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A CASE FOR EMPATHY: IMMIGRATION IN SPANISH CONTEMPORARY MEDIA, MUSIC, FILM, AND NOVELS

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A CASE FOR EMPATHY: IMMIGRATION IN SPANISH CONTEMPORARY MEDIA, MUSIC, FILM, AND NOVELS

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Kentucky

By
Constantin C. Icleanu
Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Ana Rueda, Professor of Spanish Literature
Lexington, Kentucky

2017
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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

A CASE FOR EMPATHY: IMMIGRATION IN SPANISH CONTEMPORARY MEDIA, MUSIC, FILM, AND NOVELS

This dissertation analyzes the representations of immigrants from North Africa, Latin America, and Eastern Europe in Spain. As engaged scholarship, it seeks to better the portrayal of immigrants in the mass media through the study of literature, film, and music about immigration spanning from the year 2000 to 2016. Because misconceptions continue to propagate in the media, this dissertation works to counteract anti-immigrant, xenophobic representations as well as balance out overly positive and orientalized portrayal of immigrants with a call to recognize immigrants as human beings who deserve the same respect, dignity, and rights as any other citizen.

Chapter 1 examines and analyzes the background to immigration in Spain by covering demographics, the mass media, and political theories related to immigration. Chapter 2 analyzes Spanish music about immigration through Richard Rorty’s social theory of ‘sentimental education’ as a meaningful way to redescribe marginalized minorities as full persons worthy of rights and dignity. Chapter 3 investigates the representation of immigrants in Spanish filmic shorts and cinema. Lastly, Chapter 4 demonstrates how literary portrayals of immigrants written by undocumented immigrants can give rise to strong characters that avoid victimization and rear empathy in their readers in order to affect a social change that minimizes cruelty.

KEYWORDS: Immigration, Spain, Immigration Law, Empathy, Media, Social Change

Constantin C. Icleanu

March 9, 2017
Date
A CASE FOR EMPATHY: IMMIGRATION IN SPANISH CONTEMPORARY MEDIA, MUSIC, FILM, AND NOVELS

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April 6, 2017
I dedicate this work to Heidi Icleanu, my beautiful wife who relentlessly supported me through the making and editing of this dissertation. You are someone great!
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1: Immigration Issues in the Mass Media, the Spanish Immigration Law, and Political Theory</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shifting Demographics and the Spanish Immigration Law</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass Media Portrayals of Immigration and Immigrants</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Literary Response to the Spanish Immigration Law and Mass Media</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Theories of Justice and Social Theories for Immigration</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2: ‘Sentimental Education’ as a Counterbalance to Hate Speech and Xenophobia in Spanish Music about Immigration</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music as a Form of Hate Speech against Immigrants</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A ‘Sentimental Education’: Diminishing Cruelty through Empathy and Compassion</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music against Injustice and Discrimination</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Militant Category</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Empathetic Category</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dissonant Category</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3: Cognitive Dissonance and Spanish Immigration Films</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Problems of Representation in Short Films about Immigration</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant Representation in Spanish Feature Films</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xenophobia and Cruelty as the Norm</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toward Friendship and Understanding</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Inconsiderate Approach: Orientalizing and Eroticizing Immigrants</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4: There are No Innocent Discourses:</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant Perspectives on Immigration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sergio Galarza’s Troubling Interethnic Critique in Paseador de perros</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diario de un ilegal: Humanizing Stereotypes through Responsibility and Empathy</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV
Bibliography ........................................................................................................................................271
Appendices ..........................................................................................................................................293
  Appendix 1: Music and Immigration .................................................................293
    Song 1: “Me cago en estos putos rumanos” ..........................................293
    Song 2: “Facha vs. Moro” ...........................................................................294
    Song 3: “Negros de mierda” ........................................................................295
    Song 4: “La Nueva España” ..........................................................................296
    Song 5: “La perversión de lenguaje” ............................................................299
    Song 6: “Soy un rumano en Madrid” .............................................................302
  Appendix 2: List of Short Films ..................................................................304
  Appendix 3: List of Feature Films .................................................................305
  Appendix 4: Authors of African Origin .........................................................306
  Appendix 5: Authors of Latin American Origin .........................................308
Vita ..................................................................................................................................................310
Introduction

The topic of this dissertation is to analyze the effectiveness of socially conscious artistic endeavors in questioning and positively affecting the perception of immigrants and their process of integration in Spain. It aims to contribute to the vibrant field of immigration studies in Spanish literature, music, and film through the study of mass media as a response to Spanish politics and laws related to immigration. From the onset, the subject of immigration literature, music, and film as related to law and its cultural representations in Spain is complicated because, even though it deals mostly with fictional works, in reality it seeks to address one of the most troublesome topics of twenty-first century European politics. This work is thus meant as engaged scholarship and its goal is to show the effects that immigration policies have on literature, music, and film and vice versa, as well as to analyze the artistic responses of Spanish citizens and immigrants to social injustice. To accomplish these goals, this work will foreground and analyze media accounts regarding immigrant integration authored by Spanish citizens and immigrants.

I have chosen the year 2000 as a starting point of my study because this year marks the passing of the current law that governs immigration in. This slice of time occurs a generation after the death of Francisco Franco, and the year 2000 also marks a change in how the country is willing to see its past. After 25 years of amnesty toward those in the old Franco regime and the coming to light of the crimes against humanity committed by its members, the so-called pact of silence is being broken bit by bit, and Spain is opening itself to questioning its past and researching its historical memory in order to put forth, and sometimes redress the injustices of the previous generations. The
historical memory movement is relevant to the timing of this study because its momentum propitiously affects the investigation of justice in immigration studies as well. My work attempts to attach itself to this momentum and apply the enthusiasm it has generated towards raising awareness of immigrant issues through the analysis of mass media’s representations of immigrants. Thus, the end-goal of this analysis is to improve the situation and the perceptions of immigrants in Spain.

Furthermore, because most problematic human rights abuses happen to unauthorized immigrants, this dissertation centers its study on their specific reception in Spain. As such, this study does not presume to promote the abolishing of borders, or radically change laws in order for undocumented immigrants to be legalized; instead, it focuses on treating all humans with the same humanity, dignity, and justice, whether they have broken the Spanish immigration law or not. Therefore, this analysis respects Spain’s right to democratically elect officials who create laws that represent the interests of the state; nevertheless, it critiques the application of such laws and points out hypocritical and discriminatory policies that dehumanize others for the simple fact they are born elsewhere.

To accomplish these goals the dissertation is split into four chapters. The first chapter outlines the inadequacies that prompt this study and gives a statistical background to immigration in Spain. It analyzes the Spanish immigration law, critiques the mass media’s response to immigration, and explores political theories that explain the current Spanish policies. Oscillating with the economy, the press more often than not, has been critical of immigration and represented it by recurring to negative metaphors such as oleadas (waves), mareas (tides), pateras (small rudderless boats), ilegales (illegals),
invasiones (invasions), sin papeles (undocumented), delito (crime), mafia (mafia), and violencia (violence) to reduce human being to concepts easy to rationalize and dismiss. Critiquing these dehumanizing trends, Isaac Rosa’s 2006 short story “Rasgos Occidentales” (Occidental Traits) attempts to foreground the hypocrisy of the mass media’s representation of immigrants and to sensitize his audience into paying attention to the human tragedies occurring in Spain and in its waters.

The second chapter presents Richard Rorty’s work in Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity (1989) and Truth and Progress (1998) as an audacious rethinking of the way Western analytical philosophy works and shows how it may be effective in diminishing structures of discrimination toward immigrants in Spain. The analysis of music about immigration argues that Rorty’s ‘sentimental education’ theory can aid musicians in crafting songs that address immigration in a way that is most conducive to rearing empathy in its listeners in order to change social structures and assist immigrants.

The third chapter focuses on short and feature film representations of immigrants in Spain. These filmic portrayals reveal a dissonant and layered structure in their messaging. In effect, the autochthonous Spanish writers and directors of these films address two main audiences, one explicitly: the native-born Spaniards and the second, referentially: the immigrants. The films instigate empathy toward immigrants and attempt to inspire a better understanding of the needs of these people. Nevertheless, in doing so, the directors often victimize and orientalize immigrants to the point that these people stop being individuals and instead become symptoms of broken Spanish relationships, troubled laws, and societal injustice. Furthermore, as the natives heal, the immigrants are discarded, defeated, and/or expelled from the country.
The fourth and final chapter analyzes the literature of undocumented immigrant authors in Spain in order to examine whether immigrants represent themselves in a manner capable of engendering empathy while creating dignified strong characters. It focuses on two select works: *Paseador de perros* (*Dog Walker*) (2009) by Sergio Galarza and Rachid Nini’s 2002 *Diario de un ilegal* (*Diary of an Illegal*). Despite giving in to certain stereotypes and immigrant generalities, immigrant authors are able to create strong characters that are worthy of the reader’s empathy and respect by representing their immigrant protagonists as fallible characters that take responsibility for their actions in situations that emphasize their vulnerability.

Finally, the appendix includes materials that are helpful to persons interested in further researching the topics analyzed in my dissertation. The first appendix preserves the lyrics of a variety of mostly hateful songs about immigration. Appendix two and three detail short films and feature films about immigration that have been published since the year 2000 to 2015. Appendix four and five include detail listings of works written by African and Latin American authors.
Chapter 1

Immigration Issues in the Mass Media, Spanish Immigration Law, and Political Theory

Justice denied anywhere diminishes justice everywhere.

Martin Luther King Jr.

The most important facet of a democracy, and what distinguishes it from a totalitarian system, is its representational nature. This feature allows modern democratic governments to represent the best interest of their citizens through elections and in this way carry the voices of people to the government using a bottom-up approach. In theory and most often in practice, a democratic system stabilizes a society and allows for progress. Nevertheless, democratic systems encounter a problem when it comes to immigration because, for a time, immigrant voices do not participate in government and thus, while in the country, they are prone to the voice of the majority that may, or may not be accommodating to their needs. To be clear, I am not advocating for totalitarian systems, I am simply pointing out the reason why immigrants are often marginalized before becoming citizens. Consequently, political speech and the mass media reflect a plurality of voices that often contend with each other in order to represent their constituencies. This contention between pro-immigrant and anti-immigrant voices polarizes societies, and this division gives rise to extreme and unrealistic portrayals of immigrants that serve ideological principles. Because misconceptions continue to propagate in the media, this dissertation works to counteract anti-immigrant, xenophobic representations as well as balance out the overly positive and orientalized portrayal of immigrants with a call to recognize immigrants as human beings who deserve the same respect, dignity, and rights as any other citizen.
The purpose of this chapter is to frame and analyze the Spanish cultural milieu that my study of music, film, and literature critiques in the following chapters. It thus sets forth the necessary background on Spanish immigration law, the mass media’s response to immigration, and political theories that explain the current Spanish immigrant situation and call for a better framework of interaction between immigrants and the native population.

By way of introducing the problematic issues of immigration and law, Franz Kafka’s short story “Before the Law” eloquently explains the paradoxical relations of insiders and outsiders. Rafael del Águila discusses the correlation between this story and immigration when he writes that “su protagonista, ese campesino que trata de entrar en la ley, [quizá] sea hoy más que nunca la personificación del inmigrante” (its protagonist, this peasant who tries to enter into the law, may be today more than ever the personification of the immigrant) (1). Even if Kafka may not have imagined his story to be a cautionary tale about immigration, it fits this new characterization perfectly. The narration reflects upon the paradoxical openness of law to its citizens and its stubborn inflexibility when faced with change. Kafka writes: “In front of the law there is a doorkeeper. A man from the countryside comes up to the door and asks for entry. But the doorkeeper says he can’t let him in to the law right now. The man thinks about this, and then he asks if he’ll be able to go in later on. ‘That’s possible,’ says the doorkeeper, ‘but not now’” (254). The refusal of the doorkeeper to admit the man into the law illustrates the arbitrary nature of the law when dealing with outsiders like immigrants. Hearing phrases like “not now” and “that’s possible” give hope to the man from the countryside.

1 Unless indicated otherwise, I have translated all quotes from Spanish to English.
Tragically, the man waits until the end of his days without ever entering the law. Like a recent undocumented immigrant, the man from the countryside has to obey the law of the land but cannot alter it in order for the law to properly represent him. This one-sided power relationship thus becomes a stumbling block for him.

In *El peaje de la vida (The Toll of Life)*, Algerian-born French philosopher Sami Naïr, a specialidy on migration, notices a similar mischievous imbalance as exemplified in the short story “Before the Law.” Even when the labor power of the immigrants advantages both the host country as well as the original country, she or he fails to gain entrance into the law or be represented in a meaningful way. The author observes:

Estos recorridos de trashumancia son, a pesar de las apariencias, promovidos de modo tácito tanto por los Estados de salida como por los poderes públicos de los países de llegada. Todos sacan partido de ellos, se sirven de los fueros familiares ya existentes para reducir al mínimo sus obligaciones sociales, trabajan en connivencia con el mercado hasta convertir al emigrante en una mercancía sometida a la ley de la oferta y la demanda, moldeable y manipulable a su antojo.

(These nomadic journeys are, against all appearances, promoted in an unspoken way by both the state the immigrants leave behind as well as by the public powers in the destination countries. Everyone takes advantage of them, they [home countries] make use of the family obligations already in use to reduce to the minimum their social obligations, they [host countries] work in collusion with the market until the immigrant is converted into a good subject of the law of supply and demand, malleable and able to be manipulated at their fancy.) (19)

Like the man from the countryside, the irregular immigrant suffers injustice while it paradoxically benefits both the recipient and the nation of origin. In Kafka’s story, the law empowers the doorkeeper to perform his duty with the impartiality that the law requires, and the narration does not allow the reader to attribute any impropriety to the doorkeeper’s actions. Similarly in Spain, the state is free to allow or reject immigrants. The man from the countryside, like an immigrant, asks for entry into the law, but he is
denied. There is enough ambiguity regarding what is necessary for one to gain entrance into the law and sufficient pity placed on the man from the countryside that the reader is asked to ponder this paradoxical situation and try to come up with an answer that satisfies both parties. In our modern globalized world we are also faced with a similar situation. Immigration is seen as salvation for some, means to a better life for others, and a destabilizing socio-economic problem for yet other people. Many knock on Spain’s borders and ask for entrance. Many have been granted entrance, but many are rejected and die while holding hope for a better life. I believe shameful situations like this can be avoided through a better understanding of who the immigrants are and how the state and its population can treat them with more dignity.

For clarity and organizational purposes, the following subheadings guide this chapter: 1. “Shifting Demographics and the Spanish Immigration Law” expounds and analyzes who the immigrants are, where they come from, and how the Spanish immigration law represents them. 2. “Mass Media’s Portrayals of Immigration and Immigrants” examines troubling media representation of immigrants. 3. “A Literary Response to the Spanish Immigration Law and Mass Media” explores Isaac Rosa’s short story “Rasgos Occidentales” (Occidental Traits) as a literary case-study response to the first two subheadings. Lastly, 4. “Political Theories of Justice and Social Theories for Immigration” concludes the chapter by evaluating the most important liberal political and social theories as they apply to the just representation of immigration in a modern society.
Shifting Demographics and the Spanish Immigration Law

The following ethnographic information attests to the relationship between Spain and its immigrant population. While more recent immigration to Spain has slowed down and is currently in the negative due to an exodus of Spanish citizens to other countries, Spain has experienced an incredible increase in immigrants in the last two decades. Joaquín Arango, working for the Migration Policy Institute in Washington DC, explains that “between 2000 and 2009 Spain’s foreign-born population more than quadrupled, rising from under 1.5 million to over 6.5 million. During this period the immigrant share of the total population grew from just under 4 percent to almost 14 percent, including more than half a million individuals who were naturalized” (2). Though Arango believes that the immigration policies in Spain are generally open and committed to integration and less prohibitive than other European nations, he also warns that with the economic situation taking a turn for the worse, joblessness increasing, and the Partido Popular coming to power in 2011, the attitudes and policies toward immigrants will probably become more restrictive and align themselves with the rest of Europe (12). Such a population increase has impacted every aspect of the Spanish society. When the economy was stable, the immigrants and Spain profited, but as the economy took a turn for the worse, immigrants found themselves targets of xenophobic actions and portrayals in the media. As the financial situation of the country also worsened, the immigrants’ issues became poignant and problematic to the native population.

Most immigrants came into Spain from 1993 to 2008, a time when the Spanish economy showed a tremendous growth under the presidencies of Felipe González (1982-1996 PSOE), José María Aznar (1996-2004 PP), and José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero.
(2004-2011 PSOE). More recently, due to economic inflation, the housing bubble, and the bank crisis successively between 2008 and 2010, Spain has experienced an economic crisis that left the country in a terrible recession. According to the Instituto Nacional de Estadística in the article “Notas de prensa 2013,” unemployment numbers skyrocketed to more than 27% for the general population and 57% of those under twenty-five. As a result, immigration numbers have reversed for the years 2011 to 2012, and there are more people leaving the country than coming in (Colectivo Ioé). The graph below shows the dramatic fluctuations in immigrant populations. In 2008 when the economy was still very strong, the numbers of immigrants largely increased. As the economy entered recession, from 2009 onwards, many more immigrants chose to leave the country in search for better opportunities elsewhere.

Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Latin-American</th>
<th>East European</th>
<th>North African</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>121,170</td>
<td>43,165</td>
<td>53,205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>7,652</td>
<td>-9,606</td>
<td>10,482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>-20,856</td>
<td>1,095</td>
<td>-9,563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>-16,076</td>
<td>15,022</td>
<td>-17,549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>-41,205</td>
<td>-37,822</td>
<td>-24,545</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data from the Instituto Nacional de Estadística [www.ine.es](http://www.ine.es)*

Countries included in this graph:
In 2013, the number of immigrants *leaving* Spain dramatically increased. According to Pilar Cuadrado of the Dirección General del Servicio de Estudios of the Bank of Spain and her study on the latest demographic changes, the numbers of people leaving Spain is astounding. Using the latest Instituto Nacional de Estadística’s numbers, Cuadrado shows that the general population of Spain has continued to increase even during the economic crisis but by a smaller percentage each year. She explains that the number of people has increased “tras el incremento medio del 1,9 % en el período 2002-2008, pasó a tasas del 1,2 %, 0,5 %, 0,4 % y 0,3 % en 2009, 2010, 2011 y 2012, respectivamente” (by a median increase from 1.9% in the period 2002-2008, it went to rates of 1.2 %, 0.5 %, 0.4 % and 0.3 % in 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012 respectively) (50). In 2013, for the first time since the 1970s, the population of Spain decreased by 0.3% compared to January 1st 2012. The discrepancy in numbers “es de solo 70.000 personas para la población española, mientras que alcanza las 500.000 personas para la población extranjera” (is of only 70,000 Spanish nationals, while it reaches 500,000 foreigners) (51). This shows that in 2013 over 570,000 persons emigrated, with over 500,000 of them being foreigners. Thus, the overall immigrant numbers have decreased, but the problems related to immigration have not disappeared because the remaining immigrants still need to be treated fairly and equitably. According to the Instituto Nacional de Estadística for the year 20113, there

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Latin-American: Mexico, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, The Dominican Republic, Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela.
East European: Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Czech Republic, Slovakian Republic, Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, and Russia.
3 The latest official census numbers are from 2011. Numbers for 2012 and 2013 are still provisional.
were 5.7 million immigrants in Spain, and their situation is of great interest to advocates of human rights.

Currently, according to the provisional report by the Instituto Nacional de Estadística (National Institute of Statistics) for the year 2016, the number of legal immigrants in Spain is 4,418,898 persons. This makes up a 9.5 percent of the total population that has been registered for the census (INE “Notas de prensa 2016” 3).

Among the immigrants, the most populous groups are now Eastern Europeans (989,992), Western Europeans (835,023), North Africans (678,467), and Latin Americans (455,098). Documented immigrants at the beginning of the year 2016 accounted for 9.5% of the entire population. These numbers do not include undocumented immigrants who in 2008 were estimated by Carmen González Enríquez in the Clandestino Research Project to be anywhere from 354,000 to 570,000 (2-3). Furthermore, it is of interest to note that in 2015, 114,207 immigrants became legal citizens of Spain (INE “Notas de prensa 2016” 4) further reducing the number of foreigners in Spain. Below is an updated chart covering the years 2011 to 2015 (INE “Notas de prensa 2016” 6) and showing the continuation of the trend established by the economic crisis where more people are leaving Spain than are coming in.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evolución de la población residente en España (2011-2016)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Españoles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extranjeros</td>
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(*) Datos provisionales
As alluded in the charts above, the economic crisis has affected immigrants in a disproportionate manner. Colectivo Ioé attests to this fact by mentioning that in the years between 2008 to 2011 “se perdieron 2,2 millones de empleos, el 11.5% de los autóctonos, el 15% de los de América Latina y el resto de Europa, y el 21% de los procedentes de África” (2.2 million jobs were lost with 11.5% of native born Spaniards, 15% of Latin Americans and the Rest of Europe [Eastern Europe], and 21% of those of African descent) (Colectivo Ioé 69). Furthermore, the unemployment rate exemplifies the vulnerability of immigrant populations in Spain: “La tasa de desempleo de la población inmigrante (39,1%) duplica la de los autóctonos (18,4%) en 2011. El grupo más afectado es el africano (49,3%)” (The unemployment rate of the immigrant population [39.1%] doubles that of autochthonous people [18.4%]. The most affected group is African [49.3%]) (89). These numbers demonstrate that the economic crisis in Spain affected immigrants to a much higher degree and resulted in many of them returning to their countries of origin or leaving Spain for better prospects.
As the man from the countryside in “Before the Law” must first gain access into the law before it can fully represent him, the many recent immigrants catalogued earlier must also submit to the laws of the land. All the immigrants in Spain have to conform to the Ley de Extranjería de España, also known as the Ley Orgánica 4/2000, which directs all legal affairs dealing with immigration to Spain. This law has been revised in the Ley Orgánica 8/2000, Ley Orgánica 14/2003, Ley Orgánica 2/2009, Real Decreto 557/2011, was amended on March 15, 2014, and most recently has been modified in 2017. This law and its antecedents govern the entry, stay, and deportation of immigrants as well as the recognition of their rights and liberties. While the Ley Orgánica, as any other text, can be deconstructed and has sections that could be interpreted from the immigrant’s point of view as inconsistent, it is not an unjust document. On the contrary, if the bureaucratic process works well, the law protects both legal and irregular immigrants against abuses, offers means for refugees to become legal, and even allows for limited medical care of undocumented immigrants. Governed by the caveat that the bureaucratic process functions properly, I will now proceed to show how the Spanish law addresses the topic of immigration both in its positive and negative aspects. This brief review will give background to my study and provide a base for the literary analysis of media that deals with immigration that I will discuss in the following chapters.

Analyzing the Ley Orgánica 2/2009 for language that leads to justice and dignity, one cannot be but impressed with the overall positive tone of the law; however, one must expect that there will be discrepancies between the ideal theory and its application as will be discussed shortly. The law appears to confirm the feelings of openness and integration that Joaquín Arango previously expressed. First, in the “Preámbulo” section I on page
104986 of the Spanish Law, the purpose of the immigration document is to define the “derechos y libertades de los extranjeros en España y su integración social” (rights and liberties of the foreigners in Spain and their social integration). Comparing this language to the legal wording of another country that receives a large number of immigrants shows Spain’s emphasis on the respect of human rights and its desire to integrate people into its society. Rights, liberties and integration are concepts far removed from limitations or constraints in the process of obtaining residence. Notice the difference in language in Section 201 of the United States of America’s immigration law “Immigration and Nationality Act”: “aliens born in a foreign state or dependent area who may be issued immigrant visas or who may otherwise acquire the status of an alien lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence are limited to…” (my emphasis). The document then explains the limitations that are imposed on legal immigrants in the United States. The US law thus describes immigration from a restrictive point of view and lacks the integrating element of the Spanish immigration law. The Spanish law is not oblivious to the economic and social repercussions of an unbound immigration policy and seeks to open up its borders as far as the economy can sustain, but it also focuses on the recognition of rights granted to these newcomers that are not apparent in the US counterpart:

Además, el fenómeno migratorio ha adquirido tal dimensión en España y tiene tales repercusiones en el orden económico, social y cultural que exige que por parte de los poderes públicos se desarrolle una actuación decidida en diversos frentes, incluido el normativo. Por lo tanto, los poderes públicos deben ordenar y canalizar legalmente los flujos migratorios de tal manera que los mismos se ajusten a nuestra capacidad de acogida y a las necesidades reales de nuestro mercado de trabajo. Por otra parte, España está firmemente comprometida con la defensa de los derechos humanos, por lo que los poderes públicos deben favorecer la plena integración de los
Las administraciones públicas incorporarán el objetivo de la integración entre inmigrantes y sociedad receptora, con carácter transversal a todas las políticas y servicios públicos, promoviendo la participación económica, social, cultural y política de las personas inmigrantes, en los términos previstos en la Constitución, en los Estatutos de Autonomía y en las demás leyes, en condiciones de igualdad de trato.

(The public powers will promote the full integration of the foreigners in the Spanish society, framed under a multicultural approach [...] The Public Administrations will incorporate the integrating objective of the law between the immigrants and the receiving society, traversing all the politics and public services, promoting the economic, social, cultural, and politic participation of the immigrants under the terms provided by the Constitution, the Autonomous States, and the other laws, under the condition of equality of treatment.) (104991)
The law requires that public programs and entities promote full integration of the immigrants into the commercial and cultural activities of the state. This article is extremely beneficial and sets a tone, not only of toleration of those different, but of integration with the immigrants at all levels. Besides the mandate to do all that is possible to integrate the immigrants, the law backs up these promulgations with financial means to sponsor “programas de acción bienales para reforzar la integración social de los inmigrantes” (biennial programs to reinforce the social integration of the immigrants) (BOE #229 “Ley Orgánica 2/2009” 104992). Even though these programs are the first to be eliminated when finances are tight, it is a step forward in promoting and financing the integration of the immigrants. Compare this language with the much more stringent United States “Immigration and Nationality Act” that does not mention the word integration throughout the lengthy document. Because of this language difference, the US immigration law does not carry the same cultural weight as the Spanish law in reinforcing the idea that immigrants are desired entities not merely tolerated ones. In the recognition of rights and liberties and the call to social integration, the Spanish law is ahead of the US immigration policy; nevertheless, it is not a perfect document and includes sections that insufficiently address their topics. Furthermore, as has been established countless other times, there is an enormous difference between appearances and realities. The Spanish immigration law sounds very progressive, yet as this study will show, its application has been more troubling than the paragraphs above lead readers to believe.

Reflecting on the downturn of the economy in Spain and seeking to regulate immigration that could imbalance the fragile Spanish economy, the 2009 law was
reformed in 2011. Taking a turn toward a more stringent immigration law, the Real Decreto 557/2011, last amended in March 15, 2014, has tripled in size from the 2009 edition and has introduced many more clauses and restrictions on new immigrants.

Fortunately, the integration message as found in previous editions of the law has not been removed. In the new “Preámbulo,” the law still holds its original spirit: “Junto a la ordenación de los flujos migratorios laborales y la promoción de la cultura de la regularidad, el nuevo Reglamento también pretende fomentar la integración y la igualdad de derechos y deberes, fortaleciendo la integración y la cohesión social en un contexto de diversidad cultural, desde la lógica de la igualdad de derechos y deberes” (Together with the regulation of the labor migratory flows and the advancement of citizenship in our culture, the new Regulations also attempt to promote the integration and the equal rights and responsibilities of all, strengthening the integration and social cohesion in a multicultural context, from the logic of equal rights and responsibilities of all) (BOE #103 “Real Decreto 557/2011” 2). From a human rights standpoint, the law maintains its just outlook on life for all peoples. Confirming the emphasis of the law on the respect of human rights, lawmakers have put effort into protecting immigrants even in an irregular situation against gender violence, organized crime, and human trafficking rings. Title V of the law entitled “Residencia temporal por circunstancias excepcionales” (Temporary residency by exceptional circumstances) governs this humanitarian effort by protecting undocumented immigrants from their abusers by granting them temporary residency, medical assistance, and a work permit under special circumstances. In effect, when undocumented immigrants collaborate with the authorities to reduce criminal activities, they are offered a path to legality and possibly even citizenship. While most unauthorized
immigrants do not have a path to citizenship, the attempt of Spanish lawmakers to reward those who collaborate with the authorities with a possible path is admirable.

As previously mentioned, the 2011 revision of the law changed its tone of unabashed openness to a more tepid document with thorough and stricter guidelines. Nevertheless, it continues to have issues and it has been bitterly criticized. For example, the topic of undocumented immigration is not given a proper section that attempts to regulate it. Notwithstanding the fact that the term *illegal* has been shunned in favor of *irregular*, the meaning remains the same and the law continues to ignore it. Instead, the law cursorily mentions its intent to fight against irregular immigration among other state duties inherited from the 2009 law. On the first page of the Real Decreto 557/2011, it says: “la ordenación de los flujos migratorios laborales de acuerdo con la situación nacional de empleo, la integración social de las personas inmigrantes, la lucha contra la inmigración irregular y las relaciones con terceros países en materia de inmigración” (The regulation of the migratory fluxes in accord with the national employment situation, the social integration of the immigrants, the fight against irregular immigration and the relationship with other countries in immigration matters). This is the only statement in the law where the intent to fight irregular immigration appears. It does not come in a chapter with multiple articles on procedures in how to deal with irregular immigration. It literally appears as a cursory goal of the law in its preamble among a series of other intents. Irregularity is only addressed in scattered sections where the law denies a benefit to an irregular that a legal immigrant would have. These references usually appear with the following wording “No encontrarse irregularmente en territorio español” (Not being in an
irregular legal status in the Spanish territory\(^4\) (28). These statements do not better characterize, regulate, and improve the situation of irregular immigrants. Because the law does not address irregularity in a consistent manner, these persons can be abused by the state and its population.

Another troubling facet of the immigration law is its process for family reunification. Since 2011, legal immigrants face harder obstacles for family reunification as compared to previous iterations of the law. The process for family reunification is stated in Title IV, Chapter II of the Real Decreto 557/2011. The procedure is extremely complicated, costly, and meant to slow down the reunification of families to the maximum. Besides the financial resources meant to guarantee that the newcomers will not be a burden on the economy,\(^5\) families must be able to prove they have adequate living arrangements for their household.\(^6\) Thus, in order for a legal immigrant father to bring his wife and two children, he must earn at least 250\% of the 2014 IPREM\(^7\) (Indicador Público de Renta de Efectos Múltiples [An equivalent to an American Poverty Level Indicator]) (BOE #309 “Ley 22/2013” 181) which comes to 1331.27 € or about $1846.60 in steady monthly wages.\(^8\) Compare this to the minimum monthly salary in Spain. Document Real Decreto 1717/2012 defines the minimum lawful wage in Spain to be 645.30 €/month. The sum required for the reunification of a family of four persons is more than 2.8 times the minimum wage. The yearly salary of an immigrant that desires to bring his family of three to Spain would have to be greater than 15,975.24 €. The

\(^{4}\) Many more references can be found on the following pages in the 2011 law: 41, 52, 57, 72, and 128.
\(^{5}\) See Article 54 of Title IV for further reading on family reunification and the country’s economy.
\(^{6}\) See Article 55 of Title IV for further reading on adequate living arrangements.
\(^{7}\) In 2014 the IPREM is 532.51 €.
\(^{8}\) See Article 54.1 a and b for further reading about the percentage of the IPREM an immigrant must make in order to bring his or her family.
following table details the median and most frequent annual salaries of Spanish citizens for the year 2014.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mujeres y hombres [Women and men]</th>
<th>Salarios, ingresos, cohesión social [Salaries, income, and social cohesion]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salario anual medio, mediano, modal, a tiempo completo y a tiempo parcial. 2011.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mean Annual salary, Median, Modal, full-time and part-time. 2011.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Units: euros</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salario a tiempo completo [Full-time salary]</strong></td>
<td><strong>Salario medio bruto [Gross mean salary]</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23692.8</td>
<td>27595.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Encuesta Anual de Estructura Salarial 2011. INE
Copyright INE 2014

(“Salario anual medio, mediano, modal, a tiempo completo y a tiempo parcial.” INE)

This table shows that the most frequent salary of women who are Spanish citizens would not suffice to fulfill the reunification process outlined above. The most frequent salary of Spanish men would be enough, but barely. These numbers show how difficult it is for immigrants who seek family reunifications to go forth with the process. More often than not, immigrants are the lowest earners in an economy, and providing 2.8 times the minimum salary consistently can be very challenging. This makes the goal of family reunification seldom attainable.

Besides financial stability, the immigrant father must also prove that his living quarters are adequate for his family. The problem here is defining what the law considers “adequate.” Article 55 of Chapter II, Title IV of the Real Decreto 557/2011 leaves it to each community to define an adequate living space. To show how confusing the situation is, take Madrid, Zaragoza, and Barcelona into account. In Madrid the “adequate” space is
not explained in much detail: there is no requirement for a set square meters per person, a number of bedrooms or beds, or cleanliness standards. The whole situation is left to the bureaucrats to decide case by case (“Informe de adecuación de Vivienda”). These arbitrary conditions lead to confusion on the part of the immigrant and an inability to prepare in an adequate manner before his home inspection. In Zaragoza a similarly vague situation ensues, while a home visit is also required by a state representative (“Reagrupación familiar: Informe sobre disponibilidad de vivienda suficiente”). Barcelona’s case is just as unclear; a visit from an official is required and based on the result, the immigrant may or may not bring his or her family (“Reagrupación familiar: Algunos aspectos importantes a tener en cuenta antes y después de la reagrupación”). The whole process is at best incomplete. It does not set proper expectations in order for the immigrant to adequately prepare herself or himself. One can waste a lot of money and time on the bureaucratic process because of the vagueness of the law. The financial responsibilities of the resident are very high, and the “adequate” living arrangements are undefined. This topic needs to be streamlined and explained in detail to set proper expectations and eliminate the confusion currently associated with family reunification.

Continuing the analysis of problematic situations caused by the Spanish law related to immigration, 2012 marks the year that the Spanish government ceased free access to medical care to foreigners. With the Real Decreto-ley 16/2012 the right to health services has radically changed in Spain. Before this royal decree, foreign nationals9 and unauthorized immigrants were entitled to free non-urgent medical care in

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9 Foreign nationals excludes permanent residents and legal immigrants in the process of obtaining residence.
the same way as Spanish citizens. This decree makes it impossible for undocumented immigrants to obtain any and all preventive or non-urgent primary care. Under Real Decreto-ley 16/2012, Chapter 1, Article 3, the law directs:

Los extranjeros no registrados ni autorizados como residentes en España, recibirán asistencia sanitaria en las siguientes modalidades: a) De urgencia por enfermedad grave o accidente, cualquiera que sea su causa, hasta la situación de alta médica. b) De asistencia al embarazo, parto y postparto. En todo caso, los extranjeros menores de dieciocho años recibirán asistencia sanitaria en las mismas condiciones que los españoles”

(Unregistered and authorized foreigners that are residents of Spain will receive medical attention in the following manners: a) In case of emergency for a serious illness or accident, whatever the cause, until he or she is medically discharged. b) Assistance with pregnancy, birth, and postpartum. In any case, foreigners that are less than eighteen years old will receive medical attention in the same degree as Spaniards) (31286).

Be it willingly or not, at the time Spain fostered close to 900,000 “irregular” persons who have suddenly lost the right to health care without any recourse to change the law. This decree severely fractures the Spanish society and undoes the good will that the mostly positive immigration law of 2009 achieves. Amnesty International took note of this decree-law, and immediately moved to signal its unjust and potentially illegal nature. In a news release Amnesty International condemns this move as regressive and discriminatory: “Para Amnistía Internacional, esto constituye una violación del derecho humano a la salud de las personas migrantes que viven en España, al constituir una medida regresiva y discriminatoria, prohibida por los estándares internacionales de derechos humanos.” (For Amnesty international, this constitutes a violation of the human right to health of the migrant persons who live in Spain, and constitutes a regressive and discriminatory measure, prohibited by the international standards of human rights) (Amnistía Internacional “Derecho a la salud” n.p.). Besides the clearly upsetting intent of the law, the Spanish autonomies make the application of this law even more troublesome.
As Spain is composed of 17 autonomous communities (besides Ceuta and Melilla10) the application of the law in each autonomy is different. Unlike the Federal system in the United States of America, the 1978 Spanish Constitution guarantees that each community is run autonomously, thus forming a Spain that is much more decentralized than its western counterpart. In regards to the change in the Spanish health law, Amnesty International notes how the autonomies contribute to the confusing situation which the immigrant faces.

También algunas comunidades autónomas se han opuesto a la misma [Real Decreto-ley 16/2012], e incluso la han recurrido ante el Tribunal Constitucional. Otras comunidades, sin embargo, la han aplicado y han restringido el acceso al sistema sanitario público a miles de inmigrantes que viven en sus territorios. Todo ello ha generado una situación de enorme disparidad entre comunidades autónomas, incluso dentro de ellas, pues existe una evidente situación de caos y confusión dentro de la administración sanitaria sobre cómo aplicar la reforma.

(Some autonomous communities have also opposed it [Real Decreto-ley 16/2012] and even have appealed it at the Constitutional Tribunal. Other communities, nevertheless, have applied the law and restricted the access to the public health services to thousands of immigrants that live in their territories. All this has generated a situation of enormous disparity among the different autonomous communities and even inside them because of the clearly chaotic situation and confusion as to how to apply this sanitary reform. (Amnistía Internacional “Derecho a la salud”)"

Because of the decentralization of the legislative powers in Spain, the autonomies regulate themselves differently and may also interpret the law as they see fit for their territories. Thus, a controversial reform such as the public health service has been applied in a very uneven manner throughout Spain, creating confusion and inequality.

Under the guise of pulling the country out of the economic recession, the changes in the health law in the Real Decreto-ley 16/2012 aim to save the government an

10 Ceuta and Melilla are two Spanish autonomous cities in Morocco, Africa.
estimated seven billion euros (público.es) by ending health tourism and saving expenses incurred by irregular immigrants. As Amnesty International pointed out, this law may constitute a violation of human rights. Non-profit organizations including Amnesty International, Médicos del Mundo, Red Acoge and the Sociedad Española de Medicina de Familia y Comunitaria have firmly opposed this law and have collaborated to publish a declaration against it because they believe it disregards human rights. Margarita Lema Tomé of the Asociación Derecho, Laicidad y Libertades confronts the law by showing how it violates the Spanish Constitution, previous Spanish laws, and other international agreements that Spain signed in the past. Probably her most potent argument is showing that the use of a Decreto-ley to take away basic rights is possibly unconstitutional. The Real Decreto-ley 16/2012 goes against Chapter III of the 1978 Spanish Constitution that guarantees “un régimen público de Seguridad Social para todos los ciudadanos que garantice la asistencia y prestaciones sociales suficientes ante situaciones de necesidad, especialmente en caso de desempleo” (a public regime of Social Security for all the citizens that guarantees social care sufficient in case of need, especially in case of unemployment) (99). Paying close attention to the language of the law, in 1978 the term citizens included all peoples residing in the Spanish territory, legal residents, and working migrants. All these people, not only Spanish citizens, enjoyed medical benefits as later stated by the Ley 14/1986 known as “General de Sanidad.” In Article 1.2 of the “General de Sanidad,” which was again ratified under the Ley 16/2003 Article 3.1, it expressly made health care universal to all Spaniards and foreigners in any Spanish territories. The 2003 law states: “Son titulares de los derechos a la protección de la salud y a la atención sanitaria los siguientes … Todos los españoles y extranjeros en el territorio nacional”
(The following are entitled to the rights of the protection of health and medical attention … All the Spaniards and foreigners in the national territory) (Ley 16/2003 20571).

Furthermore, Lema Tomé references Ley 33/2011 as a capstone to the long-standing tradition of offering healthcare in a free and nondiscriminatory fashion. Article 6.1 of the said law stated: “Todas las personas tienen derecho a que las actuaciones de salud pública se realicen en condiciones de igualdad sin que pueda producirse discriminación por razón de nacimiento, origen racial o étnico, sexo, religión, convicción u opinión, edad, discapacidad, orientación o identidad sexual, enfermedad o cualquier otra condición o circunstancia personal o social” (All the persons have the right to public health interventions realized in conditions of equality without discrimination on the basis of birth, racial origin or ethnicity, sex, religion, conviction or opinion, age, incapacity, orientation or sexual identity, illness or any other personal or social condition or circumstance). In this way the healthcare law before the Real Decreto-ley 16/2012 made an effort to account for and enumerate the reasons for which no one should be denied coverage. In addition to the Constitution and previous laws that it appears to be in conflict with, Spain has also signed a variety of international treaties11 that the Real Decreto-ley 16/2012 nullifies, thus making its nature even more of a problem. The Constitution, laws, and international treaties that precede the health care reform law of 2012 make very clear that all dwellers in Spain, legal or not, should have access to full

health care. These facts show how Real Decreto-ley 16/2012 may very well be illegal and ethically unenforceable.

Moreover, Lerma Tomé astutely shows that the use of a royal decree to take away immigrants’ rights to health care may be illegal. In Article 86 of the Spanish Constitution of 1978, a royal decree states the following: “En caso de extraordinaria y urgente necesidad, el Gobierno podrá dictar disposiciones legislativas provisionales que tomarán la forma de Decretos-leyes y que no podrán afectar al ordenamiento de las instituciones básicas del Estado, a los derechos, deberes y libertades de los ciudadanos regulados en el Título I” (In case of extraordinary and urgent necessity, the Government may dictate provisional legislative dispositions that will take the form of law-decrees and that cannot affect the regulations of the basic institutions of the state, the rights, the responsibilities, and liberties of the citizens regulated by Title 1) (16). Article 86 states clearly that royal decrees are only for cases of an extraordinary and urgent necessity, and they cannot affect the basic structures of the state, the rights, responsibilities, and liberties of the citizens. It is questionable that saving the resources spent on healthcare for illegal immigrants constitutes a problem that is both extraordinary and of urgent necessity, and it is clear that taking away a basic right is prohibited by the Spanish Constitution. Though it is unclear whether or not Title I covers irregular immigrants, as we have shown earlier, previous laws have included them as full participants in the state health care, which leads one to believe that the use of a Decreto-ley to take away a basic human right is improper and contrary to established laws.

As a consequence, the Real Decreto-ley 16/2012 has garnered a lot of opposition in Spain. The law has mostly been rejected in eight of the 17 autonomous communities in
Spain. Out of the eight, Andalucía, Asturias, Canarias, Castilla-León, and the País Vasco have decided to continue to provide health services to undocumented immigrants as they previously did (RTVE.es). Cataluña, Galicia, and Navarra offer conditional healthcare either after a period of time (3 months in the case of Cataluña), offer subsidies (Navarra), or fully pay the medical bills of undocumented persons when they lack financial resources. The other nine autonomous communities have adopted the law and are dividing their citizenship into insured and uninsured. The massive dissent to this decree-law makes it obvious how contentious and troublesome this document is. It remains to be seen how these challenges will be addressed in the courts, but as it stands, this law is discriminatory and confirms that under economic pressures Spanish law has changed its open attitude toward immigrant rights.

Further adding to the list of questionable practices by the Spanish government when dealing with immigration is the creation of a monetary fund for the voluntary return of immigrants, irregular or not, to their countries of origin as established in the Boletín Oficial del Estado Number 78 of 2013. This fund is similar to other European efforts (see Decision 575/2007/CE of the European Parliament and Board Meeting of 23 May 2007) to return immigrants to their countries by giving “preferencia al retorno voluntario frente al forzoso” (preference to the voluntary return instead of a forceful one) (BOE #78 “Resolución de 20 de marzo de 2013” 24859). This attempt for a “retorno digno” (dignified return) (24859) of immigrants to their countries of origin is another step that the government takes to reduce the number of immigrants in Spain. In Spain, the program is financed up to 75% by the European Fund for the Return, and it consists of three sources of funding: 1,000,000 € from the European Fund for the Return, 1,400,000 € by
the Spanish government, and finally 4,500,000 € contingent on availability of funds from
the Spanish government. Thus, immigrants who qualify for this program and desire to
return to their countries of origin may obtain the following financial benefits: 1) payment
of the visa fees and other documents related to the return, 2) payment of the ticket for the
trip home, 3) 50 € in cash as trip allowance per person and up to 400 € per family, 4) 400
€ for individuals and 1,600 € for a family as an incentive for a dignified and successful
integration into their country of origin (24866). The eligible persons that may take part in
this relocation program cannot be members of the European Union and the program
includes people that have solicited asylum, irregular immigrants, vulnerable people like
minors, disabled persons, pregnant women, the elderly, homeless, and victims of rape,
torture and human trafficking (24865). These benefits can only be collected after June 30,
2014, and their recipients must submit to “no retornar a España en el plazo de tres años a
partir del momento de su salida” (not return to Spain for the space of three years from the
time of their departure) (24865). In a way, this initiative appears to offer some
immigrants a safe return to their countries of origin.

The unfortunate reality is that this resolution also points to a desperate move by
the Spanish government to rid the country of “undesirable” persons. It seems prejudiced
that this law targets mostly Africans and Latin-Americans. It also seems directed at those
that may make this decision because they are already in a vulnerable situation as minors,
pregnant mothers, or disabled, homeless, or elderly persons. In addition, the law is
practically pointless from a financial standpoint. Surely few people are enticed by 400 €
to leave a country where they work, have made friends, and which they probably call
home. The reason many illegals face so much danger coming to Spain is that even at a
substandard European wage they would earn considerably more than in their own countries. As an example, in Mexico in 2014 the minimum pay for the year 2014 for a construction worker was 90.73 pesos/day as directed by the “Salarios Mínimos” document of the Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social. At 1 peso equaling $0.08, the minimum daily wage for eight hours of work for a construction worker would be $7.25, $36/week, $144/month, and $1,728/year. This wage is clearly incomparable to the 21.51 €/day (107 €/week, 430.2 €/month, 5,162.4 €/year or $7076.62/year), which is the minimum salary in Spain (BOE #314 “Real Decreto 1717/2012”). The financial allowance of 400 € hardly seems like a sum to entice immigrants to leave Spain. It appears that the only immigrants who would seek the benefits of this proposal would be those who would also attempt to abuse it. Another negative consequence of this legislation may be that it could attract even more irregular immigrants, as it gives them a cushioned return home if they fail to find economic success in Spain. Offering immigrants money to leave feels like a last resort to fix a very broken system by sounding socially forward and yet being troubled in practice. The initiative also sends a message to the greater population that Africans and South-Americans are a superfluous part of the Spanish society and should be relocated by all means. Thus, under the guise of a dignified return, the cultural consequences of this legislation may lead to racial profiling and the creation of negative attitudes toward the most vulnerable section of Spanish society.

Because of the environment in which laws, royal decrees, and initiatives (some exemplary and others more questionable), many immigrants are forced into unnecessarily

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12 Rate valid in June 2014.
onerous situations that they have no ability to remediate because of their limited suffrage powers. At times these political decisions lead them to choose illegality as their way of life, which brings upon them dread of the law, stigma from the legal population, and situations that are both painful to themselves and to the general citizenship of Spain. These difficult situations are fueled on one hand by political discourse and immigration laws in Spain, and on the other hand by the mass media as analyzed below.

Mass Media Portrayals of Immigration and Immigrants

Influenced by political decisions and laws, the newspapers, television broadcasts, and internet newscasts of Spain approach the topic of immigration from a politicized point of view. While some portray immigrants in a positive light, many others, including some of the largest media outlets, skew language and distort attention from facts to reinforce stereotypes and popular beliefs. Mary Nash in *Inmigrantes en nuestro espejo* (*Immigrants in our Image*) analyzes how bias, racism, and stereotypes affect the portrayal of immigration in Spanish journalistic discourse. She believes that the mass media is capable of influencing public opinion and states that “[l]os medios de comunicación de masas ejecutan un papel decisivo en liderar la opinión pública en el mundo actual de la globalización, de flujos migratorios, de nuevas diásporas crecientes y de desplazamientos masivos de población” (the mass media exercises a decisive role in leading the public opinion of the globalized world, of migratory flows, of new and growing diasporas, and of massive population displacements) (15) and that “un discurso de alteridad que enfatice los aspectos negativos asociados con un colectivo, transmite valores y crea un imaginario colectivo que puede inducir a prácticas sociales discriminatorias de subalternidad” (a negative discourse of alterity that focuses on negative traits associated with a collective,
transmits values and creates a collective imaginary that can induce social discriminatory practices of subalternity) (23). Because the media can carry such a powerful influence, it is important that it submit to strong ethical rules in order to present the facts and not ideologically steer reader opinion. Instead of emphasizing a multicultural perspective with a concerned focus on diversity for each immigrant population, Nash observes that the media constantly makes use of eternalizing myths in order to create a static and singular negative image of the immigrant subject. She identifies this as the first negative trait that pervades the media’s portrayal of immigration. She explains “si las identidades colectivas construidas desde el discurso periodístico son innegociables y presentadas como eternas e inamovibles, la incorporación de lo diferente deviene inabordable” (if media-constructed collective identities are immutable, non-negotiable, presented as an eternal collective, the incorporation of the ones that are different becomes impossible) (24). Nodding to Roland Barthes’ analysis of myths and their effects on society in Mythologies, Nash sternly warns the media that they can damage the society they claim to protect with the creation of such immutable and non-negotiable images of immigrants.

The second most important element in Nash’s analysis of the mass media’s discourse on immigration is the use of negative stereotypical vocabulary and improper metaphors. She demonstrates this by evaluating the use of the Spanish word patera or in English dinghy. A dinghy is a small boat commonly used for fishing in shallow waters. It is a very unstable vessel that is totally unsuited for crossing a large expanse of water. Notwithstanding its dangerous nature, it is the de-facto boat of death that immigrants use to cross the Strait of Gibraltar from Morocco to Spain. She points out the negative way in which patera appears in the media:
[C]uando se menciona el término «patera», se construye un imaginario colectivo popular que evoca a los inmigrantes como personas en una situación ilegal … El impacto del discurso textual quedó reforzado por la constante presencia de imágenes visuales de fotografías de inmigrantes que llegaban a las costas españolas. De este modo, las personas que inmigraban a España en patera quedaron sin reconocimiento humano y sin nombre, un recurso discursivo demoledor en la transmisión de una imagen negativa dehumanizada de l@s protagonistas de la diáspora migratoria de África.

(When the term patera is mentioned, one constructs a popular stereotype that evokes immigrants as illegals … The impact of this textual discourse became such through the constant presence of visual images taken of immigrants that landed on the Spanish coasts. In this way the persons that immigrated to Spain in patera remained in a condition without human recognition and without name, which is a destructive discursive method in the perpetuation of negative and dehumanizing portrayals of the protagonists of the African migratory diaspora.) (34)

Nash sees that the media has taken control of the word patera and related it only to cases of illegal immigration and thus imbued it with negativity. In an effort to continue Nash’s analysis of the term patera, I have uncovered that the media’s influence has extended even to the changing of the definition of patera in the official Spanish dictionary. If one were to search for the word patera in the 22nd edition of the Real Academia Española dictionary, one would find the second definition as such: “Embarcación pequeña, de fondo plano, sin quilla” (small vessel, with a flat bottom without a keel). Nevertheless, in the proposed definition of patera for the upcoming 23rd edition of web dictionary, the dinghy has now gained a second meaning “Embarcación pequeña usada para el transporte de inmigrantes ilegales” (Small vessel used for the transport of illegal immigrants). We can clearly observe and confirm how the associated meaning of the word patera has evolved over time. The 23rd edition of the RAE dictionary shows how the media has popularized a new usage for patera that now has a negative connotation. Besides this new entry in the dictionary, of even greater concern is the stripping of humanity of the
passengers of these dinghies. The constant negative use of the term *patera* normalizes and desensitizes readers to a human tragedy that kills thousands of people every year.

By way of introduction of the linguistic metaphors that plague much of the Spanish media, I will analyze several additional terms that are used pervasively and negatively. J.D. Keith Cunningham-Parmeter provides a pattern in the United States of America that is paralleled in Spain. He analyzed the linguistic metaphors the members of the US Supreme Court use when dealing with immigration and concluded that those verdicts are “[c]omplete with heroes, villains, and foreboding plotlines, these stories describe aliens attacking, invaders encroaching, and floods overwhelming communities. Behaving like good audience members, most judges, lawyers, and scholars have passively accepted this narrative” (1597). *Aliens, invaders, and floods* are common terms that negatively affect the public opinion of humans seeking better lives. The use of these metaphors is divisive and problematizes the immigrants’ status without solving any of the core issues of immigration.

Homologous to the language used in the US when speaking of immigration, the Spanish newspapers and broadcast media often use an unfit and damaging vocabulary. Sami Naïr reminds his readers of another common and damaging metaphor. On August 8, 1999 *El País*’ front page article had the title “Una marea que no cesa” (A never-ending tide) (13). This metaphor does not point to a gravitational effect on a body of water, even if water is cleverly worked into the title; in this case, the article speaks of a tide of immigrants, a never-ending tide of clearly undesired immigrants. Seemingly without respect to human life and community building, the author chose offensive language that leads to xenophobia. Lest one believe that such articles only appeared in the past, I will
briefly list a few more recent articles to show how the media takes very little regard in creating a welcoming environment to immigrants in Spain. On 15th of May 2006 in *El País* we read “El Gobierno aumentará los medios aéreos y navales para frenar la oleada de inmigrantes” (The Government Will Increase Naval and Air Patrols to Stop the Wave of Immigrants). Again, negative metaphors correlate immigrants with undesirable weather conditions. *Oleada* translates to either surf or wave, but the meaning is partly lost in translation. *Oleada* could be better translated to the feeling of being hit by a wave in dangerous circumstances. Thus the “oleada de inmigrantes” (wave of immigrants) is more than a simple wave but rather a wave that hits hard against the supposed Spanish security and cultural homogeneity. Lastly on 16th of October 2012, *El Mundo* publishes “El Gobierno alerta de una ‘invasión’ de ‘sin papeles’ en Melilla tras el salto de otros cien” (The Government Alerts of an ‘Invasion’ of ‘illegals’ in Melilla after Another Hundred Jump the Fence) (Sánchez). Let us also mention: “Una tragedia mediterránea” (A Mediterranean Tragedy) (Fanjul 25 Feb 2014) and “Sin dinero y sin futuro” (Without Money or Future) (Linde 20 May 2014) from *El País*. These are headlines that use all-too-popular metaphors to assign negative connotations to immigration. Nash analyzes the use of these metaphors and explains how dangerous and unfit they are when published:

Al hablar de avalancha o oleada de inmigrantes, el discurso periodístico asentaba un imaginario colectivo amenazador. Estas representaciones culturales del hecho inmigratorio reforzaban la impresión de una invasión descontrolada y violenta de miles de inmigrantes … El repertorio de definición de inmigrante en la prensa diaria reforzó el significado de determinadas enunciaciones sobre la alteridad inmigrante que tuvieron como consecuencia la proyección de marcas identitarias respecto a la comunidad inmigrante en clave de amenaza, atraso y barbarie, un universo imaginario difícilmente incluyente en la noción de una comunidad imaginada que se construía desde la superioridad blanca occidental.
Talking of avalanches or menacing waves of immigrants, the journalistic discourse establishes an imaginary collective that is threatening. These cultural immigrant representations have reinforced the impression of an out of control and violent invasion of thousands of immigrants … The catalog of definitions for the immigrant in the daily press reinforced the meaning of certain enunciations about the alterity of the immigrant that had as consequence the projection of identity traits as menacing, backward, and barbarous, a universe of stereotypes built from the notion of white occidental superiority.) (51)

Thus, the metaphorical images of immigrants that the press chooses to use are very damaging to the creation of a unified Spanish community. It may be noted that this unstable and metaphorical language mirrors the dissonant message of the law that appears to integrate but in fact separates immigrants from natives. The press appears to augment this message of the law toward the immigrant with double-edged metaphorical language that both makes their articles appear politically correct and at the same time creates a cultural obstacle toward the integration of immigrants in Spain.

Besides the use of metaphorical language, racism is a real problem that continues to propagate in newspapers and broadcast media. Teun A. van Dijk explains how the press engenders racism under a veil of political correctness. He notes: “la mayoría de las formas de racismo hoy en día … son del tipo de racismo indirecto, sutil o moderno en la vida diaria, que en realidad viene a caracterizar muchos de los encuentros diarios entre miembros de los grupos mayoritarios y minoritarios” (the majority of racist enunciations today … are of an indirect form of racism, subtle or modern, part of daily life, that in reality characterizes many of the daily encounters between the majority and minority groups) (20). Besides this modern politically correct racism, there also appears to be a proliferation of elitism in the selection of the context and sources in the retelling of immigrant stories by the media. Media tends to select Spaniards as moderators of the
news commentary affecting immigration first and tends to relegate immigrant sources as less trustworthy because of their emotional closeness to the subject. Dijk shows that immigrant “líderes o portavoces, no suelen ser considerados «expertos en acontecimientos étnicos», a pesar de que sean acontecimientos que directamente les afecta a ellos. Más bien se consideran fuentes tendenciosas, interesadas” (leaders or representatives are not considered ‘experts in ethnic matters’ even though these matters directly affect them. Rather they are considered biased or interested sources) (27-8). Thus, the choice of “experts” taints the immigrant’s plight with a Spanish voice that has different objectives. Instead of the immigrants, the credible sources the media promotes, as van Dijk puts it, are “los políticos, la policía, los oficiales, los abogados, los académicos o las organizaciones (todos ellos personas blancas)” (the politicians, the police, the officials, the lawyers, the academics or the organizations [all white people]) (28). This white bias in the news covers the voice of many of the immigrants with the previously mentioned damaging metaphors and politically correct racism. This discourse leads the uncritical reader or viewer to believe or to reinforce the negative eternalizing myths that the media suggests.

Another troubling topic when analyzing the media’s coverage of immigration is the linking of immigrants with violent acts. When a crime is committed by an immigrant, the news sources often mention that the person is an immigrant of a different race (if this is the case) and is a citizen of a foreign country. Thus, the linking of the vocabulary *inmigrante* (immigrant), *ilegal* (illegal), *delito* (crime), * mafia* (mafia) and *violencia* (violence) in ever-increasing creative ways connects immigration with violent crimes and creates a universalizing image of an immigrant that looks to plunder rather than to settle.
Van Dijk writes “[d]e este modo y como ocurre siempre, la información sobre el delito llega a «etnizarse» y algunas formas específicas de delincuencia característica y selectivamente se atribuyen a «extranjeros», en su conjunto, incluso cuando la mayoría de dichos delitos son cometidos por nacionales: drogas y atracos a mano armada” (in this way and as it always happens, the information over the crime becomes “ethnicized” and some specific forms of delinquency are selectively associated with “foreigners” as a collective even when most of these said crimes are committed by Spaniards: drugs and armed robberies) (33). Regardless of whether this association is intentional or not, the media never fails to mention that when a crime is committed, it is committed by an immigrant. Thus the media appears to hide the much more prevalent crimes of the autochthonous population by making immigrants symbolic scapegoats.

Juan Francisco Torregrosa Carmona investigates the unjust portrayal of immigrant violence in depth and shows how the bias of the Spanish media affects immigrants. Torregrosa Carmona does not support the idea that immigrants do not commit crimes, what he takes issue with is the unjust portrayal and attribution of crimes to immigrants. He writes: “mucho más grave resulta, por particularmente nocivo, el discurso informativo y político que establece una relación indisoluble y generalizada entre inmigración y delincuencia” (what is most serious and particularly injurious is the political and mass media discourse that establishes an inseparable and generalized tie between immigration and delinquency) (55). While it is true that in 2002 about 37% of incarcerated persons were immigrants (Torregrosa Carmona 56) and in 2012 the percentage was slightly lower at 35% (“La herencia de la inmigración”), the media continues to associate wrongdoing with immigration. The front page of the right wing
Spanish newspaper *La Razón* on February 15, 2002, exemplifies this trend. In bold capitals the title reads: “Estos son los inmigrantes que no quiere el pueblo español” (These are the immigrants that Spain does not want) and below publishes fifteen headshots of criminals that are also immigrants. This type of news is damaging to the formation of an unbiased imaginary. Instead, it promotes the stereotyping and association of criminality with immigrants living in Spain. Combating these misleading titles, Torregrosa Carmona notes that “80% de estos delincuentes tienen relación con mafias, probablemente ya eran delincuentes en su país y aquí no vinieron a trabajar, como realmente lo hacen los inmigrantes, simplemente son delincuentes extranjeros, no inmigrantes, como tampoco turistas” (80% of these delinquents have ties to mafias, and
probably were already criminals in their countries; they had not come here to work, as immigrants really do; they are simply foreign criminals, not immigrants, neither yet tourists) (57). Not to be outdone by La Razón’s piece, in 2002 Francisco Rodrigues Adrados of the Real Academia Española writes in ABC an article entitled “Xenofobia” (Xenophobia) where he argues that “[l]a xenofobia o lo que pueda haber de ella es un efecto, no una causa” (xenophobia or what small part of it may exist, is an effect, not a cause). In his opinion, xenophobia does not start with the Spanish citizen; instead, it is a response to the criminality of the immigrants and their unwillingness to acculturate. To him then, xenophobia is a response to a threatened sense of national identity that immigrants apparently attempt to destroy with their criminality. The author thus rationalizes the hate speech promoted by the media and noncritical readers against people they may consider unwanted. Such articles are highly dangerous to the general peace and cohesion of any mostly heterogeneous state. One would expect such articles to appear in totalitarian regimes that attempt to cover their internal problems by diverting attention to external causes, not in a modern and free society as Spain is today.

Furthermore, in 2008 the image below appeared in front of the window of a Beep internet café chain in the city of Alcúdia on the Mallorca Island as reported in El País on 13 May 2008 in the article “Una tienda de Mallorca prohíbe la entrada a ‘perros y rumanos.’” The image was printed in all capital letters on a blue, yellow, and red background (the colors of the Romanian flag): “¡Aviso! Se prohíbe la entrada sin previo aviso a perros y rumanos. De lo contrario saldrán hechando (sic) ostias” (Warning! Entry without previous notice is forbidden to dogs and Romanians. They would otherwise be kicked the hell out).
The message of the poster is a hateful response to the theft of two laptop computers attributed to Romanian customers. Inside the store there was another document with the title “Inmigración” (Immigration) that contained the hateful lyrics of a song by DJ Syto\(^\text{13}\) entitled “Me cago en estos putos rumanos” (I Shit on these Fucking Romanians). The song includes lines referring to Romanians as a plague and says that if they steal people should cut off their hands. The news about this xenophobic incident circulated throughout Spain and appeared in most publications. The newspaper published a follow-up interview with clients and explanations were given about the issue; nevertheless, contrasting with the apparent rebuke found in the textual version of the story, the interview showed two women who discussed the story. One woman believes that the owners of the shop did nothing wrong and tacitly admits that a lot of people think along the same hateful lines. She says: “Hombre, pues, me parece que es una forma de denunciar lo que un poquito todos también llevamos pensando durante mucho tiempo…” (Well, it seems to me that it is a way to denounce that which we all also have been thinking a bit for a long time) (El

\(^{13}\) DJ Syto and his song are analyzed with more detail in Chapter 2 of this dissertation.
“Un cartel xenófobo en una tienda siembra la discordia en Mallorca”). Then the camera cuts to a second woman of Romanian origin speaking broken Spanish that seems confused about why she could not go in the store, and the interview ends. In including both people, the video puts forth the views of these two women as two valid opinions. Is cutting off the hands of thieves a valid opinion? The way in which the story is published reinforces troubling opinions about the Romanian community in Spain without making clear that such incidents are rare and that the newspaper cannot condone hate.

Fortunately, the negative voices are not the only ones present in the media and alternative points of view exist. As a refutation to the generalizing news that immigrants are delinquents, Torregrosa Carmona directs his reader to a report by El País on 6 February 2005 entitled “¿Qué pasaría si Madrid se quedara sin inmigrantes?” (What would happen if Madrid would lose all its immigrants?). The report highlights the positive work that immigrants do to improve the capital, explains their industrious lives, and showcases their desire for integration in the Spanish society. In the article we read: “Todos, regulares y irregulares, forman un colectivo que se ha hecho imprescindible: cuidan enfermos, son mensajeros, camareros, levantan edificios ... Sin ellos, la capital no funcionaría” (All, legal or illegal, form a collective that has become indispensable: they take care of the sick, are messengers, waiters, builders … without them the capital would not function) (Jiménez Barca). As Torregrosa Carmona proposes that the singling out of immigrants as criminals leads to feelings of xenophobia, he shows that “el trabajo, y no la delincuencia, es la ocupación mayoritaria de quienes llegan de otros países precisamente para eso, para trabajar y conseguir una prosperidad personal o familiar que se traduce, también, en beneficios socioeconómicos de carácter colectivo para el conjunto de la
ciudadanía” (work, not delinquency, is the true occupation of those that arrive from other countries; precisely for this they come, to work and obtain personal or family prosperity that in turn translates to socioeconomic benefits for all, citizens or not) (59-61). When the media associates crime with immigration, it does so at the cost of damaging the society it appears to defend. When the media lifts and supports immigrants by showing how useful they are to the society they already inhabit, they work toward increasing social cohesion and diminishing feelings of xenophobia. Thus, a critical reader sees the benefits of positive integration stories and does not passively accept the negative media reconstruction.

When citizens are bombarded with negative metaphors and stereotypes, there is the possibility that some may draw false connections between individuals that immigrate and a generalized undesirable mass that seeks to trample the host society under their feet. This negative correlation may also lead to racist/bigoted behaviors that further damage the society as a whole. Cunningham-Parmeter points to a possible solution for the media in arguing for the replacement of negative metaphors with positive, community-building metaphors:

If we can imagine immigration as an invasion, then we can also imagine it as a method for improving economic stability and national welfare. If, through metaphor, immigrants can be viewed as aliens and illegals, then they can also be viewed as migrants, workers, and community members. By critically evaluating metaphor—the cornerstone of immigration stories—we can approach legal opinions with a sense of agency, thereby rejecting the inevitability of current frames. From there, we might imagine a new immigration discourse for future legal texts—one that emphasizes cooperation over struggle, contribution over battle, and personhood over alienage. (1598)

In “Alien Language: Immigration Metaphors and the Jurisprudence of Otherness”, Cunningham-Parmeter shows both the pitfalls of negative metaphors and also the value
of changing the discourse of immigration to positive metaphors. Thus, language that leads to racial divisions causes xenophobia, engenders sexual violence, and twists the facts in unnecessary and undesirable ways. Like the positive example from *El País*, the media should attempt to positively work toward the integration that the immigration law alludes to in its Preamble. Unfortunately, because the law presents the immigrant as a nuisance, the media exploits these traces of xenophobia and expands them in their publications.

In order to rectify the negative situation in which the media tends to focus on inflammatory material that uses stereotypes and generalizations, the parliamentary group Izquierda Verde has proposed a law titled “Estatuto del Periodista Profesional” (Statutes for the Professional Journalist). This law seeks to address these issues in the media by putting forth a deontological moral code for journalists. Due to a lengthy legal process, this proposal has been halted in the Spanish congress since 2004 with little chance of becoming law. Straddling an imaginary line that could restrict the freedom of the press, the proposed law attempts to put restrictions on news that arouse unfounded and negative stereotypes. In article 15 of the annex of the “Estatuto del Periodista Profesional,” we read:

**Actuar con especial responsabilidad y rigor en el caso de informaciones u opiniones con contenidos que puedan suscitar discriminaciones por razón de sexo, raza, creencias o extracción social y cultural, así como incitar al uso de la violencia, evitando expresiones o testimonios vejatorios o lesivos para la condición personal de los individuos y su integridad física y moral.**

(To act with careful responsibility and rigor in the case of information and opinions with contents that can provoke discrimination on the basis of sex, race beliefs or social and cultural background, as also inciting to violence, avoiding speech or testimonies that are humiliating or damaging to individuals and their physical or moral integrity.) (10)
Clearly, it is not the job of the government to censor the media and, because this proposal may restrict the freedom of speech and lead to banning yellow journalism, it stands little chance of becoming law; however, journalists that seek to unify Spain and make it a hospitable place may look to these types of manifestos and adhere to them personally. As journalists put forth inclusive materials, the general population may come to see the benefits of a more cohesive and multicultural society and be less inclined to admitting prejudice as a respectable opinion.

A Literary Response to the Spanish Immigration Law and Mass Media

Socially conscious literature is in part a cultural response to historical events and specific socio-political problems. At times, literature contemplates, analyzes, and exposes current societal problems either directly through essay, testimony, or satire, or indirectly as the backdrop to its narratives. As political speech, law, and mass media discourse on immigration affect lives in very significant ways, a literary push-back movement has surfaced in an attempt to show the alienation and absurdity of some of these discourses. The fictional short story “Rasgos occidentales” by Isaac Rosa published in the immigration anthology *Inmenso Estrecho Vol. II* (2006) proves to be an eerily powerful response to the way the media and political action account for immigration problems in Spain. The author is a contemporary journalist in Madrid and novel writer born in 1974 in Sevilla. Among his novels, *El vano ayer* (2004) won the prestigious Premio Rómulo Gallegos award which has earned him much attention while writing for *El Diario, Público*, and *El País*. In “Rasgos occidentales” the author addresses three audiences: the non-critical public, politicians, and the mass media. Rosa uncovers the skewed language and deception of the press and political discourse, and at the same time condemns the
non-critical reader for being complacent. This makes his short story a good example of a conscious effort to combat the cultural *status quo* and make readers realize the dangerous effects that the media and political speech can have if not understood critically. It dually acts as a satire of news tropes and as a way to show that people do not read critically the news to strip them of their superfluous ideologies.

“Rasgos occidentales” begins at the scene of a shipwrecked boat on the coast of Spain. Among the thirty bodies in the boat, one does not conform to “the norm”: “Era un niño. Estaba recogido sobre sí mismo, doblado, con las rodillas contra el pecho y los brazos rodeándolas, no en la típica posición fetal, sino más encogido aún, como si hubieran intentado plegarlo. Era un niño. Era un niño blanco” (It was a child. It was folded unto itself, bent, with the knees touching its chest and the arms surrounding them, not in the typical fetal position, but even more hunched, as if they intended to fold him over. It was a child. It was a white child.) (254). The guard who finds this child climbs on top of the other bodies, digs his hand under them, and uses all his strength to pull the baby from under the knotted bodies on the boat. Then “[el guardia saltó de la barca hasta el muelle, con el niño en brazos, al que cogía ahora como si fuera su hijo, contra el pecho, la cabecita apoyada en el antebrazo izquierdo y la mano derecha sujetándolo por debajo, con cuidado, y no se atrevió a depositarlo en el suelo” (the guard jumped from the boat to the shore, with the child in his arms, whom he now held as if he were his own, against his chest, his little head resting on his left forearm and with his right arm holding him from below, carefully, and he did not dare to lay him on the ground) (255). Although the officials at the scene have attended shipwrecks of this type in the past, they have never seen a white baby among them. The event is so unexpected that the media does not know
how to refer to the child in their reports. Calling him “white” might sound racist and “European” imprecise. They settle on identifying the baby with one that shares “rasgos occidentales” (occidental traits) (256) in order to be least offensive and “politically correct.” Thus, the title of the piece becomes the central theme of the story.

Rosa identifies the media’s surge of interest in this specific shipwreck with the finding of the white baby. The author portrays the concern that the media over focuses on the extraordinary event and backgrounds the real human tragedy of the other immigrants that died in the boat. The exceptional situation makes such a public spectacle that the child has to be spared the “typical” burial proceedings of other dead African immigrants, who were buried in an extension of the town cemetery reserved for unknown immigrants where the “cuerpos anónimos, fueron enterrados … según la costumbre, en cajas sencillas y sellando el nicho con una lápida que decía ‘inmigrante sin identificar’, la fecha de la muerte … y el número de expediente judicial como toda identificación para el caso improbable de que algún día fuesen identificados y reclamados.” (anonymous bodies were buried … in simple boxes as it was customary with a headstone that read ‘unidentified immigrant,’ date of death … and the juridical number as the only identification in the improbable case that their bodies would later be identified and reclaimed) (258). Instead, the baby is buried “en la zona común del cementerio, en un nicho en el que sólo constaba el número de expediente, pues nadie se atrevió a colocarle la etiqueta de ‘inmigrante’” (in the common area of the cemetery, in a grave with a headstone that only took note of the juridical number, because nobody would dare to label him ‘immigrant’) (258). Rosa points sharply to the underlying injustice and tragedy. The fact that it has become normal to bury the black immigrants in what appears to be a
segregated mass grave and give them so little attention should trouble his readers. Removing the “red herring” from the story (the white baby), Rosa subtly condemns racist political action, demeaning media attitudes, and the apathy of the Spanish citizens toward the appalling deaths of African immigrants.

Rosa shows how the media again skews the news in order to garner the most interest from what would normally be yet another patera event within the “Rasgos occidentales” story. As he tells it, a civil guard finds another boat at sea the following fall. This boat is filled with more than seventy African immigrants, all dead. Among the blackness of the skins of the majority of the travelers “resaltaba bajo el sol la blancura achicharrada de dos cuerpos: una mujer joven, corpulenta … Y en sus brazos, apretado contra el pecho, un bebé igualmente blanco, blanquísimio, envuelto en una toalla” (stood out a burnt out whiteness of two bodies under the scorching sun, a stocky young woman … And in her arms, tight to her chest, an equally white baby, an exceedingly white baby, wrapped in a towel) (259-60). The discovery of two more white bodies and the mystery of their deaths again causes much excitement, outrage, and confusion on the part of the media and politicians and creates a counterpoint to the first part of the story. The photographers and the TV cameras “[a]parte de un par de tomas generales de la embarcación, todas las instantáneas y planos se centraron en la inusual pareja, obviando a otras dos madres muertas con hijos muertos que viajaban en la embarcación, en este caso de ‘rasgos africanos’” (aside from a few pictures of the vessel, all the stills and shots were focused on the unusual pair, obviating the fact that in the same boat were two other dead mothers with their children, only that these were of ‘African traits’) (260). Rosa involves his readers even deeper into a web of mysterious occurrences while keenly
Rosa points out the self-interested practices of the media as they direct the attention of their readers and viewers to the topics they prefer, such as sensational deaths and mysterious occurrences, rather than point them toward the tragedy of the failed migration. With the hope of being first to cover the discovery of another white body, the media devotes an irrational amount of resources to surveying the borders for new boats adrift. When a boat is discovered, they seem overjoyed with excitement. Then, Rosa emphasizes their disappointment when they discover that the boat was “llena ‘sólo de africanos’” (filled ‘only by Africans’) (265). Critiquing real life drama with literature, Rosa portrays his impression that the media takes advantage of very terrible situations for profit rather than to aid those in need. For instance, the reporters could have mentioned some of the reasons why these people choose to endanger their lives in order to leave their countries instead of sensationalizing the journey and diverting the reader’s attention toward those few white bodies. In one part of the story, a photographer takes advantage of the transfer of immigrants from their dinghy to the Spanish boat: “Los periodistas ayudaron a subir a bordo a la mayor parte de náufragos, pero dos de los inmigrantes se ahogaron antes de ser rescatados. Uno de los fotógrafos presentes tomó una espeluznante serie de imágenes del ahogamiento que meses después le hicieron ganar un importante galardón de fotoperiodismo” (The reporters helped the majority of the shipwrecked climb aboard their boat, but two of the immigrants drowned before being rescued. One of the photographers on the boat shot a spine-chilling series of images of the drowning in process that months afterwards awarded him a great photojournalistic award) (265).
Sadly, other journalists considered the trip a failure because no new leads were found to uncover “the truth” of the whites in the immigrant boats. With a stroke of disgust, Rosa comments on the insatiable voracity of the press to be the first boots on the ground when some important event takes place, not with the intent to help, but rather to nurture their fame and fill their pockets. Again, Rosa shows how, at times, the media mistakenly fails to tackle the challenging questions at the base of the vast economic disparity between Europe and Africa that cause these doomed migrations and instead focuses on red-herrings (the whites, or whatever the popular topic may be). This process presents immigration with a tone of disappointment or as a frustrated movement instead of an opportunity for community creation.

Rosa also critiques the fickle nature of the news cycle in his story. When whites cease to be found in African boats, the interest of the public, the media, and the government wanes as well. The focus of the characters in the story changes, and the “monumental” problems from before are swept under some imaginary rug to focus on the new and even more “not-to-be-missed” news. Thus, “[e]l gobierno fue desactivando poco a poco el operativo especial del Estrecho y pudo retirar efectivos que serían destinados a otros ámbitos más desguarnecidos, que para recoger cadáveres no se necesitaban tantos guardias” (the government deactivated the special patrols in the Gibraltar Straight and was able to reuse the funds that would be destined to other more needful areas, because recovering cadavers did not require so many civil workers) (267). And, “[l]os ciudadanos nos desinteresamos poco a poco del inexplicado asunto, y comprobamos con inconfesable alivio que ya sólo llegaban muertos africanos. Sólo africanos” (we, the citizens become disinterested bit by bit with the inexplicable mystery and realize with an unspoken relief
that only dead Africans were discovered. Only Africans) (267). Testifying to the apathy that any modern public experiences unless something is exciting or new, the readers in the story get bored and find relief in the fact that only Africans continue to die on their shores. Rosa perceives that this kind of unsettling apathy is common among news followers in Spain when ready-made solutions are not available for tough problems. He wants to wake them up from their consumerist slumber and make them comprehend that humanity and justice do not apply only to people to whom they immediately identify.

In a final stroke of righteous indignation, Rosa challenges the public, the media, and governmental powers with the following rebuke:

Como tú, hipócrita lector, que has podido contar entre las líneas de este relato al menos doscientos cuatro cadáveres, ahogados, deshidratados o muertos de frío, y sin embargo sólo te has extrañado por siete de ellos: cuatro hombres, una mujer y dos niños. Y acaba el relato y sigues esperando, entre curioso e inquieto, por si acaso la grieta abierta en lo previsible supura algún nuevo cadáver de rasgos occidentales antes del punto final. O si la grieta se ha cerrado definitivamente y podemos seguir con la vieja cuenta. Sólo africanos.

(Like you, hypocrite reader, that has been able to count between the lines of this story at least two hundred and four cadavers, drowned, dehydrated, or frozen to death, and notwithstanding you worried about only seven of them: four men, one woman, and two children. And the story ends and you keep on waiting, feeling somewhere between curious and unsettled, that maybe a tiny crevice may squeeze out a new cadaver of occidental traits before the final period of the story. Or if the small crack has closed indefinitely we can now go on the same as before. Only Africans.) (267)

In an homage to Charles Baudelaire’s 1857 *Fleur du mal* (Flowers of Evil) poem “Au lector” (To the Reader), Rosa turns on his reader to make his point. In a strange turn of events, a new narrator speaks to critique the original narrator and a supposed reader who has been caught red-handed not caring about the tragedy that is cleverly obfuscated by the first narrator. The rebuke is poignant and feels like the author played a terrible trick
on his reader. As Rosa has framed the story to make the reader want to know why the whites were found among all the African immigrants, he does a wonderful job of showing how easily readers can be swayed from the facts with gimmicky red herrings used in news as opposed to literature accounts that seek ethical positioning. The readers ignore the background due to the way the first narrator steers the story to focus only on what moves the narration. This method both strengthens the point Rosa is making, and at the same time weakens it by turning the reader against him. In effect, the second narrator, which may be perceived as an authorial intrusion, finally reveals to his readers that the background of this human tragedy is what matters most; in fact, it is much more important than any focalizer mediatized by the narration. Rosa satirically parallels the news-cycle and shows how dangerous it is to read uncritically. He rebukes those involved in this cycle of despair: the politician, the media, and the reader. The politicians show compassion only when the tragedy directly affects one of their own possible constituencies. The journalists are rebuked because their work is self-interested, irreverent, and unethical when they foreground red herrings while obscuring the real tragedies. Through the literary trick of the white bodies, Rosa shames his reader, the media, the government, and the first narrator for failing to focus on what is one of the most important human problems of our century. In his fictional story the author assaults the reader to get his desired effect. Whether this act strengthens or weakens his point is somewhat irrelevant as long as it becomes clear to his readers that stories about immigration in the media are to be read critically and not simply judged for their sensational factor.
As in Rosa’s account, Spain faces a difficult road ahead. In order to adequately confront its immigration problems, it must first start with a rigorous decision about its immigration policy. It cannot be both welcoming and inhospitable in its laws. It cannot both favor the “plena integración de los inmigrantes en nuestro país y garantizar la convivencia y la cohesión social entre los inmigrantes y la población autóctona” (full integration of the immigrants in our country and guarantee the coexistence and social cohesion between immigrants and the autochthonous population) (BOE #229 “Ley Orgánica 2/2009” 104987) and at the same time restrict the immigrants’ right to healthcare, inadequately account for irregular immigration, leave the family reunification process ambiguously written, and put forth monetary funds to expel immigrants. When these contradicting facets of the law are resolved, the media will have more of an incentive to follow suit and present a more positive side of immigration. Negative stereotypes, inadequate metaphors, and the criminalization of immigration pervade the news at the cost of an increase in xenophobia and social mistrust. The media’s denigration of the immigrant subject as a scapegoat for the internal economic and social problems can be changed as Spain seeks more equality and justice. Reevaluating the current philosophical models of justice that affect immigration would allow Spanish society to better account for the immigration phenomenon and treat its participants with more dignity and respect. Clearly, identifying a model of justice that perfectly addresses immigration is difficult, nevertheless it is imperative to surface a philosophical theory that diminishes xenophobia and promotes cultural harmony if any of these problems are to be remedied.
Political Theories of Justice and Social Theories for Immigration

With the goal of diminishing xenophobia through the use of philosophy, I will summarize the political theories of justice that could be of most importance to the Spanish governmental system in regards to immigration issues and describe their positive and negative attributes. Finally, I will put forth the social theory that is most beneficial in analyzing the literature and film that represent the immigrants of Spain.

Historically, justice has been defined primarily as an innate feeling of what is right, later formalized through philosophy, and secondarily, as a code of conduct regulated by laws that govern a society. This inner intuition is then shaped by the social, economic, historic, and educational experiences of the people. It is also very subjective; it may be agreed upon by persons in similar situations, or controversial and violently rejected by others who do not share a particular worldview. Second, justice-as-law prescribes procedures, modes of conduct, and punishments for those that disobey the laws set by governments. In modern societies, justice-as-law is related to the first definition of justice because each country develops its political system based on its historical experiences and its forward-looking philosophies. Because of this, throughout recorded history no singular system of law has been immutable and unchanged. From the Hammurabi Code to modern constitutions, notions of how personhood is defined and what rights these laws confer and uphold have dramatically changed. As personal values and morals vary, so do the laws of the state. These laws may be approved by majorities and at the same time be abhorred by persons in neighboring states or minorities inside the state. Thus, we arrive at the conundrum that I find to be plaguing any version of any system of justice: from a historical point of view, no set of laws or philosophical
principles can comprehensibly serve all the needs of all the people all the time. Because of this, compromises have had to be made for laws to be upheld in the past and conciliations will be made in the future. From a basic social contract perspective, one cannot have all the freedoms possible and at the same time have all the protections assured by the state. Thus, justice-as-law works best for the governance of a homogeneous people and faces serious difficulties when applied to people of different cultures, religions, and races that reside in the same geographical area. Because immigration tends to make a society more heterogeneous, justice becomes a particularly complex issue.

Since the Enlightenment, liberal philosophies have proposed new models of thinking in order to combat the heredity of privilege, state religions, and absolute monarchy while proposing social contracts that ask for government respect of life, liberty, and the right to private property. In the eighteenth century, philosophers like Immanuel Kant and Jeremy Bentham proposed different philosophical means to achieve these goals. Kant focused on reason as the defining trait of humanity beyond Bentham’s proposed pleasure principles. Both thinkers have been enormously influential in the way we treat others, think of economy, and participate in democratic societies. Having mostly achieved the transition from authoritarian to constitutional and democratic societies in Europe, recent liberal philosophies now focus more on the respect of human rights, the environment, and the creations of supranational organizations. These new theories respond to technological advancements and the radical way in which modern means of transportation have exponentially increased our globe’s interconnectedness. These advances have led to a global homogenization of human rights and made obvious the
marked disparity of wealth between various nations. Thus, the interconnected economical webs of globalization tacitly promote immigration as a response to the great economic disparities between the highly developed countries (often, the not-so-old colonizers) and the rest (often, the not-so-old colonized). These developments and our globalized society necessitate a rethinking of our responsibility toward others in ways that early liberal philosophers of the eighteenth century could not have anticipated.

The modern analytical and postmodern philosophies that follow prescribe means to better understand immigration and integrate its participants both globally and specifically in the Spanish society. The analytical camp includes liberal theories such as egalitarianism, which describes the current leaning of the Spanish law, and libertarianism, which can provide an intriguing alternative to the current immigration problems in Spain. The postmodern philosophy of affect describes the best way to augment the benefits of both egalitarianism and libertarianism while eschewing analytical theory. Analyzing egalitarian movements is important because it outlines a good way to reorient societies’ goals toward improving the lives of those most disadvantaged. Libertarians, on the other side, attempt to orient society toward those people who, through creativity and business acumen, are able to lift the entire society. These theories are partly already at play in Spain under the guise of socialist and conservative ideologies.

Richard Rorty’s ‘sentimental education’ is not so much a political theory as it is a social philosophy that proposes a better means of understanding and treating the other through empathy. It can thus by applied to both political theories mentioned. While all three theories can affect political discourse, egalitarianism and libertarianism affect laws from a top-down approach while empathy is most meaningful at the grassroots level.
Because egalitarianism and libertarianism describe the world in mostly mutually exclusive terms and prove to be incomplete in regards to providing thorough and just immigration policies, sentiment becomes a necessary concept to supplement the deficits of the other theories. Also, because literature and film are political in an allusive way, and affect the general population on an emotional level, I focus on sentiment and empathy as the most potent and useful tools in the critique of music, film, and literature in the context of migration studies.

In analytic philosophy, the most important ideologies that have tangible effects on immigration in Spain and the more developed nations in the world are egalitarian and libertarian theories. Both movements point to Kant as their precursor and accept humans as reasonable beings. Marxism also acts as a silent and ever-present referent in the adoption of these theories; however, egalitarians shy away from Marxism because of its mostly failed implementations in Eastern Europe, Russia, and China. Marxism also haunts libertarianism as the monster in the closet that seeks to take away agency. Most important in defining what separates egalitarianism and libertarianism is the way they interpret history. The socialist, or in this case egalitarians, take history as an original position into account and attempt to redress its failings through redistribution. Libertarians, on the other side, do not take under consideration historical injustices far into the past and instead, work in the current society as it is constituted. While both theories have a Kantian base, the way they incorporate historical precedents splits them radically in the methods they choose to affect progress.

Kant’s most modern and influential egalitarian proponent is John Rawls. In *A Theory of Justice* (1971) he takes Kantian reason and modernizes it in the creation of a
redistributive economical system that, at its core, has the goal of aiding the most
disfavored members of any society first. Similar to the way the Spanish legislation works,
egalitarianism sustains that this redistribution of wealth towards those most fragile
members of the society raises the well-being of the entire society. Rawls proposes that
the principles of justice are agreed upon in an \textit{(a priori)} original position. He relies on the
original position as his philosophical device for coming up with just principles untainted
by the cultural precepts of the day. In the original position, everyone is able to agree upon
basic principles of justice to redress any inequalities that birth may present for any
individual in any society. Having all agreed to these rules before the privilege or
disadvantage birth places upon us, makes the principles fair and just. Even though the
original position (the center of Rawls’ theory) steers the conversation away from history,
or the Marxist original accumulation principle, pragmatically it produces the same effect.
While not clamoring to take the means of production from the bourgeoisie and entrust
them in the arms of the proletariat, Rawls favors the most disfavored segment of a society
(a type of proletariat) and asks for a redistribution of wealth (the means of production) in
order to lift them towards a self-sufficient and independent state. Thus, while Rawls does
not try to fix a history-gone-wrong as Marx does, he attempts to even out inequalities
from an ahistorical-\textit{a priori} positon. Rawls believes the principles derived from the
original position are just, but he suggests that they are not fixed and should evolve with
cultural and societal norms. These norms should guarantee: “First: each person is to have
an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for
others. Second: social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both
(a) reasonably expected to be to everyone’s advantage, and (b) attached to positions and
offices open to all” (53). In this way, Rawls makes certain that every member of the society has equal rights and privileges. For legal immigration, this is very useful and relevant. Rawls explains, “Assuming the framework of institutions required by equal liberty and fair equality of opportunity, the higher expectations of those better situated are just if and only if they work as part of a scheme which improves the expectations of the least advantaged members of society” (65). As it usually happens, refugees and immigrants are often the least advantaged in a society, and Rawls’ propositions seem to advantage their cause. Derived from these principles, a state could have a firm base in treating its citizens and its immigrants with fairness and dignity regardless of their ethnicity, language or religion.

While the original position bestows equal rights and opportunities for the members of a society, it does not recognize those rights globally. This is where Rawls’ theory starts to break down when applying to immigration. He mentions that “in a just society the liberties of equal citizenship are taken as settled; the rights secured by justice are not subject to political bargaining or to the calculus of social interests” (3-4). Even though he does not relent on the equal rights of citizens in the same country, he sustains that each state has the right to close their borders and limit immigration as they see fit. In *The Law of the Peoples* Rawls makes this limitation explicit: “They [outsiders] are to recognize that they cannot make up for their irresponsibility in caring for their land and conserving their natural resources by conquest in war or by migrating into other peoples’ territory without their [citizens’] consent” (48). Rawls affirms that states have a right to regulate their borders and deny entrance to peoples that may destabilize the society. Like a blind spot in his very comprehensive theory, Rawls appears to blame migrants with
deteriorating their land instead of taking into account that European colonialism is a major factor leading to the instability in most of the “developing” countries of Africa, South America, and Southeast Asia. Maybe to avoid extreme complications, Rawls prefers to keep his theory local and not to extend it globally. This makes his theory appealing for single states but insufficient for a globalized world where migratory movements are very common and literally unstoppable.

The effects of living in an egalitarian society would lead to a homogenization of both welfare and culture through Rawls’ redistributive principle. While some would find this beneficial, Robert Nozick, also a Kantian thinker, finds it troublesome. In *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (1974) he critiques Rawls’ egalitarianism stance for limiting the freedom of movement. Nozick asks: “May a person emigrate from a nation that has institutionalized some end-state or patterned distributional principle? … Consider a nation having a compulsory scheme of minimal social provision to aid the neediest (or one organized so as to maximize the position of the worst-off group); no one may opt out of participating in it” (173). His argument shows some of the limitations on freedom that an egalitarian system implies. In such a redistributive system, emigration would be discouraged and only a very limited immigration allowed to supplant low fertility rates, bring in talent, or replace those who have left the country. The effect on the country, at least in theory, would be one of homogenization of wealth and culture through the closing of borders, a reality not much different from what has come to be known as Fortress Europe. Nozick believes that this system leads to economic and cultural stagnation, rather than prosperity, being stifled by overbearing governments that limit freedoms in order to achieve their goals.
Like Spain and other European countries, governments that lean towards egalitarian systems enforce closed borders and severely punish illegal immigration. This inevitably leads to the unjust treatment of immigrants and surfaces the flaws in Rawls’ theory when applied to immigration. Because states that subscribe to this political system are mostly closed-bordered, emigration and immigration are severely limited as they are perceived as an imbalance to the fragile economic system. Regrettably, because of its local and hardly porous nature, Rawls’ egalitarian system along with the current Spanish implementation of similar egalitarian measures proves to be inadequate when dealing with the current globalized and multicultural world where population shifts are extremely common. Because Spain and most Western states rely on egalitarian-based principles, they face an inability to deal with immigration properly. They fear it, make stereotypes out of it, and dehumanize its participants because their political systems are not theoretically equipped to approach the topic properly. We have clearly observed this trend in the media representations of immigration in Spain. Fear and xenophobia persists in the media, and it reflects the closed nature and imbalance in the Spanish egalitarian-leaning law.

Proponents of libertarian philosophies prefer to establish justice by ignoring historical injustices. Starting from a tabula rasa and accepting the current distribution and acquisition of wealth along with current borders, libertarians address how to improve the welfare of people through creative means rather than through government policy. Instead of arguing how far back one must go to redress historical injustices, they forgo historical precedents. For example, instead of focusing on the causes of racism, they opt to focus on assuring adequate liberties for all people in order that ingenious individuals
may prove themselves useful beyond racist stereotypes and create new perspectives on race. Thus, while social issues like discrimination, xenophobia, and racism occur because of historical reasons, libertarians seek to regulate them as little as possible in order for systems of justice and equity to improve society through interpersonal cooperation.

Having mentioned Robert Nozick’s criticisms of Rawls’ egalitarian theory, libertarianism presents itself as its polar opposite. This liberal theory attempts to provide as much liberty as possible. At its most basic level, it seeks to deregulate business and let markets organize themselves according to supply and demand. As this theory proclaims, “The minimal state is the most extensive state that can be justified. Any state more extensive violates people’s rights” (Nozick 149). The minimal state then requires a government that only enforces contracts and leaves the rest to human ingenuity for economic and cultural advancement, with charity as the means of lifting those that are disadvantaged. At the theoretical level, this freedom of human endeavor does not place restrictions of movement in order to benefit a redistributive system. Thus, it is a benefit to immigration studies through its proclamation of open borders. If immigrants are needed, they are hired, and there is no citizenship that needs to be transferred or changed. This solution would eradicate most immigration problems. In fact, immigration would not exist as we understand it today, as there would be no borders to cross, only employment to be had elsewhere.

Unlike egalitarianism, libertarianism treasures the differences between individuals and does not seek to restrain the passing-down of privilege. It seeks an equal opportunity to the law and the workforce but denies an equality of outcome through any fairness
principle. Milton and Rose Friedman explain in *Free to Chose* (1990) why an egalitarian view is dangerous:

>[T]here is a fundamental conflict between the *ideal* of “fair shares,” and of its precursor, “to each according to his needs,” [quote by Marx] and the *ideal* of personal liberty. This conflict has plagued every attempt to make equality of outcome the overriding principle of social organizations. The end result has invariably been a state of terror: Russia, China, and, more recently, Cambodia offer clear and convincing evidence. And even terror has not equalized outcomes. In every case, wide inequality persists by any criterion; inequality between the rulers and the ruled, not only in power, but also in material standards of life. (135)

Using historical hindsight, Friedman concludes that anytime egalitarianism has been enforced, the end result was a tyranny that provided no equality nor justice. Nevertheless, what matters most in libertarianism is the underlying principle that life is unequal and talents are not meted equally to everyone. The theory takes into account physical, mental, and material differences and does not try to tone some down and increase others for the sake of fairness. Libertarians oppose redistribution of wealth because it would be impossible to know how far back one should go to redress the wrongs of history. To a libertarian, the bureaucratic process of redistribution would be a nightmare, and results, as history has shown, have never been very positive. Libertarians question the ability of any government to redistribute wealth in a way that benefits everyone without splintering the society in groups that abhor each other, some because of their wealth and others because of their lack thereof. Because of this fact, they embrace competition and believe that charity, not government redistribution, can take care of the poor and the less advantaged. Thus, they oppose current redistributive means used by Spain and other western European states and believe that their economies will become stagnant if they continue on the same path.
Libertarians tend to remember with fondness the great magnates of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and the great inventions they produced without overtaxing and government intervention. Misguidedly though, libertarianism tends to focus on those successful individuals and put a blanket of forgetfulness over those who failed. Friedman recounts,

It is the system that gave the Henry Fords, the Thomas Alva Edisons, the George Eastmans, the John D. Rockefellers, the James Cash Penneys the incentive to transform our society over the past two centuries … Of course, there were many losers along the way—probably more losers than winners. We don’t remember their names. But for the most part they went in with their eyes open. They knew they were taking chances. (138)

The men mentioned above were exceptional people who changed the world with their inventions and business practices and did it because they were mostly unrestrained by expansive government taxes and restrictions. Exceptionally, their inventions either brought high-class privileges to the masses, or they led great philanthropies to aid those in most need. Thus, the Friedmans believe that libertarianism is conducive to benedictional inventions that improve life while at the same time taking care of the poor through philanthropy and education without any need of large governments. On the other hand, while these five men were great examples, they are only a very limited selection among the many more that proved not so great. I believe it not necessary to fully analyze how slavery would have continued, monopolies increased, and diseases ran rampant in cities as they did during the industrial revolution without government intervention. Also, among the names Friedman listed, one does not yet see a woman, a non-white, nor any other historically disadvantaged person because libertarianism is not necessarily conducive to an expansion of rights and equality. Even if a libertarian system could solve
the world’s current and difficult border tragedies, it would do little to ensure a minimum livable standard of life or enforce human rights in a way that is fair and just.

As with most other theories, libertarianism proves to be both a benefit and a hindrance to the concept of immigration in Spain: the system may provide the most freedom of movement, work, and profit for any individual, but at the same time it may provide the least assurance in case of failure. Because immigrants would never have to deal with illegality under a libertarian system, they could concentrate the best of their abilities to work and profit like any other individual. There would not be any casts of legal versus illegal citizens; instead, diverse people of all kinds and sexes would be in constant competition which each other, enforcing creativity, and everyone would exert their best effort. Clearly, this is a utopian and semi-organized anarchy in which, with eyes wide shut to historical precedents, one could imagine a perfectly competing society where everyone benefits. In reality, it is a system that proved to be far from utopic during the industrial revolution of the eighteen and nineteenth centuries, and it provides no guarantees that it would fare any better if implemented today. While from an immigration perspective it would open borders and make circulation of individuals unrestrained, it may lead to bigger human rights violations in the name of business than those of socialist Russia, China, and other communist countries.

It seems then that we are left with another theoretical conundrum in regards to immigration and political theory: one may enjoy as much movement and economic freedom as possible and endure the consequences of an unregulated system, or one may restrict movement and freedom in order to provide a fair society that attempts to guarantee the respect of human rights. Even though each perspective considers itself just,
when scrutinized, each theory seems to be lacking in some way when applied to immigration. There are problems with both the egalitarian as well as the libertarian theories. This give and take makes both philosophical arguments mutually exclusive, and it is very difficult to imagine a state that prides itself with the advancement of human rights and offers a vast array of services to aid the poorest members of its society while enjoying open borders and an economy that is constantly competing and improving. In the long run, theorists have to pragmatically view the history of various forms of government and come to a conclusion as to which system has generated better societies. It is not my purpose to decide which theory the government of Spain should implement, but I believe that a newer philosophy is necessary to address both theories and bridge them in a suitable way for our modern globalized world. In case one new overarching theory is simply not possible to devise, then an oscillating system may work best to remedy the immigration problems at hand.

Specific to Spain’s case, Richard Rorty’s postmodern philosophic concept of what he calls “sentimental education” is very useful in remedying its immigration problems. While it does not solve the core problems of the previous theories, it adds a communicative approach in getting to know those who are different and works against racism and xenophobia. His theory fits well in Spain because Spanish laws emphasize human rights and integration. Being a more egalitarian state, its borders are mostly closed and there have been efforts to legalize irregular persons in order for them to participate effectively in the political, economic, and social system. This being true, the biggest problem Spain faces is its inability to enforce its closed borders and to deal with the racism, bigotry, and xenophobia inside the country. There are negative attitudes in the
media and feelings of general discontent on the topic of immigration, which are damaging to the cohesion of the Spanish society. I propose that Richard Rorty’s ‘sentimental education,’ along with other affective approaches, are the best theories available to address the contentious relationship that immigration produces in a mostly closed-bordered state.

In effect, the theory of ‘sentimental education’ is an anti-universalist proposition that rejects Kantian reason and all fixed *a priori* concepts. Richard Rorty shows in “Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality” (1998) that reason as a philosophical concept has failed to produce an effect on reducing cruelty in the world. Reason has not dissuaded people from acting in racist or xenophobic ways even though reason has been held as the most important virtue of Western thought. Rorty does not conceive this theory as a universal panacea in a similar fashion as libertarians, egalitarians, and analytical philosophers do. Instead, Rorty seeks truth that is culturally specific, regional, and contingent on situations. Understanding that different cultures have different values and respect different moral precepts, Rorty proposes the concept of a ‘sentimental education’ to be the baseline for intercultural and mutual respect, regardless of the political inclinations of the country. He sustains that meeting those unlike us and becoming friends with them will do the most in dispelling ideological xenophobic cruelty. Thus, he proposes that all should engage those disfavored by the society, get to know them, and come to understand that they are not any less human. Because Rorty’s ‘sentimental education’ is not a political theory, it is not meant to be codified as a series of laws. It does not include an economical component, nor does it specify whether borders should be open or closed. These issues are not important to Rorty because they are contingent on
each country’s situation. The nurturing of mutual respect and the sustaining of human rights should never be left to contingency wherever a ‘sentimental education’ is applied. Thus, Rorty’s affect theory acts as a stop-gap measure to egalitarian or libertarian political implementations until better theories are created. It aims to improve current relationships between people without attempting to challenge how a country operates. It also lends itself to critiquing music, film, and literature as a means to show how to engage others, learn from them, and integrate them into the host culture. Furthermore, Rorty’s ‘sentimental education’ is not unlike empathy. The same psychological means through which ‘sentimentality’ works equate perfectly with empathy, a notion that has been subjected to many more empirical studies that have shown its effectiveness in generating compassion and inspired societal change. Because of the similarities of these two theories, when necessary I exchange ‘sentimentality’ with empathy. This, and many other beneficial traits, make ‘sentimentality,’ understood as empathy, the most suitable theory to analyze the relationship between immigration and literature.

As previously noted, political philosophy that seeks to either make societies more equal or promote economic development, encounters difficulties when it attempts to account and integrate immigrants as a variable in its discourse. Similarly, the media has often egregiously relied on negative stereotypes to characterize the activities of immigrants thus furthering their stigmatization. Its discourses about immigration fail to create an accurate portrayal of immigration and instead resort to cultural scapegoatism by either accentuating xenophobic attitudes of the Spanish population or articulating the double standards of the Spanish immigration law. Furthermore, while the Spanish immigration law, or more specifically Ley Orgánica 4/2000, was originally a forward-
leaning document, its various iterations and amendments have become eroded and troublesome. From the inability to create a path to legality (BOE #299 104987), paying immigrants to return to their countries of origin (BOE #78 24859), and taking away irregular immigrants’ rights to healthcare (Real Decreto-ley 16/2012), the Spanish immigration law has become increasingly hostile to legal immigration and may even violate the human rights of irregular immigrants as denounced by Amnesty International (Amnistía Internacional “Derecho a la salud” n.p.) and various other non-profit groups.\textsuperscript{14}

Having summarized the basics of immigration in Spain and having included information and analysis of demographics, laws, journalistic discourse, and philosophy, I would like to transition to a fuller analysis of the benefits of Richard Rorty’s theory as well as its application to music about immigration in Spain. Later, chapters three and four will resolve representations of immigration in film and literature through the lens of empathy as a means to understanding the Other and also as a way to measure the effectiveness of literature and film in changing attitudes about immigrants in Spain.

\textsuperscript{14} For a more detailed explanation of each of the grievances mentioned in this paragraph, refer to the subheading “Shifting Demographics and the Spanish Immigration Law” of Chapter 1.
Chapter 2

‘Sentimental Education’ as a Counterbalance to Hate Speech and Xenophobia in Spanish Music about Immigration

This chapter first shows how Richard Rorty’s work in Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity (1989) and Truth and Progress (1998) is an audacious rethinking of the way Western analytical philosophy works and may be effective in diminishing structures of discrimination toward immigrants in Spain. Secondarily, the chapter analyzes music about immigration and shows how Rorty’s affect theory can aid musicians in crafting songs that address immigration in a way that is most conducive to rearing empathy in their listeners.

The use of stereotypes and generalizations to refer to immigrants in political discourse and the media deny immigrants their individuality and thus turn them into an exploitable resource until they obtain citizenship and are able to participate in the political discourse. Because of these circumstances, I believe that a concerted political and a conscientious media effort is needed to redress the social pain caused by conflictive laws and an unsympathetic mass media. Under this premise, I show how music about immigration authored by immigrants and Spanish citizens facilitates the integration of immigrant populations in Spain equitably and reduces racism and xenophobia as it appeals to its audience on an emotional level as prescribed by the social theory of Richard Rorty. To accomplish this goal, I first show the need for socially minded music to counteract fringe right wing activist music that expresses hate against immigrants. Second, I review the strengths of Richard Rorty’s philosophy as a balance to the weaknesses most relevant in the political theories of the previous chapter when applied to
immigration. Finally, in light of Rorty’s guidelines for creating a more equitable society, I analyze the potential of Spanish and immigrant musical efforts to diminish cruelty and xenophobia through their art.

Music as a Form of Hate Speech against Immigrants

In a liberal society that values freedom of expression, both positive and negative discourses about immigration develop. While such arguments are valuable, hate speech must to be rejected and combatted. As we have seen in Chapter 1, law, political speech, and the mass media often project an unhealthy cultural bias that leads to the negative stereotyping of immigrant populations. In certain circumstances, the negative stereotyping turns to insidious racism and bigotry. These liminal cases of hate speech act as a catalyst to violent acts on both the side of the Spaniards and the immigrants, which ends up pitting the two groups against each other instead of forging solidarity. While these cases may be few, their influence is far reaching as they stir up anger and hatred and divide communities. Among the marginal cases of hate speech against immigrants in Spain are the examples of artists such as DJ Syto, El Chivi, and Torbe. Whether purposefully or under the guise of parody, these singers make calls to violence or distort the images of Africans, Romanians, and other immigrants in Spain.

The song “Negros de mierda”\textsuperscript{15} (Shitty Blacks\textsuperscript{16}) is an example of a well-known song that espouses hate against people of sub-Saharan descent in Spain. Because of the obscure nature of this song, its author is difficult to pin down; however, the song is either

\textsuperscript{15} See Song 4 in Appendix 1 for full lyrics.
\textsuperscript{16} All translations of song titles and the lyrics of the songs are my own translations.
written by El Chivi, who unconvincingly disputes this claim, or the band Chabelos. The soundtrack is composed of repetitive accordion and keyboard notes with the singer’s voice masked by a sped up filter. As such, the voice is higher than normal and almost comical excepting the strong racist nature of the song. Overall, the musicality and production value of the song is poor but catchy. In this single, the male singer compares black-skinned people of African descent with cockroaches in the trash and seeks their extermination. He says: “Parecen cucarachas que se amontonan en la basura” (They look like cockroaches that accumulate in the trash) (0:11), “Hay que desinfectarlos pa’ no mancharse con su negrura” (One has to disinfect them to not stain yourself with their blackness) (0:26), and “Hay que esterilizarlos para que estén en franca extinción” (One has to sterilize them in order to exterminate them) (1:00). On YouTube, there are multiple unofficial versions of the song. In the second most popular instance, the song is accompanied by rotating images of what appear to be white supremacists carrying guns and posing in menacing stances. One year after being published, this version of the song had more than 265,622 views with 1,218 thumbs up and 648 thumbs down. The most popular version of the song had more than 651,000 views with 2,994 thumbs up and 962 thumbs down after two years. Disturbingly, such a racist song filled with negative stereotypes, hate speech, and xenophobia has more than double or triple the number of likes than dislikes, a fact that shows how public racism is not merely a problem of the past.

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17 El Chivi is the pseudonym of the Spanish artist José Francisco Córdoba who became an internet sensation in Spain by singing humorous songs with sexual themes during the 1990s.
Another song that is also attributed either to El Chivi or DJ Syto is entitled “Facha vs. Moro”\textsuperscript{18} (Fascist vs. Moor). Similar to the “Negros de mierda” song just mentioned, the production value of this piece is also low. While the sped-up effect also applies to the voice of the singer, the genre of the song matches violent hardcore electronica. In this song, the singer expresses his unapologetic hatred toward immigrants of African descent. In one of the verses, he writes: “Que le den por culo a todos. Y encima, me cago en Dios, paso con el coche por encima suyo [al moro] y le chafo toda la cabeza, por cabrón!” (Fuck them all. And more, God dammit, I will drive my car over him [the black man] and smash his head, because he’s an asshole) (0:15). The strong racist and violent themes of “Negros de mierda” and “Facha vs. Moro” show how hatred wrapped in catchy tunes are used to promote violence. Because these songs are still easy to find on the internet and are widely available for download, there is an obvious market for racism in Spain, and their existence highlights the difficulty of controlling discrimination and xenophobia in the digital age.

Like all countries that value the respect and dignity of human life, the Spanish Penal Code addresses hate speech and metes out corresponding punishments. Article 510, implemented in 1995, and revised and expanded in 2015, provides protection against:

Los que provocaren a la discriminación, al odio o a la violencia contra grupos o asociaciones, por motivos racistas, antisemitas u otros referentes a la ideología, religión o creencias, situación familiar, la pertenencia de sus miembros a una etnia o raza, su origen nacional, su sexo, orientación sexual, enfermedad o minusvalía, serán castigados con la pena de prisión de uno a tres años y multa de seis a doce meses.

(Those that were to incite discrimination, hate, or violence against groups or associations, for racist reasons, anti-Semitism or references to ideology,

\textsuperscript{18} See Song 2 in Appendix 1 for full lyrics. Also of note is the possible connection of this song with Manolo Escobar’s 1978 song “Mi carro me lo robaron.”

73
religion or beliefs, family situation, belonging to an ethnicity or race, their national origin, their sex, sexual orientation, illness or disability, will be punished with serving one to three years prison time and fined six to twelve months.) (Ley Orgánica 10/1995, Artículo 510)

While the Spanish Penal Code addresses issues of hate speech, convictions of such an act are rarely carried out due to the difficulty of proving that those statements have indeed stirred acts of violence that have been documented. This complication and the debate about the limits of free speech make such penal convictions and fines unlikely. To remedy some of these challenges, Article 510 of the Spanish Penal Code has been brought up-to-date to take into consideration not only hate speech but also the broader dignity abuses of people protected by the law. The new Article 510 also modernizes the law to take into account and punish hate and disparaging speech published online and/or on social networks. The law now has the power to take down such hate speech websites and block viewers from accessing it. Even with these new powers, it remains to be seen how effective this new law will be in actually curbing hate speech online as it will remain difficult to prove that speech has caused violent acts. Also, the new law may be limited to stop access to websites that are hosted outside of Spain unless the Spanish government approves of a country wide firewall, which is a major violation of free speech and the freedom of information.

Case in point, the presumed author of the two previously discussed racist songs, the artist El Chivi (José Francisco Córdoba), has escaped any prosecution by the law because of his denials of authorship and the anonymous nature of the internet. Fortunately, some cases are noticed and receive their due attention. One such case is against DJ Syto, the author of the bigoted and musically impoverished song “Me cago en
estos putos rumanos” (I Shit on these Fucking Romanians). DJ Syto (who confusedly posts online under the pseudonym El Chivi) pronounces: “son esos putos rumanos / ooh que encima también trabajan los días de fiesta / son esos putos rumanos / los que te miran en discotecas y si encima vas y les pegas / ooh van y encima te denuncian ellos a ti” (These fucking Romanians / ooh that also work on holidays / these fucking Romanians / those that stare at you in clubs and if you go and beat them / ooh they go and denounce you) (0:28). Also, he writes, “me cago en su raza, / en sus muertos y en todo su país” (I shit on their race / in their dead and all over their country) (1:55). Moreover, in the chorus he incites to violence: “me cago en esos putos rumanos, / hijos de puta ... rumanos, / voy a cortaros las manos hijos de puta... / puta” (I shit on these fucking Romanians / sons of bitches ... Romanians / I will cut your hands, you sons of bitches / bitches) (2:15). This song is disturbing; it not only expresses hatred toward the Romanian community, but it also incites violence against them. According to media reports, the song has been downloaded at least 6,000 times and was listened to in dancing clubs in the areas of Castellón, Valencia, and Madrid. Moreover, as a testament to how popular and troubling the effects of the song are, these same lyrics were posted inside the Beep internet café mentioned in Chapter 1 as a retaliation against a theft perpetrated by some Romanian nationals.

Because of this infamous popularity, the song attracted the attention of the non-governmental organization SOS Racisme who alerted the authorities. After some back and forth to ensure that the songs were not made for private listening and the involvement

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19 See Song 1 in Appendix 1 for full lyrics.
20 “Me cago en estos putos rumanos” is not El Chivi’s song; rather, it belongs to DJ Syto whose name has not been released to the press by the Spanish authorities.
of the Consejo Nacional Contra la Discriminación (National Council Against Discrimination) and the Romanian Ministerul Afacerilor Externe (Ministry of External Affairs), Syto was detained in 2005. The Spanish newspaper *El Mundo* attests that the “agentes de la Unidad de Delitos Telemáticos de la Guardia Civil detuvieron a Syto el pasado jueves, tras la denuncia presentada por un vecino de Castellón. También registraron su casa e intervinieron material informático para su posterior análisis” (agents of the Wireless Crime Unit of the Spanish Civil Guard detained Syto last Thursday, after the complaint filed by a neighbor in Castellón. Also, they searched his house and confiscated digital data for later analysis) (De la Cal “«DJ Syto»: Racismo Para Bailar”). Interestingly, when faced with the charges, DJ Syto denounced that he was the author of these songs, even though he attested the exact opposite in a public interview in 2005. In that interview he said: “Desde su llegada [los inmigrantes] no han parado de cometer delitos y meterse en líos. Soy consciente de que no todos son delincuentes [...] generalizo porque es una forma más agresiva de atacarles. Todo empezó como una broma entre amigos, y no debería haber salido de ahí” (Since their arrival [the immigrants] they have not stopped committing crimes and getting into trouble. I know that not all are delinquents … I generalize because it is a more aggressive form of attacking them. All started as a joke between friends, and it should not have left that private sphere.) (Alfageme). In the end, it is unclear what charges were brought against DJ Syto and what his punishments were, nevertheless, due to the public nature of the event, it may serve as a deterrent to future abusers.

More recently in 2014, straddling the line between parody and defamation, another song targeted the Romanians in Spain. “Soy un rumano en Madrid” by Torbe or
Ignacio Allende Fernández paints the Romanian community in Spain as either dedicated to theft or inclined to prostitution. Torbe is a popular figure in Spain, first because of his drawing abilities as a comic artist and later because of his acting and directing of pornographic films. His latest music video masquerades parody to defame. The pop soundtrack is of high production value, and the video is professionally filmed. Even so, the song’s chorus is damaging: “Soy un rumano en Madrid / Si te robo la cartera / Te sustraigo todo el cobre / No te enfades, solo quiero divertir / Soy un rumano en Madrid / Soy un rumano en Madrid / Si te quito tus mujeres / Aunque no tenga papeles / No me culpes, solo quiero divertir. (I’m a Romanian in Madrid / If I steal your wallet / I steal all your cash / Don’t be upset, I’m doing this just for fun / I’m a Romanian in Madrid / I’m a Romanian in Madrid / If I steal your women / Even if I am undocumented / Don’t blame me, I’m doing this just for fun) (0:45). Under the guise of comedy, Torbe portrays the Romanian community as uncultured thieves that come to Spain in mass to “steal your wallet” and “your women.” Due to the popularity of its author/singer, the reaction to this song has been mixed. While popular on one hand, the song was denounced as discriminatory and xenophobic on the other. The NGO Federaţia Asociaţiilor de Români din Europa (FADERE) (Federation of Romanian Associations in Europe) asks for financial remuneration from the songwriter:

[FADERE] pide al autor 100.000 euros por daños morales, además del ‘perdón público’ al pueblo rumano. “FADERE condena este tipo de comportamientos que intentan romper la armonía entre los rumanos y los españoles”, indica en un comunicado, en el que solicita que quienes vean el video en YouTube marquen “No me gusta.”

([FADERE] asks the songwriter 100,000 euros for moral damages, on top of a public apology to the Romanian people. “FADERE condemns this type of behavior that attempts to break the peace between Romanians and Spaniards,” reads the statement, in which it also asks all who see the video to down-rank it.) (La Razón n.p.)
The petition of FADERE was somewhat successful, as now the video cannot be seen unless the user is first logged into YouTube. In addition, because of its public plea, as of the writing of this chapter the video had about 2,400 thumbs up and 10,000 thumbs down along with a tirade of comments asking for the video to be taken down due to its rudeness, xenophobia, and prejudice. In the end the video was taken down, only to be published again in January 2017. Unrelated to his xenophobic song, Torbe was arrested on April 26, 2016, for allegedly raping and producing pornographic videos with a minor brought in from Eastern Europe through a human trafficking ring (Ortega Dolz). Only seven months later, he was released on bail for 100,000 Euros (De La Cal “El director de cine porno ‘Torbe’ sale de prisión tras abonar 100.000 euros de fianza”). These songs show that racism, xenophobia, and hate speech still occur in Spain, but they also show that the county is progressively more unwilling to accept this type of behavior. The revision of Article 510 of the Spanish Penal Code, the charging of DJ Syto, and the uproar over Torbe’s video show that progress is being made in noticing and combating hate speech.

Unfortunately, hate songs like the ones mentioned above are not without a context. They are part of a much greater neo-Nazi intolerant movement in Europe that uses music and obscure websites to promote hate against those different from themselves. Esteban Ibarra, the founder of the Spanish NGO Movimiento contra la Intoleracia (Movement Against Intolerance) studies how hate speech turns to physical violence against immigrants and those of other non-white races. In his 2003 book Los crímenes del odio: Violencia skin y neonazi en España (Hate Crimes: Skin and Neo-Nazi Violence in Spain), Ibarra comments on the neo-Nazi situation in Spain: “Los neonazis son sólo
jóvenes sin piedad cuya ideología les ha transformado en psicópatas morales. Nadie puede encontrar nada de honorable en quien quema a un mendigo mientras duerme, en quien apuñala a un joven por llevar melena, o en quien dispara a bocajarro a un inmigrante por su color de piel” (The neo-Nazi are nothing but young men without compassion whose ideology has transformed them into moral psychopaths. No one can find anything honorable in someone who burns a beggar in his sleep, stabs a young man for having long hair, or shoots an immigrant point-blank because of the color of his skin) (4). Ibarra suggests that these hate ideologies turn into tragedies in part because of “la insuficiente respuesta del Estado de Derecho ante este problema” (the insufficient answer of the State of Law against this problem) (5). The participants in this form of organized crime use music as a tool to promote their cause. Ibarra notes:

Según los servicios de información policial europeos, la escena musical neonazi es un nuevo filón para el reclutamiento de jóvenes activistas del racismo y para la recaudación de dinero por organizaciones neofascistas. La música del «poder blanco» adquiere un papel central en la ultraderecha europea, y junto a las secciones ultras de los hinchar del fútbol, son el principal instrumento para reagrupar la respuesta «antisistema» del movimiento neonazi a nivel internacional.

(According to European police information services, the neo-Nazi music scene is a new gold mine for the recruiting of young activists for racism, and for the raising of funds for neo-fascist organizations. The music of “white power” plays a central role in the European extreme right, and along with the football hooligans, are the principal instrument to form the “anti-system” response of the neo-Nazi movement at the international level.) (42-3)

This is the larger context of hate speech and hate music against immigration. This context promotes and justifies the work of “moral psychopaths” to take action against immigrants, make them unwelcome, and at times act with violence against them. Thus, the music of the extreme neo-Nazis stands as a red flag to organizations that fight hate and requires their sensitizing response in order to diminish this music’s appeal.
While hate groups cannot stop immigration, they further marginalize the immigrant population and fracture the Spanish population into warring groups. Starting with the first recognized case of a crime based on hate—the brutal murder of Lucrecia Pérez Matos, a Dominican immigrant to Spain, in 1992—and continuing until the 2003 publication of Ibarra’s book, more than 56 people have been killed by neo-Nazis in Spain. As Ibarra puts it, “En España, a diferencia de Alemania, el Reino Unido y otros países de la Unión Europea, no se dispone de ninguna estadística oficial de las agresiones racistas y de la violencia neonazi que permita seguir y evaluar el alcance del problema” (In Spain, unlike Germany, the United Kingdom, and other European Union countries, there are no official statistics of racial aggressions and neo-Nazi violence that allows one to follow and evaluate the breath of the problem) (140). Because of these complications, it is difficult to know how many more hate crimes and deaths occurred among immigrants in Spain from 2003 to the present time. These tragedies warrants better laws that can monitor and fight these types of racist groups along with sensitizing efforts that teach the Spanish population the benefits of solidarity and the rejection of all ultra-nationalist movements.

While Ibarra paints a dark picture of the violence against immigrants in Spain, progress is being made. The fight against hate requires institutions to work together in order to mold the Spanish culture to be more resistant to music that promotes bigotry and cruelty. Because the principle of inclusion appears to oscillate with economic prosperity and depression, it is necessary to strengthen solidarity toward immigrants and those most vulnerable members of the Spanish society by offsetting stereotypical discourses with individualizing ones. Richard Rorty’s bold and uncompromising sentimental philosophy
offers a way to keep discrimination at bay and acts as a catalyst in increasing Spain’s
tolerance and benevolence towards the immigrants already in Spain.

A ‘Sentimental Education’: Diminishing Cruelty through
Empathy and Compassion

Rorty’s perspective on human rights, rationality, and sentimentality is refreshing
as it steers away from classical analytical philosophy that has been unable to resolve the
basic issues of justice and immigration. This section of the chapter shows that because
social “truth” derived from reason alone has not been able to stamp out cruelty
historically, turning towards an empathy reared through Rorty’s ‘sentimental education’
practices can be very effective in humanizing victimized peoples. Even so, Rorty’s theory
is not a be-all and end-all theory that can act as a panacea to all the injustices of the
world, in the same way that no single theory has ever proved able to achieve this goal. It
builds on previous theories—analytical, cultural, philosophical, and literary—by
rethinking their premises and coming up with new means of reclassifying our
understanding of troublesome aspects of culture that lead to cruelty. That said,
sentimental philosophy, defined as a rejection of reason as the only means through which
truth can be gained, is not new, nor has it been unchallenged.

Historically, while Richard Rorty’s philosophy is to a degree rooted in past
sentimental thought, it is a pragmatic and modern way of diminishing cruelty towards
minorities. Rorty borrows the term ‘sentimental education’ from the 1869 novel
_L’Éducation sentimentale_ (Sentimental Education) by the French author Gustave
Flaubert. Marek Kwiek writes that Rorty “refers us back via Flaubert to novelists
contrasted with philosophers” (143) to remind his readers of his earlier inspirations.
Furthermore, Christopher J. Voparil notices a similar connection with Flaubert but admits that “Rorty reverses the priority of the relation of individual growth to the larger societal goals” (92) when using the term coined by the late French novelist. Earlier still, *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* (1768) by the Irish Laurence Sterne solidifies travel narratives and uses sentiment to argue that reason alone is insufficient in explaining what moves people. While Rorty and Sterne are not directly connected academically, both draw from the same well that mistrusts reason alone. In this historical context, Rorty rethinks sentiment in contemporary terms where basic human rights are already accepted and seeks to leave behind the vocabulary that refers back to ideals characteristic of the Enlightenment period. Additionally, Rorty is not so much interested in individuals expressing themselves as were his historical predecessors; rather, he is concerned with diminishing cruelty at the societal level. This new disassociation from the old philosophic vocabulary permits the construction of a new way to describe our social circumstances in manners that are more useful and effective in addressing racism, xenophobia, and other forms of prejudice. This basic sidestep of the analytical philosophy is an elegant and pragmatic way of carving itself a space where it can draw strengths from earlier literature as well as postmodern anti-foundationalism sources such as Dewey’s pragmatism, Hegel’s historicism, Lyotard’s mistrust of metanarratives, and Derrida’s deconstruction. These eclectic roots permit Rorty the privilege of concentrating his work on a comprehensive redefinition of values and terms that focus on individualizing, educating, and integrating those peoples who have suffered most in the past. Under these basic premises, the application of Rorty’s theory to immigration
representation in Spanish media and literature is extremely appropriate and potentially beneficial.21

When Richard Rorty puts forth the term ‘sentimental education’ in Truth and Progress, he refers to a slow cultural process through which societies can change the way certain controversial topics are understood. Rorty defines the term as: “[t]hat sort of education gets people of different kinds sufficiently well acquainted with one another that they are less tempted to think of those different from themselves as only quasi-human. The goal of this sort of manipulation of sentiment is to expand the reference of the terms ‘our kind of people’ and ‘people like us’” (176). Moreover, he defines sentimental education as a procession that “consists in an increasing ability to see the similarities between ourselves and people very unlike us as outweighing the differences.” (180) Expanding the reference of humans to include those different than us—be it culturally, religiously, or racially—through a sentimental education can change the way immigrants are perceived in the Spanish society. To change the culture in this way, educators, politicians, journalists, or artists need to act in such a way as to help their audience “imagine themselves in the shoes of the despised and oppressed” (179). In this way, the media can aid in the empathetic representation of immigrants in order to shape society to be more accepting, tolerant, and welcoming.

In order to fully understand Richard Rorty’s approach to curbing cruelty through a ‘sentimental education,’ it is essential to grasp his qualms with foundational

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21 Other academics have given serious attention to Richard Rorty and immigration issues as well. Among them are Michael A. Scaperlanda, Jesse Goodman et al., and Owen Parker who discuss various ways to implement Rorty’s ‘sentimental education’ to matters of justice, history curriculum, and sensibilization efforts.
philosophers. In effect, Rorty’s main misgiving with the analytical branch of philosophy is its relationship with truth as an a priori immutable foundation to moral laws. For Rorty, there are no a priori conditions other than history. Under what he names a “historicist turn,” Rorty shows how philosophers since Hegel have challenged a priori concepts on which “truth” is founded. He notes in the introduction to his book Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity (1989) that: “historicist thinkers … have denied that there is such a thing as ‘human nature’ or the ‘deepest level of the self.’” Their strategy has been to insist that socialization, and thus historical circumstance, goes all the way down – that there is nothing ‘beneath’ socialization or prior to history which is definatory of the human” (“Introduction” xiii). Thus, Rorty expresses his skepticism of philosophical devices that presume validity in all cultures and throughout time which define what is ‘human nature’ at its core. Along with the thinkers he references, he challenges notions of any fixed ‘human nature’ as a fiction that needs unmaking.

Foundational truths or a priori conditions serve to conceal and move “history to nature” (Barthes 143), which is exactly what Rorty attempts to combat. When history becomes nature, concepts such as ‘human nature’ and ‘truth’ are misleadingly made into ahistorical and eternal myths. Furthermore, Barthes describes the power of myth in the same way: “it abolishes the complexity of human acts, it gives them the simplicity of essences … it organizes a world without contradictions … it establishes a blissful clarity: things appear to mean something by themselves” (143). These myths, as Barthes and Rorty expose, are only social or historic conventions that do not prove any essence of value for establishing moral societal norms. In fact, they end up hurting modern

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22 Historicism today is most influenced by the German thinkers Georg Hegel (1770-1831), Friedrich Schlegel (1772-1829), and Karl Marx (1818-1883).
multicultural societies by forcing them to apply the same foundational principles in a new, diverse environment where they stumble.

One of the most important historical issues in European philosophy is reducing human nature to its most basic trait and then analyzing various aspects stemming from that immovable “kernel of truth.” From René Descarte’s *cogito ergo sum* to Immanuel Kant’s *reason*, and Jeremy Bentham’s *pleasure*, each has advanced the philosophical thought of their day considerably. In “Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality” (1998) Rorty makes a strong case for Kantian reason becoming outmoded by showing how categorical imperatives have lost their appeal. For example, Immanuel Kant believed that “[p]ure reason is practical of itself alone and gives [to the human being] a universal law which we call the *moral law*” (Kant 165). Kant writes about the universality of these laws: “Now this principle of morality, just on account of the universality of the lawgiving that makes it the formal supreme determining ground of the will regardless of all subjective differences, is declared by reason to be at the same time a law for all rational beings insofar as they have a will” (165). Because reason is considered an *a priori* truth, Kant believes that these laws apply to all people and must be obeyed by everyone. Especially thinking of a means to eradicate violence and sustain human rights, cold statements such as “it would be ruinous if an officer, receiving an order from his superiors, wanted while on duty to engage openly in subtle reasoning about its appropriateness or utility; he must obey” (“An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?” 22) are not valid. When it comes to achieving social justice, the work of Martin Luther, Mahatma Gandhi, and Nelson Mandela shows a clear break from blind obedience as the means to eradicating cruelty. Clearly, post-colonialism and other rights
movements have proven that truth is contingent, malleable, and cannot be upheld indefinitely. While still regarded as one of the most important philosophers, Kant and his reason as an *a priori*, do not appear to satisfy our current historical circumstances as well as they did during the Enlightenment. Contrary to their initial purpose, categorical imperatives have become a hindrance to the promotion of intercultural solidarity, the establishment of rights, and the diminishing of cruelty in the world.

Richard Rorty sees that the basic deficiency of *reason* used as an *a priori* stems from its relationship to truth. He argues against philosophers who think that “truth” can solve social issues through reason. As Rorty, puts, “Granted that ‘true’ is an absolute term, its conditions of application will always be relative” (*Truth and Progress* 2). Because its conditions of applications are relative, “the very absoluteness of truth is a good reason for thinking ‘true’ indefinable and for thinking that no theory of the nature of truth is possible” (3). Understanding the indefinable nature of truth, Rorty believes that truth is no more than a social construct that is made and is advanced by education, literature, and the media. Thus, these truths are regional and culturally specific. While this may be perceived as a weaker truth, it is very effective in advancing social causes locally by upholding truths that are most relevant at that moment and in terms most applicable to those whom it addresses. These newly created truths are not universal but acknowledge that humans are guided in their moral actions by a diverse variety of norms that often clash with those of other cultures. Understanding that other cultures may not share similar concepts of truth allows individuals within societies to be more tolerant and inclusive as they do not need to impose values or truths upon other cultures. This
variability and local application of truth makes Rorty’s sentimentalism essential in forwarding social justice in the treatment of immigrants in Spain.

If we take Rorty’s sentimental theory to a concrete example, we find that the issue of inter-cultural conflicts lies not within human nature but within the historical perspective of the humans within a culture: “The problem is the gallant and honorable Serb who sees Muslims as circumcised dogs. It is the brave soldier and good comrade who loves and is loved by his mates, but who thinks of women as dangerous, malevolent whores and bitches” (“Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality” 177). Rorty reminds his readers that seemingly altruistic good people act with solidarity in one situation and because of historical conditions think and act cruelly in another. This duality is the real problem that needs addressing. Following the same thought pattern, Rorty concludes that “[t]he moral to be drawn … is that Serbian murderers and rapists do not think of themselves as violating human rights. For they are not doing these things to fellow human beings, but to Muslims” (167). Because of the realization that culture and history determine humane and inhumane treatment, it is not ‘human nature’ that needs changing to address these problems, but the way we interpret culture and history. Subsequently, Rorty devises that a priori reason and questions of ‘human nature’ are not useful concepts in ailing current social issues and “suggest[s] that the appearance-reality distinction be dropped in favor of a distinction between less useful and more useful ways of talking” (Truth and Progress 1) In other words, he pragmatically deals with injustice by changing how we approach culture from a linguistic standpoint, as will be discussed shortly. Commenting on this topic he writes:

If you try to impose Aristotelian terminology on Galileo, or Cartesian terminology on Darwin, or the terminology of Kantian moral philosophy
on debates about abortion, you will be making needless trouble for yourself. To sluff off an obsolete terminology makes us more sensitive to the life about us, for it helps us to stop trying to cut new, recalcitrant material to fit old patterns. (Truth and Progress 5)

Here Rorty advocates for a required shedding of outmoded ways of thinking in favor of new ones. He believes that old philosophies are not adequate in solving modern problems because they are ill-equipped to handle new ways of conceptualizing the world. This is a very bold assumption and the issue for which he is most criticized. Whether his fairly simplistic example proves old philosophies unnecessary is not fully evident; nevertheless, it is highly appealing because it forces modern societies to examine their circumstances with a renewed interest. Rorty’s theory is also appealing because it places the responsibility for solving modern problems on current philosophers. This sensitizes the philosopher, intellectual, or politician to relevant and immediate concerns. Thus, instead of trying to place the triangular concept A into the circular philosophy B, Rorty invites thinkers to come up with new means of understanding that take into consideration our society’s unique circumstances and contingencies. As an example, Rorty reminds his peers:

The founder of my university [Thomas Jefferson] was able both to own slaves and to think it self-evident that all men were endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights. This was because he had convinced himself that the consciousness of blacks, like that of animals, “participates more of sensation than of reflection.” Like the Serbs, Mr. Jefferson did not think of himself as violating human rights. (“Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality” 167)

From Rorty’s explanation, Thomas Jefferson did not perceive the incongruity of his situation as an enlightened man who also owned slaves just as the Serbs did not perceive the incongruity of their dehumanization of the Muslims. His culture and socialization did not permit him to see this paradox. In a similar way, today’s European nations cannot
find a good way to deal with immigrants in an inclusive fashion because of self-imposed legal obstacles that place certain individuals outside of the law. Upholding some people to be “illegals,” subjects them to a quasi-human societal status as reflected in the biased music and media analyzed previously.

The most important pitfall of our time related to immigration is precisely this type of blindness. It is not that European nations are not enlightened or are deprived in their understanding of human rights. It is exactly the opposite: because of hundreds of years of liberal, philosophical, so-called progress, these societies are unable to move forward and leave behind the baggage of notions that are not working. In his work Rorty “show[s] that the vocabulary of Enlightenment rationalism, although it was essential to the beginnings of liberal democracy, has become an impediment to the preservation and progress of democratic societies” (Truth and Progress 44). It is this impediment that allows Western European nations to continue relying on xenophobic attitudes when dealing with an influx of immigrants. Like the “Serbs take themselves to be acting in the interests of true humanity by purifying the world of pseudo-humanity … Serbs, moralists, Jefferson, and Black Muslims all use the term ‘men’ to mean ‘people like us’” (“Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality” 168) and deny the same “inalienable” rights they enjoy to others that are not “people like us.” When the “line divides some featherless bipeds from others” (168), it becomes much easier to refer to marginalized people (i.e., immigrants, women, and blacks) using stereotypes than to lump them together and treat them in a way that is respectful and equitable in our contemporary multicultural societies.

The goal of this new discourse is to make them, the outsider, into one of us, an insider, in order to cultivate solidarity and peace. What is really needed is understanding
that the chief instrument of cultural change requires an adjustment in the vocabulary that predisposes one to be more inclusive and less bigoted towards those whom dominant culture has defined as different. Rorty believes philosophers are moving away from foundational questions of human nature to more pragmatic and answerable propositions. He writes: “Such writers tell us that the question ‘What is it to be a human being?’ should be replaced by questions like ‘What is it to inhabit a rich twentieth-century democratic society?’ and ‘How can an inhabitant of such a society be more than the enactor of a role in a previously written script?’” (Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity xiii) As such, by asking concrete questions that matter to a society today rather than focusing on questions of ‘eternal truth’, a society can be better prepared to answer the problems it faces at that precise moment in time.

Rorty proposes that literature and the media are the best way to redescribe outmoded values with new ones meant to engender an increased sense of social justice. In Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity, Rorty explains that books such as Condition of the Working Class in England and the reports of muckraking journalists and government commissions, as well as novels like Uncle Tom’s Cabin, Les Miserables, Sister Cam, The Well of Loneliness, and Black Boy” (141) aid people to “see how social practices which we have taken for granted have made us cruel” (141). Uncompromisingly and possibly prematurely, in Truth and Progress, Rorty proclaims that sentimental literature has done more for the advancement of human rights than moral philosophy before it and writes: “If we do all these things, then we shall see Kant’s Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals as a placeholder for Uncle Tom’s Cabin” (183). In all, the author wants his readers to question their actions and change their behavior to be more tolerant
and welcoming. This is accomplished by asking ourselves the following questions about our private life: “‘What shall I be?’ ‘What can I become?’ [and] ‘What have I been?’” (Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity 143) and pondering “‘What sorts of things about what sorts of people do I need to notice?’” (143) in relation to their public actions. In this way, Rorty sidesteps previous moral philosophy in order to help majority cultures understand that they share their humanity with minorities to the same degree that they share it with their family.

Rorty thus augments reason with sentiment. Most often, when confronted with a controversial topic, the responses that surface are initially emotional rather than motivated by reason because people have been predisposed by family life, political inclinations, and society to react in a certain way. Rorty’s ‘sentimental education’ is a way to change and adapt our cultural biases to find productive solutions for the difficult issues that society faces. Notice how Rorty shows that sentimental principles are already at work in our societies and how they have redressed many problems that in the past would have been impossible to address:

One way to change instinctive emotional reactions is to provide new language that will facilitate new reactions. By “new language” I mean not just new words but also creative misuses of language – familiar words used in ways that initially sound crazy. Something traditionally regarded as a moral abomination can become an object of general satisfaction, or conversely, as a result of the increased popularity of an alternative description of what is happening. Such popularity extends logical space by making descriptions of situations that used to seem crazy seem sane. Once, for example, it would have sounded crazy to describe homosexual sodomy as a touching expression of devotion or to describe a woman manipulating the elements of the Eucharist as a figuration of the relation of the Virgin to her Son. But such descriptions are now acquiring popularity. At most times, it sounds crazy to describe the degradation and extirpation of helpless minorities as a purification of the moral and spiritual life of Europe. But at certain periods and places – under the Inquisition, during the Wars of Religion, under the Nazis – it did not. (204)
With much foresight, in 1989 Rorty anticipates the changes that have already happened in many modern societies. Due to LGBT social movements and the media’s effort to represent homosexual relations as filled with love and tenderness as heterosexual relationships, homosexual couples have garnered the right to legally marry starting in The Netherlands in 2001, Spain in 2005, and in the US in 2015. Rorty’s ‘sentimental education’ proposes that the way homosexuality was portrayed in the public sphere has improved its reception as an expression of love rather than lust. In time, with the changes in attitude about the topic, the citizens of a country can then vote to change the laws that affect homosexual couples. ‘Sentimental education’ does not change societies immediately; nevertheless, it is a persistent effort to mold culture into becoming more accepting and recognizing new contingents that make the lives of many people qualitatively better. Rorty’s philosophy is powerful because it aids societies to progress toward more justice and fairness for all people without trampling on previous ideas nor appearing to be radical. In this way, new standards of treatment are afforded to those whom history has looked down upon. Rorty observes how the movement from taboo to normalcy occurs: “At some point in the development of our society, guilty relief over not having been born a woman may not cross the minds of males, any more than the question ‘noble or base-born?’ now crosses their minds” (224). He then associates this achievement with a time when “both males and females had forgotten the traditional androcentric language, just as we have all forgotten the distinction between base and noble ancestry” (224). While society has not fully achieved this goal, a change in the way our public speech molds the concepts of equal rights for women and men may not be far off, and “[i]t will be because the linguistic and other practices of the common culture
have come to incorporate some of the practices characteristic of imaginative and courageous outcasts” (224). By realizing that humans react to situations a certain way because history and culture have taught them so, Rorty opens an avenue for the increase of social justice though a ‘sentimental education.’ Therefore, an appeal to historicist philosophy and a ‘sentimental education’ permits us to creatively better the world for those different from the most powerful in a society.

Even if Rorty’s philosophy is meant to make citizens more sensitive to minority issues, it is not beyond critique. Seizing the weaknesses inherent to Rorty’s version of pragmatism, the bulk of the criticism of his work deals with contingency and his rejection of analytical philosophy. In his review of Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity, John Farrell compares Rorty’s contingency to Otto Neurath’s boat of metaphors at sea in the constant process of rebuilding itself to keep afloat. In all, Farrell’s comment is a subtly negative comment because it minimizes sentimentalism’s usefulness by making it impossible to implement because it does not rely on any stable foundation. Farrell writes that even though Rorty’s book is “penetrating and consistent” (17), it is also “exciting and absurd” (17) and that it “should teach us to mistrust the pronouncements of the reformed philosopher” (17). He further explains that Rorty undoes the premise that his book sets out to accomplish because “Rorty’s liberalism amounts to a program of keeping hope confined within private fantasy” (17) instead of being applicable to the public sphere. Farrell is right to point to Rorty’s theory creatively akin to Neurath’s boat because it lacks concrete foundations upon which laws and public policies could be enacted.

Similarly, Dr. Konstantin Kolenda of Rice University finds the book to be “lasting, and revolutionary, [whose] impact is his restoration of the hope that intellectual
and moral progress is possible” (278). Nevertheless, he is not impressed by Rorty’s lack of a clear way to implement the principles of a ‘sentimental education.’ Kolenda notices that “[u]nlike metaphysics, ironism does not claim to educate people, that is, to make them feel that they are being empowered in new ways” (283). Kolenda thus argues that the manipulation of sentiment is akin to a negative reprogramming of people that do not want to change. This argument against Rorty’s philosophy is accurate, as Rorty never gives a full outlook on how his ‘sentimental education’ can be put into practice to diminish cruelty; nevertheless, I am not sure the critique recognizes why Rorty may have left out the implementation of his thoughts. Leaving the implementation out may be for the best, as it is antifoundational and allows for implementation differently in different situations contingent upon the people’s needs and historical background.

Furthermore, Owen Parker and James Brassett recognize that, while literature and film are good mediums to help people see the Other in a new way, “it is not enough that we turn up with good books or films and hope the bad guys get the message. Indeed, it might be that bad guys don’t even show up; after all, and as the artists themselves would acknowledge, political films and books of the kind described rarely reach large audiences. We need to go further and provide an account of the political processes at work” (249). Echoing the previous criticisms, the authors also take issue with the fact that Rorty’s solution may simply preach to the choir and totally miss those who need the message. Here, Parker and Brassett do point out an important blind spot in Rorty’s argument that cannot be remedied if only a few NGOs and writers decide to approach immigration from a sentimental approach. As we shall see, Rorty instead would argue here that what is needed for his theory to succeed is the top-down that pervades the
means of communications. Unlike theories that claim universality and purport to be
effective in all facets of the society, a sentimental education depends on the people in
power to disseminate messages that sensitize their audiences. Rorty describes this uneasy
relationship of social change with those who hold power in a society:

[I]f we hand our hopes for moral progress over to sentiment, we are in
effect handing them over to condescension. For we shall be relying on
those who have the power to change things – people like the rich New
England abolitionists or rich bleeding hearts like Robert Owen and
Friedrich Engels – rather than relying on something that has power over
them. We shall have to accept the fact that the fate of the women of Bosnia
depends on whether television journalists manage to do for them what
Harriet Beecher Stowe did for black slaves – whether these journalists can
make us, the audience back in the safe countries, feel that these women are
more like us, more like real human beings, than we had realized. (Rorty
Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity 180)

This reliance on the wealthy as a means to inspiring social change is acutely
objectionable from the perspective of social justice and immigration, as Parker and
Brassett mention. Instead of challenging the institutions that have proven to act with
cruelty and xenophobia in the past, by relying on them to promote social justice, Rorty
appears to be upholding the status quo and effecting no change at all. It follows that there
must be an element that makes these institutions change their previous ideals and uphold
new practices. Rorty, unfortunately, never fully addresses this point, and by not
anticipating it, he leaves his pragmatism open to misinterpretation and criticism.

Adding to the critiques above, Joseph William Singer of Boston University and
Harvard Law School asks why lawyers should care about Rorty’s philosophy. Singer
takes issue with the distinction between private and public discourse that he believes
undoes much of Rorty’s pragmatist foundation. From a lawyer’s point of view, the ability
of thought-provoking philosophy to transfer to the public sphere in the form of laws is
essential. Singer believes that Rorty’s work does not go far enough in the public direction where it can be effective; it does not approach democratic politics in a pluri-ideological sphere and does not acknowledge contingency in the political scope. Lastly, he observes that by not taking these critical steps toward changing the public institutions that deal with social justice, Rorty is in fact preserving the status quo:

Rorty’s argument for pragmatism is powerful, but he steps back from the implications of his own insights. By splitting pragmatism into a public and a private component, he has disarmed it, creating a form of public discourse that not only betrays the insights of pragmatism, but also stands in the way of establishing social justice … By separating philosophy from justice, Rorty’s vision reinforces existing power relations that illegitimately oppress and exclude large segments of the population. (Singer 1759)

Echoing Singer’s astute comments, I believe that Rorty managed to “de-divinize” the private sphere by critiquing reason as an a priori and ended up divinizing politics by failing to note that modern democratic societies are pluralistic and do not share a consensus in terms of implementing public policies, especially ones that would significantly change the way certain issues would be handled. By not giving importance to these political distinctions, Rorty marginalizes the dissenting voices that disagree with the majority’s political view and thus does not live up to his pragmatic and contingent program outlined in the book. These power structures need to be envisioned as changeable structures that allow for contingency in the same way as he allows for contingency in the private sphere.

Lastly, Patrick Hayden summarizes the difficulty in which Rorty places himself when he rejects all universalist claims. He writes: “it is difficult to see in what ways Rorty’s appeal to a ‘shared human ability to feel pain’ can avoid the charge of universalism” (Hayden 61). Not unlike Peter Singer’s Animal Liberation (1975) in which
pain is the main indicator of conscience and thus the principal purveyor of rights, Rorty appears to accept this point and molds his social theory to minimize the suffering of marginalized peoples. While this is a noble goal, it also diminishes his adamant antifoundationalist argument. Furthermore, as Hayden sees it, “the ability to recognize that others feel pain does not necessarily lead to the moral conclusion that we ought to respect those others because of their suffering or, significantly, that we ought to strive to eliminate the causes of their suffering and affirm their dignity as human beings” (61). This conclusion puts into question the efficacy of Rorty’s ‘sentimental education’ when it is based solely on a contingent and historical situation all the while rejecting analytical philosophy. Nevertheless, Hayden recognizes that a type of ‘sentimental education’ “could play a valuable role in such practical endeavors by helping to cultivate the kind of affective personal experience useful in establishing a deep sense of responsibility and concern for others” (65) as long as Rorty recognizes the value of the universalist claims that have made human rights possible and engages with such thinkers in order to augment their theories.

These criticisms leave a deep wound on Rorty’s ‘sentimental education’ as he envisioned it; however, none of his critics claim that his theory has no value. In fact, all of the critiques mentioned above find his work insightful and possibly revolutionizing to the way it can diminish cruelty, yet they cannot reconcile his claims of benefit with his rejection of reason. In more than one way, I personally believe that while these critiques are merited from an analytical and legal point of view, they do not counteract his insight from a cultural studies and social justice perspective. Moreover, while it is easy to say that being antifoundationalist rejects the human rights he claims to uphold, Rorty simply
wants to move the conversation along, accepting the work done in the past, building on it, and rejecting those parts that were fruitful long ago and now prove to be an impediment. As Chapter 1 showed, finding a way to reduce discrimination when it comes to immigration involves a paradox that analytical philosophy is unable to resolve. In this case then, we are left with a patchwork of theories that cannot solve it all but in part work toward reducing discrimination. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of Rorty’s pragmatism allows current societies to move toward being more tolerant without destabilizing their current political structures or pitting different ethnicities against each other. This allows individuals to change perceptions within their spheres of influence, which in turn changes culture, and later affects the political sphere more organically as has been observed with the acceptance of gay marriage. As Roland Barthes conceives, “Truth to tell, the best weapon against myth is perhaps to mythify it in its turn, and to produce an artificial myth: and this reconstructed myth will in fact be a mythology” (135). In the same manner, Rorty desires to change our contingent vocabulary to curb violence, thus creating a new mythology. In this, Rorty hits the nail on the head. A ‘sentimental education’ or similar empathetic principles that seek to re-mythify our current representational metaphors and replace them with ones that eschew negative stereotypes about those who are different from ourselves may be the best way to steer culture to be more sensitive to the process of immigration and its participants. As with other social causes like women’s rights and equality, progress was not made because the government was radically changed through revolutionary means, but through a slow process of cultural acceptance and cognizant media portrayal of unjust issues from an empathetic perspective.
Music against Injustice and Discrimination

Socially concerned music on the topic of immigration can be a powerful influence in sensitizing Spanish citizens to the lives of marginalized people. As Hamm, Nettl, and Byrnside put it, “[T]here is no culture known to man, no single civilization of the past, that does not have its own body of music” (71). Specifically, in Spain and in relation to immigration, a number of artists have taken upon themselves to speak out against injustice and discrimination to counter other unapologetically racist discourses. Merry J. Sleight and Jordan McElroy have shown that “music listening and writing are both strategies that can be used to alter mood, with music being more influential” (311), and Thomas Schäfer et al. conclude, “[M]usic offers a valued companion, helps provide a comfortable level of activation and a positive mood” (7). These attributes make music a powerful motivator in the lives of people. As such, music is an effective tool to alter mood, both positively and negatively, and can lead to action. Because of these factors, music is an important cultural product in the analysis of migrant representations in Spain. In this part of the chapter, I analyze the unapologetic music of Frank T. and Coti, the sentimental approach of El Chojín and Manu Chao, and the desperate call of Chambao in light of Richard Rorty’s ‘sentimental education’ principles. Each one of these bands has written songs that raise awareness about immigration issues and, while each group approaches immigration with strong feelings, they do it from very different perspectives. In analyzing a selection of songs from these bands, I make use of the following three guiding principles to evaluate the potential of each work to combat discrimination and sensitize Spanish citizens to immigration:
1. How does the song make use of Rorty’s principles of ‘sentimental education’?23

2. In what way or ways is the song attempting to change the vocabulary about immigration in order to re-describe it in a positive light?

3. How is the music challenging the cultural and legal status quo of immigration in Spain through its lyrics?

Point one addresses whether the song describes how it would feel for a person to be in the shoes of an immigrant and experience his or her feelings. Point number two deals with the artist’s use of language in specifically addressing discrimination. Point three focuses on whether the music challenges stagnant societal institutions that continue to accept repressive attitudes about immigration in Spain. The more the song includes aspects of these criteria, the more the theory shows that the song will be able to reach its audience on an empathetic level and work to promote inclusive behaviors that counter racism and xenophobia.

The Militant Category

The first song that I analyze in this section pertains to the unapologetic or militant category. The song “La nueva España,” by Frank T. (Franklin Tshimini Nsombolay) in collaboration with Artes 1/29 (Abraham Arturo Álvarez) does not apologize to the dominant culture for the immigrant nor does it accept its pity; instead, it vindicates the rights of the immigrants as co-citizens without giving up the attributes that make them different and unique.

23 I do not expect these musicians to be acquainted with Richard Rorty’s principles of a ‘sentimental education.’ However, artists could use my analysis to craft songs that promote the empathy of their listeners in a more effective manner.
The Spanish artist, rap producer, and radio host Franklin Tshimini Nsombolay, better known as Frank T., was born in 1973 in Kinshasa, Zaire, an area now a part of the Democratic Republic of Congo and immigrated with his family to Spain when he was two years old. Originally, they were supposed to be in Spain for only a few months and then make their way to the United States at the invitation of the famous American boxer Cassius Clay, better known as Muhammad Ali. Due to their visas being denied, they remained in Torrejón de Ardoz, close to Madrid, where Franklin grew up (Mugak n.p.).

Discussing his early life in an interview with Dr. Stuart Green, Franklin talks about how he was treated in Spain because of his black skin color: “Lo típico: cuando era pequeño me peleaba con un compañero del colegio y venía su madre, y no me decía ‘Oye sinvergüenza.’ No, me decía ‘Vete a tu tierra.’ En un momento de enfado, de ira, el insulto cambia cuando eres negro” (The usual: when I was young I would get in fights with a schoolmate and his mother would come and she would not tell me “Listen you scoundrel.” No, instead she would tell me “Go back your homeland.” In a moment of irritation, of anger, the insult changes when you are black) (69). The mother’s reaction made him feel as if he did not belong to the only culture he had ever known. Because of the injustices he had to deal with, Franklin is much less inclined to accept the slow process of cultural change that allows blacks and other immigrants more dignity in Spain, and he would rather see the Spanish majority culture wake up to the realities of a multicultural Spain. He mentions how Madrid has changed:

Yo sé lo que es ir por Madrid en el metro y ser el único negro. Esto yo lo viví a los finales de los ochenta y principios de los noventa. Incluso el ir con una chica blanca y que te mire la gente. Esto lo he vivido yo. Con todo este flujo de inmigración eso ya es justo al revés: en metro tú miras y el setenta por ciento son inmigrantes.
(I know how it feels to go on the metro in Madrid and be the only black person. I have lived it towards the end of the ‘80s and in the early ‘90s. Even going out with a white girl and having everyone look at you. I have lived these moments. With all this new influx of immigrants now the situation is exactly the opposite: in the metro you look around and seventy percent are immigrants.) (72)

Because of the racism he faced as a youth and the massive socio-cultural change Madrid is experiencing, he chooses to make music that challenges racial stereotypes of black immigrants. He tells Green that the purpose of his music is the following: “sobre todo es que el que sigue teniendo prejuicios, si mi mensaje le llega, que le escueza un poco. Y que le haga pensar. Que le haga debatir. Y que le haga reflexionar sobre eso. Sobre todo si se siente aludido por ello.” (above everything, the point is that he who is prejudiced, if my message gets to him, let it sting him a bit. May it make him think. May it make him engage in debates. And may it make him reflect. Especially if he feels that the message targets him) (74). Taking into consideration his background, the song “La nueva España” from the 2006 album Sonrían por favor is perfectly justified and while it prone to generate less empathy when compared to the songs analyzed later in the chapter, it too has an audience that Frank T influences. Nevertheless, from the perspective of a ‘sentimental education,’ the song is overly bold and possibly offensive to the Spanish citizenry, thus, its influence among this segment of his audience is diminished.

“La nueva España” is a fast-spoken collaborative rap piece with Abrahan Arturo Álvarez, aka Artes 1/29, a Spanish native. It is characterized by tonal influences that remind the listener of music influenced by Eminem and Busta Rhymes. The structure of the lyrics mimics the form of a call and response dialogue between Frank T. and Artes 1/29 discussing the new multicultural Spain. The tonal features of the non-spoken

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24 See Appendix 1: Song 4 for full lyrics.
soundtrack elements are fairly simple with a regular beat made up mostly of synthesized samples of violin, bass guitar, trumpets, and hand claps that regularly repeat throughout the piece. While the music is simple and repetitive, it acts as background to the rhymed lyrics that take center stage. Frank T. and Artes 1/29 identify their public as native Spaniards in the chorus: “No habéis notado un cambio en todo este tiempo. / España tiene más de un color y yo soy el ejemplo. / Yo ando seguro señora, lo siento. / Ahora camino acompañado ya no estoy solo en este evento” (Haven’t you noticed a change all this time. / Spain has more than one color and I am an example. / I walk confidently lady, I’m sorry to disappoint. / Now I walk with friends, I am not alone anymore) (0:09). The chorus addresses the assumed blindness of the racial majority who, according to Frank T., prefer to close their eyes to the fact that Spain now is a multicultural place. With this song, Frank T. attempts to give a voice to the many black immigrants in Spain and show how they are an integral part of the Spanish culture. In the first verse he sings: “La nueva España la levantan inmigrantes. / Se acabó tu descarte España no volverá a ser igual que antes. / Distintas hablas, etnias, religiones cohabitan. / La nueva España miles de razas ahora gritan.” (The new Spain is being built by immigrants. / Your dismissive attitude is over, Spain will never be like it was before. / Many different languages, ethnicities, and religions coexist / in the new Spain thousands of races raise their voices) (0:19). In this way, Frank T. and Artes 1/29 make known their opinion that immigrants feel unacknowledged, not because they are not well represented, but rather because they are marginalized by the majority’s unwillingness to accept Spain as a multicultural center.

Cynically, the song does not stop at telling Spaniards that they should be more aware of other races; instead, it goes on the offensive, calling Spaniards so thoroughly
conservative as to yearn nostalgically for the days of the Franco dictatorship. While only Artes 1/29 attacks, it does not change the militant stance of the song. In addition to the previous assumption, calling the Spaniards “paletos” (red-necks) (1:51) and people “[de] pocas luces” (lacking intelligence) (1:52) alienates the native population. When Artes 1/29 refers to the national anthem as “Tu himno sin letra, el mejor chiste del mes, lo juro” (Your anthem without lyrics, the worst joke of the month, I swear) (2:49) he is doomed to offend and restrict his audience to one open to his message. Thus, instead of opening the majority’s eyes to the injustices that blacks and other immigrants suffer in Spain, he alienates some of his more conservative audience with his accusations.

Analyzing the song “La nueva España” in light of Rorty’s ‘sentimental’ program for change, the song’s militant stance weakens its affective reach to a broader audience. The song foregrounds feelings of contempt and dismissal, and minimizes empathy. In effect, the song tells Spaniards that immigrants do not care what the majority culture thinks about them because they now have sufficient numbers to do what they want and challenge Spain’s status quo. This attitude hurts the song’s potential for good as it is betrayed by a negative response to the culture it seeks to change. Moreover, while the militant nature of the song fits within recognized aspects of rap music, its potential for social good is diminished because of its tone and combative character.

In regards to how the song speaks to the need to change stereotypical immigration vocabulary, the song is mixed in its language usage. Artes 1/29 does well to appropriate the *moro* stereotype and talk about it in the context of “mis hermanos moros” (my Moorish brothers) (2:26). He thus takes a term that is normally a negative stereotype alluding to the Moorish invasion, their defeat, and their subsequent expulsion from the
Peninsula and now connotes it with brothers. On the other hand, Frank T. associates immigration with a form of contamination that affects Spain and all of Europe. He sings: “ya nadie puede evitar que toda Europa se contamine / y que la España de mil razas a vuestra cara se encamine” (Nobody can avoid the contamination of all Europe / and that the Spain of a thousand races marches toward your faces) (1:34). It may be that he used the term contamination for a rhyme’s sake (contamine with encamine); yet, its use in the song does not change its typically negative connotation. While innovative with its use of moro in a positive context, the song also replicates negative ideologies with some of its vocabulary.

Lastly, even though the song clearly challenges the Spanish status quo and uses anger to shake up complacency, it does so in a manner not conduction to creating a culture of cohesion between the Spanish and the immigrants in Spain. In fact, it challenges the status quo in such a way that it may possibly respond in a like manner, insensitively and brutishly. The “take no prisoners” approach, while valid in denouncing and exposing contexts to a fed-up audience, it is also misses the mark from the perspective of a ‘sentimental education’ as it seemingly neglects to attract other Spanish citizens to ally themselves to the immigrant’s cause.

Coti, or Roberto Fidel Ernesto Sorokin Espasa, is another artist interested in singing about immigrant rights in Spain. He is an Argentinean-born singer who lives and composes music in Madrid. His first album solo album entitled Coti (2002) launched his career as a singer in Spain. In 2004 he published Canciones para llevar (Songs to Take Home), Esta mañana y otros cuentos (This Morning and Other Stories) came in 2005,
and *Gatos y palomas* (Cats and Doves) in 2007. Since 2007, Coti has published five more albums that have consolidated him as a well-regarded artist and composer.

Coti’s 2007 song “El inmigrante” from *Gatos y palomas* contains many autobiographical elements and puts forth the perspective of an irregular immigrant in Spain who justly seeks reunification with his family. The song starts with an acoustic guitar repeating a melody that is soon accompanied by drums and a synthesizer, giving the song a pronounced rock feel. The music’s tone gives a sense of rebellion, and the lyrics are marked by a ‘sentimental’ yet impatient tone. Coti sings: “Y aunque estoy de ilegal / yo me voy a resistir / no me voy a arrodillar / tengo un sueño por cumplir.” (And even though I am here illegally / I will resist / I will not kneel / I have a dream to fulfill) (0:19). From the onset, Coti cries against the injustice of illegality, but instead of working against it to show its pitfalls, Coti disregards his legal status and goes on to state his dream. He wants to bring his family to Spain: “Allá donde yo nací / se quedaron mis seres queridos / tengo un sueño por cumplir / que es traérmelos un día conmigo.” (There where I was born / my loved ones stayed behind / I have a dream to fulfill / which is bringing them here with me) (0:28). What makes the song so poignant is the feeling of a broken reciprocity between Spain and Argentina: “Como lo hizo un día mi abuelo / escapando de la guerra / para nunca más volver / y aunque ahora ya no está / quiero parecerme a él.” (As my grandfather did it one day / escaping the war / to never return / and even though he is not here now / I want to do what he did) (0:41). The war that Coti references is the Spanish Civil War that pitted the country against itself in a merciless conflict from 1936 to 1939. During the ending stages of the war and the early years of the Francisco Franco’s dictatorship, many Republicans immigrated to Latin America to
escape being found, incarcerated, or killed by the regime. Coti now seeks to be accepted in Spain as his grandfather was in Argentina.

In an interview with the Spanish newspaper *20 Minutos*, Coti explains how this song encapsulates much of his family’s history and why he feels entitled to Spanish citizenship. Explaining his album’s political agenda he says: “hay una canción que se llama El inmigrante, que tiene mucho de mí mismo, de la historia de mis abuelos y de Argentina. Hablo en primera persona. Yo llegué a ser el ilegal más famoso en este país; viví cuatro años ilegal en España.” (There is a song named “El inmigrante,” that puts forth a lot of my story, of the story of my grandparents and Argentina. I speak in the first person. I came to be the most famous illegal in the country; I lived four years illegally in Spain.) (Marcos n.p). Because Coti’s grandfather was a Spanish citizen that left Spain for Argentina to seek political asylum, the author feels he is fundamentally a Spanish citizen who is denied his rights and the ability to reunite his family in his grandfather’s home country.

Serendipitously, Coti’s the song “El inmigrante” comes out precisely after the broadcast of the Argentinean-Spanish 2006 TV series Vientos de agua (Winds of Water) and appears to build on its premise. The Argentinean film and television director Juan José Campanella (1959) follows the story arc of a troubled pre-civil war Asturian miner, José Olaya played by Ernesto Alterio, who chooses to immigrate to Argentina after his brother dies in a horrible mining accident and in order to escape the persecutions of the Guardia Civil. Creatively, the show parallels the exile of José Olaya with the immigration story of his youngest son Ernesto Olaya (Eduardo Blanco) back to Spain. Like Coti’s immigrant, despite being a brilliant architect, Ernesto is initially unwelcome and treated
harshly in Spain. Even though, there is no direct link between the two narratives, because both address the unjust rejection of Spanish descendants returning to their roots, the connection between these two narratives is worthy of attention.

Being in Spain without a proper visa and selling over 300,000 albums of Gatos y palomas makes Coti a very influential immigrant. Having sold well, the song “El inmigrante” is a good candidate as a ‘sentimental’ tool to educate other Spanish citizens to the plight of immigration. From the onset, Coti represents his cause in a much less direct fashion than Frank T.’s song. Even so, there are still representational problems that lessen its sympathetic value. His song puts forth an argument that makes sense from the point of view of an immigrant, but it comes off to a native as entitled and partly disrespectful when he correctly, but untactfully, sings: “hay mucha [gente] que se piensa / que si algo malo les pasa / es todo por culpa nuestra.” (there are lots of people who think / that if something bad happens to them / is all our fault [immigrants’]) (1:32). Coti addresses the fallacy of immigrant scapegoatism and denounces it strongly. From a ‘sentimental perspective,’ Coti straddles two portrayals. In the first, he shows himself as a strong character who will not allow himself to be defeated by what he perceives as unjust laws, and in the second, he helps his listener understand his perspective by seeing the world through his eyes. At the end of the song this dichotomy is most apparent when he sings: “Soy extranjero / Pero no tengo la culpa / De las cosas malas de este país / Es verdad que muchas veces / Lloro por querer volver / Pero no creo que pueda / Tengo mucho por hacer” (I am a foreigner / But it’s not my fault / Bad things happen in this country / It is true that many times / I cry because I want to go back / But I do not think I can / I have a lot to do) (2:43). The lyrics both show Coti feeling sorry for himself and try
to let listeners experience with him the difficulties of taking the blame for other people’s bad actions. Furthermore, the listeners are told that he will not return because he has a lot to accomplish. In these last lines, Coti is relentless in asking for the reunification of his family both militantly and through invoking empathy for his partly helpless situation. Lastly, by comparing his grandfather’s welcome to Argentina as a political refugee to his treatment as an “illegal” in Spain, Coti does well to point out the historical hypocrisy manifest in this non-reciprocity.

As a ‘sentimental tool,’ the song does a good job of taking on the illegal stereotype and showing its fallacy because of the immigrant’s Spanish heritage. Moreover, the song makes the singer relatable because it invites listeners to understand that the undocumented immigrant cares about his family and wants to be with them as much anybody. In this manner, Coti challenges the representational status quo of immigrants as criminals and takes his listener on a journey meant to redress the wrongs by which he feels oppressed as an immigrant.

The Empathetic Category

An excellent example of music socially concerned with immigration is one written and performed by the son of African immigrants in Spain. El Chojín, or Domingo Edjang Moreno, whose music is produced by Frank T., is a Spanish rap artist of African descent from the outskirts of Madrid. El Chojín has also felt like an outsider growing up in Spain even though he was born there. Racism drives El Chojín to write and sing about a culture that needs to change. In an interview he notes how racism is perceived in Spain today:
Yo lo que he notado es que ahora el racismo ha pasado a convertirse en una opción respetable. Que antes era un insulto y era algo horrible. Le decías a alguien racista, y en seguida, aunque lo fuera, decía “¡No, no! ¡Yo, no!” Ahora no, ahora es “Tío, eso es racista,” “Sí, ¿y?” Entonces alguien no racista o que se declara no racista, entiende que otro pueda serlo y lo respeta como una opción más. Yo creo que es el peor de los cáncers (sic) que hay en la sociedad actual.

(What I have noticed is that now racism has become a respectable option when before it was an insult and something shameful. When you would call someone racist, right away, even if they may have been one, they would tell you “No, no!” “Me, no!” Now it is different; now if you tell someone “Dude, this is racist,” they respond “Yes, and?” At that point, a normal person or someone who declares himself or herself not racist understands that one could be racist and this opinion is respected as another option. I believe this is one of the worst cancers of our current society.) (Green 181)

Instead of pretending nothing is wrong with the cultural trend where racism is an acceptable point of view, El Chojín assumes the responsibility to tackle the issue of racism in Spain with his music.

El Chojín uses his music as a tool to open the minds of his listeners to behaviors that are unacceptable. His songs are both clear and respectful. The 2002 song “Ponte en mi piel” (Place Yourself in my Skin) is a single released in collaboration with the group 995 and Amnesty International. The track starts off very melodically with violins and a female voice that hums harmony and then leads into a layering of synthesizer samples and a drum that holds a rhythmic beat. The song tells the story of an immigrant who realizes his utterly hopeless condition in his country because he is deprived of everything but hope for a better life through immigration. Unlike Frank T. and the song “La nueva España,” El Chojín chooses a ‘sentimental’ approach as the song explains how the immigrant misses his homeland as soon as he leaves it behind. These lyrics humanize the immigrant protagonist as follows: “Enfrentarse a un nuevo mundo es duro, / pero es más duro no tener futuro / y ver cómo no puedes dar pan a los tuyos / Nunca tuve nada que
fuera mío, ni siquiera la certeza de comer / Y en vuestros cines me dijisteis que ésta era la tierra del pan y la miel / Así que, ¿qué iba a hacer? / ¡Ponte en mi piel!” (Confronting a new world is tough, / but it is tougher not having a future / and seeing how you can’t feed you family / I never had anything I could call mine, / not even the certainty of the next meal / And in your films you told me that this was the land of bread and honey / So, what was I to do? / Put yourself in my skin!) (0:40). The immigrant in El Chojín’s song does not come to Spain with demands and ultimatums about how he will change Spain to suit him better; instead, this immigrant acts as a mirror to his Spanish audience, where each person sees a reflection of himself or herself going through a tough moment of their lives. As listener imagines themselves in the skin of this immigrant, they start to relate to El Chojín’s portrayal of the immigrant with compassion rather than contempt.

I believe the ‘affective’ or ‘sentimental’ approach to the song makes it much more palatable to a Spanish audience because it demands empathy rather than a forced cultural change. In effect, it does ask for change and justice, but in a culturally appropriate way as the minds of the people change. When it comes to the way El Chojín and the 995 band craft the vocabulary of the song, it is evident that they were very careful to avoid negative stereotypes and to guide the listener in referring to immigration in a new manner. In one instance, El Chojín sings: “Detrás el mar, delante la libertad” (Behind, the sea; in front, freedom) (0:34). Presenting immigration as a choice between a sea that in many cases equals death by drowning or a land that symbolizes safety and stability, the song guides the Spanish listener to accept immigrants. The argument is also subtle because it paints Spain as a land of freedom, which compliments and thanks the listener for their solidarity. The chorus also reveals a very powerful use of vocabulary to move
immigration from an invasion or wave metaphor to a human necessity for those in need. The immigrant says: “¿Qué más podía hacer? Tuve que marchar / ¿Qué más podía hacer? Buscaba dignidad / ¿Qué más podía hacer? No fue fácil / ¿Qué más podía hacer? ¡Ponte en mi piel!” (What else could I have done? I had to go / What else could I have done? I was looking for dignity / What else could I have done? It was not easy / What else could I have done? Put yourself in my skin!) (0:57). Thus, El Chojín does not force the understanding of immigration upon the host country but rather asks the hosts to answer questions about immigration. If the Spaniards agree that the person’s only recourse is immigration, then half the ideological battle is won. The other half now rests with the hosts to further question the status quo and the dehumanizing discourses in the media about immigrants, use their suffrage power, and promote a public opinion for the good of immigration.

“La perversión del lenguaje” (Language Perversion) and “N.E.G.R.O.” are among El Chojín’s other efforts that work to combat ignorance, xenophobia, and racism in the 2009 album Cosas Que Pasan, Que No Pasan Y Que Deberían Pasar (Things That Occur, That Don’t Occur, and That Should Occur). These songs lend themselves to an analytical study of how language betrays culture, which in turn contributes to bigoted modes of perception and negative behaviors. Almost literally taking a page from Richard Rorty’s work, the songs show that the inherent biases and racism that are a continual source of injustice in Spain are because of language use.

The song “La perversión del lenguaje” begins with a repeating synthesized organ melody that slowly gets overlapped with rhythmic concert clapping as if to signal the beginning of a rock concert mixed with a church sermon. El Chojín begins his song with:
“Nada es lo que parece, / … / las palabras engañan, / si miras el contenido a veces todo cambia.” (Nothing is what it seems, / … / the words deceive, / if you look at the content, sometimes it all changes) (0:23) to guide his listener’s attention toward how words deceive. El Chojín goes on to attack the language of the majority culture as a vehicle for subordination and maintaining an unjust status quo. While the song does not use a ‘sentimental’ approach, it is refreshing in its clarity and is an ideological information vehicle to educate a mass audience. In the song, he draws attention to the fact that: “el lenguaje es el arma más peligrosa / que hace que aceptes por ciertas cosas bastante dudosas.” (language is the most dangerous weapon / that makes you accept as true very dubious things) (0:59) and that “las palabras determinan nuestra visión, / es hora de mirar al lenguaje y ver su perversión, oye” (words determine our vision, / it is time to look at language and see its perversion, listen) (2:26). Showing how language betrays solidarity, El Chojín asks his listener to pay attention to the danger of causing harm even without meaning it. In the song he mentions how foolish it is to use the terms developed countries and developing nations. In reality, all nations are developing countries because no progress could be made otherwise. He also criticizes the vocabulary of the media in calling people that drown in the Mediterranean Sea immigrants before they have arrived anywhere and taken the immigrant status. With these and other anecdotes, El Chojín calls out the fact that “todo está calculado para que el de abajo / interiorice su inferioridad desde el vocabulario” (all is calculated for the disadvantaged / to interiorize their inferiority starting from the words that are used to talk about him) (2:04). Thus, El Chojín fights marginalization by calling attention to seemingly untroubled everyday language use and showing how it internalizes discrimination,
In his interview with Green, El Chojín further explains his choice of topic for the song:

decidí escribirla porque es una cosa que me raya, me llama mucho la atención desde hace mucho tiempo. Yo vivo de las palabras. Luego las estudio. Y estudiándolas es cuando te das cuenta de que efectivamente están muy lejos de ser perfectas, y que de hecho ayudan a la discriminación … Entonces, todas estas diferencias que damos ya por sabidas porque el lenguaje nos lo impone así son las que tenemos que intentar deshilachar para que la gente entienda [que] lo que hay dentro de todo es una gran mentira.

(I decided to write it because it was a thing that bothers me, and it has been on my mind for a while. I live off the production of words. I study them. And studying them you realize that they are very far from being perfect, and that in fact they aid discrimination … Then, all these differences that we take for granted because language imposes it on us, are precisely what we have to attempt to unravel so that people understand that everything underneath is a big lie.) (183)

Distancing ourselves from the discovery that words carry unwanted ideological connotations, El Chojín’s point is spot on. Words and their etymologies dictate the context of perceived reality, and at times this vocabulary reinforces racist behaviors. Like Rorty, El Chojín makes it a priority to show the means through which words affect one’s culture and asks his listeners to pay closer attention to the logical fallacies that language lays out for them. Thus, El Chojín challenges the media and his listeners to make a more careful selection of the words they use to avoid the creation of negative myths.

The song “N.E.G.R.O.” serves a very similar purpose as “La perversión del lenguaje,” except it is more specifically about the language that describes black immigrants in Spain. In this song, the musician claims that it is time to de-euphemize the word negro in the Spanish language. Within his lyrics, El Chojín reminds his listeners that the color of his race implies “triste / melancólico / infausto / sucio / irritado / desventurado” (sad / melancholic / ill-fated / dirty / irritated / unfortunate) (1:42) to the
Spanish speaker. Continuing he sings: “mi propio idioma dice que ser negro es malo / se usa la palabra negro para insultar y... / de verdad que me sienta fatal escuchar y eufemismos / de color subsahariano / morenitos / como si ser negro fuera un delito” (my own language says that being black is bad / black is a word meant to insult and / truly it makes me feel terrible listening to euphemisms like / of sub-Saharan color / darkies / as if being black were a crime) (1:49). In fact, the official Real Academia Española’s dictionary puts forth a plethora of meanings for the word negro, and only one of the definitions has a positive connotation. It is rather telling that negro includes definitions such as: “Moreno, o que no tiene la blancura que le corresponde (dark skinned, or that has not the whiteness that it should have),” “Clandestino, ilegal (clandestine, illegal),” “dicho de ciertos ritos y actividades: Que invocan la ayuda o la presencia del demonio o del poder maligno (it is said about certain rites and activities: That evoke the help or presence of the devil or of an evil power),” and “Dicho de la novela o del cine: Que se desarrolla en un ambiente criminal y violento (said of the novel or cinema: That which develops in a criminal and violent environment)” (RAE). Furthermore, by pointing out how Spanish language has imbued the word negro with so many negative connotations, El Chojín makes his listener aware of the racism embedded within language. As a solution, he does not suggest an avoidance of the word but instead wants his listener to “usa la palabra sin ningún miedo” (use the word without any fear) (1:19) and realize that negro is “una identidad no una cruz” (an identity, not a burden) (1:25). El Chojín believes using the term negro without fear allows it to acquire other meanings and minimizes the typical negative connotations.
Because of the ideological weight of language on culture, songs like “N.E.G.R.O.” and “La perversión del lenguaje” are very useful in illuminating some of the inherent stereotypes language places upon a native speaker’s worldview. While Rorty proposes that coming up with new ways to look at vocabulary makes it more inclusive, El Chojín practices an art that challenges common beliefs and uses language in order to secure a new understanding of blackness and immigration that is more just and dignified. It is indeed refreshing to see such perspicacious work available to the Spanish public.

Popular songs that are socially concerned and well-rooted philosophically without being offensive are uncommon, and I believe El Chojín’s music and his social efforts set a valuable example for other artists who want to draw attention to overlooked, yet urgent, social causes.

When analyzing music about immigration, it is impossible not to mention Manu Chao. José-Manuel Thomas Arthur Chao, the man behind the band, is a French-born Spanish musician. His hybridity is celebrated in his music as he includes lyrics in more than seven languages. Some of those presented are Spanish, French, English, Italian, Portuguese, Arabic, and Galician. Manu Chao’s musical influences are eclectic and mix pop, rock, and punk with salsa, reggae, and ska. The confluence of seemingly incongruous styles and languages make his music powerfully unique in its social influence. Not unlike the narrative of Coti’s song, Chao’s story is also one of displacement. His grandfather was sentenced to death after the Spanish Civil War by Franco, and his family fled the country to France when they were in danger of more reprisals. Among many songs with a social awareness, the 1998 album Clandestino and the song bearing the same title tackle the topic of immigration directly. Peter Culshaw
notes that the album: “Clandestino, sold five million copies and in places like Mexico City he has played to crowds of 100,000.” Chao’s popularity has made him a global artist with a phenomenal reach for the social causes in which he takes interest.

For the reasons stated previously, the song “Clandestino” carries a significant cultural weight that allows Chao to mold his audience’s perception of immigration. The narrative of “Clandestino” paints the protagonist of the song as a person who has his humanity rejected because he had to flee his country. Chao sings: “Solo voy con mi pena / sola va mi condena / correr es mi destino / para burlar la ley / perdido en el corazón / de la grande Babilón / me dicen el clandestino / por no llevar papel” (Alone I go with my sorrow / alone goes my punishment / running is my destiny / in order to evade the law / lost in the heart / of the great Babylon / they call me clandestine / because I’m undocumented) (0:15). The immigrant does not desire to radically change the society but rather wants to live without shame despite his imputed legal condition and to be able to search for happiness like any other person. In this section of the song, Chao helps his listener feel with the immigrant his difficulties and fear through a ‘sentimental’ approach that asks citizens to be understanding and compassionate toward vulnerable people.

Chao’s language use is also effective as he catches his listener’s attention by the frequent use of the word clandestino (clandestine). Normally clandestino is associated with criminality, yet Chao works to change its active meaning to a more empathetic description: “me dicen el clandestino / yo soy el quiebra ley / mano negra clandestino / peruano clandestino / africano clandestino / marijuana ilegal” (they call me clandestine / I am the lawbreaker / black hands, clandestine / Peruvian, clandestine / African, clandestine / marijuana, illegal) (1:16). His repetitious use of the word clandestino is
powerful because its effect is to dull its negativity when he associates it with people. Furthermore, he makes the distinction between marijuana and its illegal status and a person whom society calls a stowaway. Instead of calling his immigrant “illegal,” Chao’s immigrant is a stowaway who is also perceived as an “undesired” entity with no right to be in Spain, hence his need to be in hiding or underground. His immigrant still carries the same burden and punishment of the law: deportation. Like Rorty suggested, meaningful change only occurs when we change the perception of a negative category with a positive one through creative linguistic changes. In the same way, Chao uses the repetition of the word *clandestine* in the song to erode its negative meaning and through an artificial semantic shift change it into a discussion of human rights.

Accompanying the lyrics of “Clandestino,” the official music video for the song strengthens Chao’s message. Overlapping a simple guitar rhythm, images of immigrants who flash their identification documents are shown. Every few seconds a close-up shot of a new immigrant materializes. The filming starts with an African woman who appears to have difficulty looking at the camera, probably due to her irregular status and being pushed aside as referenced earlier by the singer. The camera then cuts to another woman, this time of Asian origin, who similarly avoids looking at the camera. Next, the video shows Manu Chao singing about the troubled immigrant in Spain. The framing of the video continues to oscillate between close-up faces of immigrants and mid-shots of Manu Chao walking and singing, accompanied by other extreme close-ups of facial features of immigrants that set them apart from the norm in Spain. For example, the viewer sees
African tribal skin markings, a Hindu bindi, and pronounced facial features distinctive of different races. The images are powerful, striking, and endearing of the beauty of diversity. This beauty in the extreme close-ups contrasts with the broader faces of the immigrants which show a wide range of emotions from sadness to happiness, indignation, joy, and contempt. This full range of emotions and the distinctive facial features work to teach the viewer both the beauty of non-European peoples and the universal nature of human emotions. In this manner, the video adopts a ‘sentimental’ approach to challenge the racial status quo in Spain by portraying diversity as a desirable element of society. In this way, Manu Chao’s “Clandestino” works linguistically and visually to put forth its message to a wide popular audience. Moreover, it is a very effective example of an emotional attempt to elevate immigrants to worthy individuals who are equal in rights and humanity to the dominant culture.

From a ‘sentimental education’ perspective, the more successful artists have built on commonalities with the native population in order to put forth their vision of a more just representation of immigrants. They have shown that the vocabulary used to talk about immigration needs improvement, and they have put forth solutions or pointed the listener in the right direction towards treating immigrants with more dignity. The less successful artists stress that the Spanish culture is not changing fast enough to accommodate newcomers, and their music comes across as entitled, angry, or dismissive. It is not that their approaches are erred; rather, they are unsuccessful because they are not connecting with the host culture in an inclusive way.

Bindi is a red marking or jewel placed between the eyebrows of women in some places in India and Southeast Asia.
The Dissonant Category

In addition to these two categories of songs, a third affect category of music portrays the dual nature of the representation of immigrants in Spain. These songs address both a Spanish audience with a ‘sentimental’ message of inclusion and the immigrants by pleading with them to not undertake the journey to Spain as it is not worth the effort. The Andalusian band Chambao perfectly represents this third category. Chambao is known for its mixing of regional flamenco sounds with modern electronica and chill-out music in a self-denominated “Flamenco Chill” sound. This attractive modern flamenco style has garnered Chambao a lot of attention. In their 2007 album Con otro aire (With Another Air) the soloist María del Mar Rodríguez Carnero, better known as La Mari, focuses her attention on North African immigrants and their troubles in reaching the Mediterranean Sea on route to Spain and Europe. The musical quality of the song “Papeles mojados” (Wet Papers) shows the skills of the artists. Flutes, guitars, and drums are layered on top of subtle chants, possibly of Amazigh\(^\text{26}\) origin, to make a complex sound whereupon La Mari’s flamenco vocal performance resonates movingly. The song’s lyrics are effective because they do not overreach; a very simple ‘sentimental message’ asks its listeners to pay attention to the loss of “Miles de sombras cada noche” (Thousands of shadows every night) (0:32) that “navegan cargaos de ilusiones que en la orilla se quedan” (sail filled with hope that is left behind at the shore) (0:36). La Mari characterizes the immigrants as “buena gente” (good people) (0:44) who “Se juegan la vida cansaos, con hambre y un frío que pela (Tiredly gamble their lives with hunger and a chilling cold) (0:46). As a conclusion to her plea, La Mari asks her listeners: “ponte tú en

\(^{26}\) Amazigh is the common language of various Berber tribes throughout the North African region.
su lugar” (put yourself in their place) (1:00) to soften the hearts of those who judge immigrants harshly. Her message is very potent from a ‘sentimental’ perspective because it allows her listener to experience the immigrant’s point of view and thus better understand their motivations and human nature.

Overall, Chambao’s confluence of flamenco and electronic music has a positive message that challenges the listener to form new ways of understanding immigration. Unfortunately, the video that accompanies the song does not do enough to remove stereotypical associations of Africans with deserts and extreme technological and economic backwardness. The desperate journey of a “sub-Saharan” woman is shown in a formulaic way that highlights striking African motifs to a European audience: close-up facial shots of a variety of African phenotypes, medium shots of busy streets in underdeveloped towns, and long shots of unending deserts that emphasize their remoteness in geography, culture, and status. In order to show La Mari’s solidarity with the African immigrants, alternating cuts of the African immigrant woman and La Mari dressed in Moroccan clothing are mixed to make it easier for the Spanish native audience to put themselves in the situation of the immigrant. Nevertheless, the filmic metaphor falls short due to its kitsch portrayal of stock African tropes, emotional lyrics, and an upbeat and catchy soundtrack with the band playing on the beach to La Mari’s dancing. Chambao’s choice to use flamenco chill in this song creates a feeling of dissonance as it mixes popular dancing with lyrics of utter solemnity. Furthermore, even though La Mari sings about papeles mojados (wet papers) throughout the song, the sea is shown only after the music has stopped. A close-up of the immigrant looking emotionless at the sea is followed by a longshot pan of the seashore disturbed by two pateras (dinghies). This
ominous image possibly implies the death of this woman, as a representation of the death of thousands of immigrants each year that attempt to cross the sea as a last resort for a better life. The song thus humanizes the immigrant and shows solidarity with their plea; yet it also shows a certain air of exasperating futility in this long journey that may end in drowning rather than success in the Spanish society.

The song thus addresses two main audiences: on one hand, it works as a sensitizing tool to ask Spaniards to be more understanding and kinder to immigrants; and on the other hand, it inadvertently tells the immigrant that their journey may better be postponed or never started because they could drown before they see any benefits. This subverted duality reinforces the status quo that it would be better for both immigrants and Spain if the immigrants never leave their home countries. Thus, while the song garners a lot of empathy toward the immigrant’s sad journey, it discourages immigration and thus misunderstands the thousands who take this journey and succeed. Though La Mari’s message within the song shows the precarious situation of immigrants, it subliminally discourages their voyage. Symptomatic of a much greater problem, “Papeles mojados” introduces the complex duality that both welcomes and dissuades immigration as a topic that is common in the Spanish media, including the Spanish Immigration Law, newspapers and televised news, music, and film as discussed in Chapter 1 and forthcoming in Chapter 3.

Taking into consideration the music concerned with immigration examined under the lens of Richard Rorty’s concepts of ‘sentimental education,’ the analysis shows a very complex picture of the representation of immigration in Spain. Some songs, representative of an ultra-right political voice, are filled with hate toward African,
Romanian, and other immigrants and call to violence against them. Other songs deal with immigration from a militant perspective and are fed-up with the intolerance that continues to be the norm in Spain. Frank T.'s “La nueva España” and Coti’s “El inmigrante” represent an immigrant audience that demands faster progress toward just policies of integration in Spain. Their music tells Spanish citizens that Spain is a multicultural place with all races represented regardless of their personal opinions. Additionally, other artists have taken a different approach and instead of demanding acceptance, they use ‘sentiment’ or empathy to humanize immigrants and attempt to change the negative vocabulary used in the discourse of immigration. El Chojín and Manu Chao are two bands that best fit this category. El Chojín focuses on immigration and race while critiquing the culture that allows its vocabulary to represent blackness in a negative way. Manu Chao also draws his listener’s attention to the vocabulary that addresses immigration. Their musical efforts promote a better understanding of immigration by showing solidarity and working to change perspectives. Lastly, Chambao also uses a ‘sentimental’ approach conducive to empathy towards the thousands of immigrants attempting to cross the Mediterranean for a better life. Nevertheless, symptomatically of a much larger cultural problem, her effort also falls short of challenging the status quo by representing a frustrated effort to migrate, similar to the Spanish media. These different categories of music show the various ways in which immigrants and natives address the topic of human migration in Spain. They do so in order to rechannel the humanitarian effort needed to change the negative direction that political discourse and the media often employ to represent immigration in the Spanish peninsula.
As such, music has shown itself both as a tool for discrimination and as a tool for education. As discriminatory discourses continue to propagate, inclusive dialogues should be promoted to counteract these negative propositions by explaining what drives people to immigrate, what they leave behind, and how they attempt to live honestly in Spain. Rorty’s process of a linguistic redescription along with elements of a ‘sentimental education’ act as a powerful catalyst toward the cultural change and the inclusion of previously disfavored groups in the Spanish society. Thus, music can promote integration by building bridges with the audience through empathetic representations of immigrants in unjust situations.

Clearly, immigration is a complex phenomenon due to its cultural, religious, and linguistic idiosyncrasies that often clash within a host society; nevertheless, it is not a lost cause. In fact, it is a very worthy cause, and, if the Spanish society is to be more united and just, then a process of cultural change and linguistic recoding led by art and solidarity to social issues can be a very effective means of changing perspectives and improving the lives of a considerable number of immigrants living in Spain.
Chapter 3

Cognitive Dissonance and Spanish Immigration Films

As we have determined in the previous chapter, music is an empathetically persuasive medium in immigrant perception that can be used to promote inclusion or xenophobia. Next to music, film stands as another important popular culture element that informs viewers on the topic of immigration. Because Spanish directors have not shied away from addressing this most important topic, this chapter delves into the representation of immigrants in the Spanish society through film. As no films directed by immigrants have reached any mainstream audience in Spain, the chapter focuses on short and feature films about immigration directed by autochthonous Spanish citizens from the year 2000 up to the present time. This analysis proposes that while Spanish film directors portray immigration mostly under a positive and empathetic light, aspects of their work continue to be problematic, stereotypical, and often negative and cognitively dissonant depictions of immigrants that underline the deep rift that remains between the previously colonized and the old colonizers. Thus, while socially committed film is effective in motivating their Spanish audience to treat immigrants with more dignity, they also caricaturize immigrants as lust-worthy, exotic persons who are victims of a legal and cultural milieu that is not ready to accept them.

To show the underling patterns that directors use to reach their audience, this chapter will examine a breath of works starting with the most critically acclaimed shorts and ending with the three of the most important feature films that focus on individual immigrants and their lives in Spain. After a brief historical and theoretical component showing the importance and effectiveness of film as a means to persuasion, the chapter

All the shorts and feature films enumerated previously pertain to the genre of social cinema implicitly or explicitly. According to Thibaudeau, social cinema films “ponen en escena disfuncionamientos sociales debidos a macro-estructuras socioeconómicas y […] adoptan el punto de vista de los personajes afectados por ellas” (display social dysfunction as a result of socioeconomic macrostructures and [the films] adopt the point of view as do the people affected by these problems) (236). Furthermore, social cinema makes use of “denuncia social y una voluntad explícita por parte de los directores de producir una toma de conciencia e impulsar cambios” (social denunciation and an explicit and voluntary will of the directors to produce a feeling of coming to terms [with the issue] and to propel [social] change) (236). Additionally, Triana-Toribio writes: “the understanding of Spanish cinema as ‘engaged cinema’ and social cinema becomes the most prestigious high-art discourse” (27) in Spain. In this chapter, I consider socially engaged cinema, films that address social ills and attempt to correct a troubling social issue in an explicit or implicit manner.
Because social cinema has a pedagogical and educational responsibility to expose and attempt to redress social ills, some Spanish directors refuse to be categorized in this genre even when they address social ills with their films. Take for example Fernando León de Aranoa, the director of Princesas, a deeply social film about the relationship between an autochthonous Spanish prostitute and an immigrant sex worker. Aranoa declares, “Esa etiqueta de cine social o cualquier otra me parece una reducción, yo no me siento definido por ellas, ni siquiera por esa, que es un cine que me gusta. Es verdad que intento hablar de la realidad, pero también me gusta la ficción, jugar con ella, buscar el humor” (This label of social cinema or any other one seems to me like a reduction, I do not feel defined by them, not even by this one, which is a type of film I like. It is true that I attempt to talk about reality, but also I like fiction, I like to play with it and look for humor) (Zurro n.p.). Because of Aranoa’s and other directors’ reservations about being tagged with the social cinema label, I will not force on them a responsibility they do not desire; nevertheless, this chapter will evaluate their works in light of their representations of immigrants and the manner in which they make use of empathy to achieve their filmic goals because, whether they accept it or not, their portrayals shape the public’s opinion on immigration.

Historically, Spain is no stranger to cinema. Since the first showing of Thomas Edison’s kinetoscope in Madrid in 1895, Edwin Rousby’s animatograph a year later, and Lumière brothers’ cinématographe later in 1896 (Jordan and Allinson 3) these new machines proved to be very successful in both popularizing the moving image and also giving birth to Spanish film-making. Unfortunately, because Spain was unable to get ahead of the technological curve of creating film technology, it also lagged behind in
internationally marketable film production. Jordan and Allison write about this problem, “there was nowhere in Spain to do any basic training in film making and film technology. Spaniards had to go abroad since such instruction was only available within the developing French studio system” (5). Due to Spain’s reliance on French technology and the increasing appeal of Hollywood films, few Spanish directors managed to rise to international prominence with the notable exceptions of Segundo de Chomón (1871 - 1929) who was considered the Spanish Méliès for his technical skills and optical illusions and Luis Buñuel (1900 - 1983) for his iconoclastic and revolutionary surrealism. Between 1935 and 1936 Spain saw an increase in production of quality films that was unduly cut short by the Spanish Civil War (Jordan and Allison 8) and postponed its revival until the late 1980s with Pedro Almodóvar and with the filmic explosion of the 2000s (Triana-Toribio 108). Feature films, shorts, documentaries, and other forms of Spanish cinema continued to be produced during the Franco dictatorship, albeit at a slower pace, and became more ideologically minded.

Soon after coming into power, the new dictatorship sought to use film to fulfill its ideological needs. Understanding that “el cinematógrafo ejerce una innegable y enorme influencia sobre la difusión del pensamiento y sobre la educación de las masas, es indispensable que el Estado vigile siempre que haya algún riesgo que pueda apartarle de su misión” (the cinema has an undeniable and enormous influence over the dissemination of thought and over the education of the masses, it is indispensable that the state always guard against any risk that could distract it from its mission) (Seguin 31), the government began the work of censure in Spain and further diminished the influence of Spanish cinema nationally and internationally. The following actions worked against a free
cinema: Censure was first introduced on November 2, 1938, the inauguration of the NO-DO or Noticiarios y Documentales (News and Documentaries) was initiated in 1943 and ended in 1981, and lastly, all foreign films were forcefully dubbed starting on April 23, 1941 (Seguin 31-2).

Because of these new laws introduced by the fascist government of Francisco Franco, Spanish cinema was held back from becoming an international recognized industry. Jordan and Allinson succinctly describe the effects of these policies on the Spanish cinema of the time: “By the end of the decade, virtually all Spanish film production was totally dependent on state handouts of one sort or another” (16) due to the stifled creative process and the resulting inability of these films to financially self-sustain and take on topics of their choice. In context, this brief historical background explains the complicated production of film in Spain in order to show its influence on contemporary Spanish cinema. Nowadays, Spanish film represents both a continuation and a rebellion against the direction set by the dictatorship.

After the death of Franco, the Spanish cinema of the 1980s showed that it could produce both nationally and internationally sought-after, quality films spurred by a newfound freedom of production. Pedro Almodóvar’s films, albeit “inspired, in part, by the mise-en-scène of the comedies of the 1960s” (Triana-Toribio 78) put forth a Spain that carefully navigated around direct references to the Franco dictatorship. Moreover, Almodóvar rejected the social realism of his day and simply entertained in a way that appealed to both an older generation tired of oppression and a younger generation that hardly knew it. While some critics like Marcia Pally attribute Almodóvar’s films focus on taboo topics as a reflection of “visually sophisticated and political [films], with
antifascism, anti-group-think” (32) as defining features, others see the opposite. Julio Llamazares, the prestigious Spanish author, believes:

el cine, entre otras cosas, como la literatura, … siempre tienen que ser reflejo de su tiempo. En España no lo ha sido en los últimos años o no lo ha sido en todo. … Es decir, fuera de España el cine que se conoce fundamentalmente es el de Almodóvar. En Canadá o en Polonia deben pensar que España es un país de travestidos, de modernos de diseño, y España es eso en una mínima parte pero sobre muchas más cosas. Sobre todo lo que quería decir, y eso pasa en el cine y en el periodismo y en la literatura, es que hay un fenómeno de ensimismamiento, de autocomplacencia que consiste en que las películas hablan de lo que le pasa a la gente que trabaja en el cine, no de la gente que pasa por la calle.

Cinema, among other things, like literature, … have to always be a reflection of their time. In Spain, this has not been the case in the last years, or it has not been fully the case. … That is, outside of Spain, the film that is known is fundamentally that of Almodóvar. In Canada or Poland, they must think that Spain is a country of transvestites and of design fashionistas, and Spain is that only minimally among other things. Most of all, what I was trying to say, and this happens in film and journalism and literature, is that there is a self-absorption and self-pleasing phenomenon that consists in that films talk about what is happening to the people that work in cinema, and not of the people who are in the streets. (Delgado Batista n.p.)

Julio Llamazares gave this interview after the success of the 1999 film Flowers from Another World (Flowers de otro mundo) for which he co-wrote the script. He contrasted the hypermodern trend Almodóvar set for literature and other film with his efforts to show immigration and its challenges in a more lifelike manner. Llamazares’ critique is backed up, by the following feature films I analyze and several shorts about immigration which focus more on the effect immigrants have on Spanish citizens rather than the lives of these marginalized characters.
Spurred on by the popularity of Almodóvar and the retooling of the Miró law\(^\text{27}\) in the 1990s, Spanish cinema finally gained popularity both inside and outside of Spain. Because of an effort to discover and fund young female and male directors Alejandro Amenábar, Iciar Bollaín, Julio Medem, Alex de la Iglesia, Chus Gutiérrez, and Fernando León de Aranoa (Triana-Toribio 144) started producing *auteur* films of critical acclaim. As will be seen in the second section of this chapter, some of these authors also produced films that focus on immigration as a direct result of the renewed interest and funding possibilities offered to Spanish directors. Triana-Toribio also notes that the 1990s “gay boom” (97) further expanded non-standard avenues of narration and filmmaking in order to include traditionally excluded segments of representation. In addition to foregrounding young directors and exploring gay themes, Spanish cinema took on a regional flair. The aptly named “cine de las autonomías” (Spanish regional cinema) further broke the boundaries of traditional cinema by promoting the languages, cultures, and local issues of the Catalan, Basque, Galician, Valencian, Andalusian, and Canary Islands cinema (Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas 157) as a direct response to the decentralization of power from Madrid after the death of Franco. These new discourses expand the reference of Spanish cinema and make it appealing and stimulating to national and international audiences craving to see creative interpretations to old problems. This diversification and decentralization of cinema has led Santiago Segura to affirm that Spanish film-making is a “group of people and things that make us go to the cinema without thinking about the nationality of the film” (23) because films produced in Spain no longer seek to develop a form of Spanishness and rather focuses on diverse issues, topics, and local cultures. More

\(^{27}\) This law defines the cinematic criteria for films requesting Spanish government funds for production. See the December 28, Real Decreto 3.304/1983.
importantly, these films not only entertain, but also call the viewer’s attention to social ills and the effects that culture, politics, and the environment have on individuals. This socially-conscious cinema thus becomes the foundation for Spanish cinema in the 1990s and continues to resonate presently.

The Spanish cinema a generation after the death of Franco is finally ready to address the issues of the past by using socially minded cinema to address a variety of social ills. The past repression of non-Castilian dialects and the intense sense of nationalism as portrayed in the NO-DOs led to discrimination of those who were different. Films that addressed immigration had existed in Spain before their revival in the 1990’s as evidenced by the Surcos (Furrows) in 1951, Vente a Alemania, Pepe (Come to Germany Pepe) in 1971, and finally by El mar y el tiempo (The Sea and the Weather) in 1989. These films dealt with inner Spanish migration from the villages to the cities (Surcos), leaving Spain for Germany in search of better economic opportunities (Vente a Alemania, Pepe), and the return of an exiled Spanish-Argentinean man to Madrid (El mar y el tiempo). As such, they mark a necessary background to the films that would address immigration from abroad in Spain in the cinema of the 1990s and the early 2000’s. Since then, the Spanish cinema has been revitalized, and shorts and feature films about immigration now explore issues meant to engender a new sense of a more compassionate personhood through the use of empathy when representing immigrants. Thus, while still in its infancy in some aspects, Spanish film about immigration works to diminish xenophobia and transition to forms of art more inclusive to those that are different.

As I have previously shown in Chapter 2, Richard Rorty’s use of ‘sentiment’ to redescribe social issues is best accomplished through the media. If used critically, film
may be a powerful instrument in bringing forth societal change through empathy.

Augmenting Rorty’s philosophy, Gilles Deleuze deciphers the power of film through the theoretical concept of the affection image. He writes that “[a]ffection is what occupies the interval [between action and perception], what occupies it without filling it in or filling it up. It surges in the centre of indetermination, that is to say in the subject, between a perception which is troubling in certain respects and a hesitant action” (65). This affection image is manifested as the emotional surplus that a viewer gets from a film imbued with involuntary affect to the reception of the film. Thus, the affective ability of a film to influence our perception and desires shows viewers new possibilities of action.

Taking it a step further, Slavoj Žižek delights with his explication of the cinematic paradox: “The mystery is that even if we know that it is only a stage, that it’s a fiction, it still fascinates us. That’s the fundamental magic of it. For example, if you have witnessed a certain seductive scene, and then are shown the fake stage machinery behind it, you are still fascinated by it. Illusion persists. There is something real in the illusion, more real than the reality behind it (The Pervert’s Guide to Cinema 1:46:52). In these paradoxical ways cinema is able through affect to influence people and change perceptions.

As Slavoj Žižek cogently argues in The Pervert’s Guide to Cinema, film is a fantastic teaching tool for education. Žižek asks: “The problem for us is not: Are our desires satisfied or not? The problem is, how do we know what to desire? There is nothing spontaneous, nothing natural about human desires. Our desires are artificial; we have to be taught to desire. Cinema is the ultimate pervert art: It does not give you what you desire; it tells you how to desire” (0:07). Žižek believes that humans are born tabula rasa and emotions and drives are constantly nurtured not only in the earliest formative
years, but also by the media throughout one’s life. Thus, for him, in film we do not find what we are looking for, instead film teaches us what to look for. I believe Žižek chooses film as a powerful educational tool because, unlike other forms of media, it combines most aspects of human experiences. Outside of depth, the restriction of framing\textsuperscript{28}, and smell\textsuperscript{29}, film incorporates story-telling, sound, and a moving visual image to create believable and memorable emotion-inducing experiences. Moreover, film represents social situations familiar to viewers, and it models behaviors that the audience can follow. Thus, film has the best chance of any media of modeling inclusion and acting as a behavioral pattern to follow.

Strengthening the philosophical and theoretical percepts described by Rorty, Deleuze, and Žižek, Donald Auster and Andrew Butler et al. show the power of film in terms of recollection and influence of opinions. Auster tests whether ideological (sentimental and emotional appeals), technological (factual), or a mixed film has most influence when it presents cognitively dissonant facts. In devising the test, the viewers were shown a film meant to extoll the virtues of business enterprise to an audience. They were asked to rate their experience after the viewing and thirty days later. The results were surprising because even though the ideological film received the most negative reviews initially followed by the technological and the mixed films, the ideological film showed the most lasting influence on the viewers. Auster writes:

To summarize these findings, the ideological film was superior in effectiveness on one post-test measurement and both delayed post-test measurements, and narrowly missed superior effectiveness on the other

\textsuperscript{28} Depth and the restriction of the frame are now being removed by Virtual Reality experiences which allow 360 degrees of framing as well as moving through an environment.

\textsuperscript{29} Outside of the famed “Smell-O-Vision” and some Disney World experiences, smell has never become a feasible achievement to accompany film.
post-test. The technological film ranked second on three evaluations and last on a fourth. The mixed film, despite its greater influence on one post-test, was last on the other tests, and particularly ineffectual on both delayed post-tests. (403)

Auster argues that it was the ideological film was most effective because it presented a message that was acceptable to the viewers but because of its emotive content, it was generally disliked. Nevertheless, while paradoxical in nature, Auster writes that “[t]he presence of dissonance gives rise to pressures to reduce or eliminate dissonance” (403) and thus impressed its viewers the most. In regards to film about immigration, the results of Auster’s study show that a film that uses a ‘sentimental approach’ has the most chance of affecting their moods and remain memorable and influential for an extended period of time.

Additionally, Andrew Butler et al. run an experiment to evaluate the use of popular film in order to enhance classroom learning. Retention and accuracy or the information presented in textual and filmic are the most important factors in their study. Butler et al. show that film is exceptionally influential in terms of recall even when it presents information that contradicts previously taught material. Furthermore, even when students are warned with a non-specific caution that the film may present factually incorrect material, students remembered the information in the film and later incorrectly blamed texts for supplying them with the erroneous information. Butler et al. write:

However, when the information in the film contradicted the text, subjects often (falsely) recalled the misinformation from the film. This misinformation effect occurred when no warning or general warning was given prior to presentation of the film clip. Moreover, the misinformation effects obtained were quite large: Approximately half of all responses to the text-film-inconsistent questions consisted of misinformation in some conditions. In addition, subjects were highly confident in the accuracy of the misinformation they produced and sometimes misattributed it to the text when asked to make a source judgment. (1166)
Their results show that films and text combinations are extremely powerful in retaining and recalling information. Troublingly, their experiment show that films have great influence over the viewers and if the films are not accompanied by specific information that refutes false claims presented in the films, most viewers will accept misleading information. Besides the worrying consequence that film can be used to mislead, it also shows that a concerted effort in the media, textual and filmic, can have beneficial effects when it comes to treating immigrants with more justice.

Highlighting the power of the media to shape viewer perceptions and even inspire lawmakers to bring about legal reform, the Orantes case in Spain and the film *Indigènes* (*Days of Glory*) in France serve as strong examples. The 1997 Orantes situation brought to the forefront of the Spanish population that gendered violence continued mostly unchallenged in Spain even after Franco’s death. In fact, “Francoist courts recognized jealousy and honour as extenuating circumstances [thus excluding the death penalty for men], and prior to 1958 men were legally permitted to kill their wives or daughters if they caught them in the act of adultery” (Wheeler 438). Duncan Wheeler explains how the reform started:

A major paradigm shift occurred in December 1997 with the death of Ana Orantes. After recounting the ill-treatment she had received throughout her forty-year marriage on a television talk show, she was doused in gasoline and burnt alive by her husband. The media frenzy focused not only on the brutality of Ana’s death but also on the inadequacy of the legal system to protect her. (439)

Beginning with the media’s attention to the Ana’s killing by her husband, and the victory of PSOE: Partido Socialista Obrero Español (the Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party), the 2004 Ley Integral contra la Violencia de Género (Comprehensive Law Against Gender Violence) was adopted. This law makes Spain one of the most progressive states in
Europe regarding its legislation against domestic violence. Wheeler concludes that the Orantes case and films like Solas (Alone) (Benito Zambrano, 1999), Sólo mía (Mine Alone) (Javier Balaguer, 2001), and Te doy mis ojos (Take my Eyes) (Icíar Bollaín, 2003) have aided in creating an atmosphere where violence against women is unacceptable and thus had their part in the passing of the law against gendered violence. This example goes to show that when social issues become the focus of the people’s outrage through the media’s attention, they can have a far-reaching influence on the culture and law in Spain.

The prime example of how film can change a country’s outlook on minorities and immigrants is the way the 2006 film Indigènes (Days of Glory) influenced law in France. This film reminded the French government of the indecency of paying lower pensions to the Algerian troops that helped liberate Paris from the Nazis compared to the pensions of French-born citizens who fought in the war. The film was appealing from a humane standpoint and used an empathetic strategy to affect the law in a similar fashion to the Orantes case in Spain. Alec Hargreaves recounts:

*Indigènes* capitalized upon and helped to influence major public debates within France about the nation’s colonial past and contemporary postcolonial immigrant minorities. In highlighting the role played by North African colonial troops in the liberation of France during World War II, the movie helped to persuade President Chirac to end a long-standing injustice whereby veterans in former colonies have been receiving lower pensions than their former comrades in arms in France. The promotion of *Indigènes* was also used to press the case for fairer treatment of African immigrant minorities in contemporary France. (204)

While probably *Indigènes* was not the only culprit in changing the law in France, its role in bringing to the forefront the unjust treatment of North African’s in France was invaluable. Consequently, the film serves as a good example of the utility of a socially concerned film in challenging injustice and making immigrant lives better.
Lekk, la comida, written and directed by Sussi Gozalvo in 2002 is a very good example of a short focused on the topic of immigration. The short film was one of the four finalists of the second contest conducted by the Spanish non-governmental organization, ACCEM with the title of “Refugiados” (Refugees). It was also used by the Cruz Roja Española (Spanish Red Cross) in the sensitizing campaign “Aprender a mirar de cerca” (Learning to look closer) and won the runner-up award at the Canal Plus shorts competition “Europa en Construcción” (Europe Under Construction) with the title “Yo no soy de aquí” (I am not from around here).

Even though Gozalvo is an amateur cineaste, she captures the essence of the irrationality of xenophobia with a strong critique to her Spanish audience. Gozalvo tells that Lekk “está basado en un hecho real. Una historia donde nada es lo que parece y que, sin palabras, habla de los prejuicios e ideas preconcebidas que a veces tenemos sobre los otros” (is based on real events. It is a story where nothing is what it appears and that, without words, talks about prejudices and preconceived ideas that at times we have of others) (“Los jóvenes onubenses conocen a través del cine las distintas caras de la realidad migratoria” n.p.). This short film shows how an older and somewhat senile woman (Fina Morán) gets her food at the conveniently named restaurant “Bar de España” (Bar of Spain), sits down, and starts eating. When some of her soup drips down her chin, she stands up and goes to get a napkin. As she returns to her table, she discovers a man of African origin (Dembel Fati) sitting in her chair and eating her soup. Without saying a word, she sits down next to him and starts a tug-of-war over the soup plate with the African man. After a moment, the foreigner stands up, gets another spoon, and shares the
soup with the woman, each taking one spoonful at a time. When the man is done, he stands up and waves goodbye to the woman, leaves the restaurant, and smiles at the situation. When the woman finishes, she stands up and realizes that her purse is gone. The look of shock on her face is clear: the African man ate her soup and stole her handbag! The viewers feel cheated because the woman’s kindness is repaid with theft. After a moment of shock and indecision, the situation is resolved. It was a simple mistake. The woman’s purse had not moved. It was hanging where she left it on a chair at a table with an uneaten bowl of soup. The audience comes to realize the truth. It had not been the African man who ate her soup; she ate his, and he shared it happily out of his kindness. He had stolen nothing, and it was her forgetfulness that had caused the confusion.

While Gozalvo’s short film has a poor soundtrack, questionable cinematography, and shows rough editing skills, the message impresses. Gozalvo represents the immigrant as a man who realizes the woman is mistaken but would rather take her mini-abuse than embarrass her or cause trouble. The short film shows that immigrants are not a drain on Spanish society, nor are in the country for a handout. It puts forward as its thesis that mistrusting immigrants a priori is fallacious and not conducive to a healthy society. The short uses a ‘sentimental approach’ to put viewers very effectively in both the shoes of the woman as well as in the immigrant’s place. This narratological feature aids the comprehension of both sides without enforcing stereotypes. Symbolically, it critiques preconceived ideas and challenges xenophobia with a plea to give immigrants the benefit of a doubt. Moreover, Gozalvo’s short film is also effective in the delivery of its message by not speaking for immigrants and instead focusing on the woman as a representation of
the many Spaniards who have forgotten how to treat others with the same dignity they demanded when Spain was a purveyor of immigrants only a few decades ago. While *Lekk* is not the most polished short film from a technical standpoint, its message of inclusion is delivered in a very effective way and stands as an exemplary effort to make Spain a more compassionate culture.

*Nana* uses a powerful cinematography to show both the humanity of immigrants and the inhumanity of a *patera* crossing in hopes of a better future. *Nana, or Lullaby* in English, is directed by José Javier Rodríguez Melcón and is the winner of the 2006 XXth Edition of the Goya Awards under the category “Mejor cortometraje de ficción” (Best short of fiction) (premiosgoya.com n.p.). The short film attempts to sensitize its audience to the trauma immigrants go through crossing the Mediterranean Sea by making a connection between the dehumanized *patera* narratives and the most tender feelings of a mother.

Cinematography makes the short shine even when its action occurs at night. *Nana* is only one minute and 20 seconds long, yet it is captivating because of its creative use of technology and camerawork. Its framing is a perfect demonstration of Gilles Deleuze’s famous statement that “frame is limitation” (13). With this concept, Deleuze explains that film is powerful because of two somewhat paradoxical features: one, it shows the limitless power of the director in guiding the gaze of the viewer exactly and only where it chooses through the camerawork; and two, that this implicit limitation forces the audience to think outside the box of framing and reflect on their emotions, fears, and passions that the film evokes. Rodríguez Melcón’s technical abilities reflect this paradox.
wonderfully. After a brief pre-roll of acknowledgements, the first image fades in to focus as an extreme close-up shot of the face of an infant sleeping in a very peaceful manner

(Baby Sleeping – Nana)

Accompanying this first image, the soundtrack only furthers the sense of peace and harmony. A singular female voice sings a lullaby unaccompanied by any instruments. While the language of the song is not Spanish, the tone and melody identify it as a universal lullaby a mother would use to soothe her child. This universality of the tender relationship between mother and child makes this first introduction to the short emotionally powerful to any audience. Next, the camera pans slightly left and then up to reveal the mother without changing the focal length or zoom level in the frame. At first, Ramata Koite, the only credited actress, who plays the mother, looks at her child totally absorbed in an image of absolute tranquility.
Next, she gazes at an unidentified location, stops singing for a moment, displays a certain unmistakable fright in her gaze, and looks back at the infant to continue her lullaby. The camera slowly starts zooming out while maintaining eye level with the mother and revealing more of the background. The viewer is surprised to realize the mother is in a rather crowded boat afloat on the sea at night.
Imigrants in a *Patera - Nana*

There appears to be no functioning engine, and the other passengers look terrified at the prospect of being lost at sea. The sounds of the waves now mix with the lullaby and act as a menacing counterbalance to the sweet voice of the woman. Suddenly, a giant wave covers the frame completely and the camera continues to zoom out with an increased speed. The boat disappears for a moment and then reappears smaller and smaller as the camera moves away to a bird’s eye position. Ultimately, the boat disappears among the undulating giant waves, and the song is swallowed by the rushing wind and the crashing waves. In the end, the image fades to black and the end credits roll.

The message of the short is very clear despite the singing in a foreign language. Imaculada Gordillo Álvarez notes that “es fácil identificarse con el personaje que tan dulcemente canta una nana al arrullo de las olas, y compadecerse ante las enormes diferencias que se establecen entre los seres humanos por el simple hecho de nacer en lugares geográficos diferentes” (it is easy to identify with the character that so sweetly sings a lullaby among the soft murmur of the waves and sympathize with the enormous
differences that separate humans beings for being born in distinct geographical locations) (8). Thus, the director Rodríguez Melcón surprises his audience by taking them on a very short journey from the absolute comfort of the mother rocking her baby with a peaceful lullaby to the total despair of an overcrowded boat in the middle of the sea which is rocked by giant menacing waves. As described in chapter one and two, though immigrants to Spain are often portrayed by the media as invaders, Rodríguez Melcón dissuades this reading by building an empathetic connection between the mother and baby and his viewers. Attempting to fight the apathy of a Spanish public similar to the one described by Isaac Rosa’s 2006 short story “Rasgos Occidentales” where readers ignored over 200 bodies of black Africans, the director humanizes the tragedy of countless people through the creative use of the limitation of frame, camera work, and a superb soundtrack.

This filmic representation of immigration in this short is complex but not without its ideological faults as it continues to associate African immigrants to Spain with *pateras* even when most immigrants to Spain arrive through other means. In an interview with Manuel Sobrino30, we confirm that “la llegada irregular de personas [en España] hace que la gente crea que la migración es a través de esas vías [pateras] son muy grandes y [en realidad] pueden reflejar entre tres y cinco porciento, depende del año, pero [que es] un porcentaje mínimo de la población que llega a Europa” (the irregular arrival of persons [in Spain] makes people believe that these types of migrations [by dinghy] are massive, but [in reality] they only account for, depending on the year, three to five percent, [which

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30 Manuel Sobrino is in charge of media communications at the non-government organization, Red Acoge, in Spain. This 2015 interview, among others, was facilitated by a Dissertation Enhancement Award from the University of Kentucky.
is a minimal percentage of people that reach Europe) (Icleanu “Entrevista con Manuel Sobrino y Red Acoge” 14). Sobrino is accurate in stating that immigration by *patera* to Spain is minimal\(^{31}\) compared to all immigrants that get to Europe legally by ships, airplanes, and trains. In this way, the disparity between stereotype and reality is enormous, and *Nana* does not dispel this notion. Moreover, besides the foregrounding the prominent *patera* metaphor, Rodríguez Melcón associates it with the familiar context of waves (oleadas) and sub-Saharan Africans (subsaharianos), cultural constructs that lend themselves to negative connotations in the Spanish context because of their overuse in the media.

This being the case, the director does not only use stereotype to reinforce it, but rather he brings it to the forefront to also humanize its protagonists. That is, in a typical ‘sentimental education’ manner, *Nana* makes use of a stereotype and then creatively changes its connotation to make it positive. Thus, by connecting with the viewer through the love mothers have for their children, Rodríguez Melcón is able to portray a multifaceted representation of a *patera* crossing in a way that redescribes apathy toward the subject with tenderness and compassion.

Besides *Lekk* and *Nana*, the 2006 short film directed by Coke Riobóo, *El viaje de Saïd* (Saïd’s Trip) has received a lot of critical attention. In fact, it won the very prestigious Goya award and the Guadalajara International Film Festival for the best

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\(^{31}\) In 2007, only one percent of immigrants arrived to Spain in small boats, specifically 9,000 people compared to the 920,534 migrants who arrived by other means (lemigrant.net n.p.). In 2010 the number of immigrants arriving to Spain by unsafe boats had dropped to its lowest: 3,632 persons (Elmundo.es n.p.). In 2013, 45% of irregular immigrants arrived to Spain by boat (Fernández n.p.), however this high presentence is misleading because the total number of immigrants arriving in Spain had substantially decreased due to the economic recession.
animated short in 2007. Furthermore, the short won the third place at the Iberoamerican Short Film Competition in the shorts category. The talented Spanish director and animator brings the cautionary tale of Saïd to life through the medium of clay animation as a means to facilitate the reception of his message by a younger audience.

Ideologically, the short film is meant to dissuade Moroccan young men and children from endangering their lives crossing the Mediterranean Sea for a European dream that is almost impossible to achieve. Riobóo shows his dedication to his goal through the incredibly hard work or animating clay as well as through the short’s dialogue and soundtrack. In the El viaje de Saïd, Making off (sic) video, the director describes how the film came to be: “Hemos estado dos meses en la construcción de los decorados. Llevamos unos seis meses de rodaje para hacer seis minutos, o sea que más o menos llevamos una media de un minuto por mes de trabajo” (We have worked two months on the construction of the scenery. It took us about six months of filming to make [a short of] six minutes, that is, more or less a minute of film per month of work) (2:37).

Thus when “podemos llegar a tardar para hacer un plano de tres segundos unas cinco o seis horas” (it takes five or six hours of work for every three seconds) (3:05) the intended message of El viaje de Saïd is carefully calculated.

In addition to the animation, the dialogue of the short also aids in the furthering of Riobóo’s message. The director features Arabic as the de-facto language of the short with Castilian in a supporting role where appropriate. This makes sense, as the protagonist of the short film is a Moroccan boy whose language is Arabic. Furthermore, the language of the film points to its primary audience. Riobóo recounts that the short is “dirigido principalmente a los jóvenes marroquíes, cuyas expectativas sobre España están
claramente distorsionadas por la necesidad de encontrar un futuro un poco más esperanzador” (directed mainly at Moroccan youth, whose expectations about Spain are clearly distorted by the need to have a more hopeful future) (Gordillo Álvarez 5).

Furthermore, the songs featured in the short film are of exceptional high quality. They are catchy and perfectly address a juvenile audience for whom claymation is captivating. Thus, the creative medium, the dialogue, and the soundtrack work together to dissuade young Moroccan boys from attempting to cross the Mediterranean and risk their lives unnecessarily.

The basic plot of El viaje de Saïd centers on a young Moroccan boy who lives with his mother by the Mediterranean Sea.

(Saïd Playing in Front of his Moroccan Home - *El viaje de Saïd*)

The director explains: “‘El viaje de Saïd’ es la historia de un niño marroquí que cruza el estrecho por casualidad. Al otro lado, se encuentra que su viaje, lejos de ser feliz, se puede convertir en una pesadilla.” (“Saïd’s Trip” is the story of a Moroccan child that
crosses the Strait [of Gibraltar] accidentally. On the other side, he finds out that his trip, far from a happy one, could turn into a nightmare.) (Escribano and Catá 1:58). Like many others, his father had left for Spain in search of a better future and never returned.

While the director never reveals the fate of the father, his absence strongly implies his death while crossing the sea. Even so, Saïd dreams of crossing and reaching what he perceives to be a paradise. While fishing, he falls asleep and dreams that he crosses the straight and arrives in Spain. His eyes are big with amazement and wonder at the marvelous things he sees. He feels welcomed and enters a fair that symbolically highlights the riches of Spain. There he finds the typical fair extravaganza: games, rides, food, and loud music. An animated bull character representing the Spanish dream, sings to him a welcoming song telling him: “Hola amiguito. Pequeño morito. Déjate llevar. Vamos a jugar. Mira tu alrededor. No tengas temor. Olvida tu miseria. Bienvenido a esta feria.” (Hi friend. Little Moorish man. Go with the flow. Look around you. Don’t be
afraid. Forget your misery. Welcome to this fair.) (El viaje de Saïd 2:57). The welcoming is fantastic and Saïd is ecstatic to be in Spain and partake of the amazing benefits that the bull shows him.

Riobóo then makes clear that the bull is no more than a false representation of the greatness of Spain by confronting Saïd with the harsh realities of an undocumented immigration through a set of trials. Emblematically, Saïd is exposed to popular opinions about African immigrants in Spain by playing a ball-tossing fair game. As he targets a selection of Spanish puppets representative of bureaucratic state employees, corrupt employers, racist persons, and cruel politicians, the young man is played a variety of troublesome soundbites meant to teach him that Spain is not the dream he hoped it would be. The bureaucrat tells the boy: “A ver, ¿tiens permiso de residencia? ¿Algún contrato temporal? Así sin nada, no te puedo ayudar.” (Let’s see, do you have a residency permit? Any temporal contract? Like this, without any documents, I can’t help you.) (4:34). The employer, comments: “Mira chaval, yo sin papeles no te puedo contratar. Me la juego, ¿me entiendes? Buen se podría apañar. Trabajas un poquito menos. Si viene algún inspector te escondes. ¿Vale?” (Look boy, without papers, I can’t hire you. I risk my bacon; do you understand? Well, we could arrange something. You work a little less and if an inspector arrives, you hide. You got it?) (4:48). A racist woman defends herself: “Yo no tengo nada contra vosotros. No soy racista. Solo digo una cosa: Me parece super mal que tenéis que estar con mafias y trapicheos. Así nunca vais a integraros.” (I have nothing against you all. I am not a racist. I just have to say one thing: It seems to be super bad that you have to be involved in mafias and always scheming. Like this, you will never integrate.) (4:59) And finally a politician puts it: “Mire Ud. Nosotros no podemos
Hay que ser serios.” (Look sir. We can’t leave the doors open. Look sir, it would be
chaos. It would be irresponsible. We have to be serious) (5:10). These scenes anger the
boy, and his Spanish dream slowly dispels into a sad reality fraught with perils and
discrimination. Ironically, the game is rigged, and even though he hits each target, he gets
no prize— no doubt a reflection of the director’s opinion of Spain’s reluctance to treat
immigrants fairly.

Lastly, the director Coke Riobóo takes Saïd on a carnival ride called “Patera
Adventure” (Dinghy Adventure) in which Saïd is put in a small boat and thrust down
dark tunnels indicative of a spook ally populated by dead Moroccan men and children
who sing songs about their untimely death in the Mediterranean Sea.

(Patera Missadventure - El viaje de Saïd)

They also unmistakably tell Saïd not to leave his country because the journey is utterly
dangerous and unforgiving. The ride ends with Saïd thoroughly convinced of never
undertaking such a treacherous journey. He wakes up on the beach where the story
started realizing his trip to Spain had only been a dream. With a fishing rod in his hand, he feels the line pulling and reels-in a big fish, which makes him smile to the fortune of his simple yet safe life. Finally, Saïd smiles and walks home with the fish under his arm thus ending the short.

(Saïd Returns Home - *El viaje de Saïd*)

As mentioned, Coke Riobóo created the short in order to inform the Moroccan youth about the danger of crossing the Mediterranean Sea and the poor prospects of living in Spain. In an interview he reinforces this opinion: “Me gustaría resaltar la falta de conocimiento que existe entre nosotros, de las razones que impulsan a nuestros vecinos a jugarse la vida por un trabajo miserable y un trato de ciudadano de segunda clase” (I would like to highlight the lack of understanding between our two peoples and the reasons that propel our neighbors to risk their lives for a miserable job and to be treated like second-class citizens) (Gordillo Álvarez 5). What makes Riobóo’s proposition so splitting is the fact that he is not opposed to immigration. In fact, in the short
documentary of the making of *El viaje de Saïd* he says: “Creo que esa gente tiene el derecho a venir. Creo que esa gente tiene el derecho a intentar buscar en Europa lo que no tienen en sus países. Si vienen, no es por gusto; si vienen, no es por robarnos lo nuestro, sino porque no les queda otra salida, otra alternativa. Me sentía obligado de contar esta historia” (I believe that these people have a right to come. I believe that these people have a right to attempt to look for the things in Europe that they don’t have in their countries. If they come, it is not because they feel like it; if they come it is not to steal what is ours; they only come because they have no other way out, no other alternatives. I felt obligated to tell this story) (6:45). Thus, Riobóo shows he fully understands the reasons people leave their countries and even believes in an open immigration policy; yet, he would prefer that Moroccans stay in their country rather than risk their lives for what, in his opinion, would amount to a life of discrimination and poor job opportunities.

In effect, Riobóo mirrors some of the dualities of the Spanish Immigration Law, political discourse on immigration, and the media when it comes to dissuading foreigners from migrating as shown in Chapter 1. Nevertheless, his motives are based on his perceived inability of the Spanish people to change and accept these newcomers as an integral part of their society. Thus, Riobóo attempts to dissuade Moroccans from coming instead of turning his creativity inward to his own society and attempt to make it more just. The image of Saïd returning home and smiling with his new-caught fish under his arm is deceiving. In no way has the life of the boy improved. He continues to be without a father, they live in what appears to be utter poverty, and he still has no prospects for a brighter future. It may be that his life is saved; however, Riobóo does little to improve the representation and treatment of immigrants for his Spanish viewers who despite not being
the target audience, form a significant portion of his spectators as attested by the many awards the show has received.

Unlike Rodríguez Melcón’s attempt to dissuade young Moroccans from emigrating, in the 2012 Ngutu short film, the Spanish director Felipe del Olmo and the Venezuelan director Daniel Valledor of Ngutu focus on the problematics of invisibility that immigrants from Africa suffer in Spain. Malcom Sité is a Senegalese man who is attempting to understand the reasons why nobody will buy his newspapers.

His name and the newspaper he sells are key words in understanding Ngugu’s dilemma. Ngutu, meaning “lips” in the Māori language (“ngutu” Te Aka Online Māori Dictionary n.p.), references a pre-European migratory people who were expert in boat making and who spoke peculiarly (Graham 159). Like his name implies, Ngutu speaks Spanish with a heavy accent and relentlessly tries to integrate into his new life in Spain. To do so, he sells newspapers. His employer told him: “Tu ponte donde pasa gente” (Place yourself where people crowd) (00:39) in order to sell more newspapers. His speech and the color of his skin betray him as foreign, and he is ignored by the people he approaches. He tries everything in order to sell more; he even says: “aprendí español muy bien, ya casi ni se notaba que era de Senegal” (I learned Spanish very well, one could barely notice that I was from Senegal anymore) (00:46). The only person who purchases a copy from him tosses the paper right after he pays him, signaling that he just wanted to give Ngutu some money out of pity. This troubles Ngutu as he believes the newspaper is very good. “El Farolillo,” the name of the newspaper he sells, is very telling to his situation. As a farolillo is a Spanish word for a paper or plastic lantern “que sirve para adornar en verbenas y fiestas” (that is used as a decoration at dances and parties)
(“farolillo” *Diccionario de la lengua española*), Ngutu also appears to be an overlooked decoration in the Spanish milieu. Moreover, the name of the newspaper may also indicate Ngutu’s social status. In Spanish, the expression *farolillo rojo* translates currently to a last-place competitor in sport events. It is derived from the red lantern hung on the last car of a train meant to signal that boom barriers could be lifted to allow cross traffic to flow.

![Ngutu selling the “farolillo” newspaper](image)

Ngutu selling the “farolillo” newspaper suggests that he is like the man from the countryside whose doors are always locked in Franz Kafka’s “Before the Law” as commented in Chapter 1. Thus, Ngutu’s name, linguistic ability, and occupation, place him last in the Spanish society.

Nevertheless, Ngutu does not give up until he finds a solution to his problem. When not working, Ngutu observes how nonchalantly Spaniards spend their money by throwing coins in fountains, putting them in jukeboxes, and purchasing from vending machines. This shows him that spending a few coins is not the problem as he initially thought. Ngutu then has an idea to fashion a vending machine by painting in red a
board box that goes around his body to conceal his identity. He gets inside and sits silently in the middle of a crowded plaza. Suddenly, Ngutu starts selling newspapers and exclaims: “Y ahora sí, ahora me va mejor. Porque ahora lo entiendo. Porque a nadie le preocupa perder unas monedas. Lo que realmente la gente no quiere es tenerte que mirarte a la cara.” (And now, now I’m doing better because now I understand. Because no one cares about wasting a few coins. What people really don’t want is having to look you in the eye) (3:03).

(Avoiding Discrimination? - Ngutu)

Ngutu internalizes his dehumanization, by becoming the farolillo rojo in order to ensure his survival. He stands as a “wake-up” symbol to those who ignore him and who prefer to ignore immigrants of African origin. At length, Ngutu understands why he was ignored. It had nothing to do with the quality of his newspaper, nor with its cost, rather it had to do with Ngutu’s origin. He comes to understand that he represents a marginalized part of the Spanish society that Spanish citizens would rather overlook.

Technically, the directors fashion the short as a self-conscious documentary. Ngutu goes about his business and confronts his invisibility as a limited intradiegetic
protagonist; however, at key moments, he turns to the camera and comments as an omniscient narrator on his situation in order to provide context. The doubling of an extradiegetic narrator with an intradiegetic character in order to metacritique the culture that rejects him, is both original and also acts to sensitize the Spanish audience to the plight of Africans in Spain. As the film highlights his difficult situation, it reminds the audience to pay more attention to “una realidad que no nos es ajena que tratamos de no ver y mantener ajena a nuestras conciencias” (a reality that is not foreign to us yet one that we attempt to un-see and maintain foreign from our conscience) (“Ngutu, ironía y crítica sobre la inmigración y la pobreza” n.p.).

Supplementing the narratological creativity of the short film, the cinematography works in unassuming yet important ways to strengthen its critique. The framing of the shots is always fixed, and the camera never pans, zooms, tilts, or tracks except on one single occasion. At times, this stillness of the framing is maddening because it could have been much easier to track some of the moving subjects to follow the action; instead, the camera only captures vignettes, separated by cuts to other stationary frames and angles that have been previously zoomed in or focused to follow the action. Because the transitions are instantaneous, the flow of the scenes is rather rigid, stiff, and unbending. Thus, the cinematography parallels the rigid attitude in which passersby treat Ngutu. The editing may also lend itself to the notion that natives perceive immigration as a disturbing element they would rather avoid. The citizens’ knowledge of immigration issues is also fragmented by the media that shows immigration in vignettes suiting their interests rather than humanizing stories meant to paint a fuller picture. And even though the camera puts Ngutu in the center of the frame, he is as if invisible despite his attributes that make him
stand out: a heavy accent, dark skin, and an animated posture. He is not noticed because the other characters do not want to acknowledge him as a part of the majority culture. The only time the camera breaks this fragmented editing and gyrates around Ngutu is the moment when the protagonist proclaims: “Y ahora, sí. Ahora me va mejor, porque ahora lo entiendo” (And now… yes. Now things are going better, because now I understand.) (3:05). The camera’s rotational motion centers on Ngutu as a stationary object looking around as he internalizes his undesirable status. Thus, the directors assign fluidity to Ngutu in contrast to the rigidity of the passersby at precisely the moment when he comes up with a solution. Therefore, the cinematography strengthens a brutal reality: immigrants are often perceived as less desirable than inanimate objects because Spanish citizens interact with machines but actively avoid those who look and speak differently.

What makes the message of Felipe del Olmo and Daniel Valledor’s short so effective is the way in which they approach sharing their point of view. The directors build empathy toward the immigrant by placing viewers into his impossible situation. Furthermore, the directors cast Ngutu as a strong individual who will not let himself be snubbed regardless of his challenges. Ngutu’s creative approach to racism is not to fight against it, but to internalize it and use it to the advantage of immigrants. Ngugu, the character, decides to hide his distinctive skin behind his makeshift vending machine, he stops speaking in order to not reveal his accent, and he stands motionless. This makes him successful; however, this success costs him his individuality. He is now like a cold machine, objectified by those who need to read the news. This obviously leads to both a positive and a negative message. It shows how Ngutu is a strong individual, and, at the same time, it shows how vulnerable his position is in the Spanish society. As the short
film implies, Ngutu’s case is not singular. Strolling through major cities in Spain, it is impossible not to run into countless ambulant African32 salesmen and Romanis33 chasing tourists in order to make a meager living. Shockingly, few people ever look their way. Similar to the way Ngutu is treated, these people live invisible and subaltern lives on the fringes of mainstream culture. This is why the critique of the Spanish society in Ngutu is timely and at the same time so disconcerting. In effect, the short is a wake-up call to Spanish citizens to notice those people in vulnerable situations. At the same time, it asks immigrants to stay strong and turn racism into their benefit. Nevertheless, even when successful, the immigrant remains invisible to his host society. As soon as he sheds his fake vending machine costume, he returns to his invisible status again. This conclusion is not unlike Coke Riobóo’s ending to El viaje de Saïd, in that it gives a solution consistent with the director’s ideological and aesthetic purpose; nevertheless, it gives in to discursive impotence against the many problems affecting immigrants of African origin in Spain.

Lastly, Un lugar mejor (A Better Place), the 2013 short film directed by Moisés Romera and Marisa Crespo, offers an entertaining and surprising view of Spain’s economic situation. Besides winning the Jury Award at the 2014 Festival Internacional de Cortometraje Social: Solo para Cortos (International Festival of Social Short Film: Only Shorts) and being nominated for a Golden Danzante at the 2014 Huesca Film Festival, the short claims to have won “More than 60 awards” and that is has been shown at “More than 280 festivals.”

32 For more information about ambulant African salesmen, see the report in the newspaper El Día entitled “Vendedores ambulantes se buscan la vida en Barcelona” (ElDia.com).
33 Fundación Secretariado Gitano (Gypsy Secretariat Foundation) explains how the largest minority in Spain conducts its daily affairs. (Gitanos y gitanas hoy.)
The plot of the short revolves around a ruse that involves African immigrants, despite the short’s focus on the grim Spanish economy. Taking advantage of the viewers’ stereotypes associated with Africa’s endemic problems of poverty and corruption, the directors of *Un lugar mejor* frame the short to mirror these generalizations. The soundtrack by Thimbo Samb deepens the feeling of place by accompanying the first shot of a severely abused soccer ball with sounds of African drums and tribal chants. In the next close-up, a bare-footed and dark-skinned boy kicks the ball. In the following sequences, a hand-held camera cuts from the frantic dribbling and foot-play of the young men to close-ups of their faces to show their delight, intensity of emotion, and reactions to the soccer game.

(Boys Playing Soccer - *Un lugar mejor*)

Stereotypically, the players wear dirty clothes, push and shove, and trash-talk each other as they hold on to or lose the ball. Reinforcing the feeling the action taking place in Africa, the boys speak Wolof, the most popular language of Senegal. In the excitement of the moment, Serigne (played by Serigne Ndiaye) asks the others: “¿Chicas, ya lleváis
sujetador?” (Hey girls, have you already got a bra?) (0:42) to which Demba replies in jest: “Sí, llevo en un bolsillo el de tu hermana y en el otro el de tu madre” (Yes, I have got your sister’s bra in one pocket and your mother’s in the other) (0:44). Immediately thereafter, Serigne pushes down Demba and rages: “¡Tú a mi madre ni la nombres, cabrón! ¡Retíralo!” (Don’t talk about my mother, bastard! Take it back!” (0:46). While this behavior is not unusual in most cultures, it goes to emphasize the volatile nature of these high school young men and sets them apart as both juvenile and unpredictable. After this incident, Serigne leaves the game and the others sit down to discuss why Serigne was so offended.

The directors frame the shot as if the boys were in the savanna. There are no buildings, roads, or other man-made structures besides tall yellow grass and dirt. The low-angle establishing shot at 1:10 frames the backs of the sitting boys partially obstructed by long strands of sun burned grass.

(Africa? - Un lugar mejor)

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34 Official translation provided by the producers of the short as English subtitles.
Further establishing their remoteness and lack of resources, the young men start smoking cigarettes they roll themselves using loose tobacco wrapped in a piece of paper rather than name-brand cigarettes. In this way, Moisés Romera and Marisa Crespo set the stage for their message. The setting appears to be African in every symbolical way a European could conceive. The soundtrack, the protagonists, their language, their clothing, and the savanna-like setting all contribute to this initial conclusion.

When the young men sit down and discuss Serigne’s mother for a brief moment, it appears that candor and logic prevail in order to balance out their earlier exuberance. Thimbo explains that Serigne’s mother “estaba harta de ellos, que su padre le pegaba todos los días y se largo [al norte] sin avisar” (was fed up with them and his father used to beat her everyday, so she left to the north [unexpectedly]) (1:24). Here again, the directors reinforce the representation of Africans as violent, unwilling to deal with their own problems, and preferring to run away from their problems to new lands. In this film, the north refers to Europe which is perceived as a paradisiacal place. The boys say that “Allí todos los políticos son honrados y todo el mundo tiene trabajo” ([there] politicians are honest and everybody has a job) (2:14). This better place directly opposes this “puto país” (fucking country) (1:38) where the boys play soccer and converse. Malik rejects the idea and responds “¡Estás loco! ¿Por qué quieres irte de aquí? Aquí no se está mal” (You’re crazy! Why do you want to leave this place? Here is not so bad) (1:58). Demba shuts him down: “¿No? ¿Cuánto tiempo lleva tu padre sin trabajar? ¿Cuánto tiempo hace que no te compran ropa nueva?” (No? How long has been your father without a job? Do you remember the last time you bought new clothes?) (2:03). This conversation plays into the stereotype that economic progress in Africa is a literal impossibility. Demba explains
that he has raised enough money to leave northward and concludes, “Este país da asco. En el norte todo va mejor… Lo dice todo el mundo… ¿No ves la tele?” (This country stinks. Everything is better in the north countries. Don’t you watch TV?) (2:08). Pitching in, the youngest of the boys also wants to leave to the north countries without the supervision of his parents. This is another unhelpful stereotype that reminds the Spanish viewers of the many unaccompanied African children who cross the Mediterranean in hopes of a better future. Even the youngest believes, like his father, that “todo está podrido y hay que irse de aquí” (everything is corrupted, and we must leave from here) (2:12). Demba tells Malik that “Yo solo sé que aquí todo es una mierda y que me largo en cuanto pueda” (The only thing I know is that here everything is a shit and I’m leaving as soon as I can) (2:54) in an effort to end the conversation. Throughout the short the directors purposely show the hopelessness of place and the determination of the characters to immigrate. All of a sudden, the director’s ruse unravels as Thimbo puts on a Spanish World Cup t-shirt and says, “Aquello será el puto paraíso pero… ¡Antes al menos éramos los campeones!” (That will be fucking paradise but before we were the champions [sic]) (2:58) pointing his finger at the logo on his shirt. Among the laughter that ensues in the short, the viewer has a chance to reflect and re-center the geographical assumptions about the film and realize that the boys had been in Spain the whole time. Moreover, the directors reveal that the boys spoke perfectly fluent and autochthonous-sounding Spanish when they talk to a Caucasian young man telling them they are in trouble for skipping classes.

Through the unraveling of the ruse, the directors show their vision of Spain and its relationship with immigrants from Africa. The directors put forth a view of despair in
Spain, for it is just like Africa. Economic stagnation and joblessness are driving people away to seek better opportunities someplace else. From this point of view, even immigrants, who one would expect to be happy wherever there is political stability, seek to leave. This interpretation is a hard rebuke from the directors to the Spanish government that is unable to get the country back on track to progress and prosperity. The humorous message is inescapable: when even the immigrants who represent the lowest socio-economic strata want to leave the country, then the situation in Spain must be truly hopeless. Furthermore, empathetically, the short falls terribly short because it reinforces negative stereotypes about Africans in Spain. While attempting to show the effects of the economic recession, Moisés Romera and Marisa Crespo single out the young men as juvenile, unpredictable, foolish, and lazy. Even though the system offers them a free education, these boys squander it by playing soccer outside. They are foolish for believing the TV as a purveyor of sound information about the northern European countries’ economic wealth. Moreover, they are also described as ungrateful to a country that has accepted them at great cost. Last but not least, they are also represented as time bombs with short fuses because they react instinctively throughout the film. The short suggests that the characters’ impulsiveness is a reflection of the domestic violence suffered at home, represented as indubitably an African trait. In this way, Romera and Crespo instill an image that denigrates immigrants by making public what many Spaniards possibly think but never voice. This impedes inclusive practices that attempt to aid a society to be cohesive and it further divides the Spanish citizenry into sectors that are at odds with each other. It divides, profiles, and worst of all, it puts words into the mouths of these actors that reinforce negative stereotypes about themselves. In short, two
autochthonous Caucasian Spanish directors direct these young actors to vilify themselves and other people of African descent in Spain. Thus, for the sake of humor *Un lugar mejor* augments animosity and reinforces degrading stereotypes.

Emphasizing the problematic social message of *Un lugar mejor*, Marisa Crespo and Moisés Romera reveal the creative process behind the making of this short in an interview with Enric Llopis. When asked about the message the short attempts to portray, the directors responded:

Aunque reflejamos nuestras ideas, no pretendemos mostrar respuestas cerradas a nada. Intentamos, antes que nada, entretenecer. A ser posible, sorprender, y a veces, que el espectador se plantee preguntas a temas cercanos a todos. En el caso de “Un lugar mejor”, en tres minutos se tratan muchos temas actuales. No fue algo estratégico ni planeado, teníamos la idea general y el guión lo escribimos de un tirón.

(Even though we put forth our own ideas, we do not pretend to have any closed answers to anything. We try, more than anything, to entertain. If possible, to surprise, and sometimes to have the viewers ask themselves questions about the issues that people encounter in their daily lives. In the case of “Un lugar mejor,” in three minutes we tackle many topics of current relevance. It was not something strategic nor planned, we had a general idea and we wrote the script in one sitting.)

Under the veil of the cinematic art rather than social activism, the directors skirt away from taking responsibility for the more troublesome ideas their short generates. Writing the script in one sitting emphasizes the fact that the directors gave an unfiltered response to a very troubled topic. The script is not poorly written; nevertheless, humor does not excuse it from upholding negative stereotypes. The directors’ attempt to critique Spain’s economic situation is done on the back of immigrants, who, as a result, are portrayed negatively.

Taking into consideration the characterization of immigrants in the shorts analyzed above, the following conclusions can be drawn. Aside from *Un lugar mejor*, the
rest of the shorts use empathy to connect with the viewer and inform him or her about an aspect of the lives of immigrants. All shorts also critique certain stereotypes, misconceptions, and dehumanizing features popular in the Spanish media even though most do not actually come up with any equitable solutions to the problems presented. Furthermore, the shorts foreground Spain’s growing pains before it accepts itself as a multicultural culture. Besides their positive aspects, each one of these shorts is also somewhat problematic. *Un lugar mejor* shows how those of African descent in Spain, focused only of their financial wellbeing, reject Spain’s culture and values. *El viaje de Saïd* informs Moroccan youth that immigration is a futile prospect despite the many people who have emigrated and become successful. *Ngutu* partially normalizes subalternity and racism even when it appears to fight it. *Nana* leaves one haunted by the futility of a *patera* crossing in spite the fact that only a minuscule proportion of immigrants arrive to Spain by such means. Lastly, *Lekk* hinders its positive message with poor technical skills. Essentially, while all but *Un lugar mejor* put forth important messages that aid viewers to conceptualize immigration in a positive light, they also infer that immigrants are yet to expect a certain degree of marginalization in Spain. In the end, Julio Llamazares’ assessment that “hay un fenómeno de ensimismamiento, de autocomplacencia que consiste en que las películas hablan de lo que le pasa a la gente que trabaja en el cine, no de la gente que pasa por la calle” (that there is a self-absorption and self-pleasing phenomenon that consists in that films talk about what is happening to the people that work in cinema, and not of the people that are in the streets) (Delgado Batista n.p.) is correct. Thus, shorts about immigration in Spain focus on distinct elements that concern their directors, often at the cost of immigrants as in the case of *Un
lugar mejor, El viaje de Saïd, and Ngutu with Nana and Lekk coming closest to utilizing empathy to challenge the status quo and dehumanizing concepts pervasive in the Spanish media.

As such, the directors of the most popular shorts have thus far displayed that they are more interested in providing the viewer with a compelling aesthetic and entertaining experience, than carefully forwarding solutions to very troubling social issues. It appears that even though many directors touch on social issues, fixing them is not their priority. The Spanish shorts about immigration are thus caught in a vicious cycle where the immigrant is used as an interesting hook to garner attention; nevertheless and despite their central roles in the films, the immigrants’ cause continues to be subjected to victimization, stereotypes, and marginalizing discourses.

Immigrant Representation in Spanish Feature Films

The Spanish feature film industry has had a sense of revival since the early 2000s and films about social issues have been among the most remarkable. The following films have directly explored immigration issues from a variety of genres and perspectives: Salvajes (2001), Poniente (2002), Los novios búlgaros (2003), Princesas (2005), Agua con sal (2005), Aguaviva (2005), María y Assou (2006), 14 Kilómetros (2007), Retorno a Hansala (2008), Un euro, 3,5 lei (2008), Biutiful (2010), El dios de madera (2010), Amador (2010), La puerta de no retorno (2011), and El rayo (2013). 15 films in 12 years shows that feature films about immigration are an important facet of film production in Spain and that both directors and film goers crave to see how art represents immigration, give examples of multicultural interactions, and propose solutions to the

35 See Appendix 3 for the list with their associated film directors.
concerns that affect many Spanish citizens and immigrants alike. This commitment to social justice is admirable, yet not without its faults as is analyzed in this chapter.

Among the films listed above, *Princesas* (2005) directed by Fernando León de Aranoa, *Retorno a Hansala* (2008) directed by Chus Gutiérrez, and *El dios de madera* (2010) directed by Vicente Molina Foix are perhaps the best examples of the most common way that Spanish films discuss immigration.36 In this section of the chapter, I show that the formulaic nature of these three films helps engender empathy that motivates Spanish citizens to change their opinions of immigrants for the better; nevertheless, with the notable exception of *Retorno a Hansala* they also symbolically sacrifice, objectify, and victimize most of their immigrant protagonists. As such, these films put forth a discernable pattern in the which they first show how immigrants are societally abused and marginalized in Spain. Secondarily, this victimization in turn generates empathy and compassion from Spanish citizens who feel compelled to care for these new friends. Lastly, while the autochthonous protagonists are healed, changed, or fulfilled, the fate of the immigrants is left mostly to uncertainty. With the exception of *Retorno a Hansala*, the immigrants thus become a symbol for renewal in the lives of Spanish citizens while they themselves rarely see any benefits. This cognitive dissonant message makes feature films about immigration rewarding and troublesome at the same time.

Like short films, feature films about immigration in Spain also attempt to dispel the premise that immigrants in Spain are a negative feature of the society. Invariably, the main protagonists of the films who are Spanish citizens have a negative view of

36 A more complete list of films about immigration can be found in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3.
immigrants and, because of this outlook, they treat immigrants with cruelty and xenophobia. Diverging from shorts, feature films use character development tools to reshape this initial negativity and show ways through which immigrants and natives can better understand each other. Most often, the directors use a ‘sentimental approach’ to build empathy and chip away at the fear that other media and political speech use to garner attention. In this way, feature films show how individuals benefit from interactions with immigrants; however, on a societal level, these films also demonstrate that Spain is still unprepared to welcome immigrants. The dissonant nature of these films puts into conflict individual healing and societal indifference by dividing their local and immigrant audiences with messages of renewal for some and often exclusion for the others.

Each one of the three films I analyze below approaches immigration from a particular perspective on immigration. Princesas deals with immigration and prostitution, Retorno a Hansala features a Spaniard discovering Morocco and its people, and El dios de madera attempts to reconcile Spain’s Catholic and white background with other races and religions; and yet, all follow the same patterned approach to getting to know immigrants and changing their lives for the better.

Xenophobia and Cruelty as the Norm

Fernando León de Aranoa (1968) is a Spanish screenwriter known for exploring difficult ethical situations such as youth involvement in gangs, prostitution, and immigration. In Princesas, he examines the difficulties brought on by illegal immigration, addresses gender violence, and explores multicultural community creation through the lens of prostitution. By addressing this controversial topic, the director creates a world that allows him to discuss issues that extend beyond prostitution and
affect the entire country. Through analogy and empathy, Aranoa portrays a non-dogmatic and meaningful way to get to know the Immigrant-as-Other by showing how a simple friendship between Caye (Candela Peña), a Spanish sex worker, and Zulema (Micaela Nevárez), a mulata immigrant sex worker from the Dominican Republic, transforms into a discovery of human acceptance, a discourse against violence, and a critique of current Spanish immigration laws. The economic crisis of 2008 acts as the background to the plot of the film. Furthermore, 2008 is a year in which immigrants continued to arrive in Spain in considerable numbers before the drop-off of 2009. Because of the harrowing economic recession and the increase in foreign nationals in Spain, many citizens saw themselves threatened by immigration and some responded with a mix of negative feeling and xenophobia. Aranoa demonstrates these emotions from the onset in *Princesas* persuasively.

Fernando León de Aranoa underscores the premise that the Spanish society treats its immigrants inhumanely. Emblematic of Spanish films about immigration, the onset of *Princesas* establishes xenophobia as the norm. Zulema, the immigrant protagonist, is marginalized from a variety of standpoints. As Gayatri Spivak wrote, “if you are poor, black, and female you get it in three ways” (294); Aranoa shows that women in Zulema’s situation are even more in danger of marginalization because beside being women, poor, and mulatto, they are also irregular immigrants. Thus, Zulema becomes a symbol targeted by the brunt of xenophobia and violence for reasons entirely avoidable. Aranoa describes in his essay “Las mujeres invisibles,” (The Invisible Women) why he chose sex workers

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37 According to Table 1, Chapter 1 of this dissertation, more than 217,540 immigrants from Latin-America, Eastern Europe, and North Africa arrived to Spain in 2008.
as his protagonists in this film: “Las mujeres invisibles carecen además de voz. Oiréis a muchos hablar en su nombre, nunca a ellas. Cuando las quieran salvar, cuando las quieran proteger, cuando las quieran esconder, cuando las quieran echar, tampoco podréis escucharlas, porque nadie les pregunta nada, nunca.” (The invisible women lack a voice. You will hear many talk in their name, but never them. When they want to save them, when they want to protect them, or desire to hide them, when they try to send them away, you still can’t hear them, because nobody ever asks them anything) (139). As nobody pays attention to these women, they end up being dehumanized, further made subaltern, and open to an unchecked mistreatment.

Aranoa portrays the segregated physical spaces in the film as a symbol of the animosity between the immigrant sex workers and the local competition. This is best represented in Princesas by the clear division between the autochthonous and immigrant access to Peluquería Gloria (Gloria’s Hair Salon). In the hair salon, Gloria (Llum Barrera) refuses to offer African braids as an option because she believes they are unhygienic and incompatible with Spanishness, and in addition, the immigrant women are discouraged from entering the premises.

Furthermore, Aranoa demonstrates this combative attitude in the way the autochthonous co-workers perceive the immigrants. In Peluquería Gloria of Providence Street a few autochthonous sex-workers converse about the status of their profession.

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38 The street name highlights the disparity between the historically charged word *providence* and its ironic use in the film. “Providence (usually capitalized) ‘God as beneficent caretaker,’ first recorded c. 1600, from earlier use of the word for ‘God’s beneficient care or guidance’ (14c.), short for divine providence, etc. The noun in Latin occasionally had a similar sense” (“providence” *Online Etymology Dictionary*).
(Peluquería Gloria - Princesas)

(Layout of the Peluquería Gloria - Princesas)
After a disorienting camera pan that resembles the eyesight of a person inside the hair salon (Aranoa 10:23) looking out into the street, the viewers are shown women of mainly African origin who wait for male clients to arrive. Caren (Violeta Pérez) condemns the new workers: “They’re the worst. The worst, Gloria. Since they came, this is a jungle. They’ll fuck for 20 euros. Some even for 15. Blowjobs for 10, like junkies. … Gloria, I only work half as much since they came” (10:47). After some culturally appropriate but hollow resistance from her friends, Caren continues her argument based on the what she knows of the economy: “That’s not it. You’re wrong. It’s not racism. The problem is the market. The laws of the market. Not the supermarket, the other one. It’s demand and competition. There’s not enough demand and there’s no competition. The Minister of Economics said it on TV” (11:43). Aranoa thus lets his viewers know that often a xenophobic attitude toward immigrant workers is based on fallacious thought driven by fear of uncertainty. Caren’s understanding of economic principles is used as a shield for racism and intolerance. The autochthonous sex workers do not take into consideration the poor treatment of immigrants and the sacrifice they make to leave their country in order to prostitute themselves in Spain. They are more concerned that the foreigners are possibly diminishing their work prospects. As economic researchers have “not found a significant negative effect of immigration [in Spain] on either the employment rates or wages of native workers” (Raquel Carrasco et al. 627), Aranoa attempts to correct this misunderstanding throughout the rest of the film.

Adding to the xenophobia and misinformation of the prostitutes at Peluquería *Gloria*, is the way in which Aranoa shows immigrant women like Zulema being abused.

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39 The Spanish – English translation is provided by the official subtitles of the film.
by other sectors of the Spanish society. The prime example of this abuse is exemplified in her relationship with an immigration clerk (Antonio Durán Morris) known simply as the funcionario (civil servant). Not giving a name to this figure of legal authority leads to his representation as an administer of the Spanish law and not a single and corrupt individual. Through their interaction, Aranoa is able to put forth the desperate situation that undocumented immigrants experience and, at the same time, their abuse by those who hold power over them. At a diner, Zulema and the funcionario meet to discuss the terms of their illicit agreement:

Z₄₀: Can I see them? [The civil servant had previously promised to complete her change-of-status immigration paperwork.]

F₄₁: They’ve given me a lot of trouble. You have no idea. I needed a duplicate with a signature… And my friend in the registry, he’s not here. He took a few days off.

Z: Can I see them?

F: Did anyone see you? Are you meeting anyone later?

Z: I want to see my papers.

F: They’re not yours. Remember that.

Z: Show them to me.

F: Not here. Someone can see me. Let’s go to my place. We have time. When are you going out?

Z: Show them to me and I’ll go with you. …

F: Let’s go!

Z: Where?

F: I’ll tell you outside. Do you want your papers?

Z: How do I know you are telling the truth?

F: You have no other choice. (58:00)

₄₀ Z – Zulema
₄₁ F – Funcionario
The civil servant and Zulema have an informal and corrupt deal whereby he prepares her paperwork if she has sex with him without remuneration. Their agreement thus becomes a symbol of the abuse of the law to immigrants. In addition to not keeping his end of the bargain, the funcionario turns violent and repeatedly rapes and beats Zulema because she has “no other choice” (59:58) nor legal recourse against him. According to Title V of the Spanish Immigration law, Zulema would in fact have a choice.\footnote{See Title V “Residencia temporal por circunstancias excepcionales” (Temporary Residency in Exceptional Circumstances) of the Ley de Extranjería de España (Ley Orgánica 4/2000).} She would have to turn in the civil servant to the police and expose those who abuse her. In an ideal situation, the government, in turn, could protect her from her abuser by giving her temporary residence along with medical assistance and a work permit. The problem in Zulema’s case is that she is oblivious of her rights under the law. She has options, but as nobody makes her aware of them, she continues to allow herself to be abused in hopes that she will regularize her legal situation. In this way, Aranoa exposes the mistreatment of undocumented immigrants and later attempts to subvert xenophobia and abuse through empathy and friendship between a Spanish citizen and Zulema.

In Retorno a Hansala (Return to Hansala), a film released three years after Princessas, Chus Gutiérrez remains faithful to the pattern common to films about immigrants. The film was nominated and won awards at various prestigious European film festivals,\footnote{Retorno a Hansala won the 2008 Golden Pyramid at Cairo International Film Festival. Moreover, it won the Jury Special Prize and was nominated for the Golden Spike at the 2008 Valladolid International Film Festival. It was also nominated in 2009 to a Goya award for Best New Actress, Best Original Screenplay, and Best Original Song. It won the Youth Jury Award at the 2009 Nantes Spanish Film Festival and Best Cinematography and Best Screenplay at Toulouse Cinespaña. Lastly, it won the 2009 Special Award at the Turia Awards.} because of the respect the film has garnered due to its inclusive message and the creative melding of the social, road-movie, and documentary styles. Miguel A.
Delgado notes that the educational intention that the film is to “dar a conocer a los espectadores el rostro humano de la inmigración, las historias y el mundo que se ocultan tras esas cifras anónimas de ahogados en el Estrecho que escuchamos sin inmutarnos cada vez que los informativos dan la noticia del hundimiento de alguna patera” (to let its viewers know the human face of immigration, the stories and the world that are hidden behind the anonymous numbers of drowned people in the Strait of Gibraltar that we hear without any compassion every time the news broadcasts tell of another drowning of some patera) (n.p.). The director begins the film with one of the most harrowing scenes seen in a Spanish immigration film: death by drowning. The scene is filmed first-person to portray the viewpoint of a man struggling to swim to shore after the capsizing of a patera-style boat. As the camera goes in and out of the water tilting, panning, and convulsing irregularly, terrifying sounds of waves and gasps of air lead the viewer’s imagination to do the work of the drowning of a man that literally sees the shore of his salvation, then succumbs to tiredness and drowns.

(Drowning at the Shore - Retorno a Hansala)
His body is carried the final feet to the shore by the now calm waters. This scene acts as a thesis to the film by showing a native audience the dangers so many people risk in crossing the Strait of Gibraltar in hopes of a better life. While the scene has no dialogue, the images are powerful enough to convey a very strong message: regardless of a person’s immigration status, their lives have the same inherent value as any other person. This humanizing and emotive approach by the Spanish director Chus Gutiérrez combats the often negative perception and representation of immigrants in Spain.

As with Fernando León de Aranoa’s *Princesas*, *Retorno a Hansala* revolves around a conflict. The plot centers on Martín (José Luis García-Pérez), a mortician who is willing to break numerous ethical norms in order to save his business. The mortician literally withholds evidence from the judge about a piece of paper he has stolen off the body of a drowned immigrant because he plans to contact the family of the man and offer to return the body back to Morocco for a handsome fee. The autochthonous protagonist’s detachment and lack of empathy to the tragedy of the situation is disturbing. This appears to be Gutiérrez’s way of typifying the lack of empathy that Spanish citizens have come to express when confronted with the tragedies of immigration. Leila (Farah Hamed), the immigrant protagonist whose brother Rachid has died in the *patera* incident at the beginning of the film, is traumatized and willing to do anything she can to return the body to her family. At a meeting discussing Leila’s brother’s body, Martín types up some quick numbers on his calculator and tells Leila: “Okay, this will run you about 3,000 euros, but we still don’t know how much tax you’ll have to pay there.”44 (17:45). Then he lights up a cigarette and finally looks up at her without the least bit of compassion. As a

44 The Spanish to English translation is provided by the official film subtitles.
matter of fact, his concern for profit continues as he accompanies Leila to Morocco. He illegally removes the clothes off the drowned people in his mortuary, and parades them along the way in Morocco hoping to get more business transporting bodies to their relatives. Moreover, when the father of one of the drowned men recognizes some of the clothes and is unable to pay the sum, Martín shows his lack of compassion by wrestling the shirt back from the grieving father. In a similar manner, when Martin is surrounded by the distraught mourners of Leila’s brother, he appears aloof, uninterested, and uncompasionate to their loss.

Thus, the Spanish protagonist is initially represented as a cruel man who does not, nor cares to, understand the suffering he causes. His singular egocentric focus of preventing his business from closing shuts his eyes to his responsibility toward others. In this way, Chus Gutiérrez portrays what she perceives as the desensitization and lack of empathy Spanish people show when confronted with the tragedies of failed migration incidents.

Lastly, Vicente Molina Foix’s *El dios de madera* delves into the complex and problematic clash of race, religion, sexuality, and cultures between citizens and
immigrants in Spain. Molina Foix is a well-known Spanish writer and director. His second novel Busto won the Premio Barral in 1973 and his films, El espíritu del animal (The Spirit of the Animal) (1971), Sagitario (Sagittarius) (2001), and El dios de madera (2010) have received much critical acclaim.

The beginning of El dios de madera also puts for the cruelty and indifference Spanish citizens show towards immigrants. The film opens up with the arrival of two stow-away persons hiding underneath a truck: the Senegalese Yao (Madi Diocou) and the Moroccan Rachid (Soufianne Ouaarab). The film’s basic plot revolves around these two immigrants and their interactions with Spaniards. The film does not break the mold when it comes to the initial cruelty shown by natives and wastes no time in showing the dangers and precarious life of these new immigrants. When Rachid is first introduced to the viewers under the truck, he looks exhausted and is bleeding from the extreme conditions of his border crossing.

(Border Crossing: Rachid Exhausted under a Truck - El dios de madera)

—as El dios de madera has won the Silver Biznaga Award at the Málaga Spanish Film Festival in 2010. The film was also a candidate in many categories at the 2011 Goya Awards.
In Yao’s case, he is immediately chased by a border patrol and later recruited by a human trafficker to sell handbags and other items on the streets of Valencia. Like others of African origin, he becomes the member of an invisible society abused by those who can, and ignored by those who prefer not to see them. María Luisa (Marisa Paredes), an elderly woman not very proud of her present, is intrigued by Yao’s appearance, but her Caucasian male suitor sees Yao as a sign of the cultural and moral decadence of Spain. When he sees him in María Luisa’s store, he sarcastically and cruelly remarks: “I see your clientele’s changing a lot” 46 (9:25) rolling his eyes to signify his disapproval that a black man would even step in her select boutique. María Luisa’s opinion of Yao is not any better either. When she finds out he is son Róber (Nao Albet) and his roommate Rachid let Yao stay at their house for a few nights she gets upset. Recounting later her words, Róber explains jokingly to his friends: “‘Roberto, this is not a shelter for the poor.’ That was the mildest thing she said” (24:48). Like her boyfriend, María Luisa believes the immigrants lower their perceived social status and is not interested in their betterment.

Rachid’s situation is not much better. When Rachid and Yao meet again in Valencia a few years after their border crossing, Rachid recounts to Yao his early experience in Spain’s capital: “Madrid, fucking great town, modern, big, but of course, sleep in the street, look for food in the trash” (12:38). This conversation highlights his dissonant reality: Spain is rich and Madrid is an awesome town, but it is out of reach for

46 The Spanish to English translation is provided by the official film subtitles.
an undocumented immigrant who is left to fend for himself in the streets. Rachid
continues his early Spanish experience:

One day, old man come in a Mercedes… long, big, fucking great, shining. The bastard had a wad of notes (bills), like this [shows with his fingers about two inches thick]… said to go to his place. What a place, what a house! In high part of Madrid. With pool. He had a dog. Know what he called the dog? Napoleon. It was white, new, shining too. I did it well [showing with his hands a universal sign of having sex]. He was very happy. (12:37)

Rachid’s experience in Madrid is Molina Foix’s way of expressing the desensitization Spanish people experience in their attitude toward immigration. Thus, the director starts the film from the premise that immigrants in Spain are either made invisible or abused without many repercussions.

As evidenced by the previous examples, all three films support the pattern that films about immigration start from a position of cruelty toward the immigrants because natives have yet to build strong connections with the newcomers. To connect with their viewers and build up their argument, the directors of these films acknowledge that immigrants are unjustly marginalized initially to then show how to build better relationship with them. With a ‘sentimental education,’ Richard Rorty explained that cruelty can be diminished when those in a position of power experience through empathy what immigrants feel. The directors of these films thus rebuke the initial cruelty of their main autochthonous by emphasizing immigrant’s shared humanity and suffering.

Toward Friendship and Understanding

The abusive situation immigrants experience in Princesas, Retorno a Hansala, and El dios de madera is shown as an unacceptable status quo. Each director attempts to redress this situation by building strong relationships between the immigrant and non-
immigrant characters. To achieve this relationship, the directors show the value that immigrants bring into the lives of the Spanish protagonists by qualitatively improving them when they are accepted as peers. Spanish directors use this empathy-building step to amend the poor treatment of immigrants in Spain.

In *Princesas*, Aranoa brings together the immigrant and the autochthonous protagonists by standing together against gendered violence and injustice. In “Érase una vez una película” (Once upon a time there was a film), Aranoa talks about his creative process in writing the script: “Pronto me olvido de que son putas. Eso es bueno, pienso. A fin de cuentas no quiero contar la historia de dos putas, quiero contar la historia de dos mujeres. Decido escucharlas, ver que me cuentan. Y me cuentan la historia de su amistad.” (Soon I forget that they are whores. This is good, I think. At the end of the day I don’t want to tell the story of two whores, I want to tell the story of two women. I decide to listen to them, see what they tell me. And they tell me the story of their friendship) (131). Aranoa’s choice to frame sexuality in the film secondarily and instead focus on their developing friendship is a humanizing example of how different people can come together and stand united against their common foes.
Their friendship begins when Caye discovers Zulema in her apartment beat-up, bruised, and traumatized. As they get into an honest conversation, the two find out that they have much they respect about each other and strike a friendship. Emphasizing what each has to offer, Zulema takes Caye on an exploration of the immigrant side of the city. They check out underwear at the open-air vendors, try Latin-American street food, and have a good time. In the spirit of friendship, Zulema opens up to Caye her intimate fears and desires. Zulema tells her about the son she left behind in the Dominican Republic. She explains that she misses him and feels guilty for having to be a sex worker in Spain. They also talk about race, sex and Caye’s goals in life. Reciprocating Zulema’s friendship, Caye teaches Zulema about the Spanish health care system and its benefits for all regardless of their immigration status. She also invites Zulema to a family dinner, which gives Zulema an opportunity to teach a sex education class at Caye’s sister-in-law’s school. As their relationship progresses, so does Caye’s appearance. She changes her hairstyle to African-style braids and borrows Zulema’s “Sexy Girl 69” shirt to go on a personal date. Lastly, Caye and Zulema confront the funcionario and together keep him
from hurting Zulema. Caye is no longer ignorant about Zulema’s struggles, and instead of judging her, she values and respects her. Through this friendship, Aranoa shows his audience that expending interpersonal relationships to include immigrants offers unexpected benefits. The director shows that it is easy to misjudge facts and to propagate stereotypes; nevertheless, when one takes the time to make friends with those who appear different, it breaks this vicious cycle of intolerance and makes both stand for justice though compassion. From this emotional point of view, Aranoa shows his audience an example of an unlikely friendship and proposes that inclusive practices heal those involved.

Chus Gutiérrez’s *Retorno a Hansala* also dismantles cultural barriers between Spaniards and foreigners. Reminiscent of the serendipitous way in which Caye discovers Zulema in a vulnerable situation and is able to strike a friendship, Martín takes a journey with Leila to Hansala only because he is advised to leave town in order to avoid bank representatives repossessing his funeral home. In fact, Martín is so desperate to leave town, that he only accepts part of the 3,000 euros he required to take her brother’s body back to Hansala. As soon as they anchor in Tangier, Leila’s resourcefulness becomes immediately apparent to Martín. At the customs, the cadaver is not allowed to cross because a form is missing, and, to make matters worse, nobody at the customs speaks Spanish. Fortunately, Leila clears up the situation by acting as an interpreter and cultural liaison between Martín and the Moroccan authorities. The director thus trades Leila’s vulnerability for Martín’s and shows her audience the benefits of befriending immigrants. For the first time, Leila acts with confidence and cannot be considered by the viewers as a desperate immigrant caught between a rock and a hard place. She now stands as a guide
and intermediary who must be treasured and respected if Martín desires to fulfill his goals. Gutiérrez thus reverses the roles the characters played in Spain by switching their power relationships.

Furthermore, Martín and Leila go through a variety of other “road movie” style encounters that aid them in getting to know each other better. For example, their van carrying Leila’s brother’s body is stolen by highway robbers. The two protagonists are left stranded in the desert to spend the night under the stars. There, Martín apologizes to Leila for his cruel treatment and attempts to make small talk by asking her what she does. “I work at the fish market in Algeciras” (37:00) says Leila matter-of-factly, “I put fish in boxes” (37:01). Martín replies crudely but sincerely, “We have the same job” (37:24), referring to humans who die at sea like her brother, as fishes. Next, curiosity pushes him to ask her how much it costs to cross the sea illegally. She responds that it costs around 3,000 euros. The response makes Martín reflect that is as a human trafficker in reverse. He also charges 3,000 euros with the difference that he brings back the bodies the human traffickers steal. Moreover, the absurdity of paying 3,000 euros to cross the Mediterranean Sea illegally, compared to the 130 euros a round trip ticket Martín and Leila paid to cross the same location safely, makes Martín aware of the injustices that the power relationships between Europe and Africa bring. As each comes to know the other’s motivations, they slowly begin to feel empathy for each other’s challenges and begin a relationship based on mutual respect.

As Martín is exposed to Leila’s family and the kindness of the Moroccan people, Gutiérrez illustrates the pattern of friendship that is the second step in becoming more
In Morocco, Martín starts to understand Leila’s point of view and feels guilty for undertaking this trip for egotistical reasons. He knows his business will fail if he does not return with the money, but at the same time, he understands that taking money by shady means from these extremely poor villagers is an ethical crime. Herant Katchadourian in his seminal book: *Guilt: The Bite of Conscience* (2010) explains how guilt works on Martín to develop empathy for the Moroccans he gets to know. Katchadourian emphasizes that guilt is an ethical feeling which depends on social interactions and writes that guilt and shame “are considered moral emotions because they involve social judgments about how one should and should not behave” (7). Furthermore, “these emotions are linked to the welfare of others and society as a whole. They provide [a] moral force to do good and to avoid doing evil” (7). Getting to know Leila helps Martín feel the weight of his actions in a new context that he was not aware of before the trip. At a pivotal point in the film Martín realizes how unfair he had been to Leila and her family. He tells her: “You think I’m a monster, right?” (1:08:30) to which Leila replies: “No, you’re like everyone else. You have your reasons” (1:08:35). Her understanding and nonjudgmental view softens Martín, who in turn commits himself to charity: “I know they can’t pay, but we need to find a way to bring their kids back” (1:08:39). This change of heart occurs partly because of the guilt that was brought on by his relationship with Leila.

Finally, Martín’s transition from egocentric insensitivity to compassion through empathy is complete when the elders of the village arrive and bring the rest of the money.

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47 The first step is the treatment of immigrants with cruelty and xenophobia and the second is building a relationship of mutual trust with immigrants.
they promised to him. The camerawork in this scene is potent as the protagonist appears to shrink before the presence of the village elders. He does not look at the people in the eye and appears utterly ashamed of taking the money. Martín acts as a person “failing to fulfill the expectations of the ego-ideal” (Katchadourian 18) when he does not live up to his new ethical standard and feels ashamed as he takes the money. Fortunately, these ethical feelings guide Martín to be more concerned with the needs of others. In fact, his new-found self cannot in good conscience accept this money, and as soon as he finds out that Leila’s younger brother has left for Spain, he gives back the money to Leila. He is now aware of the feelings of others and cannot in good conscience cheat them as before. Thus, Chus Gutiérrez shows how Martin’s friendship with Leila changes his perspective for the better and their relationship is made exemplary to the film’s Spanish audience.

In *El dios de madera* the Spanish protagonists also experience significant changes before they accept immigrants as their equals. In this instance, accepting one’s vulnerability triggers the change in perception. The characters in this film represent the upper class’ struggle toward those who are different, unlike the middle class representation in *Retorno a Hansala*, or the perceived lower class representation in *Princesas*. Molina Foix places value on relationships that are based on honesty and while each character in the film hides something that can embarrass them and make them vulnerable, they do not live up to their potential. Róber hides his homosexuality, Rachid downplays his bisexuality, Yao lies, and María Luisa keeps her past secret. When their secrets are exposed because of their new relationship with each other, the main protagonists rediscover themselves and find a new and invaluable sense of self-wroth.
Molina Foix demonstrates a way to get to know immigrants through gastronomy. Beside their intertwining sexual relationships that break their seemingly impossible relationships, the characters of *El dios de madera* are at their happiest when they meet for a traditional Moroccan dinner. Rachid cooks the food of his childhood, and the meal proves to be a great way for the four individuals to learn of each other’s cultures in a non-judgmental fashion. At the table sits an older Christian woman who has never felt younger, an animist Senegalese man who cannot read or write, a homosexual who is coming to terms with his life, and a Muslim struggling with his faith. Molina Foix makes this gathering the best Spain can be: a multicultural gathering where all can enjoy each other’s differences and gifts.

(Dinner with Rachid and Yao - *El dios de madera*)
Corroborating Molina Foix’s approach to intercultural exchange, sharing gastronomical delicacies of other cultures proves to be a very effective intercultural interaction to generate empathy. Santiago Gómez-Zorrilla Sánchez, a spokesperson for the Spanish non-governmental organization, ACCEM recounts how food as a facilitator of inclusive practices in Spain:

La gastronomía también es una forma de cultura, al fin y al cabo, es otro de los medios que utilizamos a nivel de sensibilización y sobre todo a nivel de participación. ¿Por qué la gastronomía? Bueno, principalmente, porque la gastronomía es algo común a todos los seres humanos. … Además, la comida es un momento de encuentro y de intercambio. Entonces, descubrimos que es una vía estupenda para propiciar el encuentro intercultural. El encuentro intercultural entre la población autóctona e inmigrante de diferentes lados, al final, pues, comiendo juntos, se aprenden las diferentes recetas, las diferentes formas de cultura y al final se consigue, pues de lo que se trata, que la gente deje de ver al otro como un personaje extraño abstracto y se propicie la comunicación y el encuentro directo. A partir de allí, se empiezan a generar afectos, a generar empatías, entendimiento, encuentro y, al final, pues, es la manera en que se empieza a dejar los prejuicios.

Gastronomy is a form of culture, at any rate, it is another medium that we use to sensitize and to raise awareness. Why gastronomy? Well, first, because gastronomy is something all humans have in common. Moreover, eating is a moment of getting to know each other and it facilitates the exchange of ideas. Then, we discovered that it is a wonderful way to foster and promote intercultural exchange. This intercultural exchange between the autochthonous population and the immigrant population from various places, well by eating together, people get to share different recipes, different forms of culture and finally, one learns what this is all about, that people stop seeing each other as abstract foreigners and that direct communication and personal discovery is facilitated. From this point, one gets to know the other, and then, friendships are born, empathy is created, understanding, coming together, and finally, it is the way through which we begin to shed our prejudices.

In this way, when immigrants and Spaniards get together and share their culture and personality with each other in a most elementary way through food, people shed their preconceptions more easily and are willing to give immigrants a chance to share who
they are and how they can benefit the community. In the film, despite the original mistrust and xenophobia, María Luisa, Róber, Yao, and Rachid come together as they share their food. This simple act bonds them unmistakably. When Yao is taken to a detention center that plans to deport him, María Luisa is devastated and willing to do anything to rescue him. Similarly, Róber drops everything in his life to follow Rachid to Barcelona. Moreover, the relationship between María Luisa and her son, Róber, is renewed and becomes meaningful again as a result from their interactions with immigrants.

As has been evidenced in each of the three films, the directors use a ‘sentimental approach’ to build empathy for the immigrant protagonists. By befriending and protecting them, each of the character’s lives is made qualitatively better. The directors thus set an example for their audience to reject xenophobia and be more compassionate to immigrants.

An Inconsiderate Approach: Orientalizing and Eroticizing Immigrants

Even though Princesas, Retorno a Hansala, and El dios de madera show how relationships with immigrants make the lives of Spaniards more fulfilled and meaningful, this is not true of all the lives of the immigrants involved. With the exception of Retorno a Hansala that treats its immigrants with respect, there is a cognitive dissonant approach to the relationship portrayed in these films between Spanish citizens and immigrants. Often, the directors of the films choose to portray immigrants as victims largely ruled by their circumstances and who have a minimal amount of agency due to their legal status. Furthermore, Princesas, and El dios de madera orientalize and portray immigrants in highly unrecognizable terms thus making them appear to be a metaphorical means to the
betterment of the Spanish protagonists’ lives instead of representing fully-fledged individuals.

In Princesas Fernando León de Aranoa represents the relationship between an immigrant and a Spanish woman as a positive feat of intercultural communication. However, Zulema is represented in a dissonant manner. Seemingly, Aranoa chose to deemphasize sex in favor of the women’s friendship. In Cómo Hacer Cine (How to Make Films) he says: “Quizá el sexo es de las cosas menos importantes de la película. A medida que escribía versiones del guión, las escenas de sexo iban desapareciendo poco a poco; creo que si hubiera hecho alguna versión más, habría desaparecido por completo.” (Probably sex is one of the least important parts of the film. As I was writing versions of the script, the scenes of sex were disappearing little by little; I believe that had I made another version, the sex would have vanished entirely) (n.p.). Here, Aranoa speaks to his desire to portray the relationship between Zulema and Caye not as one between sex workers but as one between women who fight gendered violence. However, inharmoniously Zulema is a highly sexualized character in the film. For example, Zulema’s physiognomy is described by Aranoa in the storyboard for Princesas as “una atractiva mulata de aspecto latino, anchos los labios y las caderas, el pecho grande, la camiseta escasa de talla” (an attractive mulatto woman of Latino appearance, with big lips and hips, a large chest, with a tight shirt)” (Princesas: Guión técnico dibujado por Fernando León de Aranoa 17). Her representation thus contradicts Aranoa’s lofty goal of deemphasizing her sex appeal as her main characteristic.

190
Notice how Caye sees Zulema. In a café the two sit down and talk about their plans for the future. Zulema tells Caye she is raising money to bring her son to Spain. After a slightly awkward silence, Caye tells her: “I’m saving up, too! To buy a pair of tits like yours” (22:10). Zulema laughs at Caye’s preposterous wish realizing that she is perceived as a standard of beauty. Furthermore, in a Dominican restaurant Caye asks Zulema another thing: “I’ve got another question. When you are kids do they stuff in your shoes to make your ass stick out?” (29:49), referencing again that she thinks Zulema is exceptionally attractive. In this way, despite Aranoa’s claims to the contrary, Zulema is fantasized, eroticized, and objectified rather than seen for who she is as an individual.

Beside her eroticized portrayal, Zulema is also discarded at the end of the film. Even though Caye is uplifted by her friendship with Zulema that enables her to have self-respect, Zulema does not reap the same benefits as Caye. Zulema is infected by AIDS from an unprotected sexual encounter. When she finds out, the Dominican is terrified and
considers her life finished. Soon thereafter she takes revenge on her abuser by having sex with him and leaves Spain to return and spend her last years with her son. Thus, Aranoa uses Zulema to awaken Caye to new possibilities of self-respect, yet she is denied achieving her dreams. It is a cruel end to an otherwise fruitful relationship between a Spaniard and a Dominican.

Continuing in the same vein, yet adding a homoerotic gaze to the mix, Vicente Molina Foix also eroticizes the immigrants in his film. *El dios de madera*, like *Princesas*, objectifies immigrants and discards them at the conclusion of the film as well. Even though Molina Foix presents immigration as a positive benefit for the native population when María Luisa and Róber grow closer to each other and heal their fractured family, Yao and Rachid’s legal and social situations continues to be dire. The immigrants are portrayed as dangerous sex toys. Their bodies are eroticized both from the heterosexual and homosexual perspectives. When María Luisa first sees Yao’s with his top off she exclaims, “You’re so black, Yao! ... It’s a nice black… natural” (47:20). Yao’s body is not a haphazard mass of skin and bone that European viewers are accustomed to seeing in documentaries about Africa and lacks traces of the hazards of having crossed the border illegally; instead, his body is carefully sculpted to an apollonian perfection.
Rachid’s portrayal is no less fetishized under the homoerotic gaze of Róber. Coming out of the shower, Rachid begins to dance to the music Róber plays for him. His body is muscular and perfectly sculpted. His movements resemble those of a seducing belly dancer. Symptomatic of the representation of immigrants as objects under the fetishized gaze of natives, Róber refuses to join the dance. Instead, he looks with admiration as if observing a prized possession that pleasures him.
Henry Krips elucidates this moment by exposing Róber’s fetish. Krips writes that “the Other can be understood as a certain judgmental function, set in place retrospectively, by which subjects assess their own past performances” (18). Krips explains why Róber is taking so much pleasure in gazing upon his lover. The Other, Rachid, being so well built and dancing so enticingly pleases Róber because he believes he has invested emotionally in the right choice. Having made his choice, he now reaps the rewards of his good judgement and gets pleasure form this realization. Róber and María Luisa satisfy their egocentric desires by having Yao and Rachid; however, the immigrants do not share in the same comforts they offer others.

As if the erotization and objectification of Yao and Rachid were insufficient, Molina Foix disposes of the two immigrants as soon as they appear to heal the native-born family. At the end of the film the immigrants give in to the pressures applied by the
immigration law and the police and are forced to run away. After having been detained by the immigration police and later released, Yao decides to leave Valencia for Madrid in order to elude the Spanish law enforcement agents. Outside of marrying a Spanish person, his chances of legalizing his status and not ending up in another human trafficker’s gang are slim to none. By leaving Valencia he is also leaving María Luisa’s protection and guidance. His future is thus jeopardized in the exact moment that María Luisa and her son reconcile. In contrast, Rachid has an avenue to legalize his status in Spain by marrying Merce, a Spanish citizen. However, this situation is troublesome because, in order to regularize his life in the country, Rachid is forced to leave Róber and marry a woman for whom has no feelings. Yao and Rachid are left to fend for themselves after infusing new life into María Luisa and Róber’s relationship. The hard lesson that Molina Foix sustains is that while immigrants help Spanish men and women reconcile and heal their fractured relationships, they cannot be helped.

As mentioned previously, *Retorno a Hansala* does the most to go against the trend of victimization and orientalization of the immigrant protagonists. The friendship that develops between Leila and Martín make the Spanish protagonist more sympathetic to the difficulties of immigration, and Chus Gutiérrez does a remarkable job at humanizing the immigrants without taking away their agency. While initially, there appear to be certain problematic representations in the film, the director conveys immigrant dilemmas with grace. The representation of Hansala may be understood as a rudimentary mini-paradise. Gutiérrez initially portrays the life in the village as uncomplicated morally because it is disconnected from the troubles of large cities. Although poor, the inhabitants take care of each other’s needs more effectively than
seemingly anywhere else. Contrasting Martín’s worries that the bank will foreclose on his mortuary, the neighboring villagers in Hansala come together to show solidarity to Leila and help pay her debt without any arguments. Furthermore, the director does not draw attention to crimes, abuse, or dissent in Hansala from the status quo. In effect, the town appears to be a transcendental place that would make the Spanish audience wonder why anyone would ever leave Hansala and assume the risk of crossing the Mediterranean Sea seeking a life of abuse in Spain.

As with any romanticized environment, even with good intentions, films fall prey to a troubled discourse. In his seminal work *Orientalism* (1978), Edward Saïd describes the tendencies of old empires to represent old colonies with a language meant to undermine their ability to affirm their own value. He writes that orientalism “can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (4). In a similar way, Gutiérrez’s fist representation of Hansala is a problematic inverted dichotomy where Europe and Africa switch roles and Morocco takes on an overly positive representation while Spain turned to evil. This oversimplification of cultures leads to unrealistic expectations and a confusing discourse when faced with the nuanced complexity of immigration and human culture. Skirting Nietzsche’s admonition, Gutiérrez represents Hansala first as “a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms—in short, a sum of human relations, which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically, and which after long use seem firm, canonical, and obligatory to a people:
truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that this is what they are” (Nietzsche 46-7).

This superficial reading of Hansala and its inhabitants nevertheless gets nuanced and problematized soon thereafter. Chus Gutiérrez uses this initial representation of Hansala as a learning experience for her viewers to critically judge initial appearances against the much harsher and toned reality that face the people living there. Take for example the representation of Hansala’s patriarchal order and its effects on Leila. When in Spain, Leila chooses not to wear a hijab and shows that she is in full control of her decisions in her interaction with other people. She is learning Spanish both orally and the written language and is able to negotiate a new culture with ease.

(Leila communicating and writing in Spanish)

Pointing to the reasons that forced Leila to leave Hansala, the closer gets to her village, the more her appearance changes to fit the patriarchal order customary in the area. Her

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48 The hijab is a veil traditionally worn by some Muslim women in accordance with rules prescribed by the state they live in, their family traditions, or by the faith tradition they support. The reference to the wearing or not of the hijab in this section of the paper is not a judgement on the value of wearing a headscarf or not or what it means from a feminist perspective. It is simply an analysis of the choices a Muslim woman appears to have in Spain compared to the tradition she chose to leave behind by immigrating as portrayed by Chus Gutiérrez in Retorno a Hansala
hair is no longer free flowing; she wears a hijab, and puts on a skirt on top of traditional pants. Moreover, she no longer looks culturally at ease even though she is home.

(Leila’s change in appearance)

On top of the outwardly changes, the director also shows the patriarchal order of things in Hansala that relegates Leila to a lower social status because of her gender. Her father blames her for the death of his son and does not forgive her even when she begs it.

(Leila kisses the hand of her father asking for forgiveness)
Gradually, the director also dismantles the initial impression that Hansala is a perfect transcendental place where people come together and help each other in all things. While it is true that the village enjoys a level of connectedness seemingly absent in Algeciras, it also lacks job opportunities and the town’s people are under the threat of retaliation from human traffickers unless they pay their dues even for the people that drowned on the way to Spain. Thus, Leila’s change in appearance, her uneasy relationship with the patriarchal order, and the town’s abject poverty nuance the portrayal of Hansala as a town that offers little to its inhabitants.

It is no small feat that Chus Gutiérrez depicts the immigrants in *Retorno a Hansala* as individuals free to act out their lives in spite of their interactions with the Spanish citizens they heal. It is true that Martín changes his views of immigrants and is made better like the other Spanish protagonists in the other two films mentioned previously; nevertheless, his betterment is not a the cost of the immigrants. In this case, Said makes it to Spain without Martín’s help and remains independent in his actions throughout the film. In addition, when Leila returns to Spain she changes her appearance again by showing her hair, wearing pants, and acting without fear of men. Impressively, the director does not discard her as was done to Yao, Rachid, and Zulema. When Martín asks her at the end of the film to be his partner in business, and also hinting of a romantic relationship, Leila has the last word and that is “Me lo pensaré” (I’ll think about it) (1:30:30). The film thus ends in uncertainty for Martín and his endeavors, but not for Leila. She maintains her autonomy and her ability chose whatever path she desires. In this way, Gutiérrez goes against the pattern of films about immigration and sets an example of a powerful means to represent immigrants both in their ability to heal the
problems of Spanish citizens as well as maintain their dignity and respect throughout the film.

When taking into consideration the three films, the orientalization and the erotization of the immigrants under a European gaze that seeks to appropriate and discard them afterwards are troubling features of Princesas and El dios de madera. Besides a seemingly benign message that garners empathy for immigrants in Spain in all three films, viewers are also presented with a dissonant message whereby immigrants are rewarded in a non-reciprocal way. The three films, Princesas, Retorno a Hansala, and El dios de madera, clearly exhibit a common pattern that conveys this bewildering message with Retorno a Hansala being the only one who continues to respect its immigrant protagonists. First, the immigrants are portrayed through a lens of an initial social cruelty. They are beaten and raped in Princesas, turned into a business in Retorno a Hansala, and stereotyped in El dios de madera. The immigrants are portrayed in this manner in order to facilitate building empathy toward their situation and garner the native audience’s trust. Second, the directors intertwine the lives of immigrants with characters who represent Spanish citizens in a serendipitous fashion. As the Spaniards get to know the immigrants, they begin to soften their indifference. In time, they become immigrant advocates, protectors, and cultural guides. This step is fraught with challenges in which the protagonists bear each other’s burdens and are made to “imagine themselves in the shoes of the despised and oppressed” (Rorty 179). In this way, the imagined superiority of the Spanish citizens is broken down and the immigrants are brought to the same level of humanity as the autochthonous population. From this point, the native’s lives which were initially at the precipice of losing all hope, improve. Because of the relationship with
Zulema, Caye garners enough strength to admit to her family her profession, be at ease with her body image, and feel enlightened as she leads her friends in becoming more tolerant. Martin’s relationship with Leila opens his eyes to a humanity he had willingly ignored. He gathers strength, breaks up with his cheating wife, and opens himself to a professional and romantic relationship with a foreigner. Lastly, María Luisa and Róber reunite after years of frigid relations. They rediscover each other as they take up the cause of immigrants despised by the society at large. Thus, the natives are shown to be the beneficiaries of these relationships and are rewarded for their good deeds.

Unfortunately, the films also show a darker and paradoxical side of the representation of immigration in film. As the natives heal, the immigrants are discarded, defeated, and/or expelled. With the exception of Retorno a Hansala, which ends in the possibility of integration for Leila, in both Princesas and El dios de madera the immigrants end up being forced to fend for themselves. They are the recipients of a sub-message whereby although someone in Spain might champion their cause, most people will not. It is thus that the directors of these films cross a positive message of the need for an increased empathy toward immigrants with one that often demeans and objectifies them. The end result is that these contradicting messages show that immigration films continue to conform to the dualistic nature of political speech and the immigration law as discussed in Chapter 1 instead of opening new avenues of thought about integration.

Lastly, the short and feature films analyzed previously overwhelmingly address injustice, xenophobia, and racism at the individual and societal level. On an individual level, the feature films soften and educate the behavior of the host citizens who interact most closely with immigrants. These interactions make the lives of the autochthonous
protagonists of *Princesas*, *Retorno a Hansala*, and *El dios de madera* qualitatively better and more fulfilling. Because of the restrictions of length, shorts about immigration cannot afford to show the development of lasting interrelationships; nevertheless, each attempts to show the harrowing issues of immigration through the use of analogy, humor, and surprise. *Nana*, *El viaje de Saïd*, and *Retorno a Hansala* ask their viewers to come to terms with the reality and frightening challenge of crossing the Mediterranean in a *patera* for a landing that may subject immigrants to discrimination and insurmountable challenges. In *Ngutu*, *Un lugar mejor*, and *El dios de madera* the audience realizes the difficulties of being a person of African descent living in Spain. The viewers become aware of how society treats African immigrants by willfully choosing to ignore them and discriminate against them. Lastly, *Lekk* and *Princesas* work to dispel the perceived economic injustices immigrants inflict upon the host population. The lessons of each short and feature film show the concern and effort of Spanish directors to address some of the most troubling aspects of Spanish society vis-à-vis immigration. Nevertheless, these filmic representations are not perfect and, while promoting one aspect of inclusion through personal empathy, they also continue to reinforce other negative facets as mentioned previously. Thus, these feature films and shorts about immigration in Spain are complex cultural artefacts of a society that on one hand recognizes the need to improve the way immigrants are treated, and on the other shows an incipient understanding of the issues of immigration on the big screen.
Chapter 4

There are No Innocent Discourses: Immigrant Perspectives on Immigration

As noted in the previous chapters, representing immigrants in law, political speech, music, and film in Spain is often suffers from the recurrence to stereotypes that ignore specificity and individuation. While some appropriate examples exist in the media, the way in which immigrants from Africa, Latin America, and Eastern Europe are represented reveals the deeply divisive nature of the subject. Thus, there is a great need of finding better ways to represent immigration in order to create a social construct where immigrants may integrate with the least amount of friction possible in Spain.

As a review, chapter one shows how laws, journalism, and political speech problematize immigration either by not addressing it fairly or by promoting stereotypes and at times xenophobia. The second chapter argues how the social theory of Richard Rorty, a ‘sentimental education,’ can guide a majority culture to be more accepting of a minority by building empathy towards them with the arts. Thus, having positioned sentiment and empathy as the most appropriate theoretical means through which natives and immigrants can best live together, the rest of chapter two evaluates the representation of immigrants in music. In analyzing films about immigration, chapter three demonstrates how locals benefit from their interactions with immigrants but at the cost of stereotyping and not effecting a meaningful and accurate representation of individualized foreigners. Finally, the purpose of this chapter is to analyze the literary self-representation of undocumented immigrants in Spain in order to judge their effectiveness in generating empathy toward their cause.
I have chosen undocumented immigrant authors for the literature chapter to explore the possibility of a counter-discourse to the films, which were solely crafted by Spanish natives and focused on irregular immigrants. Even though the stereotypical representation of immigrants in film has the positive effect of creating empathetic situations, these films often victimize immigrants as a collective unit. This raises the most important aspect of this chapter, i.e. can immigrant narrations create characters that display a strong sense of agency and generate empathy for other people in their situation? The current analysis of the 2009 *Paseador de perros* (Dog Walker) by Sergio Galarza and Rachid Nini’s 2002 *Diario de un ilegal* (Diary of an Illegal) proves that rearing empathy toward the immigrant protagonists and creating strong characters is possible as long as authors build relatable characters and acknowledge the restrictive effects that cultural structures impose on their ability to find success. In other words, by connecting with the reader, the immigrant protagonists are able to put forth their trials and educate their audience about the challenges that undocumented immigrants go through in order to maintain their self-dignity and self-determination.

To frame the analysis, I will refer to two terms I have coined in order to address the critiquing of ethnic communities. I will use the term *interethnic critique* to refer to a critical stance adopted by individuals from within an ethnic group, and *exoethnic critique* to refer to a critique adopted by individuals from the outside of the group. Because interethnic critiques sometimes appropriate self-defeating and discriminatory patterns of inferiority by employing discursive generalities and upholding negative stereotypes, the literature of Galarza and Nini is shockingly harsh in its representation of other immigrants. Like the work of the Spanish cinema auteurs, the narratives of these two
authors also appear to reinforce confirmation biases about the unsavory nature of undocumented immigrants instead of combatting these generalizations in a convincing manner. Nevertheless, their texts are authentic and meaningful due to the independent nature of their protagonists and the testimonial nature of the narrations. The two narratives also differ in the way they go about building their arguments. Galarza often fails to correct the generalizations and negative immigrant stereotypes in his novel; in contrast, Nini’s protagonist manages to both show the harsh reality of immigrating unlawfully as well as contextualizing the forlorn and neglected situation of the immigrants he encounters. Both novels add to the creation of narratives that humanize and individualize their immigrant protagonists. Nevertheless, only Diario de un ilegal succeeds in raising awareness and rearing empathy for other immigrants he interacts with.

Although the field of immigration literature written in Spain is nascent, it is also rich and complex with a select number of immigrants and Spanish citizens natives writing on the subject. Among the autochthonous writers, Lorenzo Silva with Algún día, cuando pueda llevarte a Varsovia (Some Day When I Will be Able to Take You to Warsaw) (1997), Miguel Naveros with Al calor del día (In the Day’s Heat) (2001), Antonio Lozano with Donde mueren los ríos (Where the Rivers Die) (2007), Luis García Montero with No me cuentes tu vida (Don’t Tell me your Life) (2012), and Andrés Martínez Sánchez with Las voces del estrecho (The Voices of the Strait) (2016) have addressed immigration in their writing. These authors, among many others, work toward the betterment of the relationships between immigrants and natives by putting forth their vision of the complexities of immigration in Spain. Their perspectives are valuable and
add to the creation of an environment where immigration is normalized in spite of many discourses to the contrary. Because this chapter explores the narratives of undocumented immigrants as a counterbalance to native films about immigration, the Spanish authors mentioned above fall outside the scope of this analysis.

Literature is more readily available to the people who have the talent and education as well as the financial resources to write. Because of these requirements, immigrant authors of the first generation who are still intimately connected to the immigration process are very rare, and often write from what may be considered an elitist point of view reflecting their socio-cultural and economic differences to other economic migrants. Dissonantly then, immigrants both write testimonials of their (dis)integration process and of their relationship to other immigrants with whom they are often at odds. Unlike native authors who tend to show how alienated immigrants could be integrated in Spain in a just manner, non-native authors avoid victimization by putting forth strong characters that emphasize their agency and individuality even at the price of appearing self-centered and unapproachable. Stated differently, immigrants often tell their own stories with a focus that is primarily self-motivated rather than focusing on the integration of diverse groups of people. This ontological difference makes the voices of immigrant authors uniquely different and necessary in understanding the full picture of migration narratives.

In the following paragraphs, I explore the field of literature written by African, Latin American, and Eastern European immigrants to Spain by geographical area. Even though people of African origin account for almost a third of all immigrants in Spain, there are relatively few authors from this group whose literature about immigration
consistently reaches a mainstream audience. Sabrina Brancato comments regarding the literary production of authors of African descent in Spain as of 2008:

In fact, in spite of the large numbers of North Africans resident in Spain, there is as yet no literary production by this group, if one excludes Mohamed El Gheryb’s *Dormir al Raso* [Sleeping in the Open], a report on migration with no literary pretence (sic) written in collaboration with a Spanish author, and Rachid Nini’s beautiful *Diario de un ilegal* [Journal of a Clandestine], which was published in Arabic and only later translated to Spanish. And here the question arises of why there are so many North Africans writing in Italy and not in Spain, where their presence is so conspicuous. (6)

Brancato implicitly assesses that social circumstances have made the publication of African authors in Spain more difficult than it should be. Furthermore, she explains that the few African texts in circulation are marginalized and eroticized in literary circles instead of publicized and encouraged. Nevertheless, and in spite of Brancato’s claim, there are a fair number of authors of African descent writing in Spain as of 2015. Among these, Donato Ndongo (Equatorial Guinea), Najat El-Hachmi (Morocco), Rachid Nini (Morocco), Agnés Agboton (Benin), Inongo-vi-Makomè (Cameroon), Ahmed Daoudi (Morocco), Susana Akono (Cameroon), Laila Karrouch (Morocco), Abderrahmán El Fathi (Morocco), and Tresor Londja (Democratic Republic of the Congo) are the most prominent. While not all of these authors write exclusively about modern immigration topics, they all have addressed the African experience in Spain. Moreover, their writing has permeated literary genres as diverse as poetry, comics, short stories, journals, and novels. Their art is impressive, and it adds tremendous value to contemporary Spanish literature and culture.49

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49 For a list of contemporary native African authors’ narratives that deal with immigration, see Appendix 5.
From the works of these African authors, I have chosen to analyze Rachid Nini’s *Diario de un ilegal* (Diary of an Illegal) because it portrays its protagonist and other immigrants in Spain with the most force and sense of autonomy. Nini’s book is also one of the earliest and most popular books that espouses the troubles and difficulties of immigrants to Spain after Franco’s dictatorship. Rachid Nini is a Moroccan reporter who, in the late 1990s, makes the decision to move to Spain and work as an “illegal” immigrant. *Diario de un ilegal* is the result of his life experience in Spain. It is written in the format of an anachronic diary that mixes a narrative that takes place in Spain and France with memories from the protagonist’s youth in Morocco. Furthermore, it documents his employment, interactions with other North African Arab undocumented immigrants, and his thoughts and experiences in Spain and, to a much smaller degree, France. His writing of the journal as a first person narrative makes it easier for the text to capture its readers and aid them to see vicariously the world through the eyes of an undocumented immigrant. This makes the journal extremely powerful and personal and thus a great means of introducing a Spanish booklover to immigrant experiences that would have otherwise remained unknown. Complicating this simple and straightforward empathetic experience, the narration also works to both confirm a measure of the preconceived ideas Spaniards may have of irregular immigrants, while and at the same time explaining and combating the more nocive theories. This shows the complexity of immigrant literature as one that challenges its readers with new perspectives, both positive and negative. In this way, the book puts forth a two-fold purpose: one, to understand the rationale of an undocumented immigrant and second, to gain a measure of empathy for the situation of many other undocumented immigrants.
Latin American authors represent another important source of immigration literature in Spain and the analysis of their representations is essential. Compared to African authors, more Latin American writers publish their accounts due to the more similar linguistic, historical, and cultural background to Spain. Nevertheless, despite having an easier time publishing, few Latin American authors have chosen immigration as their main subject of writing. Most authors from this geographical area focus on journalism and a few have sporadically published short stories about immigration among their other works like Claudia Apablaza (Chile), Santiago Ambao (Argentina), Marcelo Luján (Argentina), Rodrigo Díaz Cortez (Chile), Gabriela Wiener (Peru), Consuelo Triviño Anzola (Colombia), Fernando Iwasaki (Peru), Isabel Mellado (Chile), and Carlos Salem (Argentina). Even fewer authors have dedicated full novels to immigration such as Clara Obligado (Argentina), Sergio Galarza (Peru), and Juan Diego Botto (Argentina).

These authors show the breadth of Latin American authorship on this topic in Spain. Their literature on immigration critiques the many facets of Spanish immigration policies (see Chapter 1) and offers their testimonies as proof.\textsuperscript{50}

From this demographic group, I have chosen to analyze the 2009 novel \textit{Paseador de perros} (Dog Walker) by the Peruvian author Sergio Galarza as it is the only narrative written by an undocumented Latin American immigrant detailing the first years of his experience in Spain. Like Rachid Nini’s narrative, it reveals a highly complex sphere where immigrants have to fend for themselves in order to overcome their unlawful and neglected condition. The narration recounts the personal reflections of a dog walker in his dealings with Spanish citizens and immigrants. It is a remarkable novel because of its

\textsuperscript{50} For a list of Latin American authors’ narratives that deal with immigration, see Appendix 6
insightful critiques, straightforward language, and a wanton political incorrectness. As such, Galarza recounts how the unnamed protagonist overstays his visa and finds employment working under the table as a dog walker. The book is semi-autobiographical, and the author’s immigration story to Spain mirrors the general events of the book’s character. The novel cogently explores how Madrid has changed with the influx of immigrants to Spain and, from an elitist point of view, the narrator describes his relationship to Spaniards and his thorough dislike of immigrants. Thus, Galarza’s novel is as intriguing as Nini’s diary because it problematizes the self-representation of the main character as well as his depiction of other immigrant groups in Spain. Even though Galarza’s novel manages to create a very independent and fascinating character for whom readers feel a measure of empathy, the text’s constant recurrence to negative stereotypes and offensive generalizations regarding other immigrants taint the good will readers have for the protagonist and thus diminish the social good that the text could have sustained.

Unlike the literature of immigrants from North Africa and Latin America, Eastern Europeans have yet to share their stories with the Spanish public. This situation is even more acute because Romanians are the most populous immigrant group to Spain. Besides a few academic writers who have published specialized material and some festivals that celebrate Romanian diversity in Spain, the many literary voices of Romanians and other Eastern Europeans on the subject of immigration are totally unheard. While I was not to find any immigration literature of a testimonial fashion that has been written by Eastern European authors about the challenges and rewards of living

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Galarza sees himself superior to most people he encounters because of his university education and writerly aspirations.
in Spain, Romanians living in Spain were a valuable resource of information about the Eastern European experience and their history. As a distinguished "Ramón y Cajal" scholar at the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (Spanish National Research Council), Silvia Marcu publishes on human migration from an anthropological perspective. With five books and 58 academic articles already published, Silvia Marcu is inescapable in her field. Leveraging her extensive anthropological and cultural knowledge of the Romanian community in Spain, an interview with Marcu—though not revealing any new information regarding Romanian authors dedicating themselves to writing original literature—did delineate historical information about how the Romanian community formed in Spain and elucidated how the media addresses the Romanian community from the perspective of an academic insider. As Marcu recounts her own feelings, trials, and successes in Spain, they literally mirror some of the same concerns of Nini and Galarza.

Fascinatingly, the immigrant authors from North Africa and Latin America I have selected write about immigration not only to garner empathy for the cause of immigration, but also to affirm their independence, thus counterbalancing negative and victimizing stereotypes in the media. The desire to show themselves worthy of integration leads these authors to place a disproportionate emphasis on their agency at the cost of misrecognizing the role that structure and culture play in their integration process. This ontological focus is conducive to creating strong characters that are well individualized and who take responsibility for their situations; nonetheless, it hinders garnering empathy for their cause by failing to acknowledge and take into account the systemic problems outside of their control. This observation is most apparent and is the
root problem for Sergio Galarza’s *Paseador de perros* as documented in the analysis below.

Sergio Galarza’s Troubling Interethnic Critique in *Paseador de perros*

Sergio Galarza was born in 1976 in Lima, Peru and obtained a law degree from the University of Lima. Despite his degree, he never practiced law and instead dedicated himself to other professions while he wrote. He has published four volumes of short stories and four novels, including the Madrid Trilogy which includes *Paseador de perros* (2009), *JFK* (2012) and *La librería quemada* (The Burnt Library) (2014). He is also the winner of the *I Concurso de Narrativa del Migrante Peruano en España* (1st Peruvian Migrant Narrative Contest in Spain) ran by the Peruvian Consulate in Madrid, which he was awarded for his short story “Teleoperadores” (Telemarketing). Furthermore, he was named Nuevo Talento FNAC (New FNAC Talent) after publishing *Paseador de perros*. In 2005, Galarza moved to Madrid from Lima, Peru and lived as an undocumented immigrant for a period, the premise explored in *Paseador de perros*. He has since regularized his legal situation and now works as a store clerk for the Casa del Libro bookstores.

In spite of the fact that *Paseador de perros* is an innovative prose that semiautobiographically follows the life of an undocumented immigrant, explores the development of his human relationships, and recounts his challenges in Madrid, the book has not yet garnered much academic attention nor critique outside of local reviews. This lack of academic analysis makes this critique an initial approach to expounding its merits and faults in light of social justice and its ability to nurture empathy as a social good. Even though my analysis shows that Galarza’s criticism of other immigrants is often
demeaning, his construction of a rebellious cultural immigrant who would like to fit in and contribute his uniqueness to Spain is excellent and necessary to the individualization and understanding of the diverse views among immigrants. Because of these characteristics, I believe that the writing of Sergio Galarza is highly valuable in spite of the little academic attention it has received thus far.

Paseador de perros’s plot is simple, yet multifaceted. On a basic narratological level, the protagonist is a “joven profesional, con estudios universitarios en busca de un lugar en el mercado laboral” (young professional with university studies looking for a place in the labor market) (Esparza 177). Nevertheless, what really attracts him to Spain is not a blue-collar job; instead, he is attracted by “la oportunidad de incorporarse culturalmente a un continente lleno de becas, festivales y salas de concierto” (the opportunity to culturally join a continent replete of awards, festivals, and concert venues) (Donoso 46). As a consequence of overstaying his visa, he is forced to take a job as a dog walker. While seeking opportunities to publish, he works to support himself with jobs that are below his expectations. This puts the main character of Paseador de perros in a difficult situation that displeases him and taints the way he sees Madrid. However, his employment, while ordinary, helps him get to know Madrid and its inhabitants intimately. Describing his job in a newspaper interview, Galarza mentions its idiosyncrasies: “es un trabajo a tiempo completo, se trabaja todos los días, incluidos los feriados, no hay vacaciones ni excusas por enfermedad. Los perros no entienden razones, y sus amos a veces tampoco” (it is a full-time job, one works every day, including holidays, there are no vacations, nor sick leave. The dogs don’t understand reason and neither do their owners) (Cipriani-López n.p.). Because of the difficulty and perceived
absurdity of his job’s requirements, the narrator not only loses patience easily but also
looses his tongue with numerous critiques against other immigrants and people that he
believes make his life harder because of their ignorance or unwillingness to adapt. The
narrator is thus ashamed of other immigrants’ actions and would rather avoid their stigma
by pretending he is not one of them; nevertheless, that is impossible because of his
accent, origin, and legal status. The book’s original point-of-view shows the reasoning of
an educated irregular immigrant walking dogs, picking up excrements, and dealing with
onerous owners in what has become a very cosmopolitan Madrid. Due to this unusual
premise, the book has a unique flavor that, while unpolished, presents an extremely fresh
and honest personal perspective.

Galarza responds to the social changes occurring in Spain with *Paseador de
perros* in order to affirm that not all immigrants fit within stereotypical representations.
Due to his accomplished education and writerly aspirations, Galarza is not the middle-of-
the-road representation of a Latin American immigrant to Spain and his voice is
exceptionally clear and discerning of the problems facing an unwillingly multicultural
Madrid. As such, Galarza writes his narration in a *neo-costumbrista* style reminiscent of
early 19th century sketches by Mariano José de Larra and Mesonero Romanos. Similarly,
while the former *costumbristas* were reacting to the massive socio-political changes in
Spain, Galarza responds to another socially disruptive change in Madrid: the arrival of
immigrants. According to the publisher Candaya: “Sergio Galarza reflexiona sobre los
cambios que se han producido en las grandes ciudades tras la llegada masiva de nuevos
vecinos de otras latitudes. La suya no es una visión ‘políticamente correcta’, pero se
acerca a la verdad que se respira en las calles” (Sergio Galarza reflects on the changes
that have occurred in the great cities after the massive arrival of the new neighbors from other latitudes. His vision is not “politically correct,” but it comes nearer to the truth that is breathed in the streets) (n.p.). Thus, while the text is not apologetic to immigrants, Galarza uses his novel as a postmodern “slice of life” narrative meant to preserve and expose the challenging reality of Madrid and its immigrants. Galarza’s novel analyzes the life of an educated undocumented immigrant in Madrid as a reaction to the absurd. Therefore, the following analysis will show how Galarza’s novel is successful in developing a very strong immigrant character that avoids victimization; nevertheless, it fails to promote a full measure of empathy toward immigrants because of the bigoted pronouncements of the narrator. The protagonist’s intolerant declarations against other immigrants end up mirroring patterns of discrimination found in the biased media, and they mar the overall message of the book and its empathetic value. Empathy-building strategies are thus only partially met by the novel in the representation of the protagonist and that of other immigrants portrayed in the text.

In order to analyze why the characterization of the main protagonist is unable to create a full measure of empathy, it is essential to explain the writing mechanics that are most conducive to building compassion and a feeling of responsibility toward more disadvantaged people. The main crux of empathy in (fictional) narratives is the balance between individuality and victimization. In other words, the creation of strong characters that take responsibility for their actions favors agency at the cost of seeing how laws or systems in Spain need to change in order to accommodate and integrate immigrants and help them find some relief in their desperate situation. Accounts that show the fullness of the impact of the system tend to create weaker individual characters, which is most often
successful in creating empathy. As shown in the previous chapter, Spanish filmmakers are very good at producing empathy toward their immigrant subjects, but at the same time, they mostly create disappointingly stereotypical and inauthentic immigrant protagonists. This is both a benefit, as it sensitizes the audience to the troubles that immigrants face in Spain, as well as a disadvantage because those immigrants become victimized symbols rather than fully fleshed out societal participants that have will and individuality. In contrast to films, immigrant writers in Spain do the exact opposite. They self-characterize in their writings in a way that shows incredible individuality and responsibility for their actions. However, this self-representation, while strong and refreshing, also prompts readers to diminish their feelings of shared responsibility toward the immigrant protagonist.

To elucidate this representational seesaw, let’s review empathy and its relationship with Rorty’s ‘sentimental education’. The most basic definition of empathy can be described as follows: “S empathizes with O’s experience of emotion E if and only if O feels E, S believes that O feels E, and this causes S to feel E for O” (Sober and Wilson 234) with S being person A (the Subject), O being person B (the Other), and E standing for the emotions provoked by a specific situation. What this formula implies is that when one observes a person feeling an emotion, through what experts call emotional contagion or “the tendency to automatically mimic and synchronize facial expressions, vocalizations, postures, and movements with those of another person and consequently, to converge emotionally” (Hatfield et al. 81), that person tends to identify with that emotion and feel it too. In a striking fashion, humans have the ability to empathize vicariously through literature as well as they do physically: “We can indeed empathize
with fictional characters [and]… [w]e do so through some of the same psychological mechanisms that allow us to empathize with real, flesh-and-blood persons” (Snow 70). Thus, nurturing the development of empathy in socially conscious narrations is a very useful rhetorical means to understanding what others feel by helping readers put themselves in the shoes of immigrants. Nevertheless, not all reading material will evoke empathy if the reader is uninterested in the text or the narration is culturally incomprehensible. Suzanne Keen expands upon this concept of vicarious empathy: “research shows that readers who linked themselves to story characters through personal experiences were more likely to report changes in self-perception, if not actual empathy” (217). This quotation explains that literature which achieves a strong identification between a character and the reader is better able to influence the reader in a desired way, sensitize her or him, and make a previously unknown viewpoint acceptable. In conclusion, nurturing empathy in narratives helps readers place themselves in the situation of others and feel as others do insomuch as it presents relatable content to the reader. In more ways than one, what Sober and Wilson, Hatfield et al. Snow, and Keen explain, augments Richard Rorty’s ‘sentimental education’ theory by backing it up with scientific data. In fact, it is remarkable how Rorty’s philosophy arrives at the same conclusions; yet, using an entirely different method. In narratives about immigration, the building of empathy thus becomes one of the most important tools in sharing an otherwise unknowable viewpoint, sensitizing citizens of the host country to the complexities and nuances of immigration, and inspiring them to act in positive manners that reduce societal injustice and cruelty.
Thus, while empathy is a powerful feeling that sensitizes people, it is not without issues. Even though “[t]o feel empathy is crucial in order to protect and help those who are vulnerable” (Moses 137), writers have to make those characters vulnerable in some meaningful way in order to be most effective in generating empathy. Actually, the more recognizably hopeless their situation, the more empathy those discourses generate as readers reckon with injustices they never before faced. As we have analyzed in previous chapters, avoiding negative stereotypes, creating relatable characters, and minimizing victimization are important factors in creating believable strong characters. However, strong and responsible characters interfere with creating narrative empathy: i.e., the more agency characters are allowed and the more responsibility they assume for their actions and situation, the less they are considered victims and thus they provoke less empathy for their cause. In this way, the effective creation of empathy is reduced when characters are strengthened. This formulation is supported by the intriguing work of Dr. Jennifer L. Dunn in her article “The Politics of Empathy: Social Movements and Victim Repertoires.” In the article, she asks the question: “While a survivor may make a more attractive image with which to identify collectively, will a shift toward this understanding of victimization continue to generate the compassion required for assistance?” (236) The answer, as she sees it, is complicated by many factors related to how each culture will interpret the text, but generally “victims who have been framed as agents and who are negatively evaluated are blamed for their victimization [by readers]. In contrast, victims who are portrayed as not responsible for their own victimization lack agency, but if positively evaluated as ‘pure victims’, evoke sympathy” (236-7). The problem here is evident and frustrating. The most effective narratives at generating empathy victimize
their protagonists by overemphasizing structure and thus taking away individual responsibility. This is acceptable from one perspective as it may lead to social change; however, it is also a problem for immigrant authors who do not want to be victims of circumstance. Authors like Galarza and Nini are extremely particular to show that, while some cards may be stacked against them, they are responsible for their actions and are individuals that show self-respect and courage against a backdrop of discrimination that they fight with their scornful narratives. While not “pure victims,” the protagonists of immigrant-authored narratives can also rear empathy due to the disparity of their own worth and the situation that dictates their personal tragedy. In a creative way, these authors create characters with whom readers can empathize despite their strong nature. This unexpected divergence from the theory gives value to immigrant narrations as they stand apart from the portrayals often created by Spanish citizens.

Exemplifying the theoretical notions of creating a strong character, Galarza shows that his first-person semiautobiographical character will not allow himself to be victimized. Because of the absurd dichotomy between the protagonist’s view of himself and his lowly reality, a comparison between the Sisyphean hero and immigrant narrator of Paseador de perros helps contextualize the scornful tone of the text and explains the means through which the protagonist fights his ill-treatment. In the classic text as interpreted by Albert Camus, the hero of the myth is tragic but never defeated. Camus assesses that Sisyphus’ situation “is tragic … because its hero is conscious” (121). Nevertheless, Camus, like Galarza, diminishes the tragedy of the hero with the knowledge that scorn can cut through even the direst of situations. Camus writes in a way directly applicable to Galarza’s narrator: “Sisyphus, proletarian of the gods, powerless
and rebellious, *knows the whole extent of his wretched condition*: it is what he thinks of during his descent. The *lucidity* that was to constitute his torture at the same time crowns his victory. *There is no fate that cannot be surmounted by scorn*” (121 my emphasis). Thus, because Sisyphus maintains his freedom to reason, he scorns the Gods even while being punished. Similarly, Galarza scorns his absurd condition as a cultured man forced to work under the table. Camus goes so far as to proclaim that “[o]ne must imagine Sisyphus happy” (123) because scorn gives meaning and respite against the will of the Gods. This is precisely where Galarza’s narrator finds his niche and ability to cope: he is confined to misery through his job and legal situation, and yet, he scorns society through his wit in his writing. The author explains this fact about his writing in an interview: “Mis personajes sobreviven a sus tragedias, son héroes a su manera. Es parte de una filosofía muy básica: levantarse pese a todo y seguir adelante, pero no en silencio, nunca en silencio, eso es para los oprimidos. Mis personajes buscan que su voz se escuche” (My characters survive their tragedies; they are heroes of their own making. It is part of a very basic philosophy: getting up in spite of everything and continuing on, but not in silence, never in silence, that is for the oppressed. My characters try to make their voice heard) (Medina-León n.p.). We can thus conclude that despite the oppressive situation that his character endures, Galarza will not allow him to accept it silently. Using this philosophy of life, Galarza’s narrator is an optimistic absurd hero responding to his postmodern oppressive condition with scorn.

Furthermore, the protagonist of *Paseador de perros* is portrayed reflecting an unsettling and original duality. He is both a person in a bad situation that elicits empathy, and, at the same time, he flaunts his superiority, which diminishes empathy. As such,
even though the main character “temía a los perros antes de este trabajo” (was afraid of dogs before this job) (Galarza 32), dog walking is the only employment he finds without papers. Ironically, the protagonist ponders his aspirations and his reality: “¿Se podía caer más bajo? Siempre se puede y yo aún no lo sabía” (Can one fall even lower? One always can, and I still didn’t know it) (12). Thus, the narrator portrays himself as a living contradiction. He spends all day picking up “toneladas de mierda … con esas bolsas negras” (tons of shit … with those black bags) (129), even when he considers himself worthy of much better employment. This contradiction garners empathy with his readers.

Living up to the proclamation that Galarza’s characters will not be silenced, the protagonist flaunts his egocentrism and narcissism to show he is an individual never to be lumped in with other immigrants. As such, despite the narrator’s lack of financial means, he chooses to live in Malasaña, the old center of the Movida’s countercultural scene after the death of Franco and an area in Madrid considered one of the trendiest and hip neighborhoods by the locals and visitors alike. Furthermore, besides choosing to live in such a select neighborhood, the narrator believes his tastes in music are far superior to those of most immigrants. Lastly, the narrator is infinitely annoyed by his interactions with people he considers inferior. All immigrants and lesser-educated Spaniards are below him, and he hardly cares about offending them because he refuses to see himself as a victimized immigrant. Thus, he writes condescendingly about the others immigrants with whom he works: “Perros y papeles de trabajo. ¿De qué más se puede hablar con una banda de inmigrantes que pasea perros y nunca ha escuchado a Baxter Dury, que no ha entrado al Garaje Sónico, que no ha pisado Malasaña? Todos viven atados a la nostalgia, extrañando a sus familias y su comida. Yo no extraño ninguna de las dos” (Dogs and
work permits. What else are you to talk about with a band of immigrants that walk dogs and have never heard of Baxter Dury, that have never entered into the Garaje Sónico, and that have never stepped foot in the Malasaña neighborhood? All live for nostalgia, missing their families and their foods. I don’t miss either) (Galarza 62). He makes it seem as if these other immigrants are not interested in anything more than basal pleasures and inconsequential trivialities. Like a typical narcissist, he is “characterized by impulsivity and irresponsibility; [people like him] … are habitual liars, are indifferent to the rights of others, and display lack of remorse for wrongdoing. When they do something wrong, they do not really see what the fuss is about, and may engage in rationalizations blame-shift” (Kennett 341). Therefore, he shows himself as someone who desperately desires to be recognized for his high culture rather than his legal status and employment. In showing his independent nature, at times the protagonist voluntarily pushes the reader’s empathy out of the picture. This dichotomy permeates his text and with it challenges typical immigrant representations. Consequently, he also embodies a perfect victim at times, and a nonchalant hero. In this original way, Galarza achieves empathy for his unfortunate condition and respect for his independent nature; however, he also challenges empathy with what appears to be a narcissistic and even xenophobic attitude.

A protagonist with whom readers can empathize, Galarza represents his protagonist as both admirable for his bravery to take hold of his destiny and immigrate and also alienated in his fate of an irregular immigrant in spite of his talent and desire to integrate. Because of this split representational rhetoric, the narrator expects his readers to empathize with him and see his personal situation as absurd, ridiculous, and unacceptable. As such, Galarza uses what Suzanne Keen calls “ambassadorial strategic
empathy … with the aim of cultivating their [natives’] empathy for the in-group [immigrants]” (224). Such ambassadorial empathy attempts to show to an outsider the workings of an inner group, their relationships, and their commonalities with regular citizens. Galarza however focuses his ambassadorial empathy on his protagonist as a member of a select, cultured, and highly educated immigrant group and refuses to portray himself as a member of the larger immigrant community. By making “[a]ppeals for justice, recognition, and assistance” (Keen 224), Galarza’s main character tries to show that immigrants like him share the same concerns as Spanish citizens about life, work, and other immigrants. His job is also exemplifies the Spanish economic realities that affect both natives as well as immigrants. Case in point, like the Spaniards who have to work jobs for which they are overqualified, the narrator mentions that “trabajaba como un perro” (I was working like a dog) (74), to show that he also has to work extremely hard in a profession unrelated to his training. Moreover, the dog walker becomes equated with a non-human—a dog—which underscores the harsh conditions of the life of the immigrant.

Despite the possible contradiction with the premise that strong characters impede empathy generation, Galarza draws a character that achieves empathy precisely because he is relatable to his Spanish audience due to his individual merits, yet owing to his undocumented status is forced into partial subalternity for reasons totally outside of his control. Through these complex narratological features, Galarza’s approach to building empathy via his immigrant narrator is experimentally ingenious and worthy of attention.

As a means to building a more relatable character, Galarza imbues his character with a strong will as well as an unexpected sensitivity towards the animals he cares for. Galarza draws an unmistakable parallelism between the animals whose owners refuse to
acknowledge them and immigrants like himself who feel abandoned by the society they inhabit. The strongest example of this parallelism is between Odo, a caged raccoon, and the protagonist. Odo, like his human counterpart, is an undesirable and possibly dangerous creature who is neglected by his owner despite his wealth. When the narrator first meets the animal “Odo me bufaba desde un rincón de su jaula amenazando atacarme” (Odo would hiss, threatening to bite me from a corner of his cage) (13). Even though the raccoon is in the house of a wealthy person who is home all day, the raccoon is still neglected. The animal’s fear and resentment are the implied personification of the protagonist’s own fears of being “caged” as an undocumented immigrant and never fulfilling his life ambitions outside of walking dogs. The protagonist overcomes his fear of the raccoon and even starts caring for the creature. As the main character develops a caring nature, Galarza asks his readers to feel compassion for the protagonist who is also in a difficult situation. Later, when the dog-walking business fails and the narrator is let go, the protagonist worries “¿Quién cuidará de Odo? El resto de clientes no me importa.” (Who will take care of Odo? I don’t care about the rest of the other clients) (126). Even though the narrator has shown how much he dislikes his dog-walking job, he has grown to love the animals that cannot fend for themselves. Galarza humanizes the protagonist and imbues him with care toward the helpless even at a time when his own employment situation is precarious. Reinforcing the sensitive side of the narrator is an effective means of building empathy for him.

Besides his caring relationship toward Odo, the central character further shows his gentle nature as he saves three dogs from being put down. For example, when he receives an envelope containing his final paycheck from his boss and finds a note telling him that
the elderly man from Coslada is in a coma, he goes to see the dogs one last time. He is shocked when the lady of the house suggests that, because the dogs bit a neighbor the day before, she will “llamar para que los sacrificuen” (call for them to be put down) (130).

Unexpectedly, the dog walker, who initially hated waking the dogs, asks “Si quieres, los saco un rato” (If you want, I can take them out for a moment) (130). Having the dogs and feeling no employment pressure, he plays with the dogs as if they were his own. Galarza writes about the moment his character is most happy:

Dejo que huelan los arbustos, las cagadas ajenas, jugamos corriendo detrás de una rama que lanzo tan lejos como puedo. Los perros parecen alegres, ladran saltando a mi alrededor. De pronto sé lo que tengo que hacer, surge como una revelación. Los suelto, cojo las correas y cadenas y las tiro a una papelería. Y empezamos a correr por una avenida vacía”

(I let them smell the trees, other dog’s shit, we play catch with a branch I throw as far as I can. The dogs seem happy; they bark and jump by my side. Suddenly, I know what I have to do, the thought comes as a revelation. I set them free, I grab the leashes and chains and I throw them in a trashcan. We begin to run through an empty street.) (131)

As if in a coming of age story, the narrator not only frees the dogs but also symbolically frees himself and other immigrants in his situation from the shackles of modern-day neglect and invisibility. Thus, Galarza creates a symbol of immigrant abandonment through the dogs that escaped death and Odo, the raccoon. In this realization, and in his portrayal as a strong yet caring individual, Galarza makes the protagonist approachable and identifiable.

The final humanizing act of the narrator involves his indirect plea for legalization. It is true that the narrator choses to overstay his visa in Spain; nevertheless, this choice does not determine how much he can contribute to his host society. While for some this fact is enough reason to deport him, the protagonist explains his point of view: “Si la X
neither the first letter of my identification document, nobody would recognize me as an immigrant because I don’t wear shoes with scales nor use imitation brand clothing, and my hair only shines if I don’t wash it for a few days. X for foreigner, X for problems, X because you are marked) (49-50). Even though he cannot help taking a few jabs at the “other” immigrants, his desire to integrate is valid. The “X” on his ID does not simply disqualify him from employment but also marks him with social stigma. According to the Real Decreto 1065/2007 foreigners in Spain have their Número de Identificación Fiscal (Fiscal Identification Number) marked with either an X, Y, or Z to show they are foreigners without a work permit. This immigrant identification marks the protagonist of Paseador de perros in a way that is inescapable to him and to those who would employ him. The protagonist finds his condition absurd and troublesome. It forces him to work a job he hates and be identified with the “other” immigrants whom he disdains so much. The representation of this call for help, the portrayal of his helpless legal conundrum, and his emotional connection with the abandoned animals are effective rhetorical patterns that work to garner empathy toward him in spite of his strong individuality.

In Galarza’s Paseador de perros, the protagonist’s softer side and social status as an undocumented immigrant lead to empathy creation for the protagonist. His job as a dog walker shows the structural and cultural forces over which he has little control, and his care for defenseless animals further humanizes him. These traits facilitate the main
character’s identification with his readers and thus nurture feelings of empathy. Nevertheless, this is only one facet of the dichotomy that governs his character. As discussed, he also represents an absurd hero who fights his impossible situation with scorn. Unlike Sisyphus, whose scorn is a positive attribute, Galarza’s hero translates it to qualities that undermine his reader’s empathy. Because he expects empathy toward his persona but fails to empathize with any other immigrant, the protagonist’s narcissistic and xenophobic complication diminishes the effective empathy that could have been build towards him. From the perspective of engendering social good and inclusion toward immigrants in Spain, this secondary attribute of Galarza’s main character is troubling as shown below.

The protagonist’s dualistic representation comes forth through the portrayal of other immigrants in Paseador de perros. Galarza’s main character feels unmistakably ashamed of the behavior of other immigrants in Spain, and he critiques their actions unapologetically. However, by not contextualizing the structural forces that lead immigrants in Spain to conglomerate in certain neighborhoods and pursue specific social behaviors, the novel reinforces stereotypes about immigrants instead of fighting them. In this way, the author ends up challenging his readers’ sense of justice toward other immigrants in the protagonist’s situation. Therefore, instead of coherently working toward social unity and the upholding of all immigrant’s rights, the main character undoes much of the empathy garnered for himself by acting insensitively toward other immigrants.

In his generalizing attitude, the protagonist-narrator recurs to stereotype rather than individuation. Visiting a new client close to the Tetuán metro station he passes “un
locutorio y una peluquería con un nombre en diminutivo” (a phone and computer center and a hair dresser with a diminutive name” (Galarza 49). Then he thinks to himself, “Otro barrio invadido por los inmigrantes” (Another neighborhood invaded by immigrants) (49). Recurring to the tired invasion metaphor, the narrator associates the names of immigrant-owned businesses with the lowering of the quality of life and the dilution of the Spanish culture. The invasion metaphor is demeaning because a term that normally addresses medieval wars and insect infestations is not fitting for addressing humans seeking a better life elsewhere. The metaphor also devoids immigrants of their individuality and responsibility by grouping them into a singular mass believed to take over and irrevocably change Spain. Fulfilling preconceived stereotypes that economic immigrants are disorderly and uncultured, the protagonist mentions how “los cubanos, … no paraban de gritar que ya habían enviado el dinero” (the Cubans, … could not stop shouting that they had already sent the money) (122) while speaking on public pay-phones with their relatives abroad. In his quest to show how much better he is in comparison to other immigrants in Madrid, the main character approaches other people’s responsibility toward their families with elitism and ignorance. It is as if he forgets that he too is an immigrant, and for that matter, an undocumented immigrant. He truly fails to realize that, in the eyes of Spaniards, he is no different than, nor better than any of the people he criticizes. His disparaging comments directed at other immigrants not only further immigrant stigmas, but worse, they inadvertently damage his own portrayal as a just and empathy-worthy character in the process.

Illustrating his tense relationship to the “other” immigrants in Madrid, the narrative voice appeals to another stereotype recognizable only insomuch as Galarza’s
readers believe immigrants amount to a nuisance and a bother in Spain. Thus, instead of promoting other immigrants as individuals navigating the complex immigrant predicament like himself, Galarza chooses instead to dehumanize them. While in the metro, the main character runs into immigrant musicians trying to make a living off their talent and other people’s charity. The narrator comments:

¿Por qué todos esos músicos son feos? Árabes, rumanos, latinos, africanos, un gringo y un chino extraviados. Los árabes y los rumanos me irritaban con su repertorio de EP. Los africanos golpeaban sus tambores o apelaban a las enseñanzas de Bob Marley y se balanceaban como Stevie Wonder detrás de un teclado. Los latinos soplaban sus quenas y zampoñas, rasgaban las guitarras y el charrango, u ofrecían un espectáculo deplorable imitando a los cantantes de ese pop adulto disfrazando de existencialismo de supermercado. Cuando los cantantes románticos o los árabes y rumanos subían a mi vagón, yo me cambiaba al de delante. Sus acordeones y violines chirriaban como si afilaran un cuchillo para matarme.

(Why are all these musicians so ugly? Lost Arabs, Romanians, Latinos, Africans, a gringo, and a Chinese man. The Arabs and the Romanians annoyed me with their EP [Extended Play] repertoire. The Africans beat their drums or appealed to the teachings of Bob Marley, and they would rock like Stevie Wonder behind the keyboard. The Latinos blew their Indian flutes and shepherd’s pipes, strummed their guitars and ukuleles, or offered a deplorable spectacle by imitating adult pop disguised as supermarket existentialism. When the romantic or the Arabic or Romanian singers got in my metro car, I would move to the next one. Their accordions and violins screeched like the sound of a knife being sharpened in order to kill me.) (38)

Galarza’s writing is indubitably vivid; however, it is blatantly judgmental. The main protagonist feels personally attacked and defrauded by these immigrant artists who choose street performing as their income. Similar to the previous invasion metaphor, the way in which Galarza describes these individuals is stereotypically recognizable and unnecessarily offensive in a city that already struggles with integrating immigrants. Ironically still, the narrator fails to recognize that the street performers and the people shouting at each other over the phone are probably just as interested in integrating and
not being identified with the foreigner stigma. Furthermore, the narrator’s generalization of all immigrant ambulant musicians as ugly and untalented taints the way in which the readers perceive the narrator. By portraying himself as a politically incorrect xenophobe, he is alienating the empathy of the readers who have become emotionally invested in a strong and charitable character, not a bigot.

The protagonist aligns himself with the idea that undereducated economic immigrants are unstable and chaotic. As a dog walker, he navigates Madrid from one end to another on public transportation and observes immigrants going about their day in what he perceives as complete disorder: “El bus se llenaba de rumanos, latinos, árabes y algunas excepciones españolas. La gente rompía la fila por subir al bus y el conductor nos castigaba manteniendo apagado el aire acondicionado” (The bus would get filled with Romanians, Latinos, Arabs, and some Spanish exceptions. The people would break out of line to get on the bus and the driver would chastise us by not turning on the air conditioning) (52). In this instance, the narrator associates immigrants with a chaos that appears intrinsic to their behavior and nurtured by their underdeveloped countries of origin. Symbolically immigrants are made the root of societal problems for which all others suffer. When immigrants get out of line, the driver punishes all people with no air conditioning. This punishment further fans the angst of the protagonist as he continues to describe the now steamy bus ride:

El bus era un contenedor de olores que invitaban al desmayo. Odiaba que me antepusieran un brazo en la cara, que alguien renegara en voz alta cuando el día apenas empezaba, que todos tuvieran como timbre de sus móviles las abominables canciones de moda que sonaban como música metálica, que esas canciones y otras peores escaparan de los cascos de sus MP3 como por un altavoz, que ese árabe siempre cargara con una radio portátil que usaba para difundir la música pop de su país, odiaba estar en
una jaula, pero todos viajábamos por el mismo camino, como en el metro, apretándonos como animales subterráneos llamados usuarios, gusanos encerrados en una pesadilla de acero, vidrio y luces que anunciaban la llegada del siguiente tren hacia martirio de la rutina.

(The bus was a receptacle of smells that invited fainting. I hated that people put their arms in my face, that someone repudiated out loud the day that barely began, that all had as their ringtone the abominable songs of the day that sounded with metallic tones, I hated that these songs and others even worse escaped their headphones and MP3 players like from megaphones, I hated the Arab who played his country’s pop music on his portable radio for all to hear, I hated being in a cage, but, we all traveled on the same path, like in the metro, cramped like subterranean animals named users, worms enclosed in a metal nightmare, glass and lights announced the arrival of the next train toward the martyrdom of routine.)

(52-3)

The deeply personal images show how adept Galarza is at crafting a costumbrista-like text. It is well written, recognizable, and comic in a scornful way; nevertheless, it reduces immigrants to non-agents and useless nuisances unable or unwilling to change. They are portrayed as brutish and uninitiated in the ways of western bus etiquette and so the narrator complains that they act in Spain as if they had never left their own chaotic countries. Also of note is the fact that in this instance he includes himself as part of the community of immigrants despite his bitter criticism of them: “pero todos viajábamos por el mismo camino” (we all traveled on the same path) (53). This inclusion is of note because it shows the way in which the author could have performed his interethnic scornful critique in a more meaningful and inclusive way. By being part of the group, he can critique, individualize, and show respect and understanding for people caught in a similarly difficult situation. This way he would have remained a strong character as well as retaining his reader’s commitment to empathy toward their now common cause.

Galarza makes his view clear that these old behaviors are the cause of the stigma immigrants suffer in Spain. Thus, the lesson Galarza appears to want his readers to get
from the short bus ride sketch is that as long as immigrants do not adapt to the new realities and culture of Spain, they will be stigmatized and also disparage other immigrants who put a greater effort into integrating. While this lesson may be valid from the character’s perspective, the protagonist fails to humanize and give the necessary background to explain these behaviors in order to create understanding rather than disdain for immigrants. Because of this basic shortcomings, his text continues the propagation of disparaging and anti-immigrant discourses instead of challenging them.

Delving deeper into the characterizations of other immigrants in the book, Galarza’s main character shows a particular disdain for Romanians in Spain. Unfortunately, the author forgoes getting to know this community and instead reduces them to a plague-like stereotype. Traveling through Coslada he talks about the Romanians’ “lengua extraña” (strange language) (66) and then calls the place “la mayor colonia rumana de Madrid y quizás de toda España” (the largest Romanian colony in Madrid and possibly in the whole of Spain) (6). Besides recurring again to the strongly debunked invasion metaphor, the narrator reduces Romanians to the most basic of stereotypes: “Rumanos: si no trabajan en la construcción, forman bandas que roban casas. Rumanas: si no son asistentas, se prostituyen en calles y puticlubs. Con esos rostros de duendes malignos parece como si no sirvieran para hacer otra cosa.” (Romanian men: if they do not work in construction, they form gangs that burglarize homes. Romanian women: if they are not caretakers, they prostitute themselves on the street and adult clubs. With those faces of malign spirits, it seems as if they could not serve any other purpose)

52 Coslada is a city part of Madrid Municipality. The Romanian community dominates other immigrant groups by owning 84% of the immigrant population. All immigrants account for about 21% of the total population in Coslada. See page 93 of García Caeiro’s essay on Romanian immigration to Coslada.
These statements are so troubling because they allow for only a binary form of agency for the Romanians: they are either useful when they are employed or delinquent when they are not. These statements and the strange reference to them having faces reminiscent of evil spirits does not cultivate inclusion nor understanding. Instead, it diminishes Romanians to what Rorty called “quasi-humans” (176), a sub-category of people that look like us but their actions distinguish them from us in a way that justifies their mistreatment. Galarza’s characterizations reflect an ignorance of the full power of his words and an unwillingness to understand those who are different from himself. It is truly bewildering that the narrator expects empathy for himself and his irregular situation but offers no such empathy to other immigrants. Because of these troubling representations, and in spite of its witty and fluid writing style, the book ends up with a diminished ability to affect social change through empathy.

Reaching a point of no return, the main character’s pent up anger explodes against those immigrants whom he considers unbearable in the most offensive section of the book. Having returned home in the evening after a long day of walking dogs, he wishes to enjoy some quiet and sleep. However, his plans are shattered because his Danish roommates and two Cuban men have decided to have a party. The loud salsa music blasting out of a radio makes it impossible for him to rest. Disapproving of the music, he turns it off. Suddenly, he is confronted by one of the Cuban men. After an altercation with the man, the protagonist bursts forth in a tirade of racist and xenophobic remarks directed not only at the unnamed Cuban, but also at all immigrants who have caused him direct or indirect trouble:
Una palabra más y juro que me habría tirado encima de ese negro para matarlo a golpes. ¡Negro de mierda! ¡Cuántas veces he querido decirlo! ¡Chinos mafiosos! ¡Romanas putas! ¡Moros terroristas! ¡Sudacas brutos! ¿Para qué han venido a este país si nunca pisan los museos ni los cines con películas en versión original? Sólo leen los diarios gratuitos que se reparten a la entrada de las estaciones del metro. Si no es por el acento, su ropa los delata como inmigrantes.

(One more word and I swear I would have thrown myself on top of this black man to kill him with my fists. Shitty negro! How many times I have wanted to say it! Chinese mafia! Romanian whores! Terrorist Moors! Ignorant South Americans! Why have you come to this country if you never step inside any museums, nor in the cinemas that show films in their original form [not language dubbed]? They only read the free newspapers that are given out at the entrance of the subway stations. If it is not because of their accent, their clothing betrays them as immigrants.) (71)

While these lines could be interpreted as a calculated plan of reform by Galarza, that is, to shock and awake Spaniards to the fact that discourses reflecting xenophobic and racist attitudes employed by a sector of the Spanish population do not go unnoticed by immigrants. Even so, these lines are extremely harsh. They betray a deep dislike towards those that are of a different race and those who speak different languages. Furthermore, they imply that accent, race, and clothing make better or worse people. Thus, both material possessions and physical traits automatically disqualify those the protagonist denounces from humane treatment and respect. Furthermore, these lines reflect a hypocritical attitude in which the protagonist complains about his own unjust treatment yet insults other immigrants with disparaging remarks. In context, the book’s protagonist does not utter these sentences out loud to the Cuban; nevertheless, the outcome of the pronouncement is worse because Galarza publishes them to many potential readers as a valid and possibly reinforcing opinion. I say reinforcing because “¡Negro de mierda!...

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53 Sudaca comes from sud (south) and acá (here). It is used pejoratively to talk about South Americans in Spain. See page 262 of Rosa Pellicer’s review of Daniel Mesa Gancedo’s book entitled Novísima relación: narrativa amerhispánica actual.
¡Chinos mafiosos! ¡Rumanas putas! ¡Moros terroristas! ¡Sudacas brutos!” (Shitty negro! … Chinese mafia! Romanian whores! Terrorist Moors! Ignorant South Americans!) (71) are not the literary creations of Galarza, but rather well known pejoratives about these ethnicities in Spain, used in both private conversations as well as printed in some media.54

In addition, the supposedly uncensored thoughts of the protagonist invite the reader to recognize these traits and accept them as truth without care for the damage or segregation they promote. Instead of using art and culture to redefine our identities “not only by opposition to others, but also by likeness or similarity with their identities and their ways of being” (Barreto 111), the narrator appears to promote demagoguery. Additionally, the promotion of immigrants as “pseudo or quasi-humans, second-class humans, nonhumans, sub-humans and ‘sub-animals’” (Rorty 176), does not endear the main character to his readers; in fact, it does the opposite and subverts the positive and very effective traits of the narrative to engender compassion for the protagonist’s situation. These lines are the novel’s most damaging, and this dismissive section squanders the empathy and responsibility toward the Other that the reader may have been willing to invest in the protagonist.

Ironically, the protagonist’s criticism of other immigrants’ behavior is not different from the way the protagonist is perceived by others. This observation confirms the fears of the main character that he is stigmatized because of them and shows that further criticizing other immigrants will not serve a productive purpose. As such, the following episode explains how shortsighted the protagonist is to dehumanize other

54 Chapter 2 offers some examples of these characterizations in the hateful music of the extreme neo-Nazis in Spain.
immigrants and think that these critiques will not affect himself. One morning, as the protagonist attempts to get on the bus, the driver prohibits his entry. She says “Esta mañana subiste con el volumen de los cascos muy alto y eso molesta a los pasajeros” (This morning you got on the bus with the volume of your headphones set very high, and this bothers the other passengers) (60), and he responds arrogantly that “nunca llevo el volumen muy alto y que en todo caso, de haber sido así, los pasajeros me lo habrían tenido que agradecer por cultivarles el buen gusto” (I never have my volume on high and anyway, even if it were high, the passengers would have had to thank me for cultivating their good taste) (60). In this quote, the author ironically shows how, in the eyes of Spaniards, he too belongs to the “chaotic” and “disorderly” “invaders” category that he dislikes, despite his sense of superiority. Like a good costumbrista such as Larra would have done in the 19th century, he includes himself in the category of the despised or the faulty. This episode acts both as comic relief and as a way to soften the main character’s criticism of other immigrants. The scene also goes to prove that despite his best intentions to be nothing like the “other” immigrants, the protagonist is affected directly by the cultural perception that immigrants are chaotic and troublesome. Unfortunately, the immigrant character does not take this fact as a personal lesson in humility; it only fuels his anger toward other immigrants whose faults cause him so much trouble.

Disappointingly, this view de-individualizes humans who have as much agency and will as the immigrant narrator. Furthermore, the elitist point of view that only educated or sophisticated immigrants can be good citizens is troubling, especially when held to the standards set by the protagonist. Thus, instead of framing immigrants into good and bad categories, the protagonist could have made an effort to show that those
below his standards have their reasons and are on a path toward betterment. As Galarza demands understanding for his protagonist’s absurd situation, the reader must now balance the narrator’s treatment of other immigrants against the reader’s personal sense of justice. Thus, instead of offering a unified argument about why Spanish citizens should try to integrate immigrants and treat them justly, the main character falters by mirroring xenophobic stereotypes that work against the reader’s empathy.

In the end, the final representation of the immigrant protagonist is highly complex, both leaving a reader enchanted with the clarity of speech and funny descriptions of his alienated day to day life, as well as outraged at his portrayals of other immigrants. Sidestepping the main character’s xenophobia, the book manages to create an original immigrant representation that is highly individualized and worthy of empathy. Nevertheless, when the two representational sides of the protagonist are put together, the reader has to choose whether to stick with his invested empathy or disavow him. This dilemma weakens the empathetic response and diminishes its social impact. Had the author worked to humanize and justify other immigrants along with the protagonist, the book could have been a much more potent tool in garnering empathy and showing the difficulties and successes of immigrants in Spain. Even the scornful way the protagonist sees the world could have been used more productively and positively to show how negative discourses against immigrants affect their community. This approach could have thus reared empathy instead of replicating discrimination patterns and diminishing the reader’s sense of responsibility toward the protagonist. The novel obviously raises awareness of the unjust treatment of the protagonist; nevertheless, his appraisals of other immigrants mar this message. What’s more, the protagonist cannot even be awarded civil
courage if “[w]e call civil courage an attitude and behavior that relies on an individual decision motivated and legitimated by the fundamental value of human dignity for whose protection the courageous individual behaves in a nonconformist manner and takes a personal risk” (Schwan 113). His actions are nonconformist but do not lead to a public good nor respect the fundamental value of all human dignity because they uphold demeaning attitudes toward other immigrants. In this way, Galarza holds on to a homogeneous non-reality in which Spain preserves a made-up purity of culture that never existed as exemplified in his recurrence to the invasion metaphor and a belief that immigrants degrade the Spanish culture. Because of this fallacy, the book’s protagonist attempts to distance himself from “different” immigrants and blend in as if he were native-born. Unfortunately, this view is antiquated when faced with a multicultural and heterogeneous Spain. Because of these issues, while brilliant in some ways, the book falls short from the perspective of social justice, inclusion, and the creation of empathy for immigrants in Spain.

*Diario de un ilegal*: Humanizing Stereotypes through Responsibility and Empathy

As mentioned earlier, immigrant narratives written by undocumented immigrants are extremely rare and highly thought-provoking literary pieces because they record experiences that otherwise would be totally unknowable to a non-immigrant. *Diario de un ilegal* (2002) is one of the first narrations to show the experience of an undocumented immigrant of Arabic origin in Spain. This literary occurrence is exceptional because few immigrants have the ability to write their experiences in a cogent manner and even fewer can write it while they go through the vicissitudes of their own immigrant experience.
Rachid Nini, born in Ben Slimane, Morocco in 1970, is a journalist, editor, and director of the Casablanca newspaper *Al Massae*. He graduated from the University of Literature and Human Sciences in 1994 with a bachelor’s degree in Arabic Literature. He collaborated for the *Al Alam* newspaper and later launched his own Amazigh language newspaper called *Awal* (Words) that only printed three editions before shutting down. After an invitation to the 1997 Amazigh World Congress in the Canary Islands, Nini obtained a visa to Spain but chose instead to emigrate rather than attend the conference. His life in Spain and France is documented in *Diario de un ilegal* (Diary of an Illegal), the subject of this study. After returning to Morocco, he worked as a TV show host for the “Nostaljia” program on the 2M network. In 2000 he started his “Chouf tchouf” series of articles published in the *Assabah* newspaper. Culminating his journalistic career, in 2006 he started the *Al Massae* newspaper. In 2011 he was unjustly arrested and imprisoned for a year for offending with his daring anti-corruption columns. After his incarceration, Rachid Nini declares he will not write anymore in protest for his unjust treatment.

*Diario de un ilegal* is Nini’s first published book-length narrative outside of the little known *Poemas fracasados sobre el amor* (Failed Poems about Love) poetry collection. It was published first in Arabic in 1999 and then translated into Spanish in 2002 by Gonzalo Fernández Parrilla and Malika Embarek López. His journal is a first person autobiographical diary interspersed with memories from his youth. Because both the author and the intertextual narrator use the same name, in this essay I distinguish

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55 For a more complete detailing of the circumstances of his imprisonment, see the article “MOROCCO: One year in prison for editor critical of government” published by the NGO Pen International.  
56 Beside its mention in *Diario de un ilegal*, information about this collection of poems is unknown.
Nini-the-character from Nini-the-author using the aforementioned qualifiers. The journal continues to be extremely relevant even a decade and a half after its publication because of the strength of its testimony and the fact that so few comparable documents have been published since.

In spite of the seven-year difference between the Spanish publication of Diario de un ilegal and Galarza’s Paseador de perros, the two text share many similarities but also contrast in significant ways. Both authors share a similar the socio-economic background and both are severely critical of other immigrants in Spain. However, unlike Paseador de perros, the narrator of Diario de un ilegal does not flaunt narcissism nor prioritize the disparaging of other immigrants. Nini’s narrative furthers social good and engenders empathy toward vulnerable immigrants in Spain by contextualizing and explaining the background of the many stereotypes associated with immigration. Therefore, this analysis of Rachid Nini’s Diario de un ilegal shows that, notwithstanding the critiques and stereotypes present in the narration, the protagonist is successful in engendering empathy, knowledge, and compassion towards immigrants of North African origin. Nini succeeds in constructing a more empathetic narration by fighting stereotype with persuasive arguments that humanize and individualize immigrants in spite of their illicit status and questionable behaviors. To show why Nini is more effective in garnering empathy than Galarza, the current analysis focuses first on the characterization of the narrative voice, second, on the representation of other immigrants in their intricate complexities, and third, on elucidating the reasons for the poor understanding between Spaniards and immigrants.
The title *Diario de un ilegal*—with the epithet *illegal*, a word that carries notions of trouble, poor judgment, and crime—foreshadows Rachid Nini’s strategy of directing his reader’s attention towards the stereotypes of undocumented migrants and then switching positions in order to inspire change, compassion, and understanding. The title also alludes to journal writing, a non-fiction genre meant to record and explain a person’s decisions and thoughts. Thus, the diary provides the context of an undocumented immigrant’s perspective, and the narration explores the troublesome behaviors and common stereotypes that befall North Africans, not to excuse them, but to make them comprehensible to a host audience. Furthermore, Nini’s journal writing method is peculiar in that it is not a deeply intimate medium where one writes very personal and introspective thoughts for his or her own purposes; Nini’s diary has an intended public. He recounts: “No lo he escrito para ellos [los inmigrantes], sino para los lectores españoles, porque en estos pensaba mientras escribía y en aquel momento aún no tenía la idea de regresar a Marruecos” (I haven’t written it for them [the immigrants], rather for Spanish readers, because I was thinking about them while writing and at that time I still had no intention to return to Morocco) (Leon-Sotelo n.p.). Having an intended Spanish audience signifies purpose to the narration and not simply a recording of events. The narrative purpose is to recount Nini’s experiences and those of his friends in order to show the troubling effects of illegality on individuals.

Having acknowledged the peculiarity of Nini’s title, of first importance is the characterization of the main protagonist. Just as the title draws on stereotype in order to affect change, his personal characterization works in the same fashion. Defying expectations, the author does not take a defensive posture toward the stereotype that the
North African “is always suspicious, always dishonest, [and] always a Moor” (Manzanas-Calvo 770). Nini-the-character in part reinforces this stereotype with his own hopeless immigration experience. Even as a very well educated and cultured individual, the narrator forgoes his standards and becomes a small-time thief when he is faced with no other means of survival. Explaining his own actions, Nini reveals in an interview what would have happened had he never returned to Morocco: “Me habría convertido en un delincuente. La educación no tiene nada que ver en la posibilidad de este cambio, porque lo que realmente importa es que sientes hambre y ves el futuro absolutamente negro” (I would have become a delinquent. Education does not help at all changing this fact, because what really is important is that you are hungry and your future is absolutely hopeless) (Leon-Sotelo n.p.). In this novel way, Nini uses the medium of the diary to critique the behavior of undocumented immigrants in Spain, and at the same time, build empathy towards North Africans by showing that even when people make wrong choices, they are still humans who can grow, adapt, and deserve to be treated with dignity.

Furthermore, Nini refuses to characterize himself as a pitiful immigrant, and instead puts forth an un-romanticized and brutal portrayal of the reality he lives in Morocco, Spain, and France. Thus, Nini shows that stereotypes, though they can be based on a kernel of truth, must never be used to judge others indiscriminately or to deny their humanity.

Nini strives to represent the reality of his life with honesty. His candor often catches the reader by surprise with unexpected scenes that paint the protagonist as immoral while at the same time eschew victimization. His actions emphasize the humanity of the protagonist as he grows and learns from his mistakes. Notice the
picaresque flavors in the narration of his youth and how it contextualizes the narrator’s future decisions to become a thief while an immigrant in Spain:

Aunque yo no era huérfano, me ponía a la cola y entraba al comedor en compañía de los huérfanos. … La cocinera me preguntaba por mi padre. Yo bajaba la cabeza y le decía que había muerto en la guerra. Se compadecía de mí y me echaba al plato un puñado de esos dátiles con un montón de gusanos que había que matar antes de comerlos … La verdad es que yo no era el único que se hacía pasar por huérfano. Había muchos niños que mandaban a sus padres al cementerio por un poco de pan caliente. El pan de hogaza era tan bueno que podías mandar a toda la familia al cementerio sin ningún remordimiento.

(146)

Emblematically, this fragment shows complexity in form and substance. Nini records hints of both the tragedy that causes his hunger and the comedy and sarcasm in lying to eat dates filled with worms. Furthermore, the diary unapologetically shows the young picaresque protagonist as an imperfect person who often makes mistakes.

Interpolating the 22 chapters of the journal are memories from the character’s youth that contextualize his present situation. As these memories are not placed chronologically in the diary, they link his present circumstances to an aspect of his past. While the youthful protagonist may appear to have the trappings of a thief, this is only apparent to both the reader and Nini because, as his situation worsens in Spain, Nini favors the retrieval of the more difficult facets of his past as a response to his neglect in Spain. Understood this way, Nini does not only chronologically show the formation of a
criminal but explains that his present actions and condition cause him to remember those things from his past that relate most to the tragedy of his present.

Throughout the journal, Nini’s present situation in Spain shapes the way he perceives his past. Having passed through Toledo, he wonders why all the historical shops sell mostly Christian weapons from the Reconquista period. He sarcastically comments that “Es natural. En la Historia se reconoce al derrotado por su ausencia.” (It is normal. History recognizes the defeated only through their absence) (176). As if in answer to the symbolic defeat of there being no Muslim items in the shops of Toledo, the narrator is reminded of a scene from his youth where he and some of his friends snuck into a Christian cemetery to steal marble headstones: “Las lápidas de mármol eran lo único que nos importaba de aquel reino de los muertos. Se las quitábamos a las tumbas en un momento de distracción del viejo guardián que velaba la Serena muerte de los señores. Luego saltábamos la tapia huyendo como pájaros asustados, dejando a muchas tumbas sin identidad.” (The marble tombstones were the only thing that we cared about from that kingdom of the dead. We would take them when the old guard who watched over the serene death of the lords was distracted. Then we would jump the wall fleeing like scared birds leaving unidentifiable many tombs) (177). Though defacing Christian tombs is a sacrilegious act, the author retrieves this memory to show how he, a Muslim, triumphed in a juvenile way over his Christian brethren. Moreover, because he recognizes the memory as a mistake, the author feels remorse. He reasons: “Me entristecía bastante dejar tantas tumbas sin nombre. Pero mis amigos decían que a los cristianos el fuego les había devorado los huesos, y que por tanto ya no necesitaban sus nombres.” (Leaving so many graves without names made me sad. But my friends would tell me that fire had devoured
their Christian bones, and because of that they did not need their names anymore) (177).

The narrator feels sorrow for his actions and makes retribution as best as he can by admitting his youthful folly to the reader. Thus, this example shows the protagonist as a human who makes mistakes and grows as he matures.

Besides the memories of his youth, Nini’s characterization cannot be complete without explaining the reasons why he chose to leave Morocco. Even though he appears to have had a difficult childhood in Morocco, the lack of freedom of speech is the true cause of his departure. As a reporter, he could not retell the truth as he observed it.

Working for a newspaper in Rabat, his boss asks him to report on less controversial topics: “Él siempre repite que, con mis artículos, le he traído problemas al periódico. Quieren que escriba en un tono más modesto” (He always tells me that with my articles I have brought problems to the newspaper. They want me to write with a more modest tone) (185). Because Nini’s employer suppresses his political writing, the narrator thinks that he could report on the truth without fear of repercussions if he lived in a more modern country. In fact, Nini shows his commitment to truth after his one-year imprisonment in Morocco for his daring “Chouf Tchouf” editorials about political corruption. Nini writes: “Journalists should write about what needs to be said and not what others want to hear. Unfortunately, this type of writing leads you either to silence, isolation or to prison” (Rhanem n.p.). As such, Nini shows strength of character in his unabashed desire to share the world he sees without fear of retaliation. This sentiment brings him to desperation and points him toward immigration. He writes: “Estaba desesperado. Empecé a verlo todo con claridad. Desde la cima de la desesperación se ven las cosas con extrema claridad. No como cuando te sientes estúpidamente optimista, y te
parece que las cosas tienen su orden y que en algún lugar hay una salida. La salida para mí era iniciar un largo viaje por el mundo” (I was desperate. I began to see it all with clarity. From the peak of desperation, one sees things with extreme clarity. Not like when you feel stupidly optimistic and things seem to have their order and someday things will work out. The solution for me was to start a long trip through the world) (Nini 187). As Nini sees clearly that he has no future in Morocco, immigrating becomes his solution to continuing to write without the fear of censorship. His representation as an idealistic young man who makes mistakes and does not seek to hide them rhetorically puts forth a strong character worthy of respect.

Fortuitously, Nini’s pathway to Spain appears unexpectedly. By mistake, he is invited to attend an Amazigh conference in the Canary Islands, and Nini uses it as a way to get a visa to Spain. He explains:

El periódico, supuestamente cultural, había dejado de publicarse unos meses antes de que llegara la invitación, al confundir el nombre bereber del periódico con una línea editorial pro amazig, pues pensaron que Awal (La palabra) podía ser una publicación de corte amazig. La invitación llegó como fruto de esta confusión. Y yo la acepté consciente de ella y cultivándola.

(The newspaper, presumably cultural, had stopped being published a few months before the invitation arrived, having confused the Berber name of the newspaper with a Pro-Amazigh editorial, thinking that Awal [The Word] could have been an Amazigh publication. The invitation arrived as fruit of this confusion. And I accepted it fully conscious of this error all the while cultivating it.) (202)

By cultivating the error of his invitation, he nods to the stereotype of dishonest immigrants. Moreover, after obtaining his visa and passport and paying all the fees, Nini makes absolutely no effort to attend the conference: “Naturalmente ni fui a las Islas Canarias, ni asistí a las sesiones del Congreso Amazigh.” (Naturally, I didn’t go to the
Canary Islands, nor attended the sessions of the Amazigh Conference) (203). Instead, he buys a ticket to Alicante and starts working under the table. In this way, the narrator solidifies his personification as an opportunistic character who, in order to escape the injustice of his country, is willing to take any chance he gets in order to reach Spain and make a new life for himself. Even though Nini-the-protagonist appears unscrupulous, in time he comes to regret his choices when his life becomes increasingly more desperate and impossible in Spain. However, these mistakes humanize and individualize his character instead of simply condemning him.

While describing his mistakes and deceit, the narrator works to humanize himself by sharing these mistakes openly with his reader. Though he appears to reinforce negative stereotypes about North Africans who are unscrupulous, Nini tells things how they happened and forgoes stories with the truth. He takes responsibility by sharing the more negative aspects of his immigration story; nevertheless, he also explains that despite his mistakes he still deserves compassion. Corroborating, he writes, “Lo que nos hace seres humanos es que cometemos errores. Cada vez que cometemos un error nos volvemos más humanos … Por eso cuando crecemos empezamos a arrepentirnos de las tonterías que hemos hecho. Y cada vez que nos arrepentimos nos hacemos más humanos” (What makes us human is that we make mistakes. Every time we make a mistake we become more humane … That is why when we grow up we begin to repent of the dumb things we have done. And every time we repent, we become more humane) (146-7).

Consequently, the author uses his own self-deprecated representation in order to conceive his character as human-like as possible, with flaws of character as well as with strength and honesty. While from the onset the narrator’s representation leads to a small measure
of empathy due to his brutally honest self-representation, once in Spain his character strengthens in his ability to garner empathy because he changes from a man in control to a person driven back and forth by the contingency of his undocumented condition. In this way, the author builds empathy toward his protagonist, not solely through victimization, but by drawing sharp distinctions between his dreams and his frustrated reality.

Once in Spain, Nini’s self-characterization becomes more nuanced. Despite his delusions that emigrating would fix all the problems in his life, he learns the truth about being an undocumented immigrant: the skills he worked most to hone avail him nothing because his papers are not in order. Tragically, “[e]n Marruecos, si consigues un doctorado, te puedes limpiar el culo con él … Al terminar, ves que los que nunca iban a clase son los que deciden tu destino en el parlamento, en los ayuntamientos o donde sea … Y que el título no te vale para nada” (in Morocco, if you obtain a doctorate, you can wipe your ass with it … When you finish you see that those who never attended class are those who decide your destiny in parliament, in the local governments or wherever … And that the diploma is worthless.) (80). Furthermore, the education Nini earned is not only worthless in Morocco, but, to make matters even more tragic, he believes it is also rubbish in Spain. He puts forth that in Europe, your diploma does nothing for you “[h]asta que no aprendas a hacer pizza. Y eso es terrible. Porque la pizza acaba siendo a veces más importante que el doctorado (until you learn to make pizza. And this is terrible. Because the pizza sometimes ends up being more important than your doctorate) (80). Making use of a good dose of irony, Nini explores the tragedy he suffers. In other words, in the land of his dreams, as well as in his homeland, he is betrayed by all the things he holds most sacred. His education cannot provide him with any means of
success, an issue which infinitely depresses him. As such, in the battle between the frustrated agency of the individual and the social structure which prohibits him from using his education, Nini builds a strong and relatable character.

Unlike the fortuitous chances that lead Nini-the-character to Spain, once in the country everything changes to misfortune and partial subalternity. As he can only work under the table, his repertoire of employment is limited to blue-collar labor. He first picks oranges, then goes on to be a janitor in a disco, makes pizza, works in a café, and finally does construction work. Going from job to job reminds Nini that as an irregular immigrant in Spain he will never settle down nor lead a life free of the fear of deportation. Nini is now one of the immigrants who feels “effectively immobilized owing to their citizenship status and forced into an existential stagnancy; they are incapable of returning home and barely able to live on the periphery in Europe where they risk both deportation and death” (Shepherd 56). Because stable employment is untenable, he is forced to an ambulatory state, moving from place to place to seek temporary employment only to leave soon thereafter for fear of the police. Consequently, he is starting to increasingly agree with his friend Jáled who thinks that “sólo los burros trabajan en el extranjero” (only asses actually work abroad) (Nini 71). Thus thoughts of “[v]ender hachís como él [Jáled], robar coches o bolsos de inglesas en las discotecas” (selling hashish as he [Jáled] did, stealing cars or stealing handbags from English women at the clubs) (71) start to gain a privileged priority in Nini’s thought patterns. As such, Nini makes evident that even educated and cultured immigrants are tempted by illegal actions when they have no other recourse to sustain themselves. Mulling over the contradictions that lead Nini on this delinquent path shows readers the unnecessary tragedies that face
immigrants, and consequently, Spaniards when immigration policies deny paths toward citizenship for undocumented workers. By focusing on these societal prohibitions, the diary characterizes the protagonist in a new and more vulnerable light that is more amiable to building empathy. The character Nini preserves his highly individualized characteristics and is not weakened by the change in the narrative tone; instead, his new situation restricts his agency as he is put in a precarious situation. Thus, the tension between the contradiction of his personal value and the imposing restrictions makes the protagonist a more worthy candidate for his reader’s empathy.

Even though the narration alludes toward Nini-the-character becoming a thief, his experience of stealing a woman’s handbag is deeply disturbing as readers grow more empathetically invested in the protagonist. Nini also shows that he does not take lightly this situation. He explains: “[a]lgo tenía que hacer aquella noche si no quería pasar un tercer día sin comer. Los dátiles que robaba del súper me permitían sobrevivir. Y agua, naturalmente, había por todas partes” (I had to do something that night if I didn’t want to spend a third day without food. The dates I stole from the supermarket allowed me to survive. And naturally, water, I could find everywhere) (77). Coming full circle, Nini mentions for a second time that dates saved him from starvation. Unlike in his youth when dates were a mischievous afterschool snack, the dates in Spain are now a way for him to eke out a forlorn existence. As he is brought literally to the edge of starvation, the temptation of a real meal is too much to bear. At a moment’s notice, he finds himself following a drunk English woman and mentions: “[y]a no veía más que el bolso” (I was fixated on her handbag and nothing else) (77). Nini pushes the woman, steals her bag, and runs. When he gets back to the hotel, he realizes the fullness of his tragedy: the bag
contained a variety of important personal documents but no money. Nini feels horrible for his despicable action, and being “un ladrón respetable” (a respectable thief) (81), takes her documents to the police station in order for them to be returned to her. In this fashion, the narrator admits to becoming the total opposite of what he desired for himself as an immigrant to Spain. Instead of finding a place from which he could publish his exposés about political corruption without fear of retribution, he finds himself forced to steal in order to survive.

Because the protagonist Nini feels utterly marginalized, he no longer believes he can succeed in Spain and formally complains against the system that neglects him. His comments allow readers to see that even defeated, Nini cogently argues against the absurdity of discriminatory laws that keep undocumented immigrants subaltern. He notes, “establecerse aquí sin papeles implica que con el tiempo eres candidato a convertirte en un pícaro. Porque estarás privado de trabajo y residencia y, por tanto, de ciudadanía. No tendrás nada garantizado. No tienes derecho a presentar una queja contra quien te explote, robe o engaño. Porque eres un ilegal” (to take up residence here being undocumented implies that in time you become a candidate to transform into a scoundrel. Because you are deprived of work and residence, and therefore of citizenship. You will not have anything guaranteed. You do not have the right to complain against those who exploit you, steal from you or deceive you. Because you are an illegal) (206). Nini thus explains that even highly educated people like himself are on the path to illegality if they are not allowed the same rights as other individuals. With much clarity he pens, “[t]u clandestinidad ha de ser total hasta que en la Oficina de Extranjería tomen la decisión de hacer de ti un ciudadano público. Con un carné que lleve tu foto, tu huella, y tu número
de la Seguridad Social para poder visitar al médico si sobrevives a las condiciones climáticas y no te extingues como un animal prehistórico (Your stowaway status is fully and utterly absolute until the Office of Immigrant Affairs makes the decision to make you a public citizen. With an identity card that carries your photo, your fingerprint, and your Social Security number so you can visit the doctor if you survive the climate and you do not become extinct like some prehistoric animal) (206). In this way, although Nini takes responsibility for his actions by sharing them openly with his readers, Nin-the-author also shows that the inability of the Spanish laws to integrate members of their society who want to be lawful only adds pain and multiplies society’s troubles. Furthermore, by showing his character’s willingness to integrate and placing emphasis on the systemic impossibility of this task, the author is engendering an empathetic response toward his immigrant situation as well as a social responsibility toward others like him.

The author further exemplifies to his readers that neglecting vulnerable people leads to undesired situations for Spaniards and immigrants alike. Unwillingly, Nini-the-character has been “reconstructed as the impersonation of the Moor / el moro, the Other associated with social problems, hash, [and] crime in its different forms” (Manzanas-Calvo 770-1). The author shows that as soon as Nini assumes his undocumented state, he becomes an outcast, a member of the lowest social class. Once he accepts and internalizes the societal perception of el moro, he has no option but to act out what is expected of him. Despite the strength of his character, in the end Nini becomes the unwilling follower of a tragic social script that puts him on the path to delinquency instead of citizenship. By reluctantly betraying his standards, education, and culture, Rachid Nini shows that lacking a particular stamp on a passport can lead anyone to actions that they may regret.
This moment builds empathy because it shows the negative effects that social systems have on individuals who are in Spain attempting to build a better life for themselves. In this way, the protagonist argues against dehumanizing social processes that neglect vulnerable people and thus negatively affect the entire Spanish community.

Comparing the figure of the immigrant in *Diario de un ilegal* with the figure of the immigrant in *Paseador de perros* shows that, despite the many differences between the two texts, both represent strong individuals caught in societal traps that offer them no promise of integration in spite of their talents and willingness to add their distinctiveness to Spain’s community. Both protagonists show courage in spite of their undocumented status, and both are forced to leave Spain at the end of their respective narrations. Nevertheless, unlike the protagonist of *Paseador de perros*, who spews forth copious amounts of questionable statements against other immigrants, the Moroccan author’s protagonist rejects such stereotypes and fights them by never allowing other immigrants to be dehumanized. For example, Nini’s character does not hide the fact that many other immigrants he encounters are thieves; nevertheless, he always contextualizes their situations to emphasize their humanity despite their wrong choices. Because of this basic character difference, he does not squander empathy and the feeling of responsibility that his readers builds toward him. Thus, even though both narratives work to show their protagonists as strong undocumented immigrants, *Diario de un ilegal* is more successful in generating trust and empathy because the protagonist treats other immigrants with the same dignity he expects his readers to offer him.

When it comes to representing other immigrants in Spain, Nini uses the same contextualized and brutal honesty employed to describe his main character. Because Nini
knows very well that “the contemporary crossing of Africans into Spanish soil may bring echoes of a second *reconquista*” (Manzanas-Calvo 765), he makes tackling this fear a priority. As such, Nini draws on immigrant experiences to confirm the kernel of truth behind this hardened belief and then works to show why it is a false representation of the whole.

First, Nini-the-narrator focuses on the controversial tactic meant to thwart immigrant deportation. The author attests that “en cuanto se distinguen las luces de Andalucía, los inmigrantes queman su papeles y los arrojan al mar. Lo hacen para que nadie vuelva con vida a la otra orilla. La muerte o el botín. Quemar los pasaportes es bastante similar a quemar el barco de vuelta” (as soon as they see the lights of Andalucía, the immigrants burn their papers and throw them in the sea. They do it so that nobody returns alive to the other shore. Either death or enjoyment of the spoils. Burning the passports is rather similar to burning the return boats) (207). This act, reminiscent of Cortez scuttling his ships upon arriving in America, shows the immigrants’ determination to either “conquer” Europe or accept death. Because Muslims have been represented in the media as specters of the past coming back to reconquer Al-Andalus, the image of immigrants burning their papers is very powerful to Spanish people. The protagonist thus confirms that many desperate immigrants choose to make their deportation more difficult by obfuscating their origins and consequently playing a part in the fear of a new effort of mass reconquering.

The protagonist then works to reinforce the previous *reconquista* stereotype by retelling the story of one of his friend’s *raison d’être* in France. Mustafa dedicates himself to a subaltern life of theft in Europe and is a negative example of one of these
supposed postmodern Muslim conquerors. Nevertheless, Nini’s character contextualizes Mustafa’s acts by allowing his readers to understand Mustafa’s ethical justification for stealing: “Mustafa cree que Europa es una tierra de botín para los argelinos. Especialmente Francia. Dice que aunque se pasara toda su vida robando, no compensaría lo que Francia robó durante los años que estuvo en Argelia” (Mustafa believes that Europe is the land of treasure for the Algerians. Especially France. He says that even though he may spend his entire life stealing, it would not compensate for what France stole during all the years it was in Algeria) (55). With a strong hint of irony that humanizes Mustafa’s nefarious activities, the protagonist shows how past colonial thieving is paid forward by postcolonial immigrant bandits seeking retribution for past wrongs. Even though Nini represents Mustafa in a semi-comical way, he portrays a sector of undocumented immigrants who steal and are involved in criminal activities for their livelihood. The narrator does not mince words: Mustafa and others like him are immigrants that Spaniards view with fear as representative of all Muslims who are attempting to take back Spain and turn it into an African colony. Therefore, the fear of a second Moorish invasion triggers a desire in Spanish citizens to expel the Arabs in Spain back to their countries of origin.

After acknowledging the reconquista trope and giving examples of people who fit the description, Nini then moves to restore humanity to those people accused of this reconquering and to show the irresponsible and unfounded nature of fearing such a stereotype. Nini baits Islamophobes by making use of their own fears in order to then debunk what he considers a ruse. His method humanizes the protagonists of these
speculative stories as people similar to the Spanish readers who enjoy a good laugh about a comical misrepresentation. Talking to his friends, the protagonist mentions:

Bromeando le dije que estábamos volviendo de nuevo. Cierto que ahora no éramos soldados de un ejército, ni teníamos un jefe que se pareciera a Tariq Ibn Ziyad, pero invadíamos Alándalus de nuevo. Alfonso se rió (sic) y dijo que es muy distinto venir a un país en busca de pan que como conquistador. Los conquistadores no invaden un país sólo para doblar la espalda cogiendo tomates. Cierto es también que los conquistadores no hacen pizza, ni trepan a los árboles para coger fruta. Dije yo. Nos reímos juntos.

(Jokingly I told him that we were returning in mass. True, now we were not soldiers in an army, nor had we a leader who was anything like Tariq Ibn Ziyad, but we were invading Al-Andalus again. Alfonso laughed and said that it is very different coming to a country looking for sustenance instead of as a conqueror. The conquerors don’t invade a country just to bend over backwards picking tomatoes. It is also true that conquerors don’t make pizza, nor climb trees to pick fruits. I said. We laughed.) (98)

Their humorous conversation clearly shows that comparing new immigrants in Spain to a reconquering mass is a misguided narrative. Besides comical relief for the reader, Nini also suggests to other immigrants that “lo realmente ridículo de toda esta historia es que aquí no hay botín alguno. Para vivir aquí tienes que trabajar como una mula. Tampoco existen tesoros escondidos en ningún lugar de la Península … Sin embargo hay huertas de naranjos y tomates, y plantaciones de cerezos almendros y olivos donde es imposible trabajar sin envejecer años de golpe” (the true ridiculous fact of this story is that there are no spoils here at all. To live here you have to work like a mule. There are also no hidden treasures in any place of the Peninsula … Nevertheless, there are orange groves and tomatoes and plantations of cherries, almonds, and olives where it is impossible to work and not suddenly age) (207). Besides showing the embarrassing conditions of a supposed reconquering of Spain by Moorish laborers, Rachid Nini is extremely clear in explaining to both his Spanish and African readers that there are no riches in Europe without hard
work, especially for undocumented immigrants. With efficacy, Nini tackles the
unfounded invasion and reconquering metaphors. He first makes use of an offensive
stereotype and then works to dismantle it and humanize its protagonists. Like the narrator
of Paseador de perros, Nini uses negative stereotypes; however, he also deconstructs
these generalizations in order to show their fallacies and garner empathy for immigrants.

Besides working to both confirm and debunk the reconquering of Al-Andalus
stereotype, Nini’s journal also tackles some other questionable occupations of North
Africans in Spain. Like some of the descriptions of immigrants in Paseador de perros,
these characterizations do not mince words nor attempt to hide the harsh realities of the
dishonesty of his undocumented immigrant friends. Howbeit, Nini never fails to
humanize those whom he criticizes even when they are labeled dangerous thieves, drug
dealers, and prostitutes:

En España, al llegar, la mayoría de mis amigos eran ladrones. Jáled, el que
me consiguió el trabajo en los naranjales, robaba coches de lujo y los
llevaba a Marruecos. A veces vendía hachís o pasaba de Algeciras a
Alicante la mercancía para los gitanos. Mustafa, el que me acogió en su
casa de un barrio de las afueras de París, también era un ladrón peligroso.
Y Nureddín, su primo, otro gran ladrón. A los dos días de estar en su casa,
descubrí que todos los muebles eran robados.

(When I arrived, the majority of my friends in Spain were thieves. Jáled,
the one who found me work picking oranges, stole luxury cars and would
take them to Morocco. Sometimes he sold marijuana or would smuggle
merchandize from Algeciras to Alicante for the gypsies. Mustafa, he who
took me in his home outside of Paris, he too was a dangerous thief.
Nureddín, his cousin, was another great thief. After two days in his home, I
discovered that all his furniture was stolen). (52 my italic emphasis)

The descriptions of Nini’s friends are unexpected as they were the only ones to receive
him when he enters Spain. While not representative of all immigrants in Spain, his
description confirms that some immigrants dedicate themselves to criminal activities.
Besides the obvious similarities between the representations of these immigrants with the ones in *Paseador de perros*, it is also of worth to note that while he describes their criminal behaviors, the protagonist also humanizes them as shown in italics. In this way, Nini leaves open the possibility of redemption for these people despite their current illicit activities. His descriptions of other immigrants are poignantly strong, yet they are not meant to engender disgust like Galarza’s characterizations. The contrast between the kindness that these people show Nini and their illegal acts reinforces their humanity.

Further contextualizing the way he upholds the humanity of his thieving friends, Nini-the-character contrasts them with the way his intellectual acquaintances treated him. The thieves welcomed him when his academic networks turned their backs to him:

“Cuando me fui, sólo los ladrones se quedaron a mi lado. En estos tiempos perversos puedes depositar tu confianza en un ladrón, pero no en un intelectual” (When I left, only the thieves stayed by my side. In these perverted times you may put your trust in a thief, but not in an intellectual) (54). As his intellectual friends did not come to his aid during his hardest times in Spain, the narrator emphasizes that humanity and charity are not characteristics only available to educated and cultured individuals. Of importance is not that the protagonist prefers thieves to intellectuals; rather, that he never forgets to humanize all people in his journal even when they do wrong by the society they inhabit. In fact, he never condones their actions; yet he shows that criminality should never be equated to inhumanity. As such, his comments regarding his academic friends can also be interpreted as a critique of aloof European cultures that allow the neglect and marginalization of entire sectors of their populations and then condemn their actions.
without regard to the reasons behind their behaviors. Moreover, they do not take actions taken to remedy the root issues of illegality.

In short, while the protagonists of *Paseador de perros* and *Diario de un ilegal* are strong characters that attract empathy due to their situations, their representations of other immigrants differ in significant ways. *Paseador de perros* may come across as not being proactive in lifting the stigmas associated with marginalized people, while *Diario de un ilegal* dismantles stereotypes and strives to humanize even those involved in criminal activity. There are plenty of instances in which Nini criticizes immigrants with a brutal honesty, but at the same time there are numerous means through which he contextualizes their behaviors, not to excuse them, but to explain them and show the structural forces of society that guide their individual agency toward criminality rather than integration.

In addition to the narrator’s self-representation and his portrayal of other immigrants, *Diario de un ilegal* also makes an exoethnic critique of Spanish citizens. Although Nini believes that the Spanish people are generally welcoming, he also laments the fact that they have chosen to forget their own immigrant past and allow the media to distort how immigrants are portrayed. Thus, in its exoethnic critique the narrative reveals the roots of the cultural misunderstandings between immigrants and Spaniards and offers suggestions for improvement. As such, the protagonist compliments Spanish natives for the cultural values they uphold. He takes pleasure in recognizing that “los españoles son un pueblo … [con] una inclinación natural hacia la paz” (the Spanish are a people … [with] a natural inclination toward peace) (73) like the Moroccans. Furthermore, they also value family and boisterous conversation with the difference that when they speak they also “se escuchan los unos a los otros” (listen to each other) (73). Thus, Nini builds a
relationship of trust with his readers by showing from the onset that he harbors no ill view of Spain nor its people.

When it comes to dealing with immigrants, Nini-the-author points out that Spaniards exhibit some problematic behaviors towards immigrants. Despite his kind statements regarding the peaceful nature of the Spanish people, Nini-the-character seems to believe that Spaniards have forgotten that during the Franco regime Spain was also an immigrant country. Nini points to the absurdity of this historical paramnesia in which the younger generation does not empathize with immigrants because the older generation has chosen to forget the past. Nini exposes this contradiction:

Los españoles no saben gran cosa acerca de los inmigrantes. Al menos las nuevas generaciones. Las generaciones anteriores vivieron la emigración durante la guerra civil y durante el régimen del general Franco. Y por eso conocen el infierno que es emigrar. Se fueron a México, Argentina, Francia y Alemania y a no sé qué otros lugares. Y ahora no se avergüenzan de sí mismos cuando, al ver a una persona de rasgos árabes, dicen: “«Uuuh, ya han vuelto los moros!»”.

(Spaniards don’t know very much about immigrants. At least the new generations. The previous generations lived emigration during the civil war and during Franco’s rule. And because of this they know the hell that emigration is. They went to Mexico, Argentina, France, and Germany and I don’t know what other places. And now they don’t feel ashamed of themselves when they see a man of Arabic traits and say “Uuuh, the moors have returned!”) (83)

Nini approaches this amnesiac fit, not with suspicion of a hidden agenda, but rather to confront the ignorance of the rising generation that appears to be at odds with the realities of a multicultural Spain. Corroborating Nini’s approach to Spain’s emigrant past, the Spanish film director Carlos Iglesias reminds his audience that “La memoria se pierde y este país de nuevos ricos que hoy somos se permite considerar que todos los que vienen a buscarse la vida son delincuentes … Son comentarios que se hacen desde las vísceras,
olvidando cómo hace unos años salieron de aquí cuatro millones de personas en busca de un futuro” (With time memory fades and this country is now filled with wealthy people who are permitted to think that all those who come to find a better life here are delinquents … These are commentaries that are made from the guts, forgetting that only some time ago, four million people left our country searching for a better future) (Lorenci n.p.). Speaking to the same tune as Iglesias, only eight years prior to his film, Un euro, 3,5 lei (2008), Nini tackles ignorance with the responsibility to know one’s history in order to foster more justice for the immigrants in Spain. Nini’s insight in this matter is exceptional and original. He points out the hypocrisy of being afraid of immigrants when only four decades earlier many Spanish men and women left to search for better prospects abroad.

Furthermore, the protagonist’s exoethnic critique of the host culture centers on the role of media in immigrant representations. Taking into consideration that so few books have been written by immigrants on the subject of immigration and the media’s many documented problems representing immigrants, the main character’s disappointment is obvious. He writes that “[l]os cuentos, las novelas, el cine son mentiras contemporáneas que han convertido a los ciudadanos en un público de bestias que dan vueltas en el molino de la vida cotidiana. Un público que, encima, lee y es culto” (the stories, the novels, and the movies are contemporary lies that have turned citizens into a monstrous public that circles its own tail as part of a modern daily grind. A public that moreover reads and is cultured) (49). The irony that affects the main character the most is that while cultured, the Spanish public remains xenophobic. Placing blame on sensationalist media, Nini believes it makes an otherwise smart people, dumb and insensitive.
Furthermore, Nini continues his tirade against the media by focusing on the films he sees while in Spain: “Aquí las mujeres piensan que somos criaturas sexuales con miembros gigantes. En las películas que ponen en la televisión presentan al árabe como un idiota que babea al ver a una mujer … Por eso siempre he pensado que el cine es el último recurso al que acudir para conocer al Otro” (Here women think that we are sexual creatures with gigantic sexual organs. In the movies that play on the television they present the Arab man as an idiot that drools at the sight of a woman … because of this, I have always thought that cinema is the last means one should resort to in order to get to know the Other) (62). As analyzed in Chapter 3 of this dissertation, social cinema has a responsibility to its public to accurately portray its immigrant protagonists. Nevertheless, Spanish directors of both shorts and feature films have created empathetic responses to immigrant protagonists by relying on stereotypical and unrealistic situations. Thus, Rachid Nini’s characterization of cinema as a last means to get to know the other is poignant and prophetic of the films released about immigration in the 15 years since the publication of Diario de un ilegal. Consequently, the main character’s qualm with the media is that it focuses unnecessarily on stereotypes that dehumanize immigrants instead of showing both the good and the bad of an unregulated migration.

The narrator believes that because media does not represent immigration with respect and dignity, it has created an environment where the discrimination of North Africans and other immigrants is normalized. Nini gives the following as a telling example: “En el callejón de San Antón, si no miras dónde pones el pie puedes pisar muchas cacas. Porque aquí son muy permissivos con los animales. Ver a un marroquí con las alfombras al hombro paseándose por los bares buscando algún cliente borracho les da
más asco que la mierda de un perro” (In the San Antón Alley, if you don’t look where you tread you may step on many excrements. Because here [the owners] are very permissive with the animals. Seeing a Moroccan person with carpets on his shoulder, going through bars looking for a drunk client gives people more disgust than a dog’s shit) (123). The author draws from personal experience the feeling of total disintegration that Arabic men and women feel in Spain and blames it partially on the media’s continued portrayal of women and men from other countries through denigrating metaphors. Even though he offers his critique as an outsider, his analysis is valid as it continues to hold sway many years after its publication. Thus, Nini-the-protagonist solidifies the view that the media has not done its part in rejecting negative stereotypes about North Africans and points to the dehumanized treatment of immigrants as proof.

Having shown that it is possible to craft a text that is honest to the troubles of immigration while respecting the dignity of those represented, the narrator concludes by sharing what he has learned. Unlike a hero who overcomes his trials and becomes a master of both worlds, the protagonist feels defeated and decides to return to Morocco. Before leaving Spain, he describes himself as “el derrotado que regresa a su país. Con desgarramientos musculares en la espalda y los dedos encallecidos, aptos para cualquier cosa menos para escribir” (the defeated man who returns to his country. With damaged back muscles and callused fingers, apt to do anything but write) (197). Nini leaves readers with his final thoughts on his journey. In fact, at his lowest point he pens the most poignant of his lessons about his experience in Spain:

Me he cansado de estar siempre alerta. Quiero salir de casa sin tener esa sensación. Caminar en compañía de alguien sin que el coche de policía se detenga detrás de mí, sin tener que dar explicaciones ni pedir permiso. Me
he cansado de esconderme siempre como un imbécil. Y de correr cuando había que salir huyendo. Quiero mirar a mi alrededor y ver a mis semejantes. Que mi aspecto no le produzca extrañeza a nadie. Que no me intimide una mujer y que no me mire un niño con la boca abierta. Quiero irme a dormir por la noche sin tener que comprobar el cerrojo de la puerta y que la cartera sigue debajo de la almohada.

(I am tired of always being on the lookout. I want go out of my home without this sensation. Walking with someone without the fear of a police car stopping behind me, not having to explain myself nor asking for permission. I am tired of always hiding like an imbecile. And keep going when I should have left fleeing. I want to look around me and see people that look like me. That my appearance not produce strangeness to anybody. That women stop intimidating me and that children stop looking at me with their mouths wide open. I want to leave and be able to sleep at night without having to check whether my door is bolted and that my wallet is still underneath my pillow.) (197)

Nini shows that as an undocumented immigrant, he has been betrayed by his appearance, education, and intellectual friends. Moreover, he is left to fend for himself to the point of giving in to delinquency. For him and others who desire to maintain their self-respect, Nini proclaims that immigrating without proper documentation is a bad solution because of all the societal and structural forces at play. He accepts his own defeat; however, he does not let his defeat go unnoticed. Through the publication of his journal, Rachid Nini is able to educate both natives and immigrants about the intricate complexities of immigration. He condemns and redeems immigrants like himself in a way that is worthy of empathy and understanding. His text thus stands as a marvelous example of immigrant literature that promotes individual agency and also shows how a culture can be oppressive and damaging when the media is left unchecked and history is not properly remembered.

The pattern that Rachid Nini shows most effective for achieving humanized and individualized protagonists and eliciting empathy for immigrants starts by addressing the roots of stereotypes as exemplified by the lives of real characters and then
contextualizing and explaining their counterparts without mincing words. This narrative style does not belittle its main characters nor does it infantilize the story. It addresses a mature audience and respects its ability to reason and empathize, not because they are manipulated into it, but rather because the actions narrated are genuine, the protagonists take responsibility for their actions, and the reader can see that in spite of the immigrants’ ability to change, they are limited by the circumstances and structures imposed on them.

To summarize my assessment of the two immigrant narratives Paseador de perros and Diario de un ilegal, I have argued that avoiding negative stereotypes, creating relatable characters, and minimizing victimization are important factors in portraying immigrants realistically, humanely, and empathetically in order for texts to be an effective means of positive action. Both narratives humanize their protagonists and let readers know otherwise unknowable experiences meant to show the injustices immigrants suffer in Spain. Nevertheless, Paseador de perros may disappoint with critiques that waste the empathetic promise of the protagonist with xenophobic remarks that stifle societal progress. In contrast, Diario de un ilegal stands as one of the most ethically balanced books written by immigrants about immigration to Spain. Its demonstrated relationship between an unfettered testimony and the author’s ability to humanize its protagonists despite the seeming negative representations of underground criminal rings is exemplary from the perspective of empathy. Almost paradoxically, yet in an effective manner, the book exposes the troubling facets and challenges of an undocumented immigration whilst refusing victimization by contextualizing the circumstances affecting the protagonist and other immigrants. Moreover, even though both Nini and the unnamed protagonist of Paseador de perros fail in their personal goals in Spain and are forced to
leave the country, their writing stands as a witness that they have a voice that has to be reckoned with and understood. Conclusively, Nini and Galarza’s experiences are at the center of an epistemological balance between the strong agency of the characters and the empathy needed to change the structure of laws and culture in Spain. In effect, the texts show that strong characters can produce empathy as long as they respect the cultural sensibilities of Spaniards by promoting justice and respect of all people.
Conclusion

Holistically, the purpose of this dissertation is to assess whether immigrants to Spain are depicted in law, mass media, music, film, and literature with the same dignity and respect as any citizen, or whether immigrants are addressed with xenophobia and racism. Outside of Chapter 1 where the mass media and the Spanish immigration law are analyzed, each subsequent chapter focuses on a specific artistic medium to examine whether immigrant representations lead to inclusiveness through empathy or to marginalization by a recurrence to negative stereotypes and harmful metaphors.

Throughout the dissertation, I argue that avoiding stereotypes, creating relatable characters, and minimizing victimization are important factors in portraying immigrants in a way that is conducive to empathy and social good. Consequently, I choose empathy as the most important element of critique because it is the principal means through which a majority culture can experience how marginalized people feel. When the audience “imagine[s] themselves in the shoes of the despised and oppressed” (179) through what Richard Rorty calls a ‘sentimental education,’ they understand that regardless of skin color, religion, or place of birth, each shares the same humanity and inherent value as the other. This realization brings people together, and thus, they are less likely to act with cruelty toward one another and more likely to bring about a meaningful and inclusive social change.

One of the most vital theoretical aspects that this dissertation has produced is the direct relationship between victimization and empathy and its complex nuances as experienced through music, film, and novels. Despite a vibrant Spanish music scene, socially minded music that addresses immigration is rare. Nevertheless, and somewhat
unexpectedly, the music of the Spanish rapper El Chojín (Domingo Edjang Moreno) is exemplary in its ability to tackle xenophobia, racism, and stagnant euphemisms. His songs “La perversión del lenguaje” and “N.E.G.R.O” originally appropriate negative societal discourses on language and race in order to turn them into positive social affirmations that actively garner empathy. Moreover, besides holding the record for the most syllables sung in one minute, his ability to tap into the rich history of rap and to coopt other artists to collaborate on songs for social causes is admirable, creative, and highly effective.

Additionally, I make evident in my dissertation that while Spanish films about immigration are very effective at producing an empathetic response from their audience, they also objectify and eroticize their immigrant protagonists. In this way, Princesas (Princesses) (2005) directed by Fernando León de Aranoa, El dios de madera (The Wooden God) (2010) directed by Vicente Molina Foix, and Retorno a Hansala (Return to Hansala) (2008) directed by Chus Gutiérrez convey a surprisingly dissonant message: as the Spanish citizens qualitatively improve their relationships by befriending immigrants, the newcomers are discarded, defeated, or expelled out of the country. The immigrants are the recipients of a sub-message of rejection. It is thus that the directors of these films cross a positive message of the need for an increased inclusion of immigrants with one that often objectifies them.

In terms of literature, the 2009 Paseador de perros (Dog Walker) by Sergio Galarza and Rachid Nini’s 2002 Diario de un ilegal (Diary of an Illegal) show that even undocumented immigrants can be a powerful literary force. Even though both Nini and the unnamed protagonist of Paseador de perros fail their personal goals in Spain and are
forced to leave the country, their writing stands as a witness that they have a voice that has to be reckoned with and understood. Conclusively, Nini and Galarza’s experiences are portrayed at the center of an epistemological battle between the strong agency of the characters and the prohibiting structure of laws and culture. Critics like Jennifer Dunn argue that “victims who have been framed as agents and who are negatively evaluated are blamed for their victimization [by readers]” (236-7) while victims who cannot take responsibility for their tragedies evoke empathy. As her theory problematizes the possibility of having strong individualized characters that evoke empathy, I decided to put the theory to the test. I noticed that novels written by immigrants about immigration put forth protagonists who are strong individuals because they take responsibility for their choices in their home countries; yet, they also display victim characteristics when they lose their ability to direct their lives due to their status as undocumented immigrants in Spain. This progression from well-individualized to tragic characters appears to create empathy and respect at the same time. I do not presume to have discovered a new writing style that resolves the dichotomy between victimization and empathy; nevertheless, I believe that characters who show this progression allow readers to feel a sense of loss with the immigrant protagonists and thus be more inclined to feel empathy and act with more compassion. In effect, the writing in Diario de un ilegal and Paseador de perros shows that strong characters can also produce empathy as long as they respect the local cultural sensibilities of Spaniards by promoting justice and respect of all people.

Lastly, there are many more avenues for research that can be explored from my analysis. For this purpose, I have included six appendices at the end of the dissertation. Appendix 2 and 3 attempt to leave a select list of short and feature films about
immigration. Appendix 4 and 5 include the narrative works of Latin American and African authors who write in Spain about immigration. With these appendices, the attached bibliography, and textual analysis, further investigation on a variety of topics related to immigration and social justice may advance. I hope this study will impact how immigrants are represented in the media, music, film, and future literature. I believe empathy gained through a ‘sentimental education’ is the most important tool to sensitize people about the vicissitudes of immigration because it allows them to experience rewarding and diverse points of view otherwise unknowable to them. In this way, people expand their cultural and moral horizons and gain more compassion for other people.
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Appendix 1

I am including the lyrics of these hateful songs in this appendix as a means of archival in case they are removed from the internet.

Song 1. “Me cago en estos putos rumanos” by DJ Syto.


Hoy quiero hablaros de algo,
y es de esa plaga que va en aumento,

son esos putos rumanos,
ohh que encima también trabajan los días de fiesta,
son esos putos rumanos
los que te miran en discotecas y si encima vas y les pegas,
ohh van y encima te denuncian ellos a ti

[ESTRIBILLO]
me cago en esos putos rumanos,
hijos de puta ... rumanos,
voy a cortaros las manos hijos de puta...
puta

me cago en esos putos rumanos,
hijos de puta ... rumanos,
voy a cortaros las manos hijos de puta...
puta

Ehh esos que también van de chulos,
que trabajan en restaurantes me cago en su raza,
en sus muertos y en todo su país...

Ehh esos siempre llevan gorra
se la hago tragar entera
le meto una ostia así lo mando de vuelta a su país...

me cago en esos putos rumanos,
hijos de puta ... rumanos,
voy a cortaros las manos hijos de puta...
puta

me cago en esos putos rumanos,
hijos de puta ... rumanos,
voy a cortaros las manos hijos de puta...
puta

Song 2. “Facha vs. Moro” by El Chivi or DJ Syto.
http://www.letrasdemusicas.fm/el-chivi/facha-v-s-moro
(I have preserved the lyrics as written on the website)

Hola, muy buenas noxes, estamos aquí en kien sabe dónde está la puta bici del pobre Maker, q el otros día stando en su puta casa durmiendo, unos putos hijos de puta, moracos d mierda, le chingaron la puta bici y me voy a cagar en todos sus muertos!!
CABRONES!!!!!
Cuando vaya yo en coche y vea al moro q lleva mi bici te juro q me tiro contra el y le monto la bici en mi coche.
Q le den por culo a todos. Y encima, me cago en Dios paso con el coche por encima suyo y le chafo toda la cabeza, por CABRON!!
Vamos a echar a los putos moros pero a las moras no q stan muy buenas!!
Cuando vaya yo en coche y vea al moro q lleva mi bici.. Vamos a echar a los putos moros pero a las moras no q stan muy buenas!!
Meterse las pateras por el culo!!
Y vuestra puta madre!!
Me cago en Dios!!
Y en vuestra puta madre!!
Me vais a chupar la polla!!
Meterse las pateras por el culo!!
Voy a dar dos ostias!!
Meterse las pateras ...

Robarle la bici a vuestra puta madre!!

Mi bici me la robaron anoche cuando dormía, Mi bici me la robaron anoche cuando dormía; Onde stara mi bici¿? Onde stara mi bici¿? Me cago en el puto moro q me robo mi bici!! Onde stara mi bici¿? Onde stara mi bici¿? Me cago en el puto moro q me robo mi bici!!

Hola, muy buenas noxes, stamos aki en kien sabe donde esta la puta bici del pobre Maker, q el otros día stando en su puta casa durmiendo, unos putos hijos de puta, moracos d mierda, le chingaron la puta bici y me voy a cagar en todos sus muertos!!

Cabrones!!!!!

Mi bici...vuestra puta madre!!Me cago em Dios!!Meterse las pateras...robarle la bici a vuestra puta madre!!!

Ese moro tiene mi bici!!!!!!! Se va a enterar!!

Song 3. “Negros de mierda” by El Chivi.


(I have preserved the lyrics as written on the website)

Todo el día con el tetra para bancar la vida,
Musculosa vomitada con chorizo y virra,
La Baranda que despiden siempre es mandarina
Es por eso que merecen que la Gente diga:

Coro:
Negros de Mierda,
Parecen cucarachas que se amontonan en la basura.
Negros de Mierda,
No sirven para nada y van derecho hacia la fisura.
Negros de Mierda,
Hay que desinfectarlos pa’ no mancharse con su negrura.

Si tenes alguna amigo demasiado oscuro,
Olvidalo que es un negro se cae de maduro,
Se te meten en tu casa y no vivir seguro,
Y si la ven a tu señora le tocan el culo.

Coro:
Negros de Mierda,
Habría que mandarlos a laborar a la cordillera.
Negros de Mierda,
Cada 2 por 3 se duerme la mona en una catrera.
Negros de Mierda,
Hay que esterilizarlos para que estén en franca extinción.

Song 4: “La Nueva España (con Artes 1/29)” by Frank T.
(I have preserved the lyrics as written on the website)

La nueva España la levantan inmigrantes.
se acabó tu descarte España no volverá a ser igual que antes.
distintas hablas, etnias, religiones cohabitan.
lá nueva España miles de razas ahora gritan.

[Frank T]
Muchas, no tan grandes pero sí, también libres
que el universo vibre para que la humanidad se equilibre.
Salir de aquellos zulos, no dejéis que el sistema os descarte
dejará de tener sentido el estandarte.
Si Tekafran con arte y con Artes,
da igual donde naciéramos cada uno, podríamos ser de todas partes,
cambiaremos los colores de la bandera de España
luego me tomare una sidrita;- y tú, Arturo- yo una caña.
Los días de la ignorancia nunca acaban,
pero ahora si son menos los que mirando, si el corazón te clavan.
Estos claman, después llaman y reclaman por una España más segura
da la altura de la España de la dictadura.
Ahora me siento acompañado de un chileno, un dominicano, un marroquí,
ya no soy el que miran todos como si fuese un maniquí
me gusta así salir del barrio o mi ciudad y aunque no sean iguales que yo, ver a más tipos
que se parezcan a mí.
Es otra España la que se gesta en el siglo 21
que en sus playas ve perecer en las pateras uno a uno,
la España de los toros, el flamenco y sus oles
se mezcla con la España de mil hablas y colores
de acentos diferentes, actitudes más calientes
unos de hablar más fríamente, otros aprenden velozmente,
algunos por no tener que complicarse ante bromas racistas, pondrán cara sonriente.
La España de la que hablo es inevitable es ideal
negros y moros harán que gane España algún día un mundial,
y nadie puede evitar que toda Europa se contamine
y que la España de mil razas a vuestra cara se encamine.

[Artes]
Español medio, obrero blanco, vago dice: Que no se colonice ni se cruce.
Yo, ciudadano enfadado, mc del mundo a usted le dice: Que estudie sus raíces y matice.
Carai!! Lo que hay que oír de esos paletos
pocas luces detecto, demasiados comentarios alerto.
¿Y que ha pasao’ que te han quitado el curro tonto?
Rebelión de abordo, no me hago el sordo y respondo pronto.
Conformismo laboral absurdo, ellos vienen curran
y mientras en el bar otros se burlan
Aprenda en la ‘‘nueva España’’ se habla pichi, polaco, árabe...etc...Pues no te queda por ver, eh!
En los recreos más civismo
los niños son más listos, sabiendo menos que los padres mismos
Envenenas nuestro estado supuestamente libre
y el olor a tu política eliminas con jengibre.
Gracias a dios no tienes otra,
sentirte más patriota a la par que más idiota
Meé en el cuartel de vuestro aforo,
por decoro a mis hermanos moros, rap en este foro.

[Frank T]
Equisianos a las costumbre no le ponen obstáculos
más abiertos de mente y bilingües desde párvulos,
piensen lo que quieran Europa está cambiando
con pasaporte comunitario están viajando.

[Artes]
La “nueva España” dos puntos le invito
porque haré de monitor en el crisol multilingüístico,
no hay quien se escape tío, vaya!
De nada te ha servido, hacer que se mudara hasta el vecino...
Tu himno sin letra el mejor chiste del mes lo juro
si un quintanillas me hace un ritmo con las congas, los trituro...
feliz estancia, don que inmigra,
saludo a la familia y después todos repitan.

[Estribillo]
No habéis notado un cambio en todo este tiempo.
España tiene más de un color y yo soy el ejemplo.
yo ando seguro señora, lo siento.
ahora camino acompañado ya no estoy solo en este evento.

La nueva España la levantan inmigrantes.
se acabó tu descarte España no volverá a ser igual que antes.
distintas hablas, etnias, religiones cohabitan.
la nueva España miles de razas ahora gritan.
Song 5: “La perversión de lenguaje (Con El Gran Wyoming)” by El Chojín

http://versosperfectos.com/canciones/el-chojin-la-perversion-de-lenguaje-con-el-gran-wyoming

(I have preserved the lyrics as written on the website)

[Estribillo]

Nada es lo que parece,
a veces no hay por qué pero la gente miente, ¿sabes?,
las palabras engañan,
si miras el contenido a veces todo cambia.
Que nadie piense por ti,
es menos cómodo pero es mejor así,
es El Chojín, ya sabes,
y esto La Perversion Del Lenguaje.

(El Chojín)

¿No te has parado a pensar?
demasiado a menudo usamos las palabras mal y lo saben,
encuentran cayuco con 30 inmigrantes
flotando a la deriva sobre aguas, ¿internacionales?
Un inmigrante es alguien que he emigrado a alguna parte,
si no llegaste, no eres inmigrante,
el lenguaje es el arma más peligrosa
que hace que aceptes por ciertas cosas bastante dudosas.
El cristianismo es una religión, por ejemplo,
pero el vudú no, eso es superstición, ¿no es cierto?
sacar la virgen pa que llueva es más correcto
y más civilizado que bailar alrededor de un fuego.
Crearon el término raza
para diferenciar a los demás humanos de la gente blanca,
y aunque la ciencia diga que es una gran farsa
sigue habiendo barreras porque usamos la palabra, digo, oye.

(El Gran Wyoming)

No es igual decir la jarra que la raja, ¿a qué no?,
raja que rajá o la roja que la rajo, no señor,
toma que mato, sopa que sapo, pollo que polla, ¿qué pollas dices? yo qué sé,
pues vale, y si no vale lo tiro, ¿vale? vosotros mismos chavales,
Si en la lengua está la clave,
chupa en otro sitio a ver qué tal te sabe.
si en la lengua está la clave,
chúpame el culo, ya te vale.

(El Chojín)

Algo desarrollado está terminado, completo,
le recomiendo atención con este concepto,
si un país estuviera desarrollado
en ningún caso podría seguir mejorando.
Si no hubiera malicia se diría que todos,
sin excepción, estamos en vías de desarrollo,
pero todo está calculado para que el de abajo
interiorice su inferioridad desde el vocabulario.
Las europeas son lenguas, el resto dialectos,
Colón descubre América aunque ya hubiera allí gente viviendo,
es necesario replantear lo que sabemos,
más que nada porque a menudo resulta que no es cierto.
¿Cómo vas a ser santo si eres matamoros?,
¿qué es más puta?, ¿la música clásica o el dómbolo?,
las palabras determinan nuestra visión,
es hora de mirar al lenguaje y ver su perversión, oye.

[Estribillo]

Nada es lo que parece,
a veces no hay por qué pero la gente miente, ¿sabes?,
las palabras engañan,
si miras el contenido a veces todo cambia.
Que nadie piense por ti,
es menos cómodo pero es mejor así,
es El Chojín, ya sabes,
y esto La Perversión Del Lenguaje.

(Chojín)
¿Tú por qué crees que se dice trata de blancas en lugar de trata de personas?

(Wyoming)
Hombre, porque vender blancos es un delito, macho. Es que eso.

(Chojín)
¿Y lo de la gente distinta, tú la toleras bien y eso?

(Wyoming)
No. Yo en absoluto.

(Chojín)
¿No?

(Wyoming)
No, no, porque se tolera las cosas que te duelen o que te dan por culo.
Pero es que a mí la gente distinta me gusta, o sea, no tengo que tolerar eso.

(Chojín)
Bien visto.

(Wyoming)
Qué cosas tiene El Chojín.

Song 6: “Soy un rumano en Madrid” by Torbe. [personal transcription]

He traído a mis hermanos
Mis hermanas y mis primos
El cuñado, el abuelo y el camión
Cruzamos toda Europa
Sin comida y sin ropa
En la búsqueda del sueño español.
Aquí me siento como en casa
Todo lleno de rumanos
Que vinieron en el bus y en el autostop
Atrás dejamos las playas de Constanta
Los champiñones de Borsec y las montañas de Brasov

REFRAN
Hei hei hei
Soy un rumano en Madrid
Soy un rumano en Madrid
Si te robo la cartera
Te sustraigo todo el cobre
No te enfades, solo quiero divertir
Soy un rumano en Madrid
Soy un rumano en Madrid
Si te quito tus mujeres
Aunque no tenga papeles
No me culpes, solo quiero divertir.

Solo quiero ser tu amigo
En Rumania arquitecto, pero aquí mezclo cemento
No me expulsan como lo hacen en Paris
Mis hermanas limpián coches por el día por la noche
Y sobrinos roban móvil por Madrid
Las mujeres españolas no contentas en la cama
Quieren mici y sarmale (comidas rumanas típicas) para cenar
Yo les doy lo que me piden
Pero nunca es suficiente
Ellas piden piden piden mucho más

[REFRAN]

Solo quiero bailar manele (tipo de música popular en Rumania)
Estoy harto de decir que no soy un vampiro
Españoles pesados, aunque quiero chupar a las mujeres
Rumania me cago en mi vida
Potencia futbolística, en el mundial 94 casi ganamos
Mundial, juego bonito, de puta madre
Gica Hagi, ídolo
Sugi pula (Chupa el pene)
Con la mano
Sugi pula
Con la boca
Dicen siempre al rumano, me provocan

[REFRAN]
Appendix 2

Short films about immigration of Spanish origin organized by year from 2000 to 2015.

*Lekk, la comida* (2002) directed by Susi Gozalvo

*Hiyab* (2006) directed by Xavi Sala

*Nana* (2006) directed by José Javier Rodríguez Melcón

*El viaje de Saïd* (2006) directed by Coke Riobóo

*Proverbio chino* (2008) directed by Javier San Román

*Ngutu* (2012) directed by Felipe del Olmo and Daniel Valledor

*Un lugar mejor* (2013) directed by Moisés Romera and Marisa Crespo
Appendix 3

Feature films about immigration of Spanish origin organized by year from 2000 to 2015.

*Salvajes* (2001) directed by Carlos Molinero

*Poniente* (2002) directed by Chus Gutiérrez

*Los novios búlgaros* (2003) directed by Eloy de la Iglesia

*Princesas* (2005) directed by Fernando León de Aranoa

*Agua con sal* (2005) directed by Pedro Pérez-Rosado

*Aguaviva* (2005) directed by Adriana Pujol

*María y Assou* (2006) directed by Silvia Quer

*Vientos de agua* (2006) directed by Juan José Campanella

*14 Kilómetros* (2007) directed by Gerardo Olivares

*Retorno a Hansala* (2008) directed by Chus Gutiérrez

*Un euro, 3,5 lei* (2008) directed by Carlos Iglesias

*Biutiful* (2010) directed by Alejandro González Iñárritu

*El dios de madera* (2010) directed by Vicente Molina Foix

*Amador* (2010) directed by Fernando León de Aranoa

*La puerta de no retorno* (2011) directed by Santiago Zannou

*El rayo* (2013) directed by Fran Araújo and Ernesto de Nova
Appendix 4

Authors of African Origin

The following is a list of prominent African immigrant authors writing in Spain about immigration. The authors are listed in alphabetical order.

1. El Fathi, Abderrahmán (1964) Morocco

2. Agboton, Agnés (1960) Benin

3. Donato Ndongo (1950) Equatorial Guinea

4. Inongo-vi-Makomè (Unpublished) Cameroon

5. Laila Karrouch (1977) Morocco

   - *Así es la vida (This is life)*. Madrid: Industrias Gráficas Afanías, 2013. Print.


Appendix 5

Authors of Latin American Origin

The following is a list of prominent Latin American immigrant authors writing in Spain about immigration. The authors are listed in alphabetical order.

1. Diego Botto, Juan (1975) Argentina

2. Galarza, Sergio (1976) Perú

3. Méndez Guédez, Juan Carlos (1967) Venezuela

4. Mesa Gancedo, Daniel (1969) Spain (Editor of the *Novísima relación* anthology, a great resource detailing the many Latin American authors writing in Spain)

5. Mosquera Soto, Adriana (Nani) Colombia

6. Mucha, Martín (1977) Perú
• Articles about immigration in the Spanish newspaper El Mundo from 4 July to 6 August 2006. Has received the King of Spain award for his analysis.

7. Obligado, Clara (1950) Argentina

Vita

EDUCATION

2017  Ph.D. Hispanic Studies, University of Kentucky.  
      Dissertation: A Case for Empathy: Immigration in Spanish Contemporary Media,  
      Music, Film, and Novels. Ana Rueda, director.

2013  M.A. Hispanic Studies, University of Kentucky.

2011  M.A. Spanish: Specialization in Hispanic Literatures and Culture, Brigham Young University.

2007  B.A. Spanish Teaching, Brigham Young University.

2007  TESOL K-12 Certificate, Brigham Young University.

TEACHING AND PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

2017  University of Kentucky, Part Time Instructor  
      Lexington,

2016  Wilmington College, Visiting Assistant Professor  
      Wilmington, OH

2010 – 2016  University of Kentucky, Teaching Assistant  
      Lexington, KY

2008 – 2010  Brigham Young University, Spanish Instructor  
      Provo, UT

2007 – 2008  Southwest High School, Spanish Teacher  
      Fort Worth, TX

2007  Canyon View Junior High, Student Teaching  
      Orem, UT

2007  Provo High School, ESL Practicum  
      Provo, UT
PUBLICATIONS


CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

2016  “Tools to Teach Inclusion: Spanish Hip-Hop and Rap as Havens for Immigration Justice.” 36th *Cincinnati Conference on Romance Languages and Literatures*, The University of Cincinnati, April 7-9.


2012  “Gabriela Mistral y la orientalización del indio: ¿Es posible mejorar la situación del indio y darle una voz también?” 20th *Columbia University Graduate Student Conference on Latin American and Iberian Cultures*, Columbia University, April 13-14.


2009  “The Close Up in *Central do Brasil*: The Suppression and Emergence of the National Self from the Globalized Self.” 18th *Colloquium on Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Literatures and Linguistics*, University of Texas at Austin, November 13-14.

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

2016  Travel Grant to attend the 36th Cincinnati Conference on Romance Languages and Literatures, University of Cincinnati.

2010 – 2016  Teaching Assistantship, University of Kentucky.

2015  Dissertation Enhancement Award to research immigration and interview representatives from the following Spanish NGOs: ACCEM and Red Acoge, University of Kentucky.


2014  Travel Grant to attend the 20th Annual Carolina Conference on Romance Literatures, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

2014  Travel Grant to attend the XIX Congreso de Literatura Mexicana Contemporánea, The University of Texas at El Paso.

2012  Travel Grant to attend the 20th Graduate Student Conference on Latin American and Iberian Cultures, Columbia University.

2008 – 2010  Graduate Tuition Fellowship, Brigham Young University.

2009  Research Presentation Award from the Graduate Student Society at Brigham Young University and Travel Grants to attend the 18th Colloquium on Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Literatures and Linguistics, University of Texas at Austin.

2009  Research Presentation Award from the Graduate Student Society at Brigham Young University and Travel Grants to attend the IV Interdisciplinary Colloquium on Spanish and Latin American Literatures, Linguistics, and Cultures, University of Florida at Gainesville.

2007  Dean’s List, Brigham Young University.

2006 – 2007  Spring/Summer Tuition Scholarship, Brigham Young University.