionate emphasis placed in the mass media on immigrants from this continent. Signalling them out in such a way contributes to the perception of African immigrants as an invasive, overbearing mass, and to a misconstrued image of the actual demographic reality of immigration in Spain. In actuality, the majority of immigrants in Spain are in fact not from Africa; they are not even from Latin America, the second group that public opinion would classify as dominating the immigrant spectrum. Rather, the largest number of immigrants in Spain hails from other European Union nations—the United Kingdom, Germany, etc.—who have chosen Spain as their seasonal or permanent retirement destination.⁶ That most Spaniards overlook these immigrants and perceive the phenomenon as being dominated by peoples of visibly different ethnic backgrounds contributes to many of the other misconceptions about immigration prevalent in the country today. It is important to distinguish between these groups, of course, since the motivation to

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⁶ Official statistics on the number of foreign residents in Spain are published in the Anuario Estadístico de Extranjería by the Spanish Ministry of Interior’s Delegación del Gobierno para la Extranjería y la inmigración. By continent of origin, the number of legal residents in Spain are as follows: European Union (as of 2001 membership) - 331, 362; Rest of Europe - 81, 170; Africa - 304, 149; Latin America - 283, 778; Canada and the US - 15, 020; Asia - 91, 552; Oceania - 944. These data refer to all foreigners residing in Spain under any of the following circumstances: those with permanent residency; those holding student visas; those registered with Social Services; asylum-seekers; those in possession of other visas; nationalised Spaniards; those who have formally applied for work; those enrolled in non-university studies; and those who have been born, married, or have deceased as foreigners in Spain. See <http://extranjeros.mtas.es/es/general/DatosEstadisticos_index.html>. 
immigrate for economic migrants from Africa, Latin America, and Eastern Europe is
greatly different from that which has brought Northern Europeans to the Peninsula,
namely mild weather and economical retirement opportunities. The differences
between these two types of immigrants are among the questions explored in the
stories I analyse in this chapter: Andreu Martín’s Aprende y calla (1979); Jorge
Martínez Reverte’s Gálvez en la frontera (2001); Antonio Lozano’s Donde mueren
los ríos (2003); Arturo Pérez-Reverte’s La Reina del sur (2002); Yolanda Soler
Onís’s Malpais (2003); Lorenza Silva’s “Un asunto vecinal” (2004); and José Javier
Abasolo’s El color de los muertos (2005). In each text, immigration to Spain is the
fundamental basis for the story. No longer just sporadic characters simply pointed
out for their difference and whose reason for existence in Spain is ignored, immigrants are at the centre of these novels, and their provenances, journeys,
fortunes, and misfortunes form the basis of the mysteries to be solved.

Furthermore, these detective tales point to many of the unfortunate
misconceptions that tint the way immigration is perceived in Spain. It shall be seen
that immigrants occupy all four of the main roles of the detective story: victim,
informant, criminal, and even detective. All seven writers are politically engaged
authors whose personal views and journalistic writings reveal a deep understanding
of the plight of the immigrant today in Spain. As can be expected, their views inform
their detective fiction writing and, as is the tradition of the hard-boiled novela negra,
reveal some of the very darkest, dirtiest, and most violent sides to Spanish

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7 The immigrant characters in Gier’s sampling of novels are not awarded a very high a word count.
Their stories are not really told; rather, their presence is simply pointed out in terms often used by
autochthonous Spaniards, not as “that man” or “this woman”, but as aquel sudaca or aquella mora,
esta morena or ese indio.
immigration. The immigrant characters they create in these novels, however, are not always sympathetic, nor are they solely the victims. Rather, these works weed through the very complex situation surrounding each of the immigrants’ stories, from the fields of Andalusia to the disadvantaged neighbourhoods of Madrid and Barcelona. In these novels, both the immigrant and autochthonous characters weave in and out of the traditional roles, sometimes being at once victims and criminals, informants and detectives. Most importantly, these stories demonstrate that things often are not as they seem, and neither are the immigrants, police officers, detectives, or the multitude of other complex characters that fill their pages.

As a popular genre the structure of which is based upon the revelation of truths, the *novela negra* becomes one of the platforms on which critics of the current state of immigration, namely the policies, popular perception, and reception of immigrants, can contribute to a clarification of the many existing misconceptions or myths about immigration in Spain. This is especially relevant given the saturation of the topic within the mass media, a topic that will be discussed further in Chapter 3. While searching for the ultimate truth in these tales—the identity of the killer, the circumstances surrounding the murder, etc.—the detectives unveil many other dark truths about immigration at the beginning of the twenty-first century: the atrocious living conditions that inspired the immigrants to leave their home countries; the treacherous voyage they must undertake to arrive on the European continent; and the most shocking of all, the corruption that exists on either side of Spain’s borders, perpetuating the illegal trafficking of workers. I have identified five commonly held misconceptions about immigration tackled in these novels: 1- that the proportion of
immigrants as a percentage of the total population of Spain is very high; 2- that female immigrants naturally and/or willingly choose prostitution as their trade; 3- that immigrants steal jobs from autochthonous Spaniards; 4- that corruption of authorities dealing with immigration at the various levels—legal, political, judicial—exists only in the countries of provenance; and 5- that immigration is temporary.  

While each novel is very different in its approach and structure, one common relation exists between all of them: the unveiling of the truth of the story’s mystery requires a simultaneous unmasking of the ultimate culprits in the misunderstood reality of immigration as it is played out on a daily basis in Spain’s streets and countryside, on its shores, in its police stations, and its courts.

**Misconception 1: “¡Los inmigrantes nos invaden!”**

Due to the relative rapidity with which immigration to Spain has intensified since the mid-1990s, some have begun to conceptualise it as an invasion. In the media and in certain politicians’ scripts, the phenomenon is described through negatively connoted metaphors: *invasión, avalancha, aluvión, alud.* In all cases, the terminology invokes a sense of uncontrollable devastation as this overwhelming mass takes over the country. The conglomerating wordage is most commonly applied to immigration from Africa and Latin America since the economic migrants

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8 There are two other important misconceptions about immigration that I have chosen to discuss in Chapter 3 since in both cases the mass media have played a pivotal role in their creation and promotion. The first is the unfortunately frequent misconception among Spaniards that the majority of immigrants is involved in illicit activities such as the trafficking and selling of narcotics, prostitution, and thievery; the second is a misconception held by many immigrants themselves whose (albeit often limited) access to the extremely impactful Western media may lead to a false idea of what their lives will consist of should they successfully arrive at their Spanish/European destination, which they see as the Promised Land.

9 See Andres-Suárez for examples of the contexts in which this terminology is employed (58).
from these regions are the most visible others, and also the most rejected. Maritime terms are used to reference North African immigration specifically: *la ola*, *la marea*, or *la oleada*. While pointing to the body of water that separates the African continent from the immigrants’ European destination—and is the final resting place of so many who fail to reach the northern coast of the Strait of Gibraltar—the terms also allude to a nationalistic historiography that has defined Spain as a Christian nation in opposition to the Muslim moors from whom it re-conquered its territory five centuries ago. The visual dimension of daily newspaper and televised images of Sub-Saharan and North African immigrants arriving on the Spanish coasts catalyses the sentiment of invasion. As though born from the sea, the dark-skinned, hungry faces or bloated corpses washed up on the beach appear in a constant bombardment of images that depersonalise immigration.

Yolanda Soler Onís’s 2003 text, *Malpaís*, reminds the Spanish reader of a relatively ignored, never feared, form of immigration: that of high-income Northern Europeans who choose Spain as a southern, exotic destination for their seasonal or retirement residence. By contrasting the presence of a French immigrant who moved to the Canary Islands in the 1970s with African immigrants beginning to find their way to the archipelago in 1992, the year in which the novel is set, the author points to the explicit difference in reception of these two types of immigrants. The apparent victim is Elda Meyers, a nationalised Spaniard of French origin, whose death in a house fire the Civil Guard Gumersindo Roca investigates. She is the object of adoration for her Canarian neighbours who see her as a modern, advanced woman, but more importantly, whose money is welcomed in a still struggling transitory Spain.
Like all the peripheral settings of these stories of detection, the Canary Islands that Soler Onís portrays is ground for shady activities: corruption, narcotics, white slave trade, and organised crime. In unveiling the circumstances behind Meyers’s apparent murder, the hardboiled detective highlights the contrasting perception of Northern European and African immigration to Spain:

Ya sabes cómo era esto antes. Los extranjeros llegaban y si les gustaba la isla se quedaban. Nadie les preguntaba nada. No había centros de detención, como ahora; porque los chorizos de altos vuelos mezclaban sus pelos rubios, sus tripas cerveceras, con los de los primeros turistas. Y, ¿a quién le importaba? Ah, pero lo de los negros ya es otra cosa, pese a que, como todo el mundo sabe, en España no somos racistas. (64)

The provenance of the black immigrants is as important to the Canarian residents as that of the suffocating wind that “invades” their islands every year. In a brilliantly subtle thread that weaves its way through the novel, the asphyxiating atmosphere of the Sirocco penetrates the Canarian air, bringing dust and sand off the coast of Africa. The darkness of the clouds infiltrates the islanders’ state of mind and every year during the Sirocco season the suicide rate dramatically increases: “¡Este maldito tiempo africano! siempre la misma historia. La gente se remonta…” (15). As the wind makes life unbearable for the island residents—perhaps avenging poetically the death of the Guanches, the Canarian native population nearly obliterated by the island’s European colonisers five centuries prior—the weather system’s African provenance is never forgotten: “Era verano, un día de agosto en el
que la ‘panza de burro’, que agobiaba la ciudad con sus compactas nubes grises, se había tornado ocre a causa del polvo procedente de África” (31). Even more suffocating than the invading weather system is the plague of lobster-like insects that accompanies it:

    Hacía muchos años, desde las plagas del setenta, que no se veían; a veces media docena de insectos moribundos llegaban por casualidad en medio de la expectación de los niños, quizás para recordarles lo cerca que estaban de África; aunque en los últimos tiempos el creciente número de emigrantes ilegales que se trasladaban en pateras no les permitiera olvidarlo. (50)

First wind, then insects, and finally immigrants: each reminds the residents of their islands’ proximity to Africa in a less than favourable light. But the hardboiled Gumersindo Roca refuses to assume that Meyers’s death was a Sirocco-driven suicide. His persistence on the case—inspired as much by a quest for truth as by a nostalgia for his relationship with the French immigrant twenty years earlier—leads him to Elda Meyers herself. In a case of bait and switch, the burned body is actually that of Meyer’s Spanish art dealer, and her death, while suspicious, was in fact accidental. In the end, neither the Sirocco nor the undocumented African migrants were to blame. The true culprit of María Isabel's death is her own greed in a classic tale of blackmail and betrayal.

    The vision of immigrants as an invasive conglomerate, whether of African or Latin American provenance, has the tragic repercussion of devaluing the individual immigrant lives that make up the perceived mass. In the Spanish detective tale,
xenophobic characters’ perception of immigration as an overly large, homogenous movement allows them to justify the murder of immigrants, since in their view, such individuals’ loss will make no difference in the world. Such a justification is used in Lorenzo Silva’s “Un asunto vecinal,” the fourth short story in Silva’s 2004 text, Nadie vale más que otro, when a Spanish father confesses to killing a young Ecuadorian man for pursuing a relationship with his daughter: “no necesitaba a nadie para defender a su familia y no iba a permitir que un sudaca de mierda lo chuleara […] Ya estaba, quién iba a preocuparse por un cerdo de indio menos en el mundo” (211). When ordered to investigate the murder of a young Sub-Saharan African man in José Javier Abasolo’s El color de los muertos, the xenophobic and misogynist police officer Antonio Jiménez—who in subsequent chapters rapes and murders a young Luso-African woman—makes it clear that his drive to solve the case has everything to do with his pride in his own work and nothing to do with the value of the life lost:

Le gustara o no estaba involucrado en el caso y ya no podía parar hasta descubrir a los asesinos. No le preocupaba la víctima, ¿a quién le importaba que hubiera un moro más o menos en el mundo?, a él no, desde luego, y dudaba mucho de que la gente decente y de orden se preocupara por esas cosas, quizás algún comunista de mierda, talvez uno de esos idiotas españoles y latinoamericanos que todavía no se habían enterado de la caída del muro de Berlín, pensara que la pérdida de una escoria de piel oscura era una tragedia, pero a él eso le dejaba frío. (32)
In Antonio Lozano’s *Donde mueren los ríos*, Spanish authorities’ apathy toward the investigation of Aida’s murder is evident: “Todo indicaba que se trataba de un ajuste de cuentas, según fuentes policiales, decía el periódico. Una puta menos, una negra menos. Nada que merezca el más mínimo quebradero de cabeza” (85). In each case, there is a sense that the worth of these immigrants’ lives is less than that of other Spaniards. The murderers justify their actions based on a utilitarian conception of life whereby the superior value of Spaniards may require the warranted elimination of an immigrant one. Official, and often local, investigations into these murders have the lowest priority. The detectives of these stories—Bevilacqua and Chamorro in “Asunto”, Altube and Rojas in *El color*, and Fatiha in *Donde*—, however, fight within or against the security and justice systems to ensure that each of these murder victims is awarded the same justice as that which any other Spaniard would receive. They feel, as the title of Lorenzo’s text of short stories denotes, that *nadie vale más que otro*.

**Misconception 2: “Les gusta hacer la calle… está en su naturaleza”**

Javier Coma, one of Spain’s most cited critics of the *novela negra*, has said that what makes the Spanish detective story so closely related to its American hardboiled relative is that it too is a reflection of the socio-political conditions of a capitalist society (13). In fact, in a society where what is most valued is the ability to buy and sell goods, the worth of some human lives may be reduced to such a point as to be considered inevitable losses for a more important profit. Immigrants, like the marginalised lower-class autochthonous Spaniards and Roma with whom they often
share close quarters, are among those people whose lives are repeatedly shown to be worth losing or ruining, as a secondary effect of making money. The lives of immigrant women, more so even than their male counterparts, are at the highest risk of being considered collateral damage, as they are literally bought, sold, used, and disposed of as goods in a capitalist global market. Prostitution, in which the human body is purchased and consumed for pleasure, is the context in which this type of business most often occurs. The trafficking of women from the Third World to Spain is an integral storyline in Arturo Pérez-Reverte’s *La Reina del sur*, Antonio Lozano’s *Donde mueren los ríos*, and José Javier Abasolo’s *El color de los muertos*.

Female immigrant empowerment, at almost any cost, is the main theme of Arturo Pérez-Reverte’s *La Reina del Sur* (2002). In this text, a young Mexican woman from Culiacán, Sinaloa, is helped to flee to Melilla after her cocaine-trafficking boyfriend is ordered killed by his own organisation. From the Spanish enclave to the peripheral coastal towns of Andalusia and Gibraltar, the gutsy Teresa quickly learns to distinguish herself from other immigrant women in her circumstances. She employs the simple but effective tactic: “if you can’t beat ‘em join ‘em.” In a few years, the petite Latin American, referred usually by autochthonous Spaniards simply as *la india*, goes from being the female side-kick to leading the most profitable and dangerous drug-trafficking organisation on the Strait of Gibraltar. The five-hundred-plus-page novel, however, also shows us the many turbulent moments in this young Mexican woman’s life, as she tries to survive not just in a

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10 The Madrid neighbourhood of Lavapiés is the most obvious example of this cohabitation, which is also prevalent in Spain’s agricultural sectors where minority workers live in preposterous conditions. For a detailed analysis of the similarities regarding the socio-cultural integration of ethnic minorities—the Roma and immigrants in particular—see Jordi Garreta Bochaca.
man’s world, but in a European man’s world. An anonymous journalist writing Teresa’s biography narrates the story, and by uncovering all the Spanish pockets that she filled in order to make her trafficking business flourish, acts as the novel’s detective, revealing the ultimate truths that the official authorities are too busy being corrupt to pursue.

Teresa Mendoza is spared the humiliation of forced prostitution when she arrives in Melilla to work illegally under the hospice of Dris Larbi, the owner of a gentlemen’s bar in the Spanish enclave. The rifeño finds that Teresa’s mathematical skills, developed as a money-trader in her native Sinaloa, Mexico, would be put to better use behind the bar’s cash register than on the floor providing sexual favours to his distinguished clientele. The other women in Teresa’s workplace are not so fortunate:

Las chicas –dos moras, una hebrea, una española– eran jóvenes y profesionales. Dris nunca se acostaba con las empleadas –donde tienes la olla, decía, no metas la polla–, pero a veces mandaba a amigos suyos a modo de inspectores laborales. Primera calidad, alardeaba luego. En mis locales, sólo primera calidad. Si el informe resultaba negativo, nunca las maltrataba. Se limitaba a echarlas, y punto. Rescisión. No eran chicas lo que faltaba en Melilla, con la inmigración ilegal, y la crisis, y todo aquello. Alguna soñaba con viajar a la Península, ser modelo y triunfar en la tele; pero la mayoría se conformaba con un permiso de trabajo y una residencia legal.
The *puticlub* owner’s attitude toward his women is similar to that of the producer of any product for sale: the ultimate goal is to provide a high-quality product at the lowest possible cost to the producer in order to ensure maximum profit. In order to do so, the *chulo*, or pimp, sends in taste-testers, or quality-control analysts, whose potential disappointment leads simply to a discarding of said merchandise. To put it simply, Dris Larbi’s women all share one thing in common: they are nothing more than objects for consumption in a man’s world where their worth is determined by the amount of money they can bring in. An ally of Teresa’s in her later drug trafficking mega-operation is Oleg Yasikov, a Russian contrabandist who sees little difference between the trafficking of drugs, workers, and prostitutes:

Una segunda línea de negocios, creada a partir de la discoteca, consistía en fuertes inversiones en la industria nocturna marbellí, con bares, restaurantes y locales para la prostitución de lujo a base de mujeres eslavas traídas directamente de Europa oriental. […] especializados en extorsión, tráfico de vehículos robados, contrabando y trata de blancas, muy interesados también en ampliar sus actividades al narcotráfico. (269)

In a capitalist society where human worth is degraded to its ability to make a profit, these women are only as useful as the money they can make their pimps.

It is amidst this oppressive environment, however, that Teresa Mendoza attains star-status, being named in Spain’s *¡Hola!* magazine, as the title of the novel suggests, “the Queen of the South” (325). The protagonist has to overcome a number of significant barriers. She is an undocumented Mexican immigrant, and as
if that were not enough, her only means of survival is to infiltrate a part of society—the world of trafficking—dominated by men. Despite this, Pérez-Reverte tells the tale of a woman who not only learns to defend herself among those who seek to dominate her, she herself eventually dominates the white Spaniard as though leading a counter-conquest in name of the Latin American indigenous woman whose domination recently celebrated its fifth centenary. From a woman who intermittently had to sell her body to accelerate her application for dual citizenship—thus literally codifying her presence as legal—Teresa becomes the woman who, with her flesh, her money, and most importantly, her fame and power, colonises those men that have historically dominated who she represents: “Después de hacer el amor siempre olían a ella, a su carne fatigada, a su saliva, al aroma fuerte y denso de su sexo húmedo; como si fuera Teresa la que al fin terminaba poseyendo la piel del hombre, colonizándolo” (386).

A shared characteristic among the used and violated immigrant women of these novels is the economically marginalised, sometimes abusive, households they left when they undertook their search of a better life in the West. In Donde mueren los ríos, two women hold the key roles of murder victim and detective as Antonio Lozano explores both females’ vulnerability in a world dominated by men and the empowerment of women in this context. The murder victim is Aida, a Senegalese

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11 Not insignificantly, the action of the novel takes place in 1992 and specific reference is made to the elaborately celebrated event in Spain, in particular in the traditionally conservative enclave of Melilla: “... las espantosas Torres gemelas construidas para conmemorar el quinto centenario de la conquista española de la ciudad” (76).

12 “La segunda vez [que tuvo relaciones después del Güero] fue un asunto práctico, y un policía. La gestión para sus documentos provisionales de residencia iba despacio, y Dris Larbi aconsejó que agilizara los trámites. El tipo se llamaba Souco. Era un inspector de mediana edad y razonable aspecto, que cobraba favores a emigrantes. [...] Fue a verlo y el otro le planteó sin rodeos la cuestión. Como en Méjico, dijo, sin que ella fuera capaz de establecer qué entendía aquel hijo de su madre por costumbres mejicanas” (92).
woman who is given away by her family to a friend promising to take her to Spain and find her work. In reality, she falls into the same trap as so many young immigrants; the man her family entrusts her to withholds her documentation and makes her work for years as a prostitute to pay off her travel debt (169). As we eventually come to understand, her family’s move to send Aida north was also a way of ridding themselves of a problem within their own polygamous family:

A los trece años ya era una mujer hermosa y su padre, que hasta entonces no le había prestado ninguna atención, apareció en el cuartucho en que la tenían apartada. Al principio, sólo la visitaba cuando no había nadie en casa. Pero como la costumbre es la madre de todas las imprudencias, continuó haciéndolo incluso por la noche, cuando los demás dormían. O hacían que dormían. Porque pronto las co-esposas adivinaron el acoso de su marido a la adolescente, cuyo cuerpo miraban con envidia, y arreciaron los malos tratos contra ella. Atizaron el fuego de su infierno. Y la obligaron a irse, entregándola a uno de los que se dedican al negocio de la carne humana. (97)

Like Aida, Fatiha, falls into the realm of prostitution as it is the only means for her survival once in Spain: “Nada más llegar a la ciudad me di cuenta de que más tarde o más temprano tendría que hacer la calle, como dicen aquí. Sin permiso de trabajo, sin conocer a nadie, y encima mujer y marroquí. Bingo. Algún beneficio tendría que sacar a este cuerpo que Dios me dio” (51). The Moroccan immigrant does what she can to survive in a world that turns out not to be at all what she bargained for. Unlike her Senegalese friend, Fatiha never allows herself to be dominated by a pimp and
therefore has the freedom to one day take her life into her own hands and do what it
takes to leave prostitution. She finds a job as assistant and interpreter in a non-
governmental organisation dedicated to aiding illegal immigrants. Significantly, her
character further develops into the novel's hard-boiled detective, as Fatiha
undertakes the investigation of her friend Aida's murder, convinced that the
authorities are not placing this young woman’s murder at the top of their priority list.
Like Teresa Mendoza en La Reina del Sur, Fatiha takes on the male-dominated
police authorities head on. She stands up not only for her murdered friend, but for all
the other immigrant women whose undocumented status forces them to live and
work under atrocious conditions, all the while the subjects of societal apathy.\textsuperscript{13} As a
hardboiled detective through and through, Fatiha uncovers what police authorities
are too indifferent to find: Aida’s murderer is not Amadú Kabbah, her also
undocumented companion from Sierra Leone; rather, it is her Spanish-born pimp
Ernesto, a bar-owner and friend of Fatiha’s. She, like the reader, is astounded to
uncover the nature of his secondary business and murderous xenophobic
motivations. In discovering Aida’s true murderer, Fatiha gives her friend an
honourable death, when the authorities would have preferred to have treated the
victim in death with the same lack of respect as they had in life, at the same time
imprisoning an innocent man.

\textsuperscript{13} In Antonio Lozano’s hybrid text \textit{Líneas de Sombra}, the author juxtaposes a first section of real life
Spanish mysteries that made headlines at the turn of the twenty-first century with a second section
that discusses the role of the detective novel in revealing the societal issues behind such crimes. One
of the true stories he recounts is that of Edith Napoleon, a young woman from Sierra Leon, who,
forced to work as a prostitute upon her arrival in Spain, was also the unfortunate victim of a brutal
murder, found quartered and disposed of in a Madrid garbage container (154).
In Abasolo’s *El color de los muertos*, the unfortunate, but seemingly frequent indifference of (mostly male) authorities for the plight of immigrant women gives way to a more disturbing and more direct aggression on the behalf of one of Bilbao’s most senior and admired police officers, Antonio Jiménez. The racist and repulsively misogynistic cop seeks to revindicate his honour after the embarrassment of having been left by his wife for a Senegalese man. He does so by seeking out, raping, and murdering the “blackest” immigrant prostitute he can find and exercises, therefore, not only revenge but, even more significantly, domination over the “race” that in his mind is responsible for the failure of his marriage. After discarding a light-skinned black Brazilian woman for not being black enough, he settles on Maria to be the victim of his hatred: “O sea que de Cabo Verde, africana auténtica. Seguro que eres la puta más negra que hay en el barrio” (55). As he brutally rapes her in a field outside the city’s limits he screams: “Y cuanto más negras más putas” (57). This is one of several sickeningly violent scenes that cannot but disturb the reader who must wonder how anyone can conjure up enough hatred and anger to leave another human’s body tattered and moribund as Jiménez leaves Maria’s. In a later attack, the dirty cop makes very clear his theories about African women’s genetic predisposition toward prostitution, as well as his racial superiority and entitlement:

Habéis nacido para eso, para ser putas. Hoy has tenido suerte porque me has conocido. Vas a saber lo que es bueno, vas a saber lo que un blanco, un español de verdad, es capaz de hacer con una negra como tú. […] Estás en mi país, princesa, y más te vale ser complaciente si
What makes the novel’s violence bearable is the text’s hinting that police officers of Jiménez’s type are a dying breed, remnants of a previous generation and system at which the Spanish Transition and liberalisation of the last twenty years has slowly begun to hack away. Jiménez is aware of the change: “Era increíble lo que estaba pasando en los últimos años con la policía. Mientras la gente con cojones como él era marginada, pseudointelectualillos como De Dios eran ascendidos a puestos de honor. Ese sistema, estaba claro, era una mierda, pero no le quedaba más remedio que seguir dentro de él” (177). As in Pérez-Reverte’s and Lozano’s texts, women are at the very extremes of the novel: they are society’s most vulnerable and abused members, but also become the novels’ strongest characters, upholding justice for all and in particular for others of their same gender. In Abasolo’s text, Isabel Altube, a cop assigned the case of Maria’s murder, has the doubly difficult task of unmasking the Cape Verdean immigrant’s murderer while working alongside him. Throughout, her investigation is not only repeatedly sabotaged by her partner, she also has to endure the attitude of a fellow cop whose misogyny applies also to women in the police force: “Me cago en la leche, tía, tienes madera pero al final la cagas, quizás sea mejor que te dediques a pasar a máquina los informes en una oficina en lugar de recorrer las calles jugando a policía y ladrones” (192). Her determination remains unshaken, however, and as all good hardboiled sleuths, she fights for the truth even to her own physical and emotional detriment.
Misconception 3: “La corrupción proviene únicamente del otro lado de la frontera”

While seeking to unveil the identity of the story’s murderer, contemporary texts of detection dealing with immigration reveal that the *ultimate* criminal is not s/he who the reader expects: the Spanish pimp who murders one of his Senegalese prostitutes planning to free herself from his hold (*Donde mueren los ríos*) or the father who murders an Ecuadorian worker for wooing his daughter (“Un asunto vecinal”). Certainly the arrested and/or prosecuted criminals in these cases should be held accountable for their actions; they are, in the end, the ones who take someone’s life with their own hands. However, the criminals are also portrayed as pawns in the much larger, more complex reality of a society that despite three decades of democracy continues to permit bribery, backroom political pressures, and corporatist complicity at the expense of human lives. In its American and Spanish conceptions, the ideology of the hard-boiled detective genre is critical of social and political institutions. Local, regional, and federal police forces are exactly the type of institutions that the detective reveals as the ultimate criminals in the story of immigration in Spain. The sleuth can do so because s/he is characterised in opposition to these forces—as private investigator, central police investigator, or journalist—driven by the quest for truth and dedicated to upholding moral justice regardless of political or management pressures. The detective reveals that corruption is rampant and that many officers line their pockets with the fruits of their complicity, if not outright active involvement, in illegal immigration and employment.

Lorenzo Silva’s “Un asunto vecinal” is a neighbourly detective tale that recounts the activities of the Spanish Civil Guard’s Sergeant Rubén Bevilacqua and
Corporal Virginia Chamorro as they are called to a Murcian town to investigate the murder of an Ecuadorian immigrant. In this story, as in the others of the same series, what makes the two investigative agents stand out is their determination not to jump to conclusions as their colleagues in the local police forces tend to, in particular when the case involves the murder of an immigrant and suspicions of hate crime arise:

Lo que el concejal quería era que pudiéramos colgarle en pocas horas al marrón a otro indio, ajuste de cuentas entre ellos, y aquí paz y después gloria. Para ello no había dudado en ofrecerme esa hipótesis como la más plausible, habida cuenta del carácter de aquella gente, del subdesarrollo y la violencia de los países de los que venían, etcétera. No me había molestado en aclararle entonces que Ecuador no era un país especialmente violento, ni tampoco lo eran los inmigrantes de esa nacionalidad que por aquí teníamos según nuestra experiencia. (170)

The instructions given to Bevilacqua and Chamorro by the councilman in Lozano's “Asunto Vecinal” recall the sentiment expressed by Juan Enciso, the then mayor of El Ejido and member of the Partido Popular, upon the occurrence of the riots in his town: “Hay que dejar bien claro que el pueblo de El Ejido no es racista ni xenófobo’ y que los habitantes del municipio están hartos de que achacan ‘los escritores seudoprogresistas y los medios de comunicación la mala imagen de un pueblo

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14 Nadie vale más que otro is the fifth text in one of contemporary Spain's most successful crime series. The first four texts in which Bevilacqua and Chamorro are the protagonists, all novels, are El lejano país de los estanques (1998), El alquimista impaciente (2000), La niebla y la doncella (2002), and La reina sin espejo (2005).
hospitalario” (Goytisolo 211). Like the fictional councilman of the short story, Enciso’s primary concern was that the actions of his autochthonous electoral base not be perceived as racist in the media — not the persecution of those responsible for the tragic destruction and injury targeted at the immigrant citizens of his town.

As Lozano states in the preface to the short stories, only the unprejudiced eyes of Bevilacqua and Chamorro are able to solve this case truthfully. Unfortunately, the case is representative of the daily attacks in Spain aimed at immigrants and is particularly reminiscent of the xenophobic uproar that took over another Andalusian town, that of El Ejido, Almería in 2000. For Silva, the greatest mystery of all is not that such events ensue, but that they continue to be swept under the carpet by (mostly local) authorities who try to save face: “Bevilacqua y quien le escribe creemos que el misterio que verdaderamente nos concierne es el de las cosas cotidianas, incluso el de las gentes y los asuntos vulgares y rutinarios, que sólo no son, en el fondo, cuando vulgar y rutinario es el ojo que los mira” (11).

When the pair arrive in the coastal town, they quickly realise that local authorities have already “decided” what happened and that Bevilacqua and Chamorro’s job is simply to verify their colleagues’ suppositions, all the while, of course, demonstrating to the protesting Ecuadorians that Murcia cares about its immigrant population so much that investigators from the capital were brought in to solve the case (168-9). While motivations of the Murcian authorities to bring in the central agents are deplorable, the pair’s relative objectivity permits a just investigation. In the end, the hardboiled sleuths uncover what the councilman most feared: Wilmer Estrada, a legalised Ecuadorian immigrant, was murdered by a
xenophobic autochthonous Spaniard. As with the *Brigada Central*'s Roma detective, Manuel Flores, this investigative team not only unveils the sad truth about the murderer’s identity and motivation, it also brings to light the well-engrained biased methods that corrode many local police forces and councils.\(^\text{15}\)

The role institutional corruption plays in the criminalisation of immigrants and subjective investigation of immigrant victims of rape and murder is at the very heart of José Javier Abasolo’s *El color de los muertos*, a detective novel where, as the title suggests, the colour of one’s skin determines the level of justice one receives from Spanish authorities. Its two protagonists possess many of the characteristics of hardboiled detectives: they are portrayed as loners who are unlucky in matters of the heart; they seek the ultimate truth in opposition to official security agencies; and their desire to right wrongs and to serve justice is believable since they have nothing personal to gain. However, this novel would be better categorised as a police procedural than as a hardboiled text. The police procedural, which emerged relatively late in Spain following the hard-boiled variety (Craig-Odders 1), differs from its predecessor in that the identity of the criminal is more likely to be known to the reader from the beginning of the text. In many ways, this sub-genre of detective fiction is just as much about the people investigating the crime as it is about the crime itself. Abasolo masters the conventions of the procedural to unveil yet another aspect of the existing corruption surrounding the Spanish police forces’ approach to crime.

\(^{15}\) For more on political and private industry corruption in Spain, see Transparency International’s annual *Global Corruption Report*. The 2006 publication indicates that José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero’s government initiatives to reduce corruption have led to some successes, ones he promised to deliver in light of the corruption scandals that plagued Felipe González’s socialist administration until its demise in 1996 (52). It is worth noting that the construction industry, which relies in many areas of Spain on foreign labour, continues to be a primary host of corruption and has many links to organised crime (54).
crimes that involve immigrants. To the reader’s disgust, the murderer of Maria, a young Cape Verdean woman caught in a ring of prostitution, is the police officer Antonio Jiménez. The rape and murder scene is narrated in detail, revealing the hatred and violence of the dirty cop, whose actions are symptoms of a profound xenophobia. Since the identity of the murderer is known to the reader, and suspected by Jiménez’s colleagues from early on, the investigation becomes less about who and more so about why. Why is this police officer allowed to get away with this murder (and the rape of many other young black prostitutes)? Why is the law-enforcement agencies’ priority the upholding of a police officer’s honour rather that the valuing of a human, albeit not autochthonous, life? These are the questions that the novel's detectives, Isabel Altube and Manuel Rojas, seek to answer.

Unfortunately, such racially inspired hatred is growing in Spain. While the number of incidents of racial violence remains small in that country in comparison with other EU countries with longer histories of economic immigration, they have been steadily increasing. Jiménez’s activities are reminiscent of those of Luis Merino Pérez, a real-life off-duty civil guard with a history of disciplinary offences who in 1992 opened fire in an abandoned discotheque squatted by Dominican immigrants in the Aravaca district of Madrid to “give those blacks a scare” (Carr 73). The shooting rampage ended with the point-blank murder of the twenty-eight-year-old Lucrecia Pérez and the injury of several others. Merino Pérez was caught and convicted, and the incident motivated thousands of people across Spain to protest Lucrecia’s murder. In El color de los muertos, however, justice for Maria’s death is never attained and in this sense, the story of her murder is representative of the
many other immigrant women whose stories were never told. In the end, the rapist and murderous Jiménez is killed while involved in another case. The truth about his involvement in the young woman’s death is known by police, but the corporatist philosophy of the police machinery refuses to make it public knowledge:

…aunque posiblemente ahora fuera más fácil demostrar, gracias a exámenes de grupo sanguíneo, ADN y restos de su vehículo, que Antonio Jiménez había asesinado efectivamente a María, no era posible hacerlo. No iban a permitir que se manchara la memoria de una víctima del terrorismo, un policía ejemplar que había recibido a título póstumo, alguna de las muchas medallas que el Ministro de Interior tiene siempre a disposición de sus funcionarios caídos en combate. (373-3)

The ending to Abasolo’s text, like many novelas negras is bittersweet: the ultimate truth is found, but not entirely told, and the pervasive sense is that this type of corruption will continue.

Published in 2001, Jorge Matínez Reverte’s Gálvez en la frontera recounts the latest adventures of Julio Gálvez, a second-rate journalist who writes for the economic section of an important Barcelona newspaper.¹⁶ The self-deprecating periodista is minding his own business, serving as host to a Japanese reporter, when her purse, containing evidence incriminating the directors of a Spanish company, is stolen by a couple of North African teenagers. The adventures that

¹⁶ Gálvez en la frontera is the fourth novel of the Gálvez series. In order of publication, the novels in the series are: Demasiado para Gálvez (1979); Gálvez en Euskadi (1983); Gálvez y el cambio del cambio (1995); Gálvez en la frontera (2001); and Gudari Gálvez (2005). I have already discussed Gálvez en Euskadi in Chapter 1 in my analysis of detective fiction and the historically recognised autonomous communities.
ensue lead Gálvez through several life-threatening moments: first, he is witness to a street battle between North African and Chinese gangs in the Madrid neighbourhood of Lavapiés; then, he is followed and attacked in Tangiers by members of the same groups; and finally, is forced to escape from Morocco in the only way possible: that is, in a small raft, or patera, across the Strait of Gibraltar as so many African immigrants had done before, and have done since, in search of a better life.

Throughout, the topic of immigration is a constant. A superficial reading of the text may suggest that the provenance of the North African purse-snatchers and that of their Chinese-born enemies has no real relevance to the economic scandal that drives Gálvez’s investigation. The issues related to these immigrants, however, are what most pervade the text, and a closer look reveals that at the heart of the economic scandal is their exploitation. As the journalist-turned-detective digs deeper into the situation, he uncovers the well engrained prejudice that, far from being limited to the private sector, characterises the country’s legal and judicial establishments.

Mocking the police is an important convention of the hardboiled text, since it reinforces the detective’s intellectual superiority and justifies his working alone. In Gálvez en la frontera, immediately following the purse-snatching incident, Gálvez’s Japanese guest, Takako, is unable to inform a policeman as to the race of her thief, stating that all white people look the same to her. The following dialogue between Gálvez and the policeman ensues:

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17 In addition to providing an eye-opening view of urban immigrant reality, Martínez Reverte’s text addresses the problematic relation between the mass media’s quantitative, sensationalist coverage of North African immigration to Spain and the autochthonous public’s perception; I will discuss both of these issues in depth in Chapter 3.
-Pero si no son blancos, que son moros. Y además, los que son iguales son los chinos estos. ¿Usted distingue a un chino de otro?
- La señora es japonesa.
- Pues eso, japonesa, o china. Son iguales todas. Y luego van y no distinguen. ¿A usted le parece normal que la china esta, con perdón, y espero que no sea su señora, no se ofenda usted, no distinga a un español de un moro? (12)

In addition to being representative of Reverte's delightfully comical style, this passage demonstrates the relativity with which race is conceptualised. The Spanish police and the justice system’s more generalised racial prejudice, however, is less of a laughing matter:

Los pasillos de los juzgados de la plaza de Castilla eran una espléndida demostración de las teorías sobre la desigualdad, aunque cualquier fascista de medio pelo habría podido sacar conclusiones muy distintas: las tres cuartas partes de las gentes que los ocupaban, quitando a los abogados, eran de raza gitana, magrebíes o latinoamericanos de diversa procedencia, esperando el destino que los jueces dieran a sus allegados. (27)

Throughout the novel, the prejudice and ignorance of Spanish police are undeniably showcased. Even more transparent is the police’s racism in conducting line-ups for identification, placing the suspected North African Ahmid next to two blond, blue-eyed Spaniards in the first round, and next to two very obviously native Latin Americans in the second. In fact, it is by pointing out this evidently racist procedure,
and thereby freeing Ahmid from being charged, that Gálvez first demonstrates sympathy toward the North African teenager. This sympathy will become the motivation behind the detective’s investigation for the remainder of the novel.

**Misconception 4: “¡Los inmigrantes nos quitan el trabajo!”**

Every month, the *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas* (CIS), an autonomous organisation whose purpose is the scientific study of Spanish society, publishes the results of a nationwide survey. Since the mid 1990s, immigration has accompanied unemployment and terrorism atop the list of national concerns. To many Spaniards, these three issues are not entirely unrelated, as immigration is often considered a partial cause of unemployment and as terrorism begins to mean more in Spain than the violence propagated by the Basque nationalist and self-declared terrorist group ETA. In fact, immigration to any industrialised country whose economy is growing rarely contributes to unemployment since the industries in which especially undocumented immigrants work are ones whose openings the autochthonous population is unwilling to fill, usually in the sectors of agriculture, construction, and domestic work. The unemployment rate to which the respondents of the survey refer is primarily that of professional sectors. While a disparity in wages in the two sectors is to be expected, a predominantly undocumented immigrant workforce, however, allows for even lower wages that in turn contribute to the increase in profit margin largely responsible for the country’s economic growth. As Juan Goytisolo argues, such cheap labour made the so-called “Milagro almeriense” possible. After the investment of Belgian and Dutch companies in the 1980s in the
agricultural lands of Almería, it was necessary to recur to foreign labour. Since Spaniards were reluctant to do this work, North and Sub-Saharan African immigrants started to arrive at the end of said decade. Without them, the agricultural miracle would only have been a dream (212).

The profitability of trafficked labour in the construction sector lies at the very heart of Andreu Martín’s relatively unknown detective novel Aprende y calla (1979). Set in 1974, the famed detective fiction writer’s first novel prognosticates the degree to which the illegal trafficking of immigrants to Spain will become a serious issue in future decades. After the intended murder of Ramiro Domínguez Navero and the unplanned murder of an accidental witness, Antonio, the latter’s friend Julio undertakes the investigation of the suspicious events leading to his friend’s assassination. In a twisted storyline common to the Spanish hard-boiled genre, he discovers that his friend’s death was ordered by the victim’s future father-in-law, Olavide. This real estate developer was taking advantage of Algerian illegal migrants, being transported through Spain on their way to France, for the construction of a new subdivision on the outskirts of Barcelona. In light of the still oppressive political environment of the end of the Francoist dictatorship, most of Antonio’s family and friends are hesitant to delve too deeply into the reasons behind Antonio’s murder, but Julio forges ahead, uncovering the corruption that is behind the transportation of the immigrants involving business-men, police officers, and political authorities. All of them profit from these migrants whose presence in Spain, according to co-operators in the trafficking ring, is only temporary. This would likely have been the case in the mid-1970s when greater prosperity in European countries
north of Spain would have made it a crossing ground toward immigrants’ ultimate
destination. When Julio confronts Olavide with the information he has gathered, the
construction mogul responds by offering the detective a position in his organisation,
an action typical of his corrupt modus operandi. Despite Julio’s moral objections and
intense internal struggle, the young man accepts. The fall of the novel’s detective
and hero in the last pages of the text is representative of the strong sentiment in
1979 (the time of the novel’s publication) that the issues of corruption characteristic
of the Franco years were still prevalent in the renascent democracy. This is the only
novel published outside the range of more contemporary texts dealing with
immigration to Spain (1998-2005). As such, individual Algerian migrants are not the
protagonists of the texts as they will become in subsequent novels. Instead, the
novel focuses on Spain’s involvement as a whole in the illegal trafficking of cheap
human labour at a time when the country was not yet a frequent first choice
destination:

Sí, en África reclutan gente de esa que vive en tribus en la miseria
más tremenda, y les prometen trabajo en Europa. Los meten
ilegalmente en España, o Alemania, o Francia, y, como esos
desgraciados no tienen ninguna documentación, en cuanto han
pasado la frontera, están en poder de la Organización. Los amontonan
en barracas y les cobran como si fueran casas decentes, les pagan
sólo la mitad del sueldo, la Organización se queda con la otra mitad y
el que les contrata se ahorra Seguros Sociales y demás problemas. Es
la mano de obra más barata y la que menos protesta, porque si lo
hacen los devuelven a su país. Y lo peor es que estas condiciones de vida deben ser mejores que las que tienen allí, o sea que imagina cómo tienen que vivir. Imagina lo que tienen que pasar en esos viajes de contrabando. (96)

In Lozano’s *Donde mueren los ríos*, when Fatiha explains to Tierno that his presence in Spain is perceived as a problem, the young undocumented and impressionable worker misunderstands, believing that Spaniards are concerned with the problems he faces on a day to day basis:

—Tierno: ¿El problema? ¿El problema nuestro?
—Fatiha: No el problema de ellos. El problema vuestro les importa un bledo.
—Tierno: Pero nosotros venimos aquí a trabajar, y además les salimos más baratos. ¿Sabes cuántas horas trabajaba en los tomates? ¿Es ése el problema que les traemos? Fatiha no contestó. Quizá porque no tenía la respuesta, pensé. Yo tampoco la tenía. (184)

The two immigrants’ conversation seems to be a direct response to the common characterisation of immigration in Spain as a problem, a fact that is apparent in the very way the CIS’s revelatory questionnaire is worded: “¿Cuál es, a su juicio, el principal problema que existe actualmente en España? ¿Y el segundo? ¿Y el tercero?” (my italics). As these crime novels explore the causes behind the murders their detectives investigate, they provide alternative perspectives on the process of immigration and insert themselves within a small but growing part of Spanish society
that is helping the national discussion on immigration move beyond its conception as a problem.

In José Javier Abasolo’s *El color de los muertos*, a similar view of immigration is held by the story’s bad cop, Antonio Jiménez, whose xenophobic opinion of immigrants clouds his judgement and prevents him from conducting a fair and unbiased investigation. When he is informed by his colleague Ricardo Illana that an immigrant suspect El Mdarhri is legal, has a work permit, is involved with non-governmental organisations, and has even collaborated with police to catch some bad guys, Jiménez refuses to accept that a man of colour could be anything but trouble and replaces his accusation of delinquency and illegal status with a claim that the suspect is stealing Spanish jobs: “En el fondo es lo mismo. ¿Qué más da que vendan drogas por la calle o que inciten a la gente a manifestarse? Es la misma basura y al final, lo único que queda claro, es que están quitando el trabajo a los españoles. ¿No estás de acuerdo?” (33). Illana is, however, not in agreement and refuses to dignify Jiménez’s prejudiced comments with an answer. In a later scene, when the immigrant murder victim’s wife explains that her husband was not a delinquent and that he owned his own shop, Jiménez expresses his disdain by asserting, erroneously, that not only are immigrants stealing jobs from Spaniards, they are also a drain on the Spanish social welfare system:

Por supuesto, la vida fácil, ni pagaba impuestos, ni seguros sociales ni nada de nada, pero eso sí, si se ponía enfermo, los hospitales públicos o la parroquia le atendían mejor que a un ciudadano cumplidor. Y claro, en la calle tenía tiempo de sobra para trapichear.
Drogas, prostitución, compraventa de productos robados. [...] No sé por qué me preocupo con el asesinato de tu marido, seguramente le mataron en un ajuste de cuentas entre delincuentes.” (37)

Socio-anthropologist Carlos Giménez Romero insists on distinguishing between the often conflated issues of rising Spanish unemployment and immigrant labour. As he explains, not only do undocumented workers do the jobs that Spaniards are often unwilling to do, in part because autochthonous workers can rely on unemployment benefits and prefer to wait for better offers (97), immigrants also contribute more to social security and welfare benefits than they claim (145). Abasolo’s *novela negra* not only addresses this problematic misconception, it also points to the additional obstacles toward understanding immigration when these biases are held by officers of the law who are trusted with bringing about justice.

**Misconception 5: “La inmigración es temporaria”**

“*Emigrar* es desaparecer para después renacer. *Inmigrar* es renacer para no desaparecer nunca más”

– Sami Naïr (“Poblaciones” 19).

A misconception frequently held in countries on the receiving end of migration is that it will be temporary. Sami Naïr, an Algerian-born French philosopher, sociologist, and expert in world migrations identifies this as a global phenomenon:

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18 Until the end of 1990s, Spanish media and cultural studies habitually used the terms “emigrante” and “emigración” to refer to contemporary immigration to that country, a fact indicative of Spain’s position as a newcomer among receiving countries of migratory flows. Even in a detailed study published in 2002 by philologist Inés D’Ors titled “Léxico de la emigración,” the critic employs the term “emigración” to encapsulate both migratory processes (22). I would suggest that the reluctance to use the neutral term “migración” or the term “inmigración” where appropriate is not only a reflection of Spain’s longer history as a country exporting migrants but also reflection on the tendency to view immigration as temporary: one who migrates must be an emigrant but if s/he does not settle permanently, s/he never becomes an immigrant as such.
“En todas partes la tendencia estructural de los movimientos de población es idéntica: acaban transformándose en inmigraciones definitivas. Resulta curioso que en las sociedades de acogida la inmigración sea concebida como algo transitorio” (“Poblaciones” 21). Tellingly, such a view is commonly held by those political and societal sectors that endorse a conception requiring fewer governmental expenditures and policies directed at dealing with the reception and integration aspects of immigration. The conservative position on the matter in Spain is reflected in the immigration policy implemented by the Partido Popular between 1996 and 2004 under José María Aznar. The amendments to the Ley de Extranjería made during these years are particularly revelatory of the association. Not recognising the permanency of immigration signifies not having to address the numerous issues facing immigrants seeking permanent status in the country. Instead, the Spanish government has invested millions of euros annually on the implementation of policing, vigilance, apprehension, and repatriation systems aimed at preventing and/or controlling immigration rather than directing and managing it to the benefit of both the growing economy and the extra-national workers willing to contribute to that growth. Paradoxically, the closing of Spain’s borders to migrants has favoured a permanent settlement in that country (Naïr, “Poblaciones” 22). By reducing the mechanisms through which migrants can enter, work, and then potentially leave Spain through legal means, migrants successful in entering the country are in essence forced to remain, unwilling to repeat the several years of travel and sacrifice for re-entry in the future.
In the Spanish novela negra, the paradoxical situation of the many undocumented immigrants manifests itself as an extreme societal pressure under which even the strongest, most morally driven of individuals may succumb. Before arriving at the “Promised Land,” some of the migrant characters expect to arrive in Spain, work for a period of time making and saving a large quantity of money, and return to their home countries with the ability to pay for a higher standard of living than that which they originally fled. Others intend to settle permanently in Spain, but once they see their atrocious living conditions (in particular those undocumented immigrants whose lives are managed by the firm grasp of organised crime and labour), would rather return to their homelands where they would at least be among their own people. Instead, many immigrants find themselves trapped in a closed system, often with confiscated passports and the threat of being turned over to the authorities, which perpetually prevents them from returning. For those for whom returning to their country of provenance is synonymous with a death sentence, living in the unbearable conditions of their residency in Spain is, to their astonishment, not much better. Nevertheless, there is no turning back.

The hard-boiled detective plot line, like these undocumented immigrants, is perpetually forward-moving. The mystery is solved by the physical pursuit of truth rather than behind the desk of an intellectual “whodunit-detective” and the mysterious and detective nature of the plot arises by chance within the greater context of the story rather than being presented as the main premise for the

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19 Irene Andres-Suárez identifies the “Promised Land” as one of the frequently referenced myths in contemporary Spanish fiction about immigration (54). In the following chapter, I analyse the specific role this biblical image plays during the immigrant’s voyage to Spain, as it is developed in the novela negra.
development of the novel. Once the detection begins, the acceleration of the investigation in turn creates the suspense of the story responsible for keeping the reader engaged. In detective stories dealing with immigration, theme and plot, content and structure, mirror each other to intensify both the engaging nature of the reading and the depth with which the immigrant’s dire situation can be understood.

Antonio Lozano, a relative newcomer to the novela negra scene has dedicated his first two novels to the topic of immigration to Spain. His second,\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Donde mueren los ríos} (2003), presents a multifaceted view of immigration, in particular its frequent conception as a “problem” for the receiving country. The tale is recounted by Amadú, a literature professor from Sierra Leone who allows his visa to expire and remains in the Canary Islands as one of thousands of day-labourer in the region’s invernaderos, or greenhouses. He forms a friendship with Usmán, from Burkina Faso, Tierno Bokari, from Mali, Aida from Senegal, and Fatiha from Morocco. When Aida turns up dead, Fatiha takes on the role of the hard-boiled detective, putting hers and Amadú’s life in danger to unmask the murderer when the local authorities are all to eager to convict Amadú, or any other African immigrant for that matter, for the crime. From the Canary Island’s greenhouses to its urban immigrant ghettos, this detective story gives a voice and a face to five immigrant characters, pulling them out from the swarm within which they are normally viewed in Spain. The reader comes face to face with the harshness that characterises their lives, before and after arriving on Spanish soil.

\textsuperscript{20} Lozano’s first detective novel, \textit{Harraga} (2002), is a magnificent introspective tale that also deals profoundly with immigration. I will discuss this novel in subsequent chapters for the role that border zones (Chapter 3) and the crossing of the Strait of Gibraltar (Chapter 4) play in this fantastic detective tale that earned Lozano the 2003 Novelpol prize for Novela Negra.
Amadú is painfully aware of the one-way direction that defines illegal immigration:

No podía volver a mi país, ni podía regresar a Senegal, porque mi pasaporte ya no tenía validez y las pateras sólo hacen el viaje en una dirección. Si me entregaba a la policía española, mi destino sería Sierra Leona, es decir la muerte. El único camino era permanecer aquí como ilegal, sin papeles, ni posibilidad de tenerlos, y resignarme a seguir siendo la mano de obra barata que tanto necesitan los empresarios europeos. La trampa. [...] Nos atan de pies y manos hundiéndonos en el vacío administrativo: no somos nadie. Si no hay papeles no hay identidad, si no hay identidad no hay derechos. (134-5)

Amadú’s absence of identity strips him of any rights, but paradoxically, this lack of rights makes him a prime target for the false accusation of murder when his companion Aida turns up dead. While he is non-existent when it comes to deserving a dignified standard of living, he exists enough to be a convenient scapegoat for the Spanish police who could hardly care less about finding the true identity of the person who murdered Aida, an African immigrant herself.

It is worth noting that in Lozano’s same novel, the immigrant’s desire to remain in Spain permanently or to return to the country of provenance runs along gender lines: once they realise their working and living conditions, the male
immigrants (Amadú, Usmán,\textsuperscript{21} and Tierno\textsuperscript{22}) wish they had never left, or at least long to return to their homeland; the suffering the female characters (Aida and Fatiha) endured back home, however, where in both cases they were the objects of abuse at the hands of their fathers and/or husbands, eliminates any nostalgic longing. The intensified trauma of their pasts makes their return even less of a possibility.

Sami Naïr identifies another very important consequence to the permanency of the Northward immigration to Europe/Spain: like the immigrants, whose movement is one-way North, so too is that of the benefits of migration. The workforce, the wealth: all represent a gain for the industrialised North while at the same time depriving developing nations of those strata of the population who represent the greatest potential (or danger in the eyes of many dictatorial African regimes) of political and cultural pressure for reform (“Poblaciones” 46). As immigrants’ stays in Spain become more definite, their connection to their country of provenance diminishes, as does, with time, their financial contribution to the families they left behind, further reducing these countries’ ability to develop vis-à-vis their northern neighbours. Meanwhile, as they are considered an imposition on their

\textsuperscript{21} Usmán, who left his Burkina Faso orphanage—counting on the sincerity of his Spanish sponsors when they wrote that they would like to adopt him one day—decides that the misery of his life in Spain as a greenhouse agricultural worker exceeds that which he could return to in the town of Uagadugú. Astonishingly, as an orphan raised in extreme poverty, he is the novel’s only character whose provenance represents a certain privilege. In his home country he was not politically persecuted as Amadú, was not dying of hunger as Tierno, and was not abused as Aida and Fatiha. With the help of the latter and an immigrant support centre, he turns himself in to the authorities who, pleased with volunteered repatriation, place him on a flight home: “Pagamos por venir en pateras, jugándonos la vida, y nos regalan un viaje de lujo, en avión, bromeaban algunos de los que regresaron conmigo. La mayoría llevaba en su rostro la amargura, la vergüenza, el fracaso. Otros, como yo, se sentían contentos de dar por terminada su aventura en el país de los blancos” (196).

\textsuperscript{22} Tierno Bokari, the youngest of the immigrant characters, is faced with the decision of whether to return to Mali or board the “Africans’ Plane” to Madrid. He chooses to try his fate on the Spanish mainland: “Yo no quiero vivir aquí eternamente. Tener papeles con que poder seguir la ruta forma parte de mi plan. Para cultivar tomates de sol a sol por una miseria, prefiero volver a la dibiterie. Me siento engañado y sin salida. Tengo que tomar una decisión” (151).
receiving country, Spain’s de facto policy has included the handing-off of the problem from one region to the next. In Donde mueren los ríos, Tierno, the youngest of the immigrant characters decides to test his fate by leaving the Canary Islands aboard the so-called “African plane”:

Todas las noches sale un avión a Madrid lleno de africanos que quieren irse de aquí. Al parecer, nadie los molesta ni les pide papeles. No me preguntas por qué, no he encontrado a nadie que me sepa dar una respuesta. Por la calle evitamos pasar delante de la policía, por si nos pide la documentación y nos lleva a la cárcel. Para coger ese avión, por lo que cuentan, tienes que pasar delante de un montón de ellos y no te piden nada. (151)

Realising the potentially permanent nature of the immigrants that evermore frequently arrive on its coasts via the Western Sahara and Mauritania, the “African plane” is a convenient way for the Canarian Archipelago to pass off the “problem” of immigration to the mainland of Spain, and once there, perhaps even to other European countries.

**Conclusion:**

In this chapter, I have discussed the ways in which the *novela negra* deconstructs five commonly held misconceptions about immigration in Spain. As the detectives dig deeply into the cases of rape and murder that they investigate, the pages of these novels reveal a level of criminality difficult to believe, even for the most avid reader of crime fiction. Unfortunately, the corrupt involvement of
authorities and politicians unmasked in these texts, is a reflection of that which exists in real-life Spain, where everyday, real-life immigrants struggle amidst a contradictory system that needs them for its economy to flourish, but treats them as unwanted invaders. As the socially engaged authors have stated in their interviews, essays, and prefaces, these detective tales are a platform on which a discussion about the unfortunate but real issues surrounding immigration can be held. With the relatively high level of readership of crime fiction, their texts will reach a large number of readers who otherwise might have tuned out given the saturation of the subject in the mass media, a subject I will discuss more in depth in the following chapter.
Chapter 3: The Media, Border Zones, and Marginality

Contemporary stories of immigration to Spain juxtapose the post-modern electronic information age, which creates a mass media culture without frontiers, with a nation—Spain—or a union of nations—the EU—currently designing ever-stronger physical borders that emphasize economic, cultural, and racial differentiation. In between are the immigrants, tangled in the web that lies between the life they wish to have, that which they often seek to forget, and the reality they must endure toward integration in the Western world. Neither here, nor there, neither fully accepted nor able to return, many immigrants embody the concept of the border, lying physically and metaphorically at the margins of their new and old societies. Surviving the sea voyage northward or escaping the dangers of the valleys of barbed wire fences separating the Spanish enclaves of Melilla and Ceuta from Morocco is no guarantee of a life of peace, employment, and just treatment. Detective fiction, which in its hardboiled tradition deals specifically with the underbelly of society and its marginal characters, is well suited for the topic of immigration, as the novels’ and short stories’ characters explore their positions with respect to the borders that their new society constructs and reinforces. As I shall explore in detail below, the detective texts of José Javier Abasolo, Yolanda Soler Onís, Lorenzo Silva, Jorge Martínez Reverte, Antonio Lozano, Andreu Martín, and Arturo Pérez-Reverte criticize the role of the media, their sensationalistic, fear-mongering tactics and seductive enticement toward Europe, and point to the contradictions and corruption permitted in the name of economic gain and scooping
the competition. While immigrants are kept from entering their imagined Paradise, the image of which the Western media sell them routinely, they are forced instead to negotiate lives in an underworld alongside other marginalized members of Spanish society and to navigate a world of lies, betrayal, and ultimately, crime.

**The Role of the Spanish Media in Reinforcing Fortress Europe:**

As discussed in the previous chapter, a number of important misconceptions surround the autochthonous understanding of contemporary immigration to Spain. Particularly significant is the skewed view that most immigrants are from the African continent. An important player in the creation of this misconception has been the Spanish media, which, along with other national arenas for discourse on the subject, reinforce a specific type of relationship between Spain and North Africa. Since the eighth century, this relationship has been defined by a bellicose rhetoric employed repeatedly in historic moments common to both shores of the Strait of Gibraltar. Daniela Fliesler points to the persistence of an aggressive discourse that originates with the Arab conquest of the Iberian Peninsula and develops further during the consequent Christian Reconquest of that territory. The echoes of this rhetoric then reappear in the justifications for Spain’s colonialist enterprise in Morocco at the beginning of the twentieth century and in criticism of Franco’s use of Moroccan troops at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War (73). In the last several years, a new association between the two regions is leading to the reemergence of such persistent rhetoric in discourses seeking to define the immigration of contemporary Africans to Spain, a significant percentage of which is clandestine. For their part, the
Spanish mass media have engaged in the perpetuation of such rhetoric promoting a threatening view of immigration. Critics\(^1\) have pointed to some of the ways in which the representation of immigration in the press contributes to a contempt for those that seek in Spain what many Spaniards, it should not be forgotten, sought in the rest of Europe and the Americas until the end of the 1970s. With their ability to be constantly updated, their broad reach and accessibility, and their use of digital technology, online Spanish dailies now play an important role in defining contemporary immigration for Spaniards and, as with other mediums, can frequently contribute to the bellicose characterization of the phenomenon.

The bellicose rhetoric in question originates in a Mozarabic chronicle of the year 754 in which the concept of the “loss” of the Iberian Peninsula is identified for the first time, thereby signalling its previous inhabitants, the Visigoths, as the rightful owners of said territory and the Berber general Tariq Ibn Ziyad’s troops as illegal invaders. Various texts to this effect were then published throughout the subsequent centuries, culminating in Alfonso el Sabio’s *Primera Crónica General* (circa 1275) in which the “loss” of Spain is explained through two sins: first, the Visigoth King Rodrigo rapes Caba, the daughter of the Ceutan governor don Julian, who then, from his peripheral location, avenges his honour by collaborating with North African inhabitants to invade the Peninsula. Centuries later, during the Spanish Civil War, Republican manifestos allude to an invasion led by Franco, criticising in this way the “Maurophilic” methods of that Christian dictator (Fliesler 79).

Today, the Spanish media are permeated with narratives that seek to define

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\(^1\) In addition to the works of Juan Goytisolo, Sami Naïr, and Mary Nash cited in this chapter, see Enrique Santamaría and Teun A. van Dijk.
the last decade’s significant increase in immigration from North Africa as a logical consequence of a linear Spanish history. These discourses implement rhetorical elements that equate clandestine immigration with a “new Moorish invasion,” uniting in this way historical events separated by more than a millennium. It is important to point out that in the first two events, the legends had the purpose of explaining the national foundation and reformulation of Spain, recurring to a definition of that country’s identity as being non-Moorish and non-Muslim. Spain’s patron saint is, after all, Santiago Matamoros (Saint James the Moor Slayer). In the contemporary context, a negative self-identification persists, based this time on being non-Maghrebian: different terminology—Moor, Muslim, Arab, Maghrebian—in each context, but the same rhetoric of the fear of invasion and the loss of identity. To complicate the situation further, present-day immigration to Spain is conceived within the context of a re-identification at the supra-national level of the European Union. While Spain continues to negotiate the intra-national identities of its Autonomous Communities, the country also seeks to concretise its role at the level of the European continent, which, as shall be seen, is integrally related to immigration. Spain is considered one of the doors to Europe and, as far as European Union consensus dictates, it is indispensable that these doors remain firmly closed.

It is worth mentioning that, since March 11, 2004, a third dimension has developed to the relation between contemporary North African immigrants and the Muslim invaders of the peninsular conquest. On this date, the Spanish faction of Al Qaeda carried out a series of simultaneous bombings on the Cercanías commuter system of Madrid during rush hour, killing 191 people and wounding 2050. In
response to these tragic events, historians have published suggestive texts such as César Vidal’s España frente al Islam: De Mahoma a Ben Laden, in which the author finds Al Qaeda’s motivation, and in particular its hate for Spain, in the Muslim faith. Who will forget, furthermore, statements made by Spanish ex-president and leader of the Partido Popular, José María Aznar, in his guest lecture at Georgetown University titled: “Seven Theses on Today’s Terrorism”: “the problem Spain has with Al Qaeda [goes] back no less than 1,300 years, to the early 8th century, when a Spain recently invaded by the Moors refused to become just another piece in the Islamic world and began a long battle to recover its identity.” Through affirmations such as these beginning in March of 2004, Al Qaeda, the Moors, and North African immigrants begin to be seen by some as one indistinguishable mass that is at once threatening and dangerous. Most significant is that three rather distinct wars subtly but powerfully become the background against which contemporary immigration is conceived: the war of conquest of the eighth century, the Spanish Civil War, and the contemporary War on Terror, in which Spain participated in Iraq in 2003-04.

Critics of Spain’s current immigration policy point to the government’s desire to please its European neighbours at any cost. They suggest that by participating in the Schengen Agreement, which opens borders to citizens of its member states and forcibly closes them to all others, Spain is participating in the creation of a new “Fortress Europe.” The term alludes, of course, to yet another war, that led by Nazi Germany. As is known, this war was founded upon nationalist ideas about the superiority of races, an allusion that critics of the Schengen Agreement transpose onto the immigration policy of its member states. In their own way, the Spanish
media, including those in electronic form, are contributing to the sentiment that the new “Fortress Europe” requires reinforcement.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, Spaniards have been bombarded on a daily basis with news stories that reduce African immigration to Spain to mere numbers: the excessive numbers of travellers on sunken *pateras*; the number of cadavers found on Andalusia’s coasts; the quantity of North Africans found hiding in Spanish tankers trafficking humans; and, more recently, the large number of Sub-Saharan Africans arriving in *cayucos* on the coasts of the Canary Islands. Numbers, figures, quantities, all contribute to the idea of an excessive transit of immigrants by way of invasion. See for example the following articles in the daily *El País* to this effect: “Asciende a 331 el número de indocumentados que han llegado a las costas canarias: Mauritania detiene a 50 inmigrantes ilegales que fueron abandonados cerca de la frontera con el Sáhara” (14/03/2006); “Mueren 32 ‘sin papeles’ al naufragar una patera frente a Mauritania: La Guardia Civil busca un barco sospechoso que supuestamente transporta a 500 inmigrantes” (03-04-2006). In the last decade, immigration to Spain has become a staple of the press, a fact reflected by the assignation of *Tema* status to the topic by *El País* in its online section titled *A fondo*, which, in spite of its promising name, does not delve into the subject much.

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2 Colloquially and in the mass media, this term is now synonymous with the small fishing boats used by immigrants to cross the Strait of Gibraltar. Non-existent in most Castilian language dictionaries until the late nineties, *patera* finally appears in the twenty-second edition of the DRAE (Diccionario de la Real Academia Española) in 2001 in reference to a small boat with the following definition: “Embarcación pequeña, de fondo plano, sin quilla.” While the etymology of the term indicates that *patera* came from the Andalusian word meaning “barco muy plano en el fondo para perseguir patos en sitios de poco calado” (Alcalá Venceslada 459) the word’s most common significance in Castilian remains not that in relation to ducks but to the transportation of undocumented immigrants.

3 The term *cayuco* is often used to refer to a different type of small fishing craft prominently used by immigrants travelling from Mauritania to the Canary Islands. This term also appear in the twenty-second edition of the DRAE with the following definition: “Embarcación india de una pieza, más pequeña que la canoa, con el fondo plano y sin quilla, que se gobierna y mueve con el canalete.”
more deeply than by linking the reader to photo galleries and statistics archived from a decade of reporting on the subject.⁴

Independently of news agencies’ particular ideological positions, the Spanish media participate in forming generalizations about immigrants, amassing them into a huge homogeneous conglomerate conceived of, almost exclusively, through statistics. This contributes to a skewed perspective that leads to a categorization of the phenomenon as a “problem,” which in turn provokes public rejection of immigrants. Proof of this were the events that took place in El Ejido, Almería in 2000. By concentrating the focus of reporting on immigration on the arrival of pateras and cayucos from Africa, the media, and consequently its Spanish consumers, lose sight of the other immigrants that exist in Spain. In particular, so-called “communitarian” immigrants such as nationals of Germany and the United Kingdom are mostly forgotten in comparison to the constant image of those immigrants whose countries of origin belong to the developing world. Northern immigrants who choose Spain for its climate and relatively inferior cost of living are not the characters that spring to the average Spaniard’s mind when thinking about immigration for three significant reasons: they are white, they are wealthy, and they rarely figure in the national media. Yet, immigrants from other European Union countries form the majority of foreign residents in Spain:

⁴ One sub-section of El País’s A fondo is titled “Cronología: Las llegadas masivas de inmigrantes en los dos últimos años” (15/10/2003), where, date by date, the newspaper outlines the numbers of boats and immigrants intercepted, capsized, or beached along the Spanish coast between 2001 and 2003. In another sub-section, titled “Claves: La inmigración en cifras” (13/01/2004), the daily outlines the numbers of immigrants arrived in Spain according to the following categories: Regularización, Comunidades autónomas, Procedencia, Afiliados a la Seguridad Social, Repatriaciones. The categorizations chosen by the paper include the very relevant, at least in the average reader’s mind, category of “Number of Immigrants on Social Assistance,” a statistic not likely to gain immigrants any favour with their autochthonous neighbours who may already be prejudiced about them being a drain on the system.
De las seis nacionalidades a las que pertenecen la mitad de los residentes, los marroquíes son los únicos que no forman parte de la Unión Europea. Frente al habitual discurso que suelen transmitir los medios de comunicación, frente a la supuesta ‘invasión’ de los inmigrantes procedentes de los países pobres, estas cifras deberían apaciguar los temores de la opinión pública. Pero da lo mismo. La realidad, no cabe duda, siempre se ha revelado impotente frente a los mitos. (Goytisolo 114)

Mary Nash identifica otro elemento importante del fenómeno migratorio que los medios de comunicación olvidan: las mujeres inmigrantes (106). Con la excepción de informes ocasionales que cuentan con el número de mujeres embarazadas 5 dentro del perfil numérico de los viajeros rescatados en un patera o un cayuco, las mujeres son prácticamente invisibles en el imaginario español sobre la inmigración. Más bien, lo que prevalece en los medios son imágenes de docenas de hombres jóvenes. Esta presentación masculinizada de la inmigración en España contribuye a su conceptualización como amenazante, algo que podría considerarse una militarización de la inmigración.

Worth noting and along these same lines is another aspect of the bellicose rhetoric recycled throughout the centuries to describe the arrival of North African people in Spain: the lack of agency of the individuals that form the threatening “troops,” whether real or conceived. In the foundational myth of the

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5 Pregnant women spike slightly more interest than their non-pregnant counterparts in the media since they can be portrayed as using the birth of their child, commonly referred to as bebés-gancho, to ascertain their permanency on Spanish soil. See in Figure 1, for example, the powerful image that accompanies the following headline in *El País*, on 16/11/2006: “Cuatro bebés y una embarazada en una patera en Fuerteventura: En la imagen, una mujer abraza a su bebé tras ser rescatados en la costa de Fuerteventura.”
country, it is a Peninsular character, don Julian, who instigates the invasion northward across the Strait of Gibraltar, and the North African inhabitants who support him are painted as mere pawns in the campaign to carry out his vengeance. In the resurgence of the myth during the Spanish Civil War, it is a Spaniard, General Franco, who leads Moroccans in his “invasion” of the Peninsula. Today, within the context of a perceived migratory invasion, the Spanish mass media have again robbed the immigrants of their agency in taking on a voyage to Europe. Nash points to the dehumanising effect of the words chosen by the mass media to refer to the migratory phenomenon. Rather than speaking of individuals, men, women, immigrants, youths, the press increasingly refers to these humans through, quite
simply, the means of transportation they take to Spain: *pateras, cayucos, barcos*, etc. (70). The media’s representation of immigrants as being without agency contributes to a bellicose allusion to their existence in Spain. The immigrants are militarised, represented as soldiers under the command of others, following unquestioningly their superior’s commands who, in this case, would be those transporting them to Spain. Denying immigrants their agency emphasizes their incapacity for self-determination and creates an image of immigrants that is less civilized and therefore more threatening. Such a relation contributes in turn to an exaggerated conception of immigrants as dangerous and delinquent.

When the media do refer to immigrants themselves, they regularly do so metaphorically, employing terms that have now become synonyms for “immigrant.” Each of these terms connotes immigration negatively: referring to immigrants simply as *ilegales*, emphasises their lack of rights to the territory and alludes once again to the conquest of the Peninsula; another expression, *sin papeles*, is reminiscent of another era, the Spanish Inquisition, in which the term referred to lack of documentation indicating purity of blood; the term *clandestinos* reinforces the perception of immigration as a threat; and finally, *espaldas mojadas*, terminology borrowed from the American media’s coverage of Latin Americans crossing the Rio Grand that implies desperation and barbarism (Nash 50). In addition, Spanish headlines are stuffed with wartime vocabulary to describe the Civil Guard’s role in controlling immigration: words such as *interceptar*, or *patrulleras*, as well as words
such as *vigilancia* are used to refer to Spain’s specific role within Fortress Europe. In fact, the technology behind the vigilance system employed to deter and to control immigration through Spanish coasts is highlighted by Spain’s online newspapers. *El País* has dedicated several pages to this topic in its *Gráficos* section, detailing the new mechanisms developed to this end. The interactive map of the Strait of Gibraltar encourages readers to click on the main points of entry of immigrants who arrive in *pateras*—the beaches off of Zahara, Bolonia, Tarifa, and Algeciras, for example—and details reassuringly the different ways in which SIVE (Sistema Integrado de Vigilancia Exterior), with its infra-red detectors, watch towers, and patrol boats, works to defend the Spanish territory (see Figure 2). In line with the media’s emphasis on statistics to broach the subject of immigration, readers can click on each point of entry for numerical data on the number of boats and detentions for each location. An Andalusian citizen, for example, can find out the exact number of Civil Guards, military vehicles, boats, night-vision equipment, and high-tech cameras employed locally in her/his protection from immigration. My choice of the words “defend” and “protection” are not accidental since by the end of the section on the SIVE, the reader has likely forgotten that s/he was reading about immigration and is now probably convinced of a terrible threat from which Spain is protecting her/him. Nowhere does this special section refer to immigrants as individuals until the very last page reporting on details of the actual voyage across the Strait. Even in this last

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[6] Consider the following headlines published in the Spanish daily *El País*: “ Interceptada en Granada una patera con 36 inmigrantes: Es la segunda embarcación localizada en la zona en sólo 48 horas” (29 Apr. 2006); “ Interceptadas en Tenerife dos pateras con 121 inmigrantes mauritanos: Al menos dos de los ‘sin papeles’ son menores” (21 Mar. 2006); “Una patrullera de la Guardia Civil inspecciona un barco con 200 inmigrantes en Canarias: Si se confirma que la embarcación no sufre daños, no desembarcará en las islas” (14 Sep. 2006); “La comisión propone crear un sistema europeo de patrullas y vigilancia para interceptar pateras: Llega un cayuco a El Hierro con 99 a bordo” (30 Nov. 2006).
slide, however, the information provided refers simply to the number of “individuals” that usually fit into one *patera*. The overall effect of these headlines, articles, and graphics is to incite fear of the immigrant. While detailing the vigilance system in national papers may be justified under the pretext that it simply informs the reading public or even reassures it with respect to the immigration situation, this approach actually ends up creating an idea that immigrants must be feared.

A study of immigration in the detective fiction reveals that while Spanish authorities, funded and pressured by the European Union, *literally* police Europe’s southern border, hardboiled tales of immigration *literarily* police the border zones that immigrants inhabit diegetically in the pages of the text. In Antonio Lozano’s *Harraga*, a direct reference to Spain’s television media as the country’s primary
source of information on immigration echoes the style and emphasis of the articles highlighted above in the Spanish print media:

El informativo de la televisión española abría con la noticia de que un barco pesquero cargado de emigrantes había encallado en las costas españolas, arrastrado por el viento y el oleaje contra los arrecifes. Varios de ellos y algunos miembros de la tripulación habían muerto, otros habían sido encontrado heridos entre los restos de la embarcación. El resto de la tripulación había desaparecido, y se suponía que algunos habían logrado huir. La Guardia Civil llevaba varias horas rastreando la zona. (108-09)

Not all the policing of immigrants in these detective stories takes place on the actual geographic border between Spain and Africa. As I will discuss below, these texts do, however, within the confines of their pages, explore the relationship between the Spanish authorities and immigrants in the marginalized, border zones they inhabit, even once they have physically arrived on European territory.

Still, even within the actual Spanish mass media, not all news is bad. The other face of immigration to Spain, that of the stories of individual immigrants who arrive in that country from the four corners of the world, work hard, and create a new life for themselves and their children, does occasionally appear in the pages of Spanish papers. Less frequent than the flashy headlines that adorn the front pages and more obscurely located in the society and opinion sections, articles on these aspects are published by an increasing number of journalists. Conscious of the repercussions that short and superficial news captions have on the formation of the
collective imaginary, writers such as Juan Goytisolo seek to remind the Spanish reader of the hypocrisy of policies that promote the persecution of immigrants all the while depending on their cheap labour for economic growth. Particularly critical have been satirical cartoonists who, using the power of image and a delicate wit capture the absurdity of the situation, reminding us that at the centre of Fortress Europe’s reinforcement are human lives. Finally, it should be noted that it is not only in Spain nor only the topic of immigration that the press portrays within the context of a threat. Fear-mongering dominates today’s modern mass media including, of course, English-language press that warns its consumers of news of a multitude of dangers. It is in this context that writers of detective fiction seek to bring forth a different view of immigration to readers saturated with its coverage in the media.

Figure 3: “En el cielo, ¿pedirán papeles?” by Máximo – *El País*. (08 Oct. 05).

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8 See for example El Roto’s powerful cartoons in *El País*: “Las vallas sólo funcionan si se cree en ellas” (4 Oct. 2005), “Ojo, mancha” (6 Oct. 2005), “Al Subsahariano desconocido” (11 Oct. 2005), and “¡Las invasiones se hacen en portaaviones y no en pateras!” (12 Oct. 2005). See also Máximo’s cartoons in the same daily titled: “En el cielo, ¿pedirán papeles?” (Figure 3) and “Ceuta/Melilla” (3 Oct. 2005).
“¡Los inmigrantes son todos criminosos!”

A specific consequence to the Spanish mass media’s coverage of immigration has been the development of a misconception within public opinion that immigrants are by definition delinquent. In fact, the media reinforce the already existent prejudices held by much of the Spanish public as a result of its relative ignorance of the geopolitical, social, or cultural dimensions of their immigrants' countries of provenance. Most Spaniards’ understanding of the situation consists of a rather vague idea that somewhere down there, on the African continent, the (now) immigrants likely had to steal, kill, or do anything else necessary in order to survive the backwardness of their home countries and that they will carry over this same social behaviour into Spain. With this view that crime has become a part of “their nature” (like prostitution among immigrant women, as discussed in the previous chapter), lies the assumption that criminality will necessarily increase with an increase in immigration.9 The media’s portrayal of immigration as a dehumanised, homogenous mass has led to the categorization of immigrants within very restricted, inaccurate, stereotypes. Not only does the press repeatedly rely on terms denoting invasion, war, and natural disasters, it also frequently equates the more neutral term inmigrante with the now quasi-synonymous terms indocumentados, ilegales, and sin papeles. The result is a skewed perception that all immigrants are illegal. Since the frequency with which immigrants attempting to reach Spain through clandestine

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9 The CIS’s (Centro de Investigación Sociológicas) opinion barometer, published monthly since 1979, reveals the perceived connection between unemployment, crime, terrorism, and immigration, among surveyed Spaniards. From the mid-1990s to around 2005, these four “issues” have consistently topped the charts in response to the question: “¿Cuáles son, a su juicio, los tres problemas principales que existen actualmente en España?”.
measures is much more dramatic and newsworthy than, for example, their struggles for equal pay and equal rights within the workforce, or their difficulties in securing decent housing.\textsuperscript{10} stories and photographic images of North and Sub-Saharan Africans dangerously crammed into fishing boats remain the most prevalent form of reporting. Most detrimental to a progression of peaceful coexistence between autochthonous and naturalized Spaniards is the headlines’ implied association between “illegal status” and “illegality” in general. In other words, the pervasive use of the term \textit{illegal} with \textit{inmigrante} has added flame to the already existent fire of perception that immigrants are inherently criminal. Such assumptions are a staple of detective Antonio Jimenez’s modus operandi in José Javier Abasolo’s \textit{El color de los muertos}. When the detective is assigned the case of a murdered immigrant, he assures himself and his colleagues that he knows exactly how this story is going to play out: “¿qué otra cosa podía pensar tratándose de un moro? – que se trataba de la típica reyerta entre compatriotas por líos de faldas o de drogas y que a alguien, Mohamed de nombre sin lugar de dudas, se le había escapado la navaja con nefastas consecuencias” (29). The policeman’s language is utterly offensive, from his racist jokes about the criminal’s probable name to his Islamophobic commentary of what likely ensued after the crime was committed:

\textit{De acuerdo con el orden natural de las cosas el asesino tendría que haber sido un compatriota del muerto, posiblemente un ilegal, que a esas horas debería estar llorando amargamente mientras explicaba}

\textsuperscript{10} As Sami Nair has identified, “Si por desgracia algunos medios de comunicación han tomado la costumbre de engordar desproporcionadamente—la violencia pasa factura—los pocos casos de inseguridad provocados por inmigrantes marginales y marginados, es con el fin de ocultar de un modo eficaz la verdadera y a menudo dramática situación de inseguridad en el trabajo que padecen los propios inmigrantes” (España 118).
que no sabía que le había pasado ya que quería al difunto como a un hermano y se justificaba diciendo que algo le cegó, el maldito alcohol, para una vez que un buen musulmán como yo desobedece los preceptos del profeta acaba ocurriendo una desgracia, sí, eso hubiera dicho con toda seguridad el tal Mohamed o Abdullah o Salim. (29)

As Jimenez will find out, the deceased man was in fact a worker with legal status by the name of Omar and his murderers were two autochthonous Spaniards who, as part of a layered and complicated scheme involving national security agencies and Spanish secret services, actually killed the wrong man.

It is true, however, that the difficulties surrounding undocumented immigrants’ lives in Spain will likely lead them to the margins of society, forced to live and work in segregated environments. As with all marginalized groups in society, of immigrant or autochthonous origins, clandestine immigrants may need to conduct a portion of their daily activities under the radar of authorities and neighbours. The spectrum of these activities, however, is immense: at the one end are hard-working, honest (while perhaps undocumented) labourers in Andalusia’s greenhouses and urban underground factories, while at the other end are some immigrants who actively participate in illicit activities, including the trafficking of drugs and people. Frequently, however, the latter type of activity involves the complicity and/or cooperation of Spanish agents. The investigations of these detective stories, each revealing the many differing aspects of immigration, examine not only the various levels of delinquency that an undocumented immigrant might encounter on her/his journey toward becoming a permanent resident of Spain; their detectives also seek to
uncover the root causes—societal, political, and economic—that have in many cases contributed to immigrant delinquency. While unravelling the multi-layered system that foments the largely underground areas in which many undocumented workers conduct their lives, one constant factor is true: the overwhelming majority of these immigrants would not choose to work as tax-evading travelling vendors, low-level traffickers or thieves; rather, they do what they must in order to survive in a Western system that, despite its superior opportunities for personal economic gain with respect to the immigrants’ countries of provenance, nevertheless pigeonholes immigrants into the same low-wage, little-respected, often illegal, activities, regardless of the immigrants’ level of education, training, or experience.

The Authorities and the Media: A Love-Hate Relationship

In the contemporary Spanish detective novel, the relationship between law enforcement and the media is of particular interest. The nature of these rapports at times directly influence the manner in which the topic of immigration, legal or illegal, or the crimes committed by or against immigrants is handled. As a rule, the police authorities and their journalistic counterparts tolerate each other at best, and more often than not, engage in a ridiculous back and forth competition to see who solves the mystery first. All the while, both types of characters intermittently reveal restricted details to each other if such cooperation indicates the possibility of a breakthrough for their own personal investigation. This game is a well engrained element of the hardboiled tradition and is ubiquitous in traditional American detective novels and films and remains a staple of contemporary, televised North American
The relationship between Yolanda Soler Onís’s detective Gumersindo Roca and Antidio Rodríguez, his rival and journalist for a local Canarian newspaper, is exactly of this ilk. Roca’s sentiments about Rodríguez’s method are very clear: “le tocaba las narices la poca discreción de la gente, y luego esos metomentodo de los periodistas, pensó, si por lo menos supieran colaborar, pero se cargaban una investigación, hasta un buen reportaje, por vender cuatro periódicos más al día” (25). According to the detective, the journalist’s comportment breaks a moral code in which solving a case and potentially saving a life should not be compromised for the sake of a profit. Despite his reprisal of Rodríguez’s way of operating, detective Roca succumbs to the temptation of collaboration when he realizes that a little information given to the press now may result in a bit of relevant information later (113). Tragically, this secretive and ultimately self-interested form of cooperation between the two individuals allows for relevant information to fall through the cracks. When Rodríguez publishes the fact that there was a witness to Elda Meyers’s murder, the witness is himself killed. At that point in Roca’s investigation, the hardboiled detective knew not to involve Iván, a mentally challenged young man who worked in a pub near the site of the murder, for fear his life would be in danger in an already messy tale of deception and murder. Ultimately, however, his sometimes-yes sometimes-no policy of information trading with the journalist Rodríguez, who clearly would do anything for a juicy story, gets Iván killed (135).

Still, members of the Spanish media are not always portrayed as competitive, story-driven journalists in the contemporary novela negra. In line with the hardboiled
tradition of exposing corruption, these texts do not hesitate to expose circumstances in which, especially local, media are in bed with corrupt authorities. In Lorenzo Silva’s detective short story “Un asunto vecinal,” it takes somewhat of an outsider, the Madrid-stationed investigator Rubén Bevilacqua, to unveil the shady dealings between the local police force and the local press, which, rather than reporting impartially, acts as the unofficial spokesperson of the force. Sent to investigate the murder of Wilmer Washington Estrada, an Ecuadorian immigrant, Bevilacqua knows all too well what to expect from the small Murcian town’s media outlets:

Los periódicos locales, en efecto, y ya me imaginaba intoxicados por quién, aventuraban algunas hipótesis, todas ellas en línea del ajuste de cuentas dentro de la propia comunidad ecuatoriana del pueblo, aunque con variaciones en cuanto al móvil. Se hablaba de un crimen pasional, de una deuda impaga da, de rivalidad entre bandas dedicadas a la introducción ilegal de inmigrantes… De fantasía y de credulidad el mundo anda bien abastecido. (191)

That quién to whom Bevilacqua refers is the local city councillor who greets the detective from the capital and for whom the nature and ethnicity of the crime is a forgone conclusion (170). Much to the councillor’s dismay, as well as that of the local police chief Novales, Estrada’s murderer is not a revenge-seeking drug trafficker or a debt-owed compatriot; it is a local Spaniard who couldn’t stand the fact that his daughter was falling in love with “un sudaca de mierda” (211).

Given the usual conflictive or corrupt relation between authorities, detectives, and the media in the contemporary novela negra, it is fitting to consider the rather
unusual case of Julio Gálvez, Jorge Martínez Reverte’s beloved journalist turned hardboiled detective. As an unconfident and self-deprecating media man, Gálvez repeatedly ponders the nature of his profession, his relative lack of ability to carry it out successfully, and, most importantly, the responsibilities he has to society to deliver objective and meaningful news. Most often, his conclusions are cynical: “He vivido lo suficiente como para haber traicionado confianzas y haber servido de instrumento a otros, que son cosas que le pueden pasar a quien hace periodismo de investigación” (9). Later, he describes his profession as: “[un] abnegado servicio que los periodistas tenemos que prestar al público: contar lo que pensamos que va a interesarle… Bueno, o lo que se nos ocurre para poder llenar una página” (16).

One has only to continue reading the text, however, to discover that the cynicism in Gálvez’s conclusions about journalism does not permeate his behaviour as a journalist. Rather, Gálvez assumes the mantle of the mythical “good journalist,” whose motivation is driven by the quest for truth and the re-establishment of moral standards in a post-modern society that continues to transgress them. The characterization of Gálvez as this “good journalist” stems in part from the formal conventions required by the characterization of the “good hard-boiled detective,” and the union of these characteristics in Julio Gálvez is a direct result of the tension between thematic and formal forces in the novel.

The previous three novels of Martínez Reverte’s detective series, published in 1979, 1982, and 1995, have depicted Gálvez as somewhat of a mediocre journalist. In each text, he hopes his next big break will land him a good job in a better newspaper. In Gálvez en la frontera, however, professional ascendance is no longer
a concern for Julio Gálvez: his newspaper is considered to be of good quality and the protagonist’s age and maturity have made him less ambitious. One must ask, therefore, why he should risk his life repeatedly pursuing a story that does not relate to the immediate task at hand. Why does Gálvez strive to free Ahmid, the North African protagonist in the purse-snatching incident, of allegations of murder, when his editor has entrusted him with another unrelated assignment? I propose that his motivation is not wholly explained by his role as journalist but that it is also informed by his characterization as a hard-boiled detective.

The relationship between the Spanish hard-boiled detective story and critical realism has been well established. Critics such as Patricia Hart, José Colmeiro, Joan Ramon Resina, and Renée Craig-Odders have all demonstrated that the so-called “boom” of the detective novel in Spain in the 1970s and 1980s was no coincidence. The transition to democracy and the resulting Desencanto in the post-Franco years created a fertile atmosphere for the development of a genre in Spain that had evolved more than a century earlier in the northeastern United States under similar social circumstances: increased crime, vandalism, drug addiction, etc. Beginning with Edgar Allan Poe’s Murders in the Rue Morgue (1841) and perfected by Raymond Chandler and Dashiel Hammett, the hard-boiled detective story “confronts the brutal reality of modern urban crime and has a marked social dimension” (Macklin 51). Two of Reverte’s previous novels, Demasiado para Gálvez and Gálvez en Euskadi, have been consistently studied within the context of Spain’s Disenchantment period and are seen to address two of the main concerns of that era: namely “the preponderance of contemporary economic scandals,” in the first
(Craig-Odders, *Detective 63*) and growing nationalism and industrialization in Basque Country, in the second. While *Gálvez en la Frontera* is no longer considered a novel of the disenchantment period, its social dimension is not in the least diminished. Just as Reverte exposed various perspectives on the Basque nationalist movement in his previous novel, he provides the reader with several takes on immigration in Spain in *Gálvez en la frontera*.

Part of writing within critical realism is constructing a protagonist whose desire to right wrongs and to serve justice is believable. As such, hard-boiled detectives are often characterized by not having anything to win from their investigations. This altruism in turn emphasizes the commitment to the social criticism of the text. In the case of Julio Gálvez, his motivation is perhaps best understood in comparison to that of one of his fellow colleagues, Almudena. Together, these two journalists represent the socially conscious and politically progressive perspective that Reverte places in opposition to that of the police and other governmental institutions. Both Gálvez and Almudena are sympathetic to the struggles of young illegal immigrants such as Ahmid, and to the excruciatingly difficult events that have brought them to circumstances in which the dangers and violence associated with their petty thievery are a way of life preferable to the one left in their native country. While Gálvez’s and Almudena’s ideological positions may be similar, their motivations for getting involved in the matter of immigration are very different.

Almudena is a young twenty-something woman who is entrusted with the immigration story when Gálvez is taken off of it for not being young enough to keep up. While she follows Ahmid to Tangiers to capture what she hopes will be the
humanitarian immigration story of the year, Gálvez takes the same route to try to help the young man clear his name of murder accusations. It is true that Gálvez also wants to ascertain from Ahmid the location of the stolen papers, and therefore reveal a serious economic scandal by writing an exposé, but, as Reverte makes quite obvious, this is only his official motivation for the investigation. His real involvement is notably emotional and personal. In this respect, Gálvez’s characterization reveals an evolution from the previous novels of the series and Almudena serves to juxtapose this newly found Gálvez with the young, naïve, and idealistic journalist he once was.

When in Tangiers, both characters work separately to find Ahmid and his mafia boss, Rachid. While Gálvez is too smart to fall into the trap of a certain Mohamed who pretends to be Rachid’s father, Almudena innocently falls right in, allowing herself to be swept away by the false-father’s touching story of a kind-hearted son, whose only dream is to be able to finish his studies in Spain. Almudena gets what she thinks are the first steps toward an excellent story, while Gálvez refrains from the temptation and concentrates on finding Ahmid in order to clear his name. In the end, they are both led to a raft owner who agrees to take them back to Algeciras and flee the Chinese mafia that is pursuing them. In a boat with fifteen others, the couple experience firsthand the fear and risk of crossing the Strait. When by fortune they arrive safely, they are the only individuals not to be apprehended by the Spanish police and to be sent back to Morocco.

As Spaniards with an active critical mind, both Gálvez and Almudena experience a sense of solidarity with their fellow travellers that they will never forget.
As journalists, however, they proceed with this information in very distinct ways. Gálvez prefers not to engage in the sensational reporting, knowing that the overexposure of such stories has led to the desensitisation on behalf of the Spanish public to the immigrant cause: “No había otra expresión en sus rostros que la de la derrota, mientras se acuclillaban a la espera del momento de la expulsión. Posiblemente hubieran visto en la televisión española los rostros de otros miles como ellos que habían fracasado en el intento” (245).

The path that Gálvez takes is much less opportunistic and draws far less attention to his name as a journalist, but is equally important in terms of a fight in the name of immigrants and their hardships in Spain. With the documents recovered, and the economic scandal exposed, Gálvez helps to dismantle a large Spanish mafia ring that used poor, young, illegal North African immigrants for its dirty work. The story is far less heart wrenching but his contribution to the improvement of the social conditions of his society, as a journalist and as a detective, is nonetheless very important.

The portrayal of the Spanish journalist in Gálvez en la frontera serves to exemplify the different, more critical role that journalists like Jorge Martínez Reverte and his colleagues ought to be taking with respect to the present immigrant situation in Spain. The way in which Reverte makes this social commentary is well in line with the detective genre of which Gálvez en la frontera is a part. Perhaps the most notable aspects of this undertaking is the fine line that Reverte walks between adhering to conventions of form and the needs for the thematic development of the topic of immigration. The borders in this novel, therefore, are not just the geographic
ones across which Gálvez must travel; rather, Reverte explores the border between Gálvez’s characterization as journalist and as detective, and the border between opportunistic journalism and journalism of truth. In this respect, Gálvez is most certainly *en la frontera*.

**The Promised Land**

When you come to the land that the Lord will give you, as he promised, you shall keep this observance.  
Exodus 12.25

and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey,  
Exodus 3.8

While the Spanish press’s coverage of immigration has undoubtedly influenced the perception that that country’s citizens have on the topic, Western media of a different kind have played an important role in affecting the manner in which immigrants themselves conceive of the journey to Europe that awaits them. More specifically, Western media that make their way to the developing world have skewed the image immigrants have of the life that awaits them should they be successful in their voyage. A fundamental problem with the illegal trafficking of workers from the Third to the First World is the misconception held by those workers of the conditions that will define their actual existence upon arrival in what they mistakenly conceive of as the “Promised Land.” Lured Northward by the glitz and
glamour so pervasive in images they see of the West on television\textsuperscript{11} and movie screens, future immigrants are encouraged to take on the miserable and dangerous journey to Europe hoping that that life will one day be theirs:

La atracción hacia el \textit{way of life} occidental de las capas medias de la población de los países del Sur proviene precisamente de su integración “cultural” en el sistema mundial. Se han hecho muy pocos estudios cualitativos sobre este tema, pero se sabe que el acceso al modo de consumo occidental desempeña un papel decisivo en la decisión de emigrar por parte de estratos sociales a menudo integrados en su país de origen. (Naïr, Poblaciones 42-43)

While citizens of developing countries have access to Western images of consumerism through the frontier-less world of post-modern information age, there are many physical and metaphorical borders that will make attaining that \textit{way of life} very difficult. As Sami Naïr points out, the relationship between Western (or Northern) consumerism and mass media, as they infiltrate the Third World (or the South), is intimate:

Y es también, sobre todo, el advenimiento de una civilización mundial concretizada no sólo en los objetos producidos y en la necesaria adaptación mental para su utilización, sino también en las industrias de los sueños, de la ficción y de la información, transmitidas por los medios de comunicación—y transmitidas hasta en los rincones más

\textsuperscript{11} Anthropologist Henk Driessen’s study of the new European-African frontier finds that media-inspired voyages to Europe comprise a part of many of his interviewee’s tales of immigration. Consider his commentary, for example, on an interview with a man named Abdu from Dakar: “His view of Europe was molded by the glamorous television images of affluence and liberty which he saw in cafés” (104).
recónditos del planeta—. […] Por supuesto, esta mundialización no se produce por mera simetría de los intercambios: de hecho, es el Norte el que inventa; y el Sur el que se amolda al imaginario del Norte, el que adopta los objetos, las aspiraciones, los rituales, la visión del mundo. El Norte domina. (Poblaciones 26-27)

As several of the detective novels dealing with the topic of immigration explore, the Spanish Paradise is imagined by future immigrants to be a land that will help them forget the impoverished lives they lead in their countries of origin. In Lozano’s *Harraga*, the protagonist Jalid says as much before his first voyage to Spain: “ unas semanas más tarde, me embarqué en él, para cruzar el Estrecho como quien cruza la frontera entre el Infierno y el Paraíso” (28).12 Unfortunately, upon arriving in Spain, immigrants quickly realize that their long and arduous journey was only the very beginning of the even longer one that may one day lead them to the life they saw on those television screens. Instead, they find themselves living a life often worse than that which they left, at least at the beginning of their stay in Spain, since in addition to terrible living and working conditions,13 their days are now also clouded with fear of the authorities and a nostalgia for their culture and loved ones. One of Antonio Lozano’s characters in *Donde mueren los ríos* states that any work at all in his home country of Senegal would have trumped his new life in Spain: “Al principio, creíamos que la vida sería mucho mejor aquí que en África. Ya sabes, las cosas que oyes,

12 Antonio Lozano’s reference to Spain as Paradise is a motif that runs all throughout the novel: “La mayor parte del tabaco americano y del alcohol que entraba ilegalmente en Marruecos era asunto suyo. Muchos de los barcos pesqueros que arribaban a las costas españolas cargados de emigrantes en busca del Paraíso habían sido puestos a la mar también por ella” (57).

13 Antonio Lozano’s narrator and protagonist, Jalid, describes the situation powerfully in *Harraga*: “La fresa de Huelva, la fruta de Murcia, el tomate de Almería eran recogidos por brazos africanos que intentaban, a cambio de una vida más miserable aún que la que habían dejado, hacinados en barracones insalubres, hacer llegar una mano llena de comida a sus hijos” (56).
que ves en la televisión. Pero ahora lo tengo claro: si tuviera trabajo en Senegal, no lo dudaba ni un instante. Me volvía para allá. Echo de menos demasiadas cosas” (69).

An important aspect to keep in mind is that Spain’s promotion as a country conceived of as the Promised Land took place relatively recently. Spain is a newcomer as a European destination for immigrants in search of wealth, having until the 1970s been little more than “la antesala del supuesto paraíso europeo” (Goytisolo 201). Spain’s more traditional role as a stepping stone for immigrants on their way to bigger and better things (and places) is underlined in Andreu Martín’s 1979 detective novel Aprende y calla:

Yo sabía que los norteafricanos no solían quedarse definitivamente en España, que no era más que una escala en el camino hacia países donde, aun explotándolos, sacarían más dinero. Paraban un tiempo aquí para pagarse parte del viaje y luego se largaban. Cincuenta por ciento de su sueldo para la empresa por ‘hacerles el favor de darles trabajo’, otros veinticinco para pagar la estancia, otro tanto para continuar el viaje, ¿con qué coño se quedaban ellos? (102)

Currently, as permanent immigration becomes a reality in Spain, however, so too does the segregation of immigrants, legally, socially, and physically. Their often atrocious living conditions would be appalling to any autochthonous Spaniard, not to mention to the many Northern Europeans who vacation, sometimes just a few kilometres away, on Spain’s coasts. The illegal status of some of the immigrants, however, has meant that their abodes are as hidden as possible from the greater
public, a situation that local Spaniards welcome in a disgraceful admittance that ignorance is bliss. Fatiha, Lozano’s detective in Donde mueren los ríos, points to the surprising short physical distance that separates the otherwise astonishingly different worlds of the immigrants on the one hand, and the Spanish and other European beach-goers on the other, in the Canary Islands:

se respiraba bienestar, serenidad. Una eterna vacación. Libertad. la presencia del mar, quizá, pensé. O las terrazas repletas de gente. O que la vida aquí es eso. Desde luego, nada que permitiera imaginar lo que vi después, a escasos metros de allí, en una bocacalle de ese mismo paraíso: la casa donde vivían mis recién conocidos. […] Un fuerte olor a té impregnaba el interior del inmueble, delimitando un territorio habitado por gente ajena a lo que ocurría en el exterior. Otro mundo. Todos los habitantes de aquel espacio singular eran africanos, magrebíes y negros, sin ningún Sahara de por medio. (67-68)

The citation reveals that the sought after Paradise does exist on Spanish soil, just not for the economic migrants who were drawn there in hopes living within it. The proximity of these two existences, furthermore, while tragic for its blatant disparity of wealth and quality of life, has also been the site of human kindness also captured by the media (see Figure 3). A more difficult task is to translate these spontaneous acts of solidarity into active and sustained denunciation of governmental policy such as the Ley de Extranjería, which continues to be flawed.
As they plan their voyage to countries of the First World, these immigrants dream of attaining the peace and liberty that the citizens of those countries enjoy. The freedom to live, work, and succeed is, after all, what is portrayed in the Western movie and television programs that find their ways into the Third World’s cinemas and homes. In Lozano’s *Harraga*, the role of the Western media in attracting impoverished Moroccans to Spain is made clear, as can be seen by the protagonist’s reminiscence on the birth of his tumultuous journey:

A través de las antenas parabólicas, que en pocos años habían invadido las azoteas, llegaban pruebas constantes e irrefutables de que existía un mundo mejor, y a nosotros no nos había tocado vivir en él. Trabajo abundante, dinero para mucho más que un vaquero barato y unos litros de cerveza, noches relucientes de neón, mujeres dispuestas a amar, coches para todos, hamburguesas americanas,
centros comerciales gigantescos, penetraban en cada hogar, 
salpicaban nuestra miseria, derrotaban nuestra resistencia. (15)

The greatest tragedy of Jalid’s story is that his media-inspired ambition ultimately leads to a morality-blurring greed and the death of his youngest brother, Abderrahmán, who, upon finding a bag full of Jalid’s dirty trafficking money, tries himself to run away in search of a better life. In so doing, the impressionable younger brother is mistaken for Jalid and shot dead by other traffickers. As Jalid lies in a Moroccan prison cell for the many illicit activities he eventually confesses to, his brother returns to him in a dream and explains what happened to him as he touched the bills:

Cuando los toqué, Jalid, sentí que dejaba el asiento frente a la televisión y que me metía dentro de ella. Sí, atravesé la pantalla, y no te puedes ni imaginar todo lo que cabía ahí. Podía comer mis anchas, conducir los mejores coches, vestirme como un príncipe. Probé todos os perfumes del mundo, y las mujeres más hermosas me llamaban. [...] a menudo te he oído decir: con el dinero todo se puede comprar, hasta la felicidad. He salido muy poco de la medina, pero he pasado muchas horas delante de la televisión, las suficientes como para saber que debes de tener razón. (148-49)

The passage points to another important reality that Lozano criticises in his texts: an important contributing factor to the immigrant’s misconception about the life that awaits her/him upon arrival in Europe is the disingenuous promotion by immigrants themselves who, once naturalized and upon their seasonal return to their home
countries, often exaggerate the magnificence of their immigrant lives and cover-up the hardships that have characterized their true experiences. Jalid himself was the victim of such an exaggeration, wooed into the world of trafficking drugs, and eventually, of people, by his friend Hamid.\footnote{The speech Hamid gives Jalid, persuading him to enter the world of trafficking in order to achieve that which the pervasive Western media in their country promises, is quite convincing in its promise that happiness, just as pure Capitalism would have it, is directly correlated with money: “Vamos, Jalid, ya estamos aquí. Se acabó harrira y el té. Has llegado al mundo de la abundancia, de la libertad, de la vida verdadera. Mira a tu alrededor: esta carretera reluciente y sin baches te lleva directamente a la felicidad. Aquí, cuando tienes dinero en el bolsillo, lo tienes todo. Y te aseguro que tendrás tanto dinero en el bolsillo como para que no haya deseo que no puedas cumplir. Se acabó eso de trabajar de sol a sol para servir a los ociosos del mundo, a quienes no tienen más horizonte que la mesa del café en el que pasan media vida. La felicidad no está al alcance de os mediocres” (21).} Later, Jalid becomes a perpetuator of the misconceptions that kill his brother, lying to his family about the nature of his work and exaggerating the wealth and happiness of his immigrant life.

\textbf{Hell, the Borderlands:}

Sadly, Harraga’s protagonist Jalid succumbs to temptation, engaging in activities that before he would morally and philosophically oppose:

\begin{quote}
Ni siquiera opuse resistencia. Me dejé arrastrar hacia un negocio que me repelía. Yo mismo había conocido a unos cuantos: […] mujer, hijos, país, todo trocado para siempre por un pan con sabor a derrota. Siempre tuve claro que mi camino al Paraíso nunca pasaría por una patera, odié a los negociantes de la miseria. Y ahora, sin quererlo, y sin rechazarlo, me convertía en uno de ellos, me disponía a seleccionar a los más pobres, los más desesperados, los más incautos, para obrarles el pasaje hacia el Infierno. (81)
\end{quote}
Jalid’s imagined Paradise, like that of so many other immigrants wooed Northward becomes in fact, a living Hell. The reason is that reaching the territory that officially belongs to the First World does not guarantee a First World way of life. In fact, in many ways, immigrants, especially those who arrive in Spain clandestinely, end up in a sort of Limbo—to continue along with biblical metaphors—that is neither here nor there. Unfortunately for them, this Limbo is in many ways worse than the life they have left. The immigrant is essentially stuck in between two worlds and becomes an indefinite fixture on the landscape of the in-between. Ironically, the rigid and fortified border that from home signified the separation of the individual from the Promised Land where s/he hoped to live freely and now becomes a separation between that individual and the family, identity, culture, memories, and youth left behind based on false expectations.

In a discussion of the transnational, transcultural, and at times translingual borders evoked, formed, and crossed in the story of Spanish immigration, it is relevant to consider a more established area of Hispanic border studies: that which deals with the border between Mexico and the United States. While certain similarities do exist, one important difference between these two borders begs to be noted: while the current 1848 Mexican-U.S. border is politically and ideologically unnatural, given the historical settling of peoples on either side of it, the Strait of Gibraltar, the most prominent physical border in the discussion on contemporary immigration to Spain, is, at least geographically, a rather logical barrier. In spite of this, the political boundaries separating North Africans from Iberian peoples have historically been unstable. Such borders have lain as far as north of the Pyrenees—
as was the case at the height of the Moorish rule of Al-Andalus—and as far south as Morocco, where Spanish rule of the Ceutian and Melillan enclaves defy to this day the natural geographic border created by the Strait of Gibraltar. To comprehend the complexity of the immigrant situation in Spain today, however, a broader understanding of the notion of “border” is necessary. As with the case of the Mexico-U.S. border, one must distinguish between that physical, geographical border and the metaphorical border (Castillo 6) that exists between the white dominant classes of both northern countries on the one hand, and the African and Latin American in Spain, and Chicana/o and Mexican immigrant populations in the United States on the other.

The space that these populations inhabit is characterized by a doubling: inhabitants of the borderlands are at once an “us” and a “them.” When it is convenient that they be a part of the Northern identity, as when their labour contributes to that society’s economic growth, they are an “us.” At every other moment, their difference is reinforced by mainstream cultural and political agendas, a sentiment that for Fernando Savater boils down to the race of poverty:

La verdadera raza maldita, en todas partes perseguida, a la que en cualquier latitud resulta peligroso pertenecer es la raza de los pobres. Es una raza imprescindible como mano de obra o bestia de carga, pero que se hace insoportable en cuanto solicita igualdad de derechos y respeto a su dignidad humana..., o cuando comete delitos, desesperada por la falta de una y otra. Los habitantes de El Ejido no son racistas, aunque tampoco tiene objeción a que los inmigrantes
trabajen por la mitad de sueldo que los nativos, vivan en condiciones infrahumanas, eduquen a sus hijos en régimen de *apartheid*, etcétera [...] siempre que tengan sus papeles en regla o, no teniéndolos, obedezcan y salgan aún más baratos. Sólo se vuelven racistas si se comete un crimen o un robo: entonces el sujeto no es tal o cual persona—obligados a vivir en circunstancias que ellos prefieren ignorar—sino la mala índole de la raza entera en general.

Globally, but in particular in border areas where the contact between peoples has a long history, individuals typically share what John C. Hawley has called a double sense of *universal latency* and *manifest particularity*: “universal latency” refers to the post-modern sense of interconnection between cultures, in which an increasing percentage of the globe has immediate and overlapping access to artefacts produced by disparate and often conflictive systems of meaning; “manifest particularity” refers to the resistance of such deconstruction, implying stasis and essential difference as possibilities (1). With respect to contemporary immigration in Spain, universal latency occurs through the borderless mass media that penetrates both the First and Third Worlds, while manifest particularity is revealed through the political reinforcement of the borders to Europe as well as national and local legislation that differentiates the rights of Spain’s autochthonous and immigrant populations. As a result of this perpetual differentiation within the country, immigrants, like the Roma before them, are relegated to the margins of society, mostly ignored, occasionally feared, but always underprivileged. In this way, there is a progression of meaning, first from the geographical border that separates
economic migrants from their destination, next to the metaphorical borders that keep that population separated from the mainstream once arrived, and finally to a physical separation once again as that metaphorical difference becomes spatial through the creation of ghettos in the inner cities and outskirts of agricultural communities.

In Lorenzo Silva’s short story, “Un asunto vecinal,” it is significant that the name of the small, mostly agricultural, Murcian town in is never uttered. The tale of xenophobia, patriarchal aggression, and small-town cover-up politics becomes transposable onto any one of Spain’s agricultural communities where immigration is, proportionally speaking, rather relevant. Peripheral towns and cities, whether in terms of their size, their (lack of) power, or their liminal location with respect to Spain’s geographical and political centre, are hotbeds for friction over immigration, being susceptible to comparatively large populations of immigrants and historically more traditional and conservative than urban centres. On the fields of Almería, Nijar, and Cartagena, agricultural need for cheap labourers willing to do the work many other Spaniards will not leads inevitably to autochthonous and immigrant populations living in close quarters, quarters that for some intolerant, small-town residents are too suffocating to bear and which result in the devastating events such as those of El Ejido in 2000. Peripheral cities and towns, however, especially as they are traditionally portrayed in the hardboiled text, are also more corruptible, requiring the intervention of a centralised police force or a big-city private eye to set things strait. Border and coastal towns in particular are known for their shady, municipally encouraged, shady activities. In Pérez-Reverte’s La Reina del Sur, such a place is exactly where Teresa Mendoza, a Mexican fugitive seeking to escape the grasp of
her Mexican ex-boyfriend’s cocaine-smuggling mafia, needs to hide out: “Si deseaba un lugar discreto, lejos de tropiezos desagradables y también un trabajo para justificar la residencia hasta que arreglase los papeles de su doble nacionalidad—el padre español al que apenas conoció iba a servirle por primera vez para algo— […] dos opciones: Galicia o el sur de España” (119). As Teresa quickly learns about Melilla, the “southern” Spanish destination she selects because of its preferable climate, corruption and illegality are as much a part of the local political and law enforcement agencies as they are of the cross-border business moguls’ shady activities: “los aduanero locales, tan duros como los propios contrabandistas –se habían criado en los mismos pueblos y navegado en los mismo barcos” (118). Soon, Teresa thrives within the protectorate’s devious rules of operation, using them to her advantage and empowering herself as an immigrant and as a woman:

un nombre dicho aquí o allá, algunos billetes cambiando de mano. Y a la policía le iba de perlas para las estadísticas. […] Esto incluía una vasta red de corrupción que iba desde las montañas donde se cosecha el cannabis hasta la frontera o la costa marroquí. Los pagos se escalonaban en la proporción adecuada: policías, militares, políticos, altos funcionarios y miembros del Gobierno. A fin de justificarse ante la opinión pública—después de todo, el ministro del Interior marroquí asistía como observador a las reuniones antidroga de la Unión Europea—, gendarmes y militares realizaban periódicas aprehensiones: pero siempre a pequeña escala, deteniendo a quienes
no pertenecían a las grandes mafias oficiales, y cuya eliminación no molestaba a nadie. (122-23)

While Teresa learns the ropes of the male dominated underworld of cross-border trafficking, her female counterparts in other novelas negras are not so lucky. As Gloria Anzaldúa describes in her 1987 seminal text *Borderlands/La Frontera*, which introduced the “New Mestiza” approach to Chicana studies, the female border worker faces a number of successive barriers that subjugate her to a permanently inferior state—and space—with respect to her male counterpart. To subvert this hierarchical structure, the new mestiza first reclaims her Mexican heritage vis-à-vis the American infrastructure imposed on her compatriots; next, she reclaims her status as a *female* Chicana, asserting her power and independence from her male counterparts; finally, the New Mestiza reclaims her sexual orientation among males and male-minded women both within and without the Chicana/o community, thereby systematically untying the restraints that have historically held her back from true equality on the Mexico-U.S. border. In Spain, the female immigrant’s journey includes similar stages of struggle. In many cases, her emigration is motivated by a desire to break from the potentially abusive hold of a patriarchal family structure; such is the case for Aida in *Donde mueren los ríos*. Once in Spain, the female immigrant is frequently forced to operate within the grasp of a new patriarchal system where her livelihood, and ultimately her life, is at the mercy of a pimp or *mafioso*. Finally, should the female immigrant successfully break free from the patriarchal grasp of her country of provenance and that of her new country of residence, she will redefine herself within her new Spanish-immigrant society, both
as a woman of colour that autochthonous Spaniards will view with preconceived notions, and as a fellow immigrant, whose compatriots will seek in her a physical and emotional connection to their homeland.

As noted in the previous section on the Spanish mass media’s contribution to a bellicose rhetoric on contemporary immigration, women are almost completely absent from the coverage of that phenomenon. Even when unfortunate events involving immigrant women become newsworthy, however, the individual’s name, country of origin, and personal circumstances are unlikely to be investigated or reported, making that female individual part of just a sub-categorical statistic: *una (mujer) magrebí, una (mujer) latinoamericana, una (mujer) subsahariana.* The last example, in fact, resembles the manner in which Fatiha learns of Aida’s death in Antonio Lozano’s *Donde mueren los ríos.* The deceased’s friend and the novel’s hard-boiled detective who, like Aida, was forced to work as a prostitute when she first arrived in Spain but subsequently managed to escape that world to work for a non-governmental organization helping immigrants, is all-too-familiar with the press’s style of reporting. Much to Fatiha’s chagrin, even the most obtuse omissions of relevant detail in the reporting of Aida’s death are not enough to make her doubt that the identity of the victim is indeed that of her dear friend:

> En el artículo de La Provincia no mencionaban el nombre, aunque nada más ver el titular en la página de sucesos Fatiha supo que se trataba de Aida: “Prostituta subsahariana asesinada en la calle Alfredo L. Jones.” De madrugada, en plena calle, degollada. Cerró los ojos para contener la impresión, controlar las arcadas. Como cada
mañana, después de desayunar echó un vistazo en el Centro a la prensa del día. Odió más que nunca la maldita palabreja, subsahariano, el eufemismo que contenía a todos los apestados, los que pueblan de tinieblas las vidas tranquilas de los europeos. Como si darle uniformidad al enemigo lo hiciera parecer menos peligroso, más controlado. Su amiga subsahariana. Una más entre tantas, para la periodista, para los lectores. Pero para ella, era Aida, su amiga, con su historia triste y única, personal desde su nacimiento hasta su muerte.

(81)
The description of Aida’s murder is reminiscent of the brutal murder of Edith Napoleon, a young woman from Sierra Leon forced to work as a prostitute upon her arrival in Spain found quartered and disposed of in a Madrid garbage container in 2003. As Lorenzo Silva discusses in Líneas de sombre in his chapter on Edith’s death, crimes against female immigrants are characterized by the victim’s ultimate marginality:

Y es que Edith era eso. Basura. Una ciudadana sin derechos. Expuesta a cualquier explotación. Sin poder denunciar ningún abuso que sufriera, de los blancos a los que se la chupaba (siento la crudeza, así es la vida, para el que no lo sepa) ni del negro que se quedaba con su dinero y le tenía secuestrada la libertad. Es fácil matar a alguien así. Es fácil tirarla después en cualquier parte, pensando que nadie la reclamará. Puede que su asesino tenga algún problema psicológico. Pero en medio de su claridad u oscuridad de mente debió
de pensar eso: ‘Sólo es una puta negra.’ Y procedió en consecuencia.

[...] Saben que su víctima es más débil que otras: creen, con razón o sin ella, que se esforzará menos la policía en encontrar al responsable. (156)

While Edith did not survive her encounter with the middle-class autochthonous Spaniard who “could not recall what happened” on the night he procured her services, her double condition of marginality, as a woman and as an immigrant, extended past her death, reducing her once again to a statistic of immigration.

As established in the first chapter of this dissertation, not only do the criminal, victim, and informant of a detective story tend to be marginal characters in the Spanish novela negra; the hardboiled detective also suffers a certain degree of marginality that, despite her/his consequent social isolation and ineptitude, permits the detective to relate to the underworld s/he investigates and facilitates the investigator’s penetration of the crime to be solved. In that chapter, the otherness of the novels’ detectives was geographical, linguistic, and cultural, in the case of Maria-Antònia Oliver’s Majorcan sleuth Lònia Guiu and in that of Manuel González Reigosas’s Galician Nivardo Castro, and it was also social, in the case of the Romani Manuel Flores and the rest of his Madrid-based investigative team with underprivileged backgrounds. In the novelas negras dealing with the topic of immigration, the marginality of the detective continues to be of relevance because from it stems a sense of solidarity with the immigrant characters involved in the cases. Once again, when other police forces are involved in the cases, the internal and political pressures that guide their investigation is placed in opposition to that of
the hardboiled detectives, for whom the main concern is, quite simply, to uncover the truth.

In Andreu Martín’s *Aprende y calla*, Julio, like Juan Madrid’s Manuel Flores, is Romani. As the native of Granada’s famous Sacromonte caves tells his new love interest Carmen, being accepted in mainstream Spanish society has been an uphill struggle:

Le conté que siempre había deseado dejar el barrio bajo, que había hecho el bachillerato elemental a los veintidós años y que, luego, me hice amigo de un abogado joven al que ayudé a organizar el despacho de principiante por poco más que una propina. Él me dio libros para leer, me enseñó cómo se comporta uno en sociedad, […] Por eso, he olvidado el caló y he luchado por abandonar mi acento andalusí y hasta chapurreo un poco en catalán. […] Luego nos peleamos por una chica. Los dos nos enamoramos de la misma chica y, el día que discutimos, me recordó cuál era mi barrio y mi cultura, y me recordó que él me había sacado de la basura y todo lo que yo le debía. Le pegué un guantazo y no le volví a ver. (86-87)

The hypocrisy exercised by Julio’s companion, befriending him and then putting him in his place depending on the situation, is reminiscent of the complicated and often contradictory manner in which the Spanish mainstream as a whole has dealt with its Roma population, embracing and exporting its Gypsyness on the one hand, and relegating that population to the country’s lowest social strata on the other. This hypocrisy, in turn, acts as a precursor to the way immigration is conceived: while
immigrants are subjected daily to discrimination at the hands of Spaniards, those same Spaniards need their hard work at low wages for the country’s recent economic miracle to be sustained. In fact, the trafficking of illegal workers is the basis for the novel’s investigation and Julio’s solidarity with them is made clear:

Los que viajaban en la trasera del camión eran muy morenos, argelinos sin duda, y vestían ropas oscuras, sucias y deformadas, unos pobres desgraciados que, huyendo de las malas condiciones en que vivían, se ponían en manos de esta organización que les metía ilegalmente en cualquier país europeo, les proporcionaba el trabajo más miserable, cobraba su sueldo y sólo les daba la mitad. y ellos, bajo la amenaza de cárcel o, en el mejor de los casos, de ser deportados de nuevo a la vida que rehuían, nunca protestarían ni se rebelarían. Demasiado patético y melodramático para mi gusto. (88)

When Julio uncovers Carmen’s father’s involvement in the trafficking of these workers and invites him to become a part of his organization, the sleuth struggles to contain his anger, a situation his girlfriend excuses in the following way: “No insistas, papá. Yo entiendo lo que le ocurre a Julio. Ha salido de lo más bajo de la sociedad, y desde entonces, está huyendo de eso. Ahora no pertenece a ninguna clase: vive solo, se siente aislado y dijera que se siente rechazado por todo el mundo. ¿No?” (132-33). Carmen’s astute observation points to yet another dimension to Julio’s reason for solidarity with the Sub-Saharan immigrants being brought to Spain: while he may have moved out of Sacromonte’s caves and to the big city, Julio will never be a mainstream Spaniard like Carmen and her father; he, like those immigrants
seeking to ameliorate their ways of life, is stuck in a no-man’s land, neither here nor there. Sadly, despite his extreme internal struggle, Julio caves under the pressure to accept the offer and becomes everything he has always despised. This move too is analogous to that of so many honest and hardworking immigrants who, as we have seen, are ultimately faced with the choice to remain in the misery of the borderlands, or to enter the underworld of criminality in a final desperate attempt to reach the Promised Land.

In Yolanda Soler Onís’s *Malpais*, Gumersindo Roca is suspicious of the forensic doctor assigned to his case because the medic’s socio-economic class, in comparison with the hardboiled detective’s humble upbringing, is a *de facto* reason for distrust: “Lo veía como al típico niño bien, que a los doce años ya viajaba durante los veranos a Irlanda para estudiar inglés. Roca procedía de los riscos y de las escuelas nacionales, de patear el Parque y las calles y de bregar con los chorizos y las fulanas y los malos tratos y los ilegales…” (48). As Roca himself states, his marginal youth kept him in close contact with other less fortunate members of society, including undocumented labourers. While this contact may have been at times confrontational, a sense of solidarity with the underprivileged is an asset to his investigations. Solidarity among marginalized characters manifests itself again at young Iván’s funeral, the murdered witness in Roca’s case. All those who attend are less than fortunate characters related in some way to the run-down port neighbourhood where Iván had lived and was killed: “… cuatro jóvenes con aretes en las orejas, pelo largo y camisetas sin mangas sobre vaqueros muy ajustados. Ninguno superaba los quince años. Finalmente un hombre negro se unió
al cortejo” (103). In a sort of poetic retribution of kindness, a nameless African immigrant joins in the mourning of Iván’s death, acknowledging in this way Roca’s commitment to the underprivileged class.

Finally, in Lozano’s *Donde mueren los ríos*, the relation between the detective, marginality, and immigration is at its most intimate since in this novel, they are one in the same. Fatiha, a Moroccan immigrant who, for several years, endures the fate of many young female migrants whose journey was at the mercy of traffickers, becomes the story’s hardboiled detective and is ultimately the only character of any background able, or willing, to get to the truth. Knowing the terrain in which her friend and murder victim Aida led her life of prostitution, Fatiha’s own marginality ultimately allows her to solve the case more successfully than the prejudiced cops, with preconceived notions of the murderer’s skin colour, with whom she is juxtaposed. Fatiha’s solidarity with the victim, through their friendship, similar backgrounds, and gender, is the last stage in Fatiha’s metamorphosis since her immigration to Spain. First, she leaves the patriarchal injustices of her arranged marriage of convenience; then, she successfully exits the world of prostitution for a respected and meaningful position with a non-governmental organization dedicated to helping immigrants; and last, she takes the case of her murdered friend in her own hands knowing that if she does not, no one will:

Io de Aida no puede quedarse así. No puede ser que un tipo se la cargue porque no le salgan las cuentas de sus polvos y que no pase nada. Que la maten para dar empleo a las demás y que nadie mueva un dedo. Que haya cientos de Aidas prisioneras en este país libre y
democrático y nadie para tenderles una mano. Coño, Ernesto, tenemos que hacer algo más que pasar esta mierda de vida desde la barra de un bar, o desde la mesa de un despacho. Tengo que saber qué le pasó a Aida, quién se la cargó. (113-14)

Fatiha’s investigation not only exonerates her friend Amadú, the undocumented worker from Sierra Leone who the cops are all-too-eager to arrest for the murder; ultimately, it reveals that the Spanish-born Ernesto, Fatiha’s friend and confidant, is Aida’s true murderer and that his pub, the detective’s favourite hang-out, is nothing more than a cover-up for his prostitution enterprise.

**Conclusion:**

In the end, the state of immigration in Spain at the end of the twentieth century can be viewed as a series of contradictions. While the country’s post-Transition economic boom created a labour demand in agriculture, manufacturing, and construction unable to be met by autochthonous Spaniards, unemployment rose in professional industries, making the public erroneously apprehensive about the impact of immigrant workers. While these often underpaid workers made the economic miracles of Almería, Nijar, and Cartagena possible, their presence in the small, peripheral towns was at best tolerated and at worst despised. While the borderless nature of the information age infiltrates homes and movie theatres all around the world enticing future immigrants to join the land of the wealthy, the reality of the voyage to reach that land is beset with borders, physical and metaphorical, that exclude immigrants from the Promised Land. In the media, the immigrants are
reduced to statistics and once arrived, they remain in the borderlands, forbidden still from their ultimate goals. Despite all this, one important factor is to be kept in mind: immigration to Spain, in comparison to its Northern European counterparts, is still a very new phenomenon. As its government and society respond and adapt to Spain’s changing population, the country’s borderlands will hopefully become a place for dialogue, one of those “in-between spaces” that Homi Bhabha suggests are innovative sites for elaborating new strategies of identity (2). Should this be the case, literature, written not only about immigration but by immigrants themselves, will play its part as a medium for the discussion of a new concept of Spanishness that will acknowledge and include Spain’s immigrant population.
Chapter 4: The Voyage

Pa’ una ciudad del norte  
Yo me fui a trabajar  
Mi vida la dejé  
Entre Ceuta y Gibraltar  

Soy una raya en el mar  
Fantasma en la ciudad  
Mi vida va prohibida  
Dice la autoridad  

Solo voy con mi pena  
Sola va mi condena  
Correr es mi destino  
Por no llevar papel  

– Manu Chao: “Clandestino”

Over the last several decades, the Strait of Gibraltar has become the final resting place for many young Africans who have lost their lives while trying to reach Europe in small, overly cramped boats equipped with no safety measures. With the impossibility of recovering or identifying the bodies, the water that separates the First and Third worlds takes on new meaning as the place where young men and women’s endurance and strength are tested and tried, and where the voyage toward a better life may instead cut it short. In the previous chapter, I discuss the ways in which the Spanish mass media have contributed to the creation of a threatening view of immigration to the Iberian Peninsula and I argue that through contemporary detective fiction, politically committed authors have created an alternative space for the imagining of immigration— one in opposition to the constructed amalgamate that pervades dailies and television screens. In this chapter, I will extend this idea by elucidating some of the specific techniques used by contemporary writers of the
novela negra to provide the Spanish reading public not only with an alternative view to the mainstream portrayal of immigration, but an even more revolutionary one: one that transposes the reader into the shoes of the immigrant her/himself. This is not to say that autochthonous Spanish writers claim to “understand” the plight of the Latin American, Sub-Saharan, or Maghrebian economic migrant, her/his condition of poverty, exploitation, and/or subalternity. However, by placing their narrators, detectives, and/or protagonists in representative physical circumstances that economic migrants regularly endure in their long journey to the perceived Promised Land and by narrating in remarkable detail from that perspective the obstacles they are forced to surmount, these authors lead crime fiction readers through horrifying situations and locales that would likely never enter the realm of their life experience. In so doing, these writers provide their readers with an immigrant point of view, or POV, as seen through the immigrant lens.

Particularly relevant to this internal view is the physical voyage the immigrants undertake from their homelands to their European destination. This voyage consists of a number of stages, each of which threatens to prevent migrants from attaining their ultimate goal and destination. Immigrants must first attain the financial means to leave their home; in the case of female migrants, they may be required to flee a difficult domestic situation characterized by male domination and potential abuse. Next, the immigrants endure a long voyage to the Western World: on foot through the desert; across the Atlantic in the cargo of a ship; hidden in containers on tractor-trailers; and/or ultimately on the most precarious of all vehicles, on a small boat across the Strait of Gibraltar. Each stage represents the potential for danger and
crime and is fruitful material for detective fiction writing. As the immigrant characters undertake excruciating journeys that are far-removed from the reality of many of the tales’ readers, they personalize an experience that is usually only conceived as a large impersonal mass. Each other in these novels explores different aspects of the journey that immigrants take to their destination, broadening readers’ scopes of knowledge about a process that has become a daily occurrence in Spain. As Antonio Lozano states in an interview with La Gangsterera, the popular and well-respected web magazine branch of the detective fiction literary review by the same name, his first detective novel strives to invert the tale of immigration as it is known in Spain:

*Harraga* está escrita como un intento de ofrecer la visión del problema de la emigración desde la perspectiva del emigrante. Nuestra sociedad se lo plantea, por lo general, solo desde el punto de vista que le afecta: la seguridad, el trabajo, la pérdida de identidad. Obviamos por ello las preguntas fundamentales, que nacen del lado del que toma la terrible decisión de subirse a una patera. Está escrita también para mostrar el rostro humano, individual de la emigración frente a la homogeneización interesada que se hace del fenómeno desde el discurso oficial.

In Chapter 2, I argue that this and other Spanish detective stories of immigration, in seeking to unveil the ultimate culprits of their mysteries, clarify misconceptions about immigration that are fomented by many of the voices in the national discussion on
the contemporary migratory processes. In this chapter, I will again argue that these novels provide an alternate view of immigration but I will now focus on textual manifestations of this innovative perspective. Not only have these texts engaged in discussions of the other face of immigration within the national conversation on the issue; the narration within their pages also diegetically places readers—and by extension the Spanish public—on the other side of the story and gives them a taste of the emotional, physical, and psychological situation of the immigrant by leading them through some of the most trying events one might endure.

In my consideration of Martínez Reverte’s *Gálvez en la frontera* (2001), Arturo Pérez-Reverte’s *La Reina del Sur* (2002), and Antonio Lozano’s *Harraga* (2002) and *Donde mueren los ríos* (2003), I will demonstrate that these authors employ a number of different narrative techniques to reinforce the readers’ experience while accompanying immigrants on their voyage to the First World: cinematographic techniques such as *kino-glaz* (movie-eye) are used in the creation of an internal perspective of the crossing; travel narrative strategies are employed evoking the fears and thrills that accompany the undertaking of such emotionally overwhelming voyages; and finally, aspects of the coming-of-age story, or *bildgunsroman*, and of testimonial literature inform the authors’ approach to telling the immigrant’s story. The incorporation of these narrative strategies is never in competition with the literary codes of the hard-boiled detective story, which form the foundation and overall blueprint of the novels; rather, the borrowed techniques weave in and out of

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1 As I discussed in the previous chapter, misconception regarding immigration to Spain that contemporary Spanish detective novels address include: that migrants are “invading” Spain; that immigrant women are inherently loose; that corruption surrounding immigration prevails only from outside of Spanish borders; that immigrants steal jobs; and that immigration is temporary.
the stories adding meat to the detective skeleton and enhancing the reading experience by allowing the reader to penetrate the psyche and emotional position of the immigrant characters. The incorporation of these techniques serves, in the end, to heighten the evocative effects—fear, suspense, horror, thrill, caution—that are so pertinent to crime fiction.

**Visual Documentary and the Representation of the Immigrant Experience**

As discussed in the previous chapter, the representation of world migrations in the mass media is focused disproportionately on the local. Despite the fact that migration consists of a global phenomenon that by definition transcends borders and requires a transnational approach to its management, contemporary journalistic reports systematically reduce or ignore the dependent relations between emitting and receiving countries. F. Javier García Castraño, a Spanish sociologist specialized in migration, describes the situation in the following way:

> La realidad de la inmigración, su carácter de globalidad, tiene un eco virtual en lo personal e inmediato del inmigrante, en su llegada en patera, en sus dificultades para abrirse camino en entornos locales concretos. La realidad del inmigrante es, así, desposeída de su dimensión espacio-temporal, vale decir histórica, para quedarse en simple anécdota sensacionalista de cualquier titular de prensa. (104)

As a result of the overly simplified, locally focused, and sensationalist nature of this type of reporting, the Spanish public has become largely desensitised to the plea of the illegal immigrants' situation in Spain, while at the same time developing a
skewed view of the impact of immigration on a national level. The slanted public opinion is made evident by comparing two of the questions in the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas’s national monthly survey on the state of Spanish affairs that are particularly relevant to the perception of immigration as a problem in contemporary Spanish society. In response to the question “¿Cuál es, a su juicio, el principal problema que existe actualmente en España? ¿Y el segundo? ¿Y el tercero?” immigration consistently figures among the top four most common responses —together with terrorism/ETA, unemployment, and housing— frequently getting around thirty percent of respondents identifying it as one of the top three problems (CIS). In response to a question that refers more specifically to how the respondent her/himself is affected by immigration, “¿Y cuál es el problema que a Ud., personalmente le afecta más? ¿Y el segundo? ¿Y el tercero?”, only ten percent of respondents consistently identify immigration as an issue with housing gaining importance. The discrepancy reveals the degree of sensitisation to which public opinion is prone, and suggests the power of the media as a probable cause of influence. In a quantitative analysis of immigration as represented in some examples of Spanish newspapers, radio and television networks in 2001, García Castraño et al. found that, in fact, unemployment and lack of civic security coincided in their basic characteristics with the image of immigration portrayed by news reports. It is important to note that the highly localized focus on immigration such as that propagated through images of young Sub-Saharan men on pateras deals nonetheless with a relatively abstract sense of what the phenomenon of contemporary immigration actually consists of rather than a truly felt experience by
Spaniards themselves. It is to the closing of this gap that contemporary Spanish novelas negras of immigration contribute.

In Gálvez en la frontera, Jorge Martínez Reverte explores the role played by the Spanish mass media in representing immigration to Spain through his hard-boiled detective and newspaper reporter. In the fourth novel of the Gálvez series, the author extends his use of the journalistic tradition not only in the characterization of his protagonist, but also by integrating techniques of visual narration and documentary observation. As a journalist, Julio Gálvez is acutely aware of the mediatised nature of his contemporary surroundings, particularly those processes that depend on the visual for their greatest impact. There is no doubt that the visual is of extreme relevance in the consideration of a topic as preponderant in the conscience of contemporary Spaniards as that of illegal immigration. From the colour of the immigrants’ skin seen on the city streets, to their representation in photographs and televised documentaries, the Spanish eye is constantly bombarded with the “image” of the immigrant. I put “image” here within quotation marks in order to signal the fact that it is not necessarily the actual immigrant that is seen by the Spaniard, but a portrait constructed by the media that mediatise her/him regularly. Even when looking at an immigrant live and in person, the gaze of the Spaniard is influenced by images propagated by the culture that encloses it. Stephen Heath, in The Nouveau Roman, states that one learns fixed forms of “seeing socially” and that one of the principal pedagogical instruments used for the transmission of these fixed forms of seeing is literature, especially that which derives from the mass media (225). In this context, the image of the immigrant and the representation of that
image in Gálvez en la frontera should be considered diegetically with respect to the
media and extradiegetically in terms of the detective genre.

The narrative that Martínez Reverte employs to describe the Madrid
neighbourhood of Lavapiés points to a plurality of faces that define Spanish urban
centres: “Parejas de senegaleses, grupos de chinos […], indios o paquistaníes
paseando o discutiendo sobre relojes, algunos magrebíes […], gitanos autóctonos y
habitantes del barrio desde siempre, españoles con aire marginados y una
frecuencia estadística de vejez prematura muy alta” (105-6). On another occasion,
Gálvez relates the similarity of the young North Africans’ physical appearance with
the image disseminated by American television series: “Casi todos ellos vestían
ropas deportivas, abundaban las gorras de visera colocadas al revés y muchos de
ellos lucían ostentosas cadenas de oro en las muñecas o el cuello […] propias de
una teleserie norteamericana […] hubo un largo y ceremonioso cruce de palmadas
estilo NBA” (48). This citation makes evident that the images propagated by the
media of subaltern figures such as the North African immigrants in Spain not only
affect the perception of these subjects by the Spanish public, but that the media also
influence the creative process of that image by the actual subjects, in this case, by
promoting their auto-identification with the Afro-American culture of the United
States, whose similarity of social circumstances cannot be ignored: lack of
integration, association with the underworld of society, reduced education, poverty,
higher preponderance of crime, etc. As is the case in the United States, the image
that these groups promote is one that is not necessarily seen favourably by the
national white majority.
The relation between the live gaze and the mediatised version of the immigrant situation is focused again by Gálvez when a street-gang war breaks out in his midst. The effect that it invokes in him is relevant to an understanding of a witness’s receptive process in the age of mass communications:

   El que llevaba la pistola […] apuntó hacia el grupo y disparó dos veces antes de que se la encasquillara el arma. Se lo señalé a Gómez, que pudo captar su imagen. Entonces, el miedo desapareció. Me sentía fascinado por el espectáculo, no podía quitar la vista de aquella barahúnda monstruosa que podía desembocar en una catástrofe. Y experimenté, por un momento, la frialdad del testigo, aunque sólo fue por un momento. (63)

The cold disposition that Gálvez experiences when he gazes live as though through a documentary lens, is a behaviour resulting from the repeated representation of such events on television screens; despite the fact that Gálvez witnesses the events live, he recognizes his sentiment as one already experienced through television. Television spectators unconsciously celebrate cold reactions since these permit the watcher to forget for an instant the reality of the event being mediatised and allow the viewer to appreciate the relative safety of her/his personal situation. That short moment is enough for the spectator to continue on with her/his life uninterrupted. For a character such as Gálvez who will choose to engage with the subject on a deeper level, however, the coldness of that moment is quickly replaced by the menacing reality that he faces throughout the rest of the story; as he delves ever deeper into the investigation, he becomes the target of Moroccan and Chinese gangs that resent
his revelation of their illicit activities and seek to eliminate him completely from the picture.

It is significant that in a novel that deals in part with the role of the media in the representation of the immigrant, the best example of visual-documentary techniques is the description offered to us by Gálvez not as a journalist but as a mere human being while crossing the Strait of Gibraltar on a small raft now so familiar to Spaniards. In this scene, Martínez Reverte offers his readers a front-seat view of one of the fundamental processes of the illegal immigrant experience to Spain: the iconic crossing — even though he does not frame it within a journalist narration as such. Contrary to the stories that Gálvez’s sensationalist reporter colleague Almudena will publish, the protagonist’s narration, which lasts nine pages, is never intended for publication in a newspaper, nor does it ever reach one. Instead, it enters the corpus of Spanish novelas negras and becomes representative of a shift from mass media coverage to literary documentary of which Jorge Martínez Reverte is a part. While the following passage does not do justice to the totality of the narration, it offers an example of its impact:

El silencio seguía siendo el amo a bordo. No se oía una sola voz, ni un cuchicheo; el lenguaje de aquel pequeño universo era el del tacto. La mujer que portaba al niño acunaba a su bebé, y su pareja protegía sus hombros con ambas manos para transmitirle algo de calor. Los hombres solos, que eran mayoría, se dejaban llevar por el mecimiento de las olas y no esquivaban el contacto del cuerpo del vecino […] Poco a poco, comenzamos a ganarle la batalla al mar. El nivel del
agua comenzó a disminuir y la barca, a emerger de las aguas oscuras

[…] La exigencia colectiva disminuyó. Sin que nadie diera la orden, la evacuación del agua cesó cuando aún quedaba un palmo en el fondo de la barca (240-2).

The description of the crossing places the reader of the novel onboard with the other passengers and provides a tangible perspective of the experience. Significant is the fact that the documented image is from the immigrant POV of events, a fact that contrasts dramatically with the traditional images that the Spanish public has of the crossing by raft, that is, the perspective from the Spanish shore as the raft approaches the coast, from a helicopter surveying coastal waters, or that of an objective camera eye surveying lifeless bodies on the beach when such voyages go wrong (see Figures 1 and 2). Through his protagonist’s narration, Martínez Reverte offers his detective fiction readers that which he does not offer his readers of journalism. The “report of the year” that Almudena writes following the crossing will undoubtedly also create some impact upon its readers due to its ekfrastic description. Placed amidst many other reports in the media’s collection on the matter, however, the report will run the risk of being skipped or forgotten altogether due to overexposure.

By framing Gálvez’s narration, which is long and detailed, within the confines of the detective novel, Martínez Reverte gives his own reader the opportunity to consider a very relevant subject of his society, without risking desensitisation. On the contrary, by employing POV, he humanises the experience and makes it both vital and visceral. On this point, I am in stark disagreement with Marco Kunz, for whom
Figure 1: Top-down image of Sub-Saharan immigrants travelling in a *patera* near Cabo de Gata. *Info Melilla* (31 May 2007).

Figure 2: Image of African immigrants disembarking from a *cayuco* as they arrive at the Canary Islands. *Reportero Digital, Valencia* (07 Dec. 2006).

*Gálvez en la frontera* is the epitome of contemporary Spanish literature on immigration that he sees as opportunistic and manipulative of the immigrant’s plight. For Kunz, the narration of the voyage in *patera* only reinforces the preconceived notions of immigration to Spain promoted by the mass media and exploits real life immigrant experiences for the sake of suspense:
La literatura de género revela aquí su carácter de *ars combinatoria* de elementos tópicos de la realidad extraficcional con procedimientos narrativos tradicionales. La empresa suicida de los emigrantes se recicla como anécdota saturada de *suspense* y emoción en una novela detectivesca que, igual que el periodismo tal como lo practica Almudena, transforma los problemas de la inmigración en un producto de consumo. (250)

In this passage, inscribed within Kunz’s study on the metaphors of migration in the work of Juan Goytisolo, the critic takes a jab at detective fiction and suggests that its codified employment of suspense is symptomatic of an overall inferiority of the genre. In his archaic condescension to “genre literature,” Kunz underestimates the ability of detective fiction readers to extrapolate from the *novela negra*’s critique of the way immigration is often conceived. He downplays, for example, Gálvez’s repudiation of the type of sensationalist reporting in which Almudena engages; the journalist turned detective criticises the “tufo paternalista y de exacerbación de los sentimientos” employed by his colleague and disagrees with her slight alterations of the truth in the name of the “utilidad social del buen reporterismo” (273). The protagonist’s refusal to partake in sensationalistic reporting is indicative of the novel’s broader commentary on the overexposure of immigration in the mass media and the consequent desensitisation to the topic —a relation that would not likely be lost on the reader. That the *patera* scene provides an internal and opposing perspective of immigration than that which dominates in the media as seen in the previous images, and that the ultimate criminal of the story is shown to be the
multinational information technology companies that take advantage of immigrants to increase their profit margin, is further indication of the novel’s critical stance on the more common threatening portrayals of immigrants in Spain.

In the first pages of Gálvez en la frontera, Martínez Reverte foreshadows the internal narration of the crossing by placing his detective protagonist in the shoes of the young Maghrebian thief in Madrid. While escorted to the police station in the back of a cruiser, Gálvez alludes to the necessary consideration of external versus internal views of the immigrant experience:

Las ofertas turísticas de las ciudades civilizadas no ofrecen, por lo que yo sé, la posibilidad de recorrer sus calles a bordo de un furgón policial. Es una experiencia que vale la pena. No sólo porque el punto de vista cambia de manera sensible, sino porque uno se siente observado de otra manera. Un par de paisanos a bordo provoca la mirada curiosa y reprobadora de los viandantes, que parecen dar por sentada la culpabilidad de los viajeros sin uniforme. […] Ahmid … bajaba de otro furgón policial, idéntico al nuestro, y con la misma expresión de inocencia que nosotros. Sólo que a él le empujaban los guardias. (13)

The power to narrate from the internal perspective of the subject is stylistically characteristic of visual documentary. The incorporation of journalistic techniques in written narrative has been established in the works of Theodore Dreiser, Ernest Hemingway, and George Orwell, among others. The works of John Dos Passos are an important antecedent of the incorporation of journalism in narration, in particular
with respect to his use of cinematographic techniques. Using the theory of Soviet
director Dziga Vertov’s *kino-glaz* and the *newsreel* technique of the Frenchman
Charles Pathé, Dos Passos develops a way of narrating his realistic novels using the
technique of the *camera eye*. In considering visual perspective in *Gálvez en la
frontera*, the first influence is particularly relevant since, for Vertov, the
cinematographic camera is a better-suited instrument than the eye for capturing the
occurrence of real life (Chillón 162).

Herein lies the brilliance of using the detective literary medium for the
exploration of the very harsh reality of immigration to Spain. While skimming,
skipping, and depending heavily on headlines and photos for one’s intake of
information are inherent to the act of reading a daily newspaper, the process of
reading a detective novel is different in very important ways. The reading is linear
and if the author is successful, the story becomes so engaging that the reader
cannot help but continue so as to reach the resolution of the crime. In the hard-
boiled genre, which depends as much on the social circumstances that lead to the
crime as on the resolution of the crime itself, the reader is made privy to strata of
society that the majority would likely never enter and becomes intellectually
embedded in the narration. This embedment is possible within the hard-boiled
tradition of the *novela negra* in a way that could not, for example, be developed
within the closed room, *whodunit* tradition of the detective novel. In the latter sub-
genre, the story opens with knowledge of the crime to be solved and the
investigation takes place retrospectively by characters who are never part of the
action itself. Furthermore, *whodunit* detectives such as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s
Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson or Agatha Christie’s Miss Marple belong to a strata of society above that of the seedy underbelly of society where hard-boiled crimes are committed. Their distance from this world, together with their protected investigative environment, reproduces the external perspective “from above” that Spanish authors of the hard-boiled novela negra oppose through their embedded detectives who explore the position “from below,” or better yet, “from within.”

The speed with which hard-boiled detective fiction is normally read, with its straightforward, no-nonsense style of writing and page-turning nature, also contributes to the creation of an optimal context in which to narrate a scene such as the one I outline above. In combination with the use of perspectives that echo cinematographic techniques, the fast-paced narration places the reader in the back of that police car or on that dreadful patera, with the scene experienced almost in real time, making it that much more tangible. In referring to Martínez Reverte’s first detective novel, Demasiado para Gálvez, Patricia Hart considers the political nature of that text and suggests that it would have been more effective to have separated the “political novel” from the “detective novel,” which according to the critic were in constant conflict (134). While this may be true of Gálvez’s first novelistic production, it is certainly not the case for Gálvez en la frontera. By the fourth novel of his series, Martínez Reverte demonstrates a great ease with his ideological position as well as with the conventions of the detective and journalistic mediums that inform his novel. Far from being in conflict, these impulses reinforce each other. Essential to the author’s success in consolidating the journalistic and detective forces of his text is
the explicit criticism of sensationalist journalism that in the case of immigration has become a problematic phenomenon in Spain.

**The Crossing**

In Antonio Lozano’s first novel, *Harraga* (2002), which earned him the 2003 Novelpol prize for the *novela negra*, the Canarian writer places the reader in the shoes of Jalid, a bright, studious, young Moroccan man who becomes entrapped in a network of drug and human trafficking across the Strait of Gibraltar. Wanting nothing else than to arrive at the Promised Land, of Spain, and to carve out a better life for himself and his family, Jalid’s journey demonstrates how quickly one’s misery can drive one past the point of no return. As he becomes more deeply involved in an organization that will eventually betray him, he is the witness and agent of threats, murders, and revenge. The protagonist leads the reader through Tangiers’s medina where hungry schoolchildren cross paths with integrationists, and where the hopes and dreams of thousands of families are betrayed in a battle of survival of the fittest.

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2 Integrationism forms one of the paths that Antonio Lozano identifies as an option for young Moroccan youth who seek to escape their extreme poverty and which, according to Sami Naïr is becoming increasingly common (Término 82). Throughout *Harraga*, Jalid’s choice to emigrate and become a smuggler is juxtaposed with that of his cousin who, as an integrationist, seeks the resolution to his country’s misery in the study of the Qur’an:

> Mi primo, para reforzar sus argumentos durante estas conversaciones, se encerró en el estudio del Corán. Encontró en el Libro las respuestas a todas las provocaciones de su amigo, pero también a las de sus propias frustraciones. […] Se convirtió pronto en un cabecilla, un líder, uno de esos barbudos que sembraban la medina y las mezquitas de esperanza y de amenazas, que siempre tenían a alguien para escucharlos, a alguien para temerlos. (73-4)

A third path is that of Jalid’s sister Amina. Throughout the novel, she is painted as a hero that neither gives into the temptation of extremism like her cousin nor betrays her compatriots by becoming their traffickers as does her brother; instead, the young law student establishes a non-governmental organization whose mandate is to provide youth with tools to contribute to their country’s exit from poverty: “Nunca se sintió ajena a su mundo, ella que podía aspirar a vivir fuera de él. Nunca anheló huir de la miseria de la medina, ella que tenía la riqueza a su alcance. Nunca nos quiso abandonar; mi querida Amina, cómo te añoro. Sólo era feliz concibiendo una vida mejor para todos, su familia, sus vecinos, su barrio, su país. Cree en un mundo mejor, Amina” (48).
With its multi-dimensional characters — throughout the text, for example, Jalid moves back and forth between the roles of victim, criminal, and detective —, this post-modern tale is a testament to the complexity of illegal immigration whose problematic reality, and therefore solution, is far from obvious.

The action of the novel begins in Tangiers and continually oscillates between this Moroccan city and Granada as the protagonist travels back and forth across the Strait of Gibraltar. In this sense, the novel’s narration is intimately related to the crossing of this body of water and, in fact, the theme of crossing becomes of central importance and acquires multiple literal and metaphorical meanings. The story begins where so many real stories of immigration do. A young African man who, despite his hard work and dedication to studies, is faced with a future that promises little more than the difficulties endured by his parents and generations before theirs: poverty, hunger, and most devastatingly, a sense of eternal despair. It is this despair that Hamid, Jalid’s friend and contact in Spain, evokes to convince the impressionable young man of the benefits of emigrating:

Hemos nacido en África, Jalid, ése es nuestro drama. Aquí existimos para sobrevivir, luchamos para no morir de hambre, soñamos para no morir de desesperanza. No valemos nada, ni siquiera para nuestros gobernantes. En nuestros países estamos abandonados a nuestra suerte, perdidos en la miseria, desnudos frente a la injusticia, al capricho de cualquier reyezuelo con uniforme, policía, portero del ayuntamiento, aduanero, funcionario del Gobierno. (22)
It is to leave this inevitable destiny that Jalid turns to the Mediterranean, that body of water that has provided the backdrop to his beloved city throughout his life and that acts as a constant reminder of the geographical proximity to a potential alternate existence. What Jalid does not realize when he decides to try his fate in Spain is that that Mediterranean Sea will acquire new meaning as, not only a barrier between poverty and affluence, despair and possibility, but as the repository of hundreds of lives lost, as a macabre player itself in the tale of immigration.

Unlike the majority of African immigrants who cross the Strait of Gibraltar from Morocco and seek to reside permanently in Spain, the path that Jalid undertakes will make his relation to those thirteen kilometres of water that separate the European and African continents at its narrowest point a very intimate one. After procuring a falsified visa from a corrupt official at the Spanish Consulate in Tangiers, Jalid leaves his home country on a large, comfortable ferry, an experience incomparable to that of those who undertake the same route by patera:

Cruce el Estrecho como un señor, dirían los españoles: con mi traje y mi corbata, el visado bien ilustrado sobre mi pasaporte, dinero y tarjetas. De eso no tengo queja. No llegué aquí en patera, hice lo que debía y fui respetado. Cierto: a algunos compatriotas algo les dijeron, los zarandearon, registraron, retuvieron. Pero yo iba delante de ellos, y casi nada vi. Sólo una ligera bruma de indignación que no podía enturbar mi felicidad: atravesé el Estrecho con todas las de la ley. (10)

The idealism with which Jalid undertakes his first trip across the Strait, however, would end with that crossing. Once in Spain, the protagonist learns that his dream of
studying and working in that country as Spaniards do was an empty one; instead, the new life Hamid has designed for him requires that he become a trafficker of drugs, crossing the Mediterranean periodically by ferry with the product hidden on his body. With each crossing, Jalid becomes more and more embedded in a world from which he can no longer separate himself: “Entendí lo que Hamid quiso decir al afirmar que de este negocio no se salía. Se refería a que no salías vivo, si pretendías abandonarlo por tu cuenta. Demasiada gente poderosa” (36). Eventually, Jalid is promoted within his illegal organization—at the head of which is a Spanish lawyer from Granada—and traffics not only drugs but people, compatriots who, like his old self, believe that the northern shore of that strait holds a better future for them than that which would otherwise be their destiny. Little by little, the Mediterranean and Jalid become partners in crime, two interdependent components of the not-so-well-oiled machine of illegal immigration.

Throughout this process, the crossings that Jalid undertakes across the Strait of Gibraltar are echoed within his own being. Driven by a blinding desire to succeed at any cost, Jalid metamorphosises into a criminal of the ilk he always despised: “De mi primer asombro pasé a aceptar que este mundo es así, y sentí una profunda tristeza recordando que mis padres depositaron alguna vez en esa gente todas sus esperanzas. Ahora, yo era uno de ellos; un peón más en el engranaje de sus trapicheos. Me sentía algo traidor, algo afortunado” (36). With each physical crossing between the worlds of hope and desperation, the protagonist becomes more deeply imbedded in the world of crime. As with Martínez Reverte’s Gálvez en la frontera, Lozano’s Harraga allows the reader to accompany the novel’s immigrant
characters and to experience an internal view of the process of crossing the Mediterranean, which often begins long before the immigrant actually sets foot on the sea vessel. Particularly impactful are the stages immediately preceding the crossing by *patera*, an event that eventually becomes an integral aspect of Jalid’s life as he evolves into a trafficker of his own compatriots. The selection of “candidates” for the crossing, which begins with a preying on the most vulnerable members of Moroccan society, culminates in the ritualistic burning of their identity documents. In this moment, North African and Sub-Saharan hopefuls dramatically dissociate themselves from their past, they become *harraga*, a group of faceless workers that will contribute to the economic machine of their Spanish Promised Land:

Me aseguré de que nadie llevara consigo su documentación: eran *harraga*, los que queman sus papeles, para salir del país sin dejar rastro. Les explicamos que era para protegerlos, para que no los pudieran devolver a su lugar de origen, que nunca debían confesar. En realidad, era la organización la que se beneficiaba de esa situación. Una vez que los dejaban en sus puestos, no se atrevían a salir sin documentación, si a abandonar el trabajo o, en el caso de los más desesperados por regresar, a pedir auxilio en el consulado. (110)

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3 The word *harraga* is one of ten Moroccan Arabic terms in a glossary that appears at the beginning of Lozano’s first novel providing Spanish readers with the necessary linguistic tools with which to gain a deeper understanding of the immigrant process. *Harraga* is defined in the following way: “Término marroquí que significa 'los que queman', y con el que se designa a los emigrantes ilegales, que hacen desaparecer su documentación antes de emprender el viaje” (7). The glossary is the last time the Spanish perspective is acknowledged by the author and from the opening page of the first chapter, the narrative voice is that of Jalid, one of the novel’s victims and criminals, and its only detective.
And so, these migrants not only cross the Mediterranean Sea, a tumultuous journey in itself that holds no guarantees; they, like Jalid, will be forced to become new people with all the good and bad that those new lives might entail.

The burning of identity documents is particularly relevant to this process of metamorphosis since identity, in its most fundamental conception as the set of behavioural or personal characteristics by which an individual is recognizable, is completely removed from the immigrants in their moment of initiation as harraga. Without those papers or documents that link their person with the bureaucratic system of identification, these humans truly become faceless pawns in the capitalist game of profit at whatever cost. In Martínez-Reverte’s *Gálvez en la frontera*, “papers” appear throughout the novel as a *leitmotiv* that links the processes of detection, journalism, and immigration. In so doing, they gain a relevance superior to what may at first simply appear to be a MacGuffin, a device used extensively by Alfred Hitchcock as an object whose purpose is to incite curiosity and desire, drive the plot, and motivate the actions of characters within the story but whose specific identity and nature is unimportant to the spectator of the film. The primary drive for Julio Gálvez’s investigation is the recuperation of stolen papers incriminating the Matador company. These papers, like the Hitchcockian MacGuffin, are never actually retrieved, described, or given any specific importance. In true hard-boiled style, however, the search for those documents leads Gálvez and the reader to a

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4 The most famous example of Hitchcockian MacGuffins is the mysterious statuette in his adaptation of Dashiell Hammett’s *The Maltese Falcon* (1941). In classic noir style, the jewel-encrusted statuette is the driving force for the plot, which involves three murderous adventurers who will stop at nothing in their quest to make millions. Hitchcock’s MacGuffin subsequently appears as wine bottles in *Notorious* (1946) and as “government secrets” in *North by Northwest* (1959). In each case, what the MacGuffin actually is does not matter in the least; it must simply exist as a force in the plot’s development.
young Maghrebian man named Ahmid, who is himself an *harraga* and a low-level pawn working for the leaders of a large-scale operation that, among other illicit activities, traffics immigrants. Gradually, the focus shifts away from the nature of the papers themselves and to the trafficking of immigrants across the Strait of Gibraltar, which in turn becomes the subject of a report written by Julio’s journalistic partner. Almudena’s article completes the life cycle of the papers in *Gálvez en la frontera*: first, they are incriminating financial documents; next they symbolise the identity documents stripped from Ahmid’s possession; and finally, they are those daily newspapers that represent immigration to Spain in its headlines. As I will discuss below, such papers attain yet another layer of meaning as documentary evidence within the testimonial structure incorporated into the *novela negra* of immigration.

In Arturo Pérez-Reverte’s *La Reina del Sur*, the protagonist, who is also an immigrant, develops once again an intimate relationship with the Mediterranean Sea as she, like Jalid, enters the world of drug trafficking as a means of survival. Teresa Mendoza, a Mexican who settles in Melilla while fleeing the death threats of a Sinaloan mafia, escapes prostitution—the fate of most young foreign women who end up in that Spanish enclave—by turning Northward to the sea. Other immigrants working for a Moroccan bar owner are not so fortunate:

A fin de cuentas, los tres clubs de alterne que el rifeño tenía en la ciudad eran parte de negocios más complejos, que incluían facilitar el tráfico ilegal de inmigrantes —él decía tránsito privado— de Melilla y a la Península. Eso abarcaba cruces por la valla fronteriza, pisos francos en la Cañada de la Muerte o en casa viejas del Real, sobornos a los
policías de guardia en los puertos de control, o expediciones más complejas, veinte o treinta personas por viaje, con desembarcos clandestinos en las playas andaluzas mediante pesqueros, lanchas o pateras que salían de la costa marroquí. (101)

While Teresa never crosses the Mediterranean in a *patera*, she does get involved in a whirlwind of illegal activities that require her to cross frequently between both coasts. Beginning as the second in command to her Galician lover, Santiago López Fisterra, and then becoming the primary driver of his small motor boat, Teresa eventually becomes the queen of a narcotics empire that inspires her title as *la Reina del Sur*.5

Pérez-Reverte’s detailed description of the frequent crossings between the two coasts of the Mediterranean, all made through Teresa’s eyes, bears striking resemblance to the voyages her fellow immigrants experience between the North African Northern Coast and Spain’s Costa del Sol: the crossings are undertaken at night; to be successful, the operations must take place under the radar of coastal surveillance.

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5 The media also play an important role in the immigrant tale of Teresa Mendoza. Ironically, Pérez-Reverte includes one of Spain’s most prestigious dailies, *El País*, in his tale by having this paper do a piece on Mendoza. Rather than serve to expose her narcotics operation, however, the report turns her into a superstar, a fictional twist that shows yet again how the media can fall short of making meaningful change:

Por aquel tiempo su blindaje jurídico y fiscal ya era perfecto, y la reina del narcotráfico en el estrecho, la zarina de la droga, —así la describió *El País*—, había comprado tantos apoyos políticos y policiales que era prácticamente invulnerable: hasta el punto de que el ministerio del Interior filtró su dossier a la prensa, en un intento por difundir, en forma de rumor e información periodística, lo que no podía probarse judicialmente. Pero el tiro salió por la culata. Aquel reportaje convirtió a Teresa en leyenda: una mujer en un mundo de hombres duros (363). Her stardom, like that of so many celebrities, then enjoys an ongoing relationship with popular forms of print media such as that of the magazine *¡Hola!* (325). The collaboration between *El País* and *¡Hola!* in converting Teresa into a star can be read as further commentary on the state of Spanish mass media at the end of the 1990s, when this story takes place.
patrollers; and the fear of those authorities pales in comparison to the fear of the sea itself, its waves, power, and darkness:

Teresa se subió hasta el cuello el cierre de la chaqueta de aguas y se puso un gorro de lana […] los aduaneros y la Guardia Civil hablaban encriptados por secráfonos […] De vez en cuando alzaba el rostro a lo alto, buscando la amenazadora sombra del helicóptero entre las luces frías de las estrellas. El firmamento y el círculo oscuro del mar que los rodeaba parecían correr con ellos. (141-2)

Arturo Pérez-Reverte’s description evokes in the reader the sensory experience of the passengers, referring to the frightening darkness, the cold winds and water, and sounds of security voices and the sea’s waves, all threatening a devastating end to the crossing. The most detailed internal narration of Teresa’s nocturnal crossings, however, coincides with the night in which everything goes wrong and Santiago is killed:

Había ido mal desde el principio. Primero la niebla, apenas dejaron el faro de Ceuta. Luego, el retraso en la llegada del pesquero al que estuvieron aguardando en alta mar, entre la brumosa oscuridad desprovista de referencias, con la pantalla del Furuno saturada de ecos de mercantes y ferrys, algunos peligrosamente cerca. […] Las luces de La Línea clareaban a poniente, por el través de babor, cuando los dos resplandores gemelos de Estepota Y Marbella aparecieron en la proa, más visibles entre pantocazo y pantocazo, la
This description is valuable since it provides readers with a visual sense of what arriving on the Spanish coast at night in a tiny boat must entail. It is important to reinforce that this image would lie in stark opposition to that which most readers would be accustomed: the view of such small rafts arriving as seen from the coast and never the reverse.

Particularly important is the development of the scene that pits Santiago and Teresa against a Spanish coastal helicopter pilot. What ensues is a thrilling chase, a fight between sea and air vessels on different sides of the law. Again, the action is narrated from the internal view of the small motor boat, once again placed in stark opposition to the aerial images of *pateras* engrained in the Spanish psyche that are here symbolized by the helicopter:

Fue entonces cuando cayó sobre ellos el pájaro. Oyó el rumo de sus palas arriba y atrás, levantó la vista, y tuvo que cerrar los ojos y apartar la cara porque en ese momento la deslumbró un foco desde lo alto […] Sabía que por mucho que se acercara el helicóptero nunca llegaría a golpearlos, salvo por accidente. Su piloto era demasiado hábil para permitir que eso ocurriera; porque, en tal caso, perseguidores y perseguidos se irían juntos abajo. (190-1)

This thrilling high-speed chase culminates in a catastrophic crash against a large rock off the Spanish coast. Teresa is the only survivor and is subsequently imprisoned.
An analysis of narrations of the crossing is incomplete without a discussion of the cargo that requires the crossings in the first place: in this case, several dozen kilos of cocaine. When Santiago and Teresa realize that the above-mentioned trip may not end successfully, they throw their cargo overboard (189). Package by package, Teresa discards the merchandise into the depths of the sea knowing that without it, authorities will have a harder time prosecuting the traffickers. In so doing, she mimics the actions traffickers of immigrants across the Mediterranean take when faced by similar threats. When the voyage does not go as planned, the traffickers’ priority changes from that of moving their merchandise —whether it be cocaine or humans— from point A to point B to one of protecting themselves from prosecution. Despite the necessity of crossing the Mediterranean, many of the immigrants who risk their lives in *pateras* do so without knowing how to swim. Many have never seen a sea and have walked thousands of kilometres from the interior of the African continent to reach the Maghrebian coast. Being cast overboard in the middle of the night is a death sentence with no chance for appeal. Significantly, Teresa's partner Santiago is also unable to swim, a fact shared by many of his fellow Galicians, so much of whose history, ironically, has been influenced by the sea: “La mitad de los gallegos no sabemos nadar, dijo al fin. Nos ahogamos resignados y punto” (144). By placing Teresa’s narcotics trafficking endeavours alongside her own story of immigration and that of the clandestine human trafficking operations that surround her, Pérez-Reverte leads the reader to an important conclusion: in the underworld of the underground market, the trafficking of tobacco and drugs is not much different from that of people. As Sami Naïr powerfully summarizes in a chapter of *El peaje de*
Like Jalid in Antonio Lozano’s *Harraga*, whose path toward Western success leads him through the world of trafficking narcotics, Teresa’s survival as an immigrant from Mexico in Spain becomes dependent on that same way of life; for as is the case of her immigrant counterpart, she is transformed by her multiple crossings of the Strait. The type of work in which Teresa and Jalid engage aggravates their underlying immigrant condition of dislocation. In *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha identifies dislocation as an effect of the effort of “keeping true time in two longitudes at once” (129). In the cases of Jalid and Teresa, their constant oscillation across a body of water that not only separates two continents but two completely different worlds complicates their sense of identity by denying it any stability; Jalid and Teresa, therefore, can neither rely on their sense of identity from before immigration, nor on a stable redefined one formed afterward. These characters are in a constant state of dislocation.

Teresa is acutely aware of her dislocation. With each successive deepening of her involvement in the world of narcotics, her awareness of her transformation is heightened. She describes her metamorphosis as a doubling, a process by which she ceases to be a Mexican woman yet never becomes a Spanish one; instead, she develops a hybrid identity that characterizes immigration in general:

*A veces, la otra Teresa Mendoza a la que sorprendía desde el más allá de un espejo, en cualquier esquina, en la luz sucia de los amaneceres, seguía espiándola con atención, expectante por los...*
cambios que poco a poco parecían registrarse en ella. [...] resultaba interesante, casi educativo, entrar y salir de aquel modo de sí misma; poder mirarse desde el interior lo mismo que desde afuera. Ahora Teresa sabía que todo, el miedo, la incertidumbre, la pasión, el placer, los recuerdos, su propio rostro que parecía mayor que unos meses atrás, podían contemplarse desde ese doble punto de vista. Con una lucidez matemática que no le correspondía a ella, sino a la otra mujer que latía en ella. Y esa aptitud para tan simular desdoblamiento [...] era lo que permitía observarse fríamente, a bordo de aquella lancha inmóvil en la oscuridad de un mar que ahora empezaba a conocer, ante la costa amenazadora de un país del que muy poco antes casi ignoraba la existencia. (133-4)

As Teresa herself observes, the doubling of her identity is a symptom of a difficult life on the run that is at once plagued by uncertainty. Forced to adapt to the daily threats to her wellbeing, she learns to step out of herself in a hardening of spirit without which the pains of her immigration would be unbearable.

**A New Kind of Travel Narrative**

Historically, travel writing has been intimately connected to colonialism. As such, it has contributed to the Western canon through which until recently, as Edward Said’s *Orientalism* demonstrates, the West almost exclusively conceived the rest of the world. Mary Louise Pratt identifies the ways in which travel narratives directly or indirectly contributed to producing “‘the rest of the world’ for European
readerships at different points in Europe’s expansionist trajectory” (5) and David Spurr states that travel writing is one of those “discourses of colonialism [by which] one culture comes to interpret, to represent, and finally to dominate another” (4). In this context, the use of travel writing techniques in novelas negras, whose politically committed authors seek to expose the post-colonial realities of others in Spain, seems contradictory. In a more recent contribution to the subject, however, Graham Huggan signals that “travel writing has also served as a useful medium of estrangement and as a relativist vehicle for the reassessment and potential critique of domestic culture. Both of these registers can be seen in contemporary travel writing, which acts alternately as a repository for exoticist forms of cultural nostalgia and as a barometer for the recording and calibration of cultural exchange” (39). It is on these aspects of what Huggan has called “counter-travel writing” in the post-colonial era that authors such as Jorge Martínez Reverte, Arturo Pérez-Reverte, and Antonio Lozano draw while narrating the internal perspective of the immigrant’s voyage. Their incorporation of metaphors of travel literature in their stories of immigrant crossings is in line with a broader resurgence of interest in travel narrative: “the revival of travel literature indicates readers’ desire for writing that is responsive to the dramatic and complex ways in which the world has changed in the past few decades. Travel literature offers a reflection of such changes, but, more important, it captures our changing perspectives of borders, boundaries, and other spatial concepts” (Russell 2).

In The Sea Voyage Narrative, Robert Foulke identifies a number of characteristics that are common to most sea voyage narratives despite this literary
genre’s diversity. Since Homer’s *The Odyssey*, the Mediterranean Sea has been a dominant body of water in travel narratives, a detail shared with representations of the contemporary immigrant journey in the Spanish detective novel. As Odysseus recounts his adventures to Penelope in the first person, furthermore, his narration establishes yet another important element of travel writing, the oral tradition (27), which, as I will demonstrate below, continues to play an important role in providing an internal immigrant perspective in the *novela negra*. Travel writing often recounts a personal quest for self knowledge or the determination to prove oneself, and involves a process of discovery, which, as Foulke states, is not merely that which develops from a physical encounter with the unknown but which manifests itself as an adjustment between preconceptions of that unknown and the direct experience that does not match them (68). In the detective novel of immigration, this latter characteristic parallels the clarification of misconceptions regarding that phenomenon, which I discussed in Chapter 2.

Despite the obvious difference between traditional travel narratives that involve large scale ships commissioned by crowns to discover and conquer new lands and the aspect of travel in the contemporary issue of immigration, there are some rather striking parallels. The first is the type of individual that is likely to undertake the voyage: historically, there has been a larger percentage of sailors who come from the lower classes since for them, like for economic migrants, difficult living conditions make the risks associated with the voyage less deterring. On board the vessel, a strict hierarchy is established: in the case of immigration to Spain, this is reflected in the most basic way in *pateras* or *cayucos* with the traffickers and
passengers; in the larger picture of illegal immigration, however, the importance of the hierarchy within the smuggling organization is key to its profitability and like the sailors on ships of discovery, immigrants are at the very bottom rung. Like these sailors, many immigrants are young men who leave their families, wives and children, behind, with whom they wish to be reunited. The tension between the desire to forge ahead to arrive at a better world and to return to one’s family and homeland is a constant in the *novela negra* of immigration.

In the sea voyage narrative, fear is the dominant emotion: fear of the night, fear of the sea, fear of the unknown. In the immigrant’s voyage, these fears are compounded by the knowledge that their journey is unsanctioned and that as a result, they must place their lives in the hands of strangers seeking to make a profit. In the *novela negra*, fear is an essential element since it allows for mystery and suspense required by the genre’s codes. With respect to the novels’ immigrant protagonists, fear not only satisfies the readers’ engagement with the genre, but it also connects the diegesis with the social phenomenon that it depicts, explores, and, in the case of these politically committed authors, criticizes. In Antonio Lozano’s *Donde mueren los ríos*, the multi-dimensional fear described by Tierno exemplifies this unity of meaning:

Las primeras horas del viaje fueron de silencio. Todos nos saludamos cortésmente, para volver enseguida la mirada sobre nuestras propias vidas. Únicas, distintas, como las estrellas de la leyenda, transitando juntas en camión entre las dunas. Viviendo con íntima intensidad los momentos iniciales de esa aventura que nos disponíamos a afrontar,
empujados cada cual por sus propias circunstancias, pero todos atenazados por el mismo miedo: la incertidumbre de lo que nos esperaba al final del camino, la tan temida prueba del mar, esa llanura de agua que sólo conocíamos por la televisión; la policía, el trabajo, la tierra extraña. (124)

The importance given to fear in each of these novelas negras is significant since at all times, fear manifests as a very personal emotion experienced by the immigrant protagonists. Its evocation contributes to the creation of the alternate views of immigration that the novels’ authors seek to provide to their Spanish reading public. The more commonly referenced perspective on the fear of immigration is that of mainstream Spanish society; that is, fear of the immigrants themselves. In these texts, the immigrants fear the sea, its frigidity, its darkness, and its waves; a stark contrast to the widespread Spanish fear of waves of a different kind: those of immigration.

The ship, with its self-contained, isolated rigidity is the natural setting for exploring ethical dilemmas such as the conflict between virtue and authority or for questioning the reasons for the degeneration of an entire society. In some sea voyage narratives, the process of self-discovery takes centre stage in a sub-genre of
travel writing that Foulke has called the sea *bildungsroman*⁶ (11). In these types of
texts, inexperienced youngsters leave the familiarity of shoreside places for the sea,
which provides a whole range of potential tests. The manner in which the young
protagonists face these tests, their ability to overcome risks and gain confidence, is
considered an initiation into the world of travel and an essential process of the
*bildungsroman*. In the coming of age stories of immigrant characters of the *novela
negra*, the obstacles are ongoing: in Pérez-Reverte’s *La Reina del Sur*, as we have
seen, Teresa’s maturation from a powerless, abused, immigrant woman to the head
of a trafficking empire is intimately connected to the relationship she develops with
the Mediterranean sea over multiple crossings; in Lozano’s *Harraga*, the process of
initiation is the literal rite of passage onto the *pateras* that lead immigrants away
from their homelands.

The protagonist of this novel echoes the dangers of this important literary
pattern in the sea *bildungsroman* as he succumbs to heightened pressures, as
Foulke describes, usually present themselves as follows: “When the test becomes
more menacing and the probability of failure greater, the stakes change from
growing up to risking moral destruction […] the usual archetype for such dark
initiation is descent, both obvious and as natural as a ship or person sinking to the
bottom of the sea” (12). In *Harraga*, this sinking is both literal and metaphorical: as a

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⁶ The generally accepted prototype of the *bildungsroman*, or coming of age story, is Goethe’s 1795 *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* [*Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship*]. Novels of this genre narrate the life of a young (historically male) protagonist as he finds friendship and love, and is faced with conflict and the cruel realities of life, all the while finding himself, his identity, and his purpose. While the *bildungsroman* has its roots in German literature of the nineteenth century, there exist other variations in the European tradition. According to James Hardin, the German *bildungsroman* deals mostly with the individual’s preoccupations of social mobility and class conflict, while the British equivalent explores questions of the individual’s morality through her/his spiritual and psychological maturation (xxiv). A Spanish antecedent to the modern coming of age story is the Golden Age picaresque, the most famous example of which is *Lazarillo de Tormes* (Anonymous).
result of his participation in recruiting young, desperate Moroccans, Jalid becomes responsible for the deaths of many of his compatriots who drown when their ships cannot overcome the power of the waves. Among them is the love of Jalid’s life, Yasmina (154). Jalid’s own moral destruction leads him to a descent that will psychologically torture him for the rest of his life. Imprisoned for his involvement in the trafficking of humans, he is placed in complete isolation and is visited by his family and loved ones only in dreams, punished in life for his role in leading young hopefuls to their death.

In Lozano’s *Donde mueren los ríos*, the journeys undertaken by the novel’s two youngest characters suggest the possibility of more optimistic endings to the process of maturation. While Usmán and Tierno choose completely different paths away from the misery of working illegally in Canarian greenhouses, they will both make use of the lessons they have learned through their voyage to Spain when confronting inevitable future obstacles. Usmán decides to enter deeper into Europe by leaving the Canary Islands in search of more honourable work on the Peninsula. Usmán, on the other hand, learns that the best thing he can do to better his economic situation is to help that of his people: he returns, therefore, to Burkina Faso to continue the work of his mentor and orphanage director Hadama. In so doing, Usmán not only brings his voyage full circle like that of the sailor who survives his travels to bring home the lessons learned, but Usmán also represents a movement toward a solution to the problems surrounding mass world migrations that involves the investment of minds and money in the emitting countries of immigrants rather than solely in their reception.
In *The Sea Voyage Narrative*, Robert Foulke outlines the difficulties with defining the literary body of work that concerns itself with sea travel since “the subject can be labelled neither ‘literature of the sea voyage’ nor ‘historical voyage narrative’ with any accuracy” and suggests that “the symbiosis between literature and history, imagination and experience, fiction and autobiography is very close and full of quite complex interactions” (xii). We have seen how elements of each of these aspects of the sea voyage have entered into the *novela negra*’s contribution to the narrative of immigration. In the following section, I will discuss how another multi-faceted literary genre —*testimonio*— enters these Spanish tales of immigration and builds on the *novela negra*’s incorporation of the sea voyage *bildungsroman*.

**Testimonio and Documenting the Immigrant**

In the absence of official identity documents that attest to undocumented immigrants’ existence —a circumstance evident in their title of “undocumented labourers”—, literary productions, or documents that tell the immigrant’s story take on new meaning. Within detective novels of immigration, the use of testimonial narrative techniques adds new dimensions to these texts, whose solution — ultimately— is also about identity since it depends on identifying the culprits of the crimes being committed. Testimony has been and remains an essential element of detection: sleuths interview eye-witnesses for first-hand accounts; they rely on informants for leads; and, in the case of the police procedural, the act of witnessing and identifying the criminal by the victim plays an important role. In their detective stories of immigration, therefore, Spanish authors build on the codified element of
testimony to give voice to the immigrant protagonists whose perspective might otherwise be ignored or discarded. These testimonies, the primary role of which is to provide evidence of the crimes being investigated, also narrate the voyage undertaken by the protagonists. In this way, they serve not only as an extension of their internal perspective and travel narrative, but as a narration that documents the journey of an entire displaced people.

*Testimonio* is a well established genre of writing that, while controversial as a socially and politically charged form of narrative, has a well-defined set of characteristics. In its most basic sense, *testimonio* retells historical events from an eye-witness perspective using a variety of literary strategies from dialogue to poetry, from stream of consciousness to metaphor. The diverse corpus of literary production was prompted by intense social upheaval in Latin America that included the Cuban Revolution (1959), the Bay of Pigs (1961), the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua (1979), Indigenous human rights struggles in Guatemala, and the military dictatorships that dominated the Southern cone in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Yúdice 220). I will not enter here into the ongoing debates over whether *testimonio* is or is not “literature,” nor will I comment on current discussions regarding the problems of veracity, reliability, and the authorial role of the ethnographer/compiler.  

Instead, I will consider the way contemporary authors of the *novela negra* make use of the established codes of *testimonio* to make their detective tales of immigration —

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7 The most infamous debate over these matters is that between ethnographer Elisabeth Burgos-Debray, known for her role as compiler and editor of *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú y así nació mi conciencia* (1985), and David Stoll, whose response to that text in his controversial *Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans* (1999) divides critics on the question of testimonio to this day. The “Menchú-Stoll” debate was an important aspect of the 2003 LASA (Latin American Studies Convention) and continues to divide hispanists. For more considerations on testimonio see Roberto González Echavarría’s (1985), Georg Gugelberger’s *The Real Thing: Testimonial Discourse and Latin America* (1996), and John Beverley’s *Testimonio: On the Politics of Truth* (2004).
which themselves are unarguably texts of fiction—more gripping, all the while adhering to the contemporary Peninsular variety of the *novela negra* that is grounded in realism and social critique. I argue that the use of these testimonial techniques within crime fiction, regardless of one’s critical opinion as to the legitimacy of *testimonio* as a literary genre, reinforces the Spanish authors’ endeavour to lend voice to their immigrant characters and to shed light on the dire situation of entire communities of immigrants in Spain.

According to Ana Del Sarto, while *testimonio* productions have been triggered by a variety of circumstances, most works share the following seven characteristics: they are based on traumatic historical and/or social episode(s); they are told from an individual perspective; the individual experience serves as an allegory for the communal experience as a whole; the author has been oppressed or silenced in some capacity and the work contains political statement against the perceived oppressor or suffering caused by that oppression; literary elements such as dialogue, poetry and metaphors are infused throughout the writing; there is a sense of orality; the author includes selections from other texts including newspaper clippings, quotes from leaders and popular mythology.

As I will demonstrate below, the literary incorporation of these elements permits authors of the *novela negra* to bridge the act of testifying with their social
commentary on the migratory process.\textsuperscript{8}

In his seminal essay, “The Margin at the Center,” John Beverley asserts that testimonio is not so much concerned with a problematic hero but with a problematic collective social situation in which the narrator lives (33). In contemporary Spain, immigration is, as I have discussed and as the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas’ monthly barometer indicates, often regarded as a problem by the general public. As a phenomenon that has affected thousands of immigrant lives and been so present in the Spanish consciousness for the last two decades, immigration to Spain can thus be viewed as the concomitant “traumatic historical event” being told by these testimonials. In *Donde mueren los ríos*, Antonio Lozano skilfully borrows from testimonio to create a collective narration that includes the personal voyage narrative of each of his five protagonists who are united by their immigrant status in Spain regardless of their different backgrounds, ethnicities, and experiences. Lozano’s incorporation of testimonio diegetically mimics the structural means by which testimonio is documented and produced extra-diegetically: one of Lozano’s characters, Amadú Kabbah, recognizes the need to record the events surrounding his and others’ process of immigration and therefore undertakes the process of compiling his comrades’ stories. Amadú, like the ethnographer in testimonio who interviews and embeds her/himself into the community s/he wishes

\textsuperscript{8} Critical considerations of testimonio have been largely focused on Latin America where the genre has its roots. In addition to Rigoberta Menchú’s text, representative works of the Latin American testimonio canon include: Esteban Montejo’s *Biografía de un cimmarón* (1968), Elena Poniatowka’s *Hasta no verte, Jesús mío* (1984), Omar Cabeza’s *La montaña es algo más que una inmensa estepa verde* (1985), and Domitila Barrios de Chungada and Moema Viezzer’s *Si me permiten hablar: testimonio de Domitila, una mujer de las minas de Bolivia* (1977). Increasingly, texts produced in Spain have been considered through the literary critical lens of testimonio as is exemplified by Cristina Dulúa’s study of Montserrat Roig’s work in *La voz testimonial de Montserrat Roig: estudio cultural de los textos* (1996). Before her untimely death, Montserrat Roig was, anecdotally, a close friend and colleague of Spain’s most famous detective fiction writer Manuel Vázquez Montalbán.
to document, has a higher educational and professional formation than that of the four fellow immigrants he befriends. Given his background as professor of literature in Sierra Leone, he sees it as his duty to document the undocumented, the voices that have been silenced through their marginality. As in *testimonio*, Amadú’s narration begins by addressing his audience directly:

> Me van a perdonar si, al contarles esta historia, no sigo el curso de los acontecimientos tal como sucedieron [...] creo que aquí, en vuestra tierra, tengo que contaros mi vida o, mejor dicho, la parte de mi vida que empieza al salir de mi país, que pasa fugazmente por la cárcel en que empecé a escribir y termina en una playa, sentado frente al mismo horizonte que contemplan todos los hombres y mujeres del mundo. Es mi historia y la de las personas con que me encontré, mis amigos, compañeros de un viaje que iniciamos por separado y que todavía no ha terminado, porque los que estamos condenados a buscar nunca sabemos si nuestro viaje tiene fin. (11)

For Amadú, the process of testimonial narration in the *novela negra* of immigration is intimately connected to that of the immigrant’s personal voyage: “Ellos me contaron su historia y ahora me toca a mí hacerlo. Formamos un grupo pintoresco de personas que nunca habrían dado juntos más de cuatro pasos de no ser porque el camino en que se encontraron era el único que les era permitido seguir” (14).

One problematic element of *testimonio* is its partial reliance on the creative element of storytelling (Beverley xv): first-hand accounts and narrations of a historical event require the witness to reconstruct, often in linear fashion, the
unfolding of the event as though narrating a story. In the contemporary Spanish
detective novel on immigration, testimonial storytelling is not only a vehicle by which
immigrants may declare their role in the crime being investigated, but, as in the
cases of Antonio Lozano’s *Harraga* and *Donde mueren los ríos*, is also a formalized
documentation of the oral tradition. As such, the immigrant characters’ oral
testimony foreshadows the process by which immigrants and their Spanish born
children will themselves write about the origins and obstacles of contemporary
immigration to Spain. One of the immigrant testimonies that Amadú documents is
that of Tierno, a young Peul man whose nomadic background goes hand in hand
with the oral literary traditions of the Fula people.9 For Amadú, the compiler of the
novel’s immigrant testimonies, Tierno’s situation epitomizes the need for his
journey’s documentation: “Aunque Tierno no sabe leer ni escribir, posee un
profundo conocimiento de la historia de su pueblo, de sus tradiciones, de su cultura.
Como todos los africanos, los peul transmiten sus conocimientos de generación en
generación por medio de la palabra” (34). As a professor of African literature,
Amadú is acutely aware of the wealth of information at risk of being lost for lack of
documentation and cites Amadou Hampâté Bâ (c. 1900-1991),10 the Malian writer

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9 The Fula is an ethnic group of people spread over many countries from West Africa, Central Africa,
and even parts of East Africa including Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, and Burkina Faso. Due to
dispersion of this nomadic people throughout Africa, they are referred to by various names including
the Wolof Pêl that has led to the French Peul also used in Spanish.

10 Like the immigrant character Tierno Bokari, the Malian writer Amadou Hampâté Bâ was a Fula,
born to an aristocratic family in Bandiagara, the capital of the pre-colonial Toucouleur Empire. At the
beginning of his studies, Bâ attended a Qur’anic school run by Tierno Bokar, whose name
undoubtedly inspired Antonio Lozano for his peul immigrant character. Having founded the Institute
of Human Sciences in Bamako and represented Mali at the UNESCO general conferences, Bâ helped
establish a unified system for the transcription of African languages. He devoted the latter years of his
life to research, writing, and classifying the archives of West African oral tradition that he had
accumulated throughout his lifetime. He also wrote his memoirs *Amkoullel l’enfant peul* and *Oui mon
commandant!, both published posthumously.
and ethnologist with whom, significantly, he shares his name: “Cada vez que un viejo muere en África se incendia una biblioteca” (152).

Tierno’s testimony begins poetically and echoes the oral tradition of his people: “Yo soy ese pastor sin rebaño que buscó lejos de su tierra lo que en ella había perdido. Crucé un desierto y un mar, mundos nuevos para mí, pero la enseñanzas que la vida me tenía reservada llegaron después de ese largo viaje” (37). Part of the Peul youth’s long voyage is the passage by sea from Mauritania to the Canary islands that has become a common trajectory for illegal immigration in recent years in response to increased patrolling of the Strait of Gibraltar. This sea voyage is much more treacherous than that between Northern Morocco and Andalucía; it measures on average 1400 kilometres in comparison to thirteen kilometres at the Strait’s narrowest point. Tierno’s testimony includes an internal perspective of his immigrant voyage like those of Tereza Mendoza in Pérez-Reverte’s La Reina del Sur and Julio Gálvez in Gálvez en la frontera: “la barca, empujada por un pequeño motor, salió en plena noche. Nos abrigamos con unas viejas mantas que sin duda habían cubierto ya cientos de cuerpos como los nuestros. Mantas impregnadas de miedo y esperanza, de lágrimas y sudor; mantas testigos de la verdadera historia de los emigrantes” (129). Tierno’s narration, filled with physical and sensory description, places the reader inside that small boat and powerfully transmits the fear and hope experienced by the immigrant travellers that have left their mark on those worn blankets.

Amadú also documents the testimony of Usmán, an orphan from Burkina Faso, whose mother —a victim of AIDS— he never knew, and who was raised in
the Dufour Foundation of Uagadugú. The young man’s immigrant journey begins when he leaves his orphanage in search of Adán and Eva, his Spanish foster parents, whom he believes will take him in should his voyage to the Canary Islands be successful. Once he finds them, Usmán’s foster parents are not as prepared to adopt him as he imagined and he is eventually faced with working as an undocumented agricultural worker for survival. In compiling Usmán’s testimony, Amadú, this story’s ethnographer, mimics yet another aspect of testimonio outlined by Del Sarto by including selected texts as documentary evidence of the testimonial: “Cuando dije a Usmán que estaban escribiendo un libro sobre nuestras vidas en la isla, me entregó una copia de la carta que había enviado unos meses antes a Hadama11 y que guardaba como un tesoro junto a su coche rojo y la foto de Adán y Eva” (129). This process of collecting texts as testimonial evidence juxtaposes the lack of official documentation—or papers—that I have demonstrated to be representative of the denial of the illegal immigrant’s individual identity.

In circumstances that include the transnational movement of people as in immigration, a passport is a most important possession. This document has the power to declare the immigrant’s origin and, should that immigrant be so fortunate as to attain a Spanish passport, to symbolize that person’s membership to Western society. As Lozano demonstrates in Harraga, immigrants are led to believe by their traffickers that destroying their original passports is in their best interest because it will avoid deportation, while in reality, it is in the traffickers’ interest since it limits the immigrant’s movement and ensures greater fidelity to the illegal labour enterprise associated with those traffickers. In Donde mueren los ríos, the prostitution ring for

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11 Hadama is the director of Usmán’s orphanage and is his only anchor to his homeland.
which one of the immigrant characters works is discovered to have used this same modus operandi. Aida, a young immigrant woman sold by her family to traffickers, is denied access to her passport until she has paid off the debt for her immigration. She is also the novel’s murder victim, whose death her fellow immigrant comrades investigate in light of the Spanish law enforcement agency’s underwhelming efforts. The novel’s hard-boiled detective Fatiha, an immigrant woman herself, works in conjunction with Amadú, the story’s ethnographer, to resolve their friend’s murder. Their partnership is representative of the intricate union of crime fiction’s codes with testimonial strategies in Antonio Lozano’s novelas negras. Their discovery of incriminating documents is the ultimate stage in the resolution of the crime and provides concrete evidence that supports the immigrants’ testimony: “Saqué la carpeta de debajo del colchón y me dispuse a examinar, sin prisas, los papeles. Imaginé a Fatiha a mi lado, compartiendo conmigo ese momento que me parecía la antesala de una victoria (210).

Among the papers the team uncovers are photographs that place a face on the victims of yet another human trafficking operation. They also include evidence attesting to police corruption and the falsification of Spanish identity documents (211), all of which reveal the significance of “papers” in illegal immigration. After years of a miserable existence denied of a true identity, Aida’s life is given new meaning when her documents fall in the hands of her friend Fatiha. This immigrant woman, who began her life in Spain as a prostitute but was able to escape the clutches of her pimps, honours Aida by affirming her existence and identity—even if only in death:
Pasaron otras vidas por mis manos. Las que, como la de Aida, eran controladas por los mafiosos. Las que habían pasado años trabajando por un pasaporte que nunca les llegó. Papeles, muchos papeles, con anotaciones que no tenían desperdicio. Lo leí todo, por encima, sin detenerme demasiado. Volví a mirar las fotos, detenidamente, una a una, imaginando la amargura detrás de cada rostro. me di cuenta de la importancia de lo que había delante de mí. (218)

On the novel's final page, Fatiha explains Tierno's refusal to carry illegal identity documents as he leaves the Canary Islands to try his luck on the Spanish mainland:

Le dije que lo entregué todo a la policía menos su pasaporte, y que se lo podía mandar. Pero ya no lo quiere. Dice que no ha robado a nadie para tener que ir por la vida con documentos falsos. Que tiene el mismo derecho que cualquiera a papeles legales. Y que si no se los dan, que él tiene un nombre, el que su padre y su madre le dieron, y una historia propia. Que ésa es su identidad, con papeles o sin papeles. (227)

Having endured several difficult years in the hands of traffickers, Tierno has found an internal strength that does not lie in real or falsified documentation. The journey that took him to this place, like that of his immigrant friends, is one that such pieces of identification could never fully recount. That is why Amadú, like the Peul ethnographer Amadou Hambâté Bâ after whom he is named, will make sure it is told: “Es un peul —afirmó Amadú—. Un auténtico peul. Escribiré su historia, y la de Usmán. Y la nuestra. Porque no pueden seguir cayendo vidas en el pozo sin fondo
del olvido. Para darle nombre y apellido a cada una de nuestras vidas” (227). With these closing words, Antonio Lozano brings his novel full circle, explicitly declaring to the readers of his novela negra that much more needs to be done.

Conclusion

The immigrant’s voyage is an integral part of the detective tale of contemporary immigration to Spain. This journey, which in almost every case includes a sea-faring leg, becomes an integral element of the process of investigation. In making the crime fiction reader privy to the internal perspective of the immigrant’s voyage —as placed in opposition to the external view provided by the Spanish mass media— authors Jorge Martínez Reverte, Arturo Pérez-Reverte, and Antonio Lozano make use of traditional narrative techniques of the sea voyage narrative and of testimonial literature as well as those of cinematography. Their texts become places not only for resolving questions of crime, but also vehicles for the exploration of oneself and of one’s role in the contemporary migratory process.

These novels also become part of a corpus of literature that is sprouting in response to the dominant form of representation of immigration in the mass media. Finally, these texts open the way for a new generation of novels on immigration across literary genres that will be written not only from the perspective of the immigrant protagonists but by immigrant writers themselves.
Conclusion

Que tire la primera piedra quien nunca haya tenido manchas de emigración en su árbol genealógico… Así como en la fábula del lobo malo que acusaba al inocente cordero de enturbiar el agua del arroyo de donde ambos bebían, si tú no emigraste, emigró tu padre, y si tu padre no necesitó mudar de sitio fue porque tu abuelo, antes, no tuvo otro remedio que ir, cargando la vida sobre la espalda, en busca de la comida que su propia tierra le negaba […] Aquel que antes fue explotado y perdió la memoria de haberlo sido, acabará explotando a otro. Aquel que antes fue despreciado y finge haberlo olvidado, refinará su propia capacidad de despreciar. Aquel a quien ayer humillaron, humillará hoy con más rencor.

– José Saramago

1 From José Saramago’s prologue to Juan José Téllez’s Moros en la costa (2001).
2 In his 1996 book Fugados en velero, Gonzalo Morales Hernández tells the story of these Canarian emigrants who in 1949 risked their lives to flee the misery of Spanish poverty and travelled across the Atlantic on the Elvira, finally arriving in Puerto de Carúpano in Venezuela in May of 1949.
José Saramago’s words and the image of the Spanish emigrants arriving in Venezuela remind us that economic migration across national borders and involving Spain is not a new phenomenon. Despite this, and as I have discussed in the previous chapters, recent immigrants to Spain from the developing world face many of the same prejudices that Spaniards experienced in their receiving countries only a few decades ago. In this, Spain is not unique. Xenophobic backlashes after the murder of journalist Theo Van Gogh by a Muslim man in Holland in 2004 and police clashes with North African communities in the Parisian banlieues in 2005 reveal that tensions regarding immigration and its descendents remain high in Europe. Many of these tensions have involved the targeting of Muslim communities as part of the politics of fear that has predominated in much of the West following the terrorist attacks on the New York City World Trade Center in September of 2001 and on Madrid’s Atocha Station in March of 2004.

In Spain, there are an encouraging number of voices speaking out against the xenophobic behaviour that led to the race riots of El Ejido, Almería in February of 2000. In addition to the Spanish chapters of Amnesty International and Doctors Without Borders, who have denounced the living conditions of the thousands of documented and undocumented immigrants in Spain, other non-governmental organisations such as Andalucía Acoge, S.O.S. Racismo, and the Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado (CEAR)\(^3\) have focused their work specifically on

\(^3\) For more on Andalucía Acoge, see <http://www.acoge.org>. In addition to S.O.S. Racismo’s national and regional Web pages (<http://www.sosracismo.org>, <http://sosracisme.org>), the organisation publishes an annual report on the state of racism in Spain, which can be accessed at <http://www.eurosur.org/racismo/sos_racismo/>. As is to be expected, recent publications show new immigrants to be the victims of the majority of cases of prejudice and hate crime in Spain. The Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado’s (CEAR) official website is: <http://www.cear.es/home.php>.
the immigrant situation. In 2001, the government of the Canary Islands reprinted the front-page photo of the newspaper Agencia Comercial shown above on thousands of large posters with a caption reading “Nosotros también fuimos extranjeros.” The posters were designed by the Ministerio de Trabajo y Asunto Sociales as part of an ad campaign to sensitise Canarians to current immigration in the Autonomous Region (Bárbulo). Intellectuals like Juan Goytisolo and Sami Naïr, through their editorial contributions to national dailies and their academic publications, have striven to counterbalance the otherwise predominantly statistical coverage of immigration in the mass media, which has had the overall effect of depersonalising the migratory phenomenon. Increasingly, contemporary Spanish writers and filmmakers have used their works to explore the topic of immigration to Spain. Through the pages of their texts and on the movie screen, new perspectives of immigration have become progressively more accessible to the Spanish public. One thematic aspect that all considerations on the topic share is the impact of contemporary immigration on Spanish conceptions of identity.

In this dissertation, I argued that the Spanish detective novel has been and continues to be another important venue for discussions on immigration, both because of the genre’s well-established literary tradition of reflecting on and critiquing contemporary society, and because of the high readership the novela negra enjoys in Spain today. In particular, I demonstrated that Spanish detective fiction since the political transition to democracy in 1975 has served as a medium in which to explore questions of marginality. Long before large-scale immigration from Latin America, Africa, and Eastern Europe appeared on the radar of the Spanish
collective consciousness, characters reflecting Spain’s already heterogeneous society filled the pages of the *novela negra*.

**Spain’s Autochthonous Others in the Novela Negra**

In Juan Madrid’s popular series of fourteen novels, *Brigada Central* (1989-90), the protagonist detective Manuel Flores exemplifies the persistent prejudices that Roma suffer in contemporary Spanish society. Even as the well-decorated state police officer from Madrid’s central brigade, Flores is faced at every turn by fellow cops who cannot stand to see a Gypsy representing their institution. Reflecting Spain’s own oscillating love-hate relationship with its Andalusian Gypsy identity, Manuel Flores is plagued with internal battles and finds himself continually negotiating between the legal codes he enforces and the inherited codes of his people.

For their part, Catalans, Galicians, and Basques represent another manifestation of otherness with regard to the historical centralist conception of Spanishness as their regional leaders strive for a greater public role for regional language and culture as well as to have their regional histories acknowledged vis-à-vis the central, Castilian-Spanish historiographic canon. Despite each region’s unique historical literary relationship with detective fiction, the three linguistic manifestations of the literary genre explore common themes of transition, migration, language, and marginality. In Maria-Antònia Oliver’s Catalan series of three novels (*Estudi en lila*, 1985; *Antípodes*, 1988; *El sol que fa l’ànc, 1994) and Carlos González Reigosa’s series of four novels (*Crime en Compostela*, 1984; *O misterio*
*do barco perdido*, 1988; *A guerra do Tabaco*, 1996; *Narcos*, 2001), their protagonists Lònia Guiu and Nivardo Castro are migrants within Spain whose investigations back in their homelands serve as catalysts for their personal explorations of identity. As a Majorcan woman living in Barcelona, Lònia Guiu strives not only to assert herself as a female detective, but she also must negotiate her identity while living in Barcelona, the centre of *catalanitat*, while her occasional slips of tongue reveal her peripheral place of birth. Nivardo Castro, a native of Galicia who emigrated first to France and then to Madrid, is counterbalanced by his investigative sidekick and journalist Carlos Conde, who unlike Castro, remains infatuated with his Galician homeland, its history, its language, and the romance of its past. The two serve to provide a multifaceted portrayal of regional identity and intra-national migration and reveal a variety of personal relationships with their homeland that foreshadows the complexity that extra-national migrants arriving later will experience.

In Jorge Martínez Reverte’s *Gálvez en Euskadi* (1983), the regional Basque perspective is portrayed not by the novel’s detective Julio Gálvez, but by the investigation’s informant Sara Goicoechea. Through his detective’s friendship with the young *etarra*, Martínez Reverte brings to the forefront a critical view of some of the internal struggles that characterise the nationalist movement. As a non-Basque writer discussing Basque issues, Martínez Reverte is careful not to claim to understand the subjects he depicts nor to defend their actions to a country torn by the violence ETA propagates even while representing *etarras* to his public as real people who believe in their struggle and would do anything to avenge decades-old oppression. His gripping storyline and innovative humour are an excellent example
of the novela negra’s ability to address serious issues that have repercussions on a national scale all the while filling its pages with entertaining and thrilling material for its readers.

A religious other becomes the focus of another Spanish detective novel in Manuel Quinto’s *El judío errante* (1987). As the text’s detective Buenaventura Pals undertakes an investigation in search of an ever elusive Jewish character named Martin Heschel, the text reveals that processes of identity formation in a post-Transition Spain include not only the consideration of synchronic realities such as ethnicity, language, and geographic location, but also of diachronic elements pertaining to the country’s historical processes of national identity formation, particularly insofar as these have been tied to religion. Heschel and Pals share both a desire to find the ultimate truth and a relative marginality within the society. Because of this, Pals remains determined to continue on with the investigation of the Wandering Jew’s disappearance long after other police authorities deem the case closed. The detective’s acute perception in solving the mystery also leads him to a deeper understanding of the historical circumstances in Spain that continue to influence the way Martin Heschel and other religious minorities are seen by the largely Christian population. In this way, Manuel Quinto’s text foreshadows some of the obstacles that immigrants of Muslim faith will confront as part of their integration into Spanish society.
Spain’s New Others in the Novela Negra

After demonstrating that Spanish detective fiction, which has a long and well-documented literary tradition, has been the site of portrayal of autochthonous others in Spanish society, I have looked at how new others, immigrants, become the protagonists of novelas negras published at the turn of the twenty-first century. With analyses of eight detective texts written by seven Spanish authors, I have shown that immigrants in contemporary Spanish detective fiction play a variety of important roles in their stories’ mysteries. In response to the predominantly negative press that immigration receives in other media, José Javier Abasolo’sEl color de los muertos(2005), Antonio Lozano’s Harraga (2002) and Donde mueren los ríos (2003), Andreu Martín’s Aprende y calla (1979), Jorge Martínez Reverte’s Gálvez en la frontera (2001), Arturo Pérez-Reverte’s La Reina del Sur (2002), Lorenzo Silva’s “Un asunto vecinal” (2004), and Yolanda Soler Onís’s Malpaís (2003) reveal sides of the immigrant experience often overlooked in mainstream discussions on the issue.

Using the conventions of their well-encoded literary genre, writers of the novela negra portray immigrants as victims, informants, and detectives, and not only as criminals. In so doing, they shed light on some of the macrocosmic powers affecting current immigration trends: Spain’s rapid economic growth and the role cheap imported labour has had on its agricultural, service, and real estate industries; the way Spanish and foreign corruption at a variety of levels facilitates clandestine means of immigration because of its economic benefits; and the socio-economic conditions of emitting countries of migrants. The detective texts also provide a glimpse of what an individual immigrant’s experience might be, from the moment
s/he decides to leave her/his place of birth, through the arduous journey to the Promised Land, and once faced with the reality of what her/his new life will bring.

In Chapter 2 of this dissertation, I demonstrated how in pursuing the ultimate truth and culprits of the crimes committed in the texts’ pages, the Spanish sleuths also unveil the reality hidden behind many popular misconceptions about immigration to Spain. The first is the misconception that “immigrants are invading” the country. Despite the unquestionable statistical increase in immigration in the last twenty years, both through official and irregular means, the percentage population of immigrants in Spain still remains among the lowest in Western Europe. Furthermore, many of the immigrants contributing to the elevated statistics are not economic migrants, but citizens of other European Union countries who have retired in Spain but whose presence remains largely under the radar.

In my discussion on storylines involving the trafficking of women from the Third World to Spain in the novela negra, I argue that Arturo Pérez-Reverte’s La Reina del sur, Antonio Lozano’s Donde mueren los ríos, and José Javier Abasolo’s El color de los muertos negate the deplorable and prejudiced misconception that immigrant women innately prefer to work in prostitution. I also consider how contemporary Spanish detective tales illuminate the various levels of local, national, and international corruption that surrounds clandestine immigration to Spain and how these are interconnected with individual greed as well as the often unspoken recognition of the need for underpaid, foreign labourers. Finally, Chapter 2 addresses the misconception held in large part by immigrants themselves that their absence from their homeland will be a temporary one.
In Chapter 3, I focused my attention on the intimate relationship between the novela negra and the mass media. As a consequence of constant news reports showing boats filled with dark-skinned young men arriving on Spanish beaches and the coining of terms denoting invasion like oleada and marea, which have entered into mainstream vocabulary to refer to immigration, a powerfully skewed image of immigration has entered into the Spanish psyche. In constant dialogue with the Spanish media, I argue that the contemporary detective novel de-militarises the immigrant, showing the individuality behind each immigrant story. Finally, in the fourth chapter of this dissertation, I extend my analysis of the novela negra’s personalisation of the immigrant experience by showing how internal points of view of the immigrant journey enter into the detective stories. As immigrant characters undertake tumultuous journeys in search of a better future, the stories’ detectives also embark on voyages of discovery, unveiling the ultimate criminals in the cases they investigate and revealing some of the truths behind contemporary immigration to Spain.

Clues of What is to Come

The number of publications in Spain in the last two decades that deal thematically with immigration indicates that literary representations of this topic are only likely to increase in the coming years. As immigrant communities become more established and begin to form a permanent part of Spain’s already plural society, literary and filmic texts will undoubtedly continue to reflect the integration of immigrants into that society. A consequence of this process will undoubtedly also
entail the creation of new texts that not only address immigration but that are written by immigrants themselves or their descendents. In an interview with Paula Corroto of the Spanish daily El Público, author Juan Bonilla—whose depiction of immigrant exploitation in Los príncipes nubios won him the 2003 Premio Biblioteca Breve—states: “En Francia e Inglaterra la literatura inmigrante se escribe sola. Espero que algún día nuestros mejores escritores tengan apellidos árabes o de Mali. Sería una inyección de vigor para nuestras letras.” As an avid reader of detective fiction and a believer in its power to bring insight to the complexities of Spanish society, I hope that those authors also try their hand at the novela negra.


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