Spanishness in the Spanish Novel and Cinema of the 20th – 21st Century
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction ........................................................................................................................... 1
From Iberianness to Spanishness: Being Spanish in 20th-21st Century Spain
Cristina Sánchez-Conejero, University of North Texas, U.S.A.

PART I: FROM MEMORIES OF THE CIVIL WAR TO PROPOSALS OF AN ALTERNATIVE SPANISHNESS

Chapter One ....................................................................................................................... 11
Spanishness and Identity Formation From the Civil War to the Present:
Exploring the Residue of Time
David K. Herzberger, University of California, Riverside, USA

Chapter Two ..................................................................................................................... 21
Deleuze and the Barcelona School: Time in Vicente Aranda’s Fata Morgana (1965)
David Vilaseca, Royal Holloway College, University of London, UK

Chapter Three .................................................................................................................. 33
Nostalgia, Myth, and Science in Rivas’s El lápiz del carpintero
Lucy D. Harney, Texas State University – San Marcos, USA

Chapter Four .................................................................................................................... 43
Memory, Identity and Self-discovery in Manuel Rico’s Los días de Eisenhower
Agustín Martinez-Samos, Texas A&M International University, USA
PART II: SELLING SPANISHNESS: FROM FRANCOIST “SPAIN IS DIFFERENT” TO ALMÓDOVAR

Chapter Five ........................................................................................................... 55
Tourism, Structural Underdevelopment, and Anthropological Distancing in Juan Goytisolo’s Essays, Travelogues, and Fiction 1959-1967
Eugenia Afinoguénova, Marquette University, USA

Chapter Six ........................................................................................................... 67
Exclusion and Marginalization of Dissidence in the Novels of the Spanish Guerrilla
M. Cinta Ramblado-Minero, University of Limerick, Ireland

Chapter Seven ...................................................................................................... 79
Family Therapy and Spanish Difference/Deviance in Almodóvar’s Taconas lejanos
Anne E. Hardcastle, Wake Forest University, USA

PART III: FRANCOLESS SPAIN: TOWARDS A NON-FRANCOIST DEFINITION OF SPANISH CULTURE

Chapter Eight ...................................................................................................... 95
The Spanish Bildung of Deza/Marias by Wheeler/Russell in Tu rostro mañana I: Fiebre y lanza
Stephen Miller, Texas A&M University, USA

Chapter Nine ..................................................................................................... 107
Cultural Specificity and Trans-National Address in The New Generation of Spanish Film Authors: The Case of Alejandro Amenábar
Rosanna Maule, Concordia University, Canada

Chapter Ten ...................................................................................................... 121
Violent Nation: Histories and Stories of Spanishness
Andrés Zamora, Vanderbilt University, USA
PART IV: RE-RECORDING SPANISHNESS: NATIONHOOD AND NATIONALISMS IN CONTEMPORARY SPAIN

Chapter Eleven.......................................................................................................................... 133
Sound Ideas or Unsound Practices? Listening for “Spanishness” in Peninsular Film
Patricia Hart, Purdue University, USA

Chapter Twelve......................................................................................................................... 147
“This festering wound”: Negotiating Spanishness in Galician Cultural Discourse
Kirsty Hooper, University of Liverpool, UK

Chapter Thirteen ....................................................................................................................... 157
Out of Order: “Spanishness” as Process in El espíritu de la colmena
Robert J. Miles, University of Hull, UK

Chapter Fourteen ..................................................................................................................... 169
From Illiterate Andalusian Xarnega to Proper Bourgeois Lady: The Failure of Forced Acculturation in Montserrat Roig’s La ópera cotidiana
Maureen Tobin Stanley, University of Minnesota Duluth, USA

PART V: WOMEN, GENDER AND SPANISHNESS

Chapter Fifteen ........................................................................................................................ 181
Identifications, Abjests, and Objects: Myths of Gender and Nation in the Early 20th Century Spanish Novel
Alison Sinclair, University of Cambridge, UK

Chapter Sixteen......................................................................................................................... 191
Hooking for Spanishness: Immigration and Prostitution in León de Aranoa’s Princesas
Cristina Sánchez-Conejero, University of North Texas, USA

Chapter Seventeen ................................................................................................................... 203
Pal White’s Redemption: Gender and Spanishness in Manuel Mur Oti’s Una Chica de Chicago
Jorge Marti, North Carolina State University, USA
## PART VI: DEFINING SPANISHNESS IN THE GLOBAL ERA

Chapter Eighteen ..................................................................................... 215
Straitened Circumstances: Spanishness, Psychogeography, and the Borderline Personality
*Ryan Prout, Cardiff University, UK*

Chapter Nineteen ..................................................................................... 227
Eating Spanishness: Food, Globalization and Cultural Identity in Cruz and Corbacho’s *Tapas*
*Cristina Sánchez-Conejero, University of North Texas, USA*

Chapter Twenty ....................................................................................... 237
*Solas (Zambrano, 1999): Andalousian, European, Spanish?*
*Sally Faulkner, University of Exeter, UK*

Contributors ............................................................................................. 247

Index ........................................................................................................ 253
INTRODUCTION

FROM IBERIANNESS TO SPANISHNESS:
BEING SPANISH IN 20TH-21ST CENTURY SPAIN

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What does it mean to be “Spanish”? This seems like a simple question, but if one were to ask this question of several different people, one would almost certainly receive several different responses. These responses would likely range from a narrow definition to a wide-ranging concept which may include terms such as Spanish, Spanish-American, Latino, Latin-American, Hispanic, Hispanic-American, and Iberian.

Indeed, these are terms that are clearly related, and are easily and often confused. While “Spanish” refers mainly to 1) the Spanish language spoken by approximately 400,000,000 people the world over, 2) a citizen of Spain and 3) all things related to Spain, in practice this demarcation can be decidedly fuzzy, with other terms being closely related to this concept. “Hispanic” comes from “Hispania”, the Latin name the Romans gave to the Iberian Peninsula, which itself had been given the name “Iberia” by the Greeks. After the fall of the Roman Empire, the Visigoths took over the peninsula in the Vth century AD, forming an independent kingdom that lasted until the VIIIth century AD and changing the name of Hispania to Spania in the process. Thus, each of these terms originally applied to the entire peninsular area encompassing modern-day Spain, Portugal, Andorra, and Gibraltar, making every inhabitant of the region all of Iberian, Hispanic, and Spanish. Of course, such a geographically-based blanket inclusiveness does not satisfy our modern political maps; a citizen of Portugal, while certainly Iberian (though not necessarily in the original, indigenous sense), would probably not be considered Hispanic and certainly never Spanish. In fact the very term “Iberian” is now somewhat ironic as there is hardly any cultural dialog between Spain and Portugal despite their geographic unity and common membership in the European Union since 1986. Similarly, although both the terms Hispania and Spania
have Latin origins, residents of the Iberian Peninsula would never be considered Latino—an identity reserved for residents of Hispanic-settled American colonies.

In truth, the Iberian Peninsula has never been comprised of a single ethnic or even political identity under any name: during Greek times Iberia was thought to be composed of at least forty-eight distinct peoples, Roman Hispania was divided at various times into anywhere from two to nine provinces, and for the majority of time spent under Visigoth rule portions of Spania were controlled by competing Germanic tribes (even the period of unification which followed existed in name only). Such ethnic and political division continued through Moorish rule and the Middle Ages, and carries into today, despite such remarkable unifying attempts as those of the Catholic King and Queen in the XVIth century or Francisco Franco’s dictatorship in the XXth century. The Iberian Peninsula thus represents a long and complex mix of cultural traditions, influences, and identities.

With such a convoluted history of competing terminology combined with centuries of ethnic, political, and migratory considerations, it is no surprise that a confused application of terms has arisen today. The word “Iberian” is clearly associated with the geographic feature of the Iberian Peninsula, and is therefore of little ambiguity, but also of little common use. The term Hispanic should, in theory, apply similarly to anybody descended from this same peninsular region, but in practice is frequently used in a casual and exclusivist sense to refer only to those of Hispanic descent in the Americas, and certainly never to the Portuguese. This ambiguity is ironically reinforced by frequent use of the additional term “Hispanic-American” which, although intended to clarify the group being referenced, ironically serves to further confuse the meaning of the contrasting term “Hispanic” when used alone while also creating an ambiguity of its own: does Hispanic-American refer to all the inhabitants of the Hispanic American countries of South America, Central America, and the Caribbean, or more narrowly to individuals from only those American countries which have Spanish as their main and official language, or exclusively to those individuals of this heritage who are now citizens of the United States? This ambiguity may be further enhanced when people of Hispanic-American descent move beyond the borders of the Americas entirely, including into the original territory of Hispania, where fellow residents may or may not also be considered Hispanics.

The term “Spanish” presents a similar semantic challenge: although most clear when used to describe the citizens of Spain, it also represents a language and heritage, and is therefore commonly applied to any
individual who is a native speaker of Spanish or is of Spanish descent—including Hispanic-Americans. As a consequence, the term “Spanish-American” may apply to all Hispanic-Americans, or to those nationals of Spain (ie, Spaniards) living in the Americas, or solely to those Spaniards living specifically in the United States. Refreshingly clear in this regard are the terms “Latino” and “Latin American” which, due to their intrinsic linguistic and territorial connotations, hold little ambiguity: both of these terms are used interchangeably to denote inhabitants of the Hispanic Americas who speak Spanish or Portuguese. This definition clearly includes inhabitants of Brazil, which are typically (though not necessarily) excluded under the denomination “Hispanic-American”. Additionally, it shares the bilingual Spanish/Portuguese component in common with the term “Iberian”, and thus Latino is to the Americas as Iberian is to the region of the Iberian Peninsula.

Given this plurality of meanings and uncertain distinctions, where does the term “Spanishness” fit? What does it refer to? The RAE (Real Academia Española de la Lengua) dictionary defines “españolidad” (Spanishness) as:

1. Cualidad de español.
2. Carácter genuinamente español.

However, this begs the question, “What is a Spanish quality, and what is the Spanish character?” Even within Spain itself the term “Spanish” may have many meanings and connotations aside from a simple identifier of citizenship.

Even within Spain itself the term “Spanish” may have many meanings and connotations aside from a simple identifier of citizenship. This is exemplified in the very language of Spanish, which holds status as only one among four officially recognized languages of Spain (with the others being Basque, Catalan, and Galician). Thus, in addition to being a common language shared throughout the world, Spanish actually holds greater official primacy in several nations outside of Spain. Though relevant, the Spanish language is clearly not a unique identifier of Spanishness in the context of Spain. This linguistic diversity is merely a reflection of deeper cultural traditions which defy easy classification under a single banner. Religion poses similar difficulties: although Spain is regarded as a majority Catholic nation, Spanish Catholicism is largely a cultural rather than truly religious enterprise. Religious exhibitions such as the Semana Santa (Holy Week), church weddings, and first communion are typically tied more to social tradition and expectation than to real
religiosity, as evidenced by Spain’s paradoxical acceptance of anti-Catholic position such as divorce (since 1981) and abortion (legalized with restrictions in 1985). In contrast the Spanish-speaking nations of South America are also conspicuously Catholic in nature, but with greater fervency and depth of conviction. By nearly every cultural or ethnic criteria imaginable Spain resists simple characterization. Regardless of which trait is identified as being “Spanish”, divisions will be found within Spain that throw the general relevance of the characteristic into doubt, and further consideration will reveal that the characteristic is not unique to Spain. Clearly the white, monolingual, Catholic image of Spain promoted by the dictator Franco is both simplistic and illusory.

Immigration and the process of globalization have further rendered any narrow unifying concepts of Spanishness obsolete. According to 2007 Instituto Nacional de Estadística de España (INE) statistics, of the 802,971 recognized immigrants in Spain in 2006, 268,482 were from the Americas, with 69,467 being from Bolivia, 28,249 from Brazil, 4,402 from the U.S., and 526 from Canada. This mixing of Spanish and Latin American/American cultures and ethnicities (including caucasian, mulatto, mestizo, black and Amerindian) further redefines and blurs notions of the Spanish and the Hispanic. In addition, it is estimated that between 500,000 and 800,000 Muslims currently reside in Spain, with this religion representing the second most popular in Spain—a stark departure from the Catholic ideal. A recent influx of Romanian immigrants has made them the third largest immigrant group in Spain (after Moroccans and Latin Americans), further contributing to the cultural mix.

Spanishness thus emerges as an openly plural concept in post-Franco Spain—ethnically, religiously, and even linguistically. Racial plurality accentuates problems with racism in Spain, whether conscious or not, and thus racism must be considered as part of the social fabric of Spanish identity, as discoursed in the 1990s by such musical acts as Amistades Peligrosas and Manu Chao. Shifting views on religion have led to ongoing debate over the role of religion and whether religion—and which religions—should be taught in schools. Linguistic diversity, for its part, is deeply connected not only to immigration, but to peripheral nationalisms in Spain. Immigrants bring with them a wide variety of languages, most

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2 For more information about this unconscious racism see John Hooper’s The New Spaniards, 443.
notably including Arabic, Romanian, Portuguese, and distinct dialects of Spanish. Linguistic assimilation into the broader linguistic landscape and tradition varies among different immigrant groups. For example, while most Moroccans show a high interest in learning Spanish in order to better assimilate in Spain, a Romanian movement primarily affiliated with the Partido Independiente Rumano (PIR) has emerged which demands the use of the Romanian language alongside Spanish in cultural institutions such as schools and libraries. Such bilingualism would stand in addition to the already co-official status of Basque, Catalan, and Galician with Spanish, but not necessarily in a region-specific manner. Although the co-official status of these peripheral languages was established in Article 3 of the 1978 Spanish Constitution, there is a great deal of ambiguity regarding its practical implementation and ramifications. While Point 1 of Article 3 states that “el castellano es la lengua oficial del Estado”, it continues with “todos los españoles tienen el deber de conocerla y el derecho a usarla”, thereby creating a blurry distinction both between el deber (the obligation) and el derecho (the right) and conocerla (knowledge of the language) and usarla (usage of the language). Based on this language, it is unclear whether an official language must be used or merely known, and conversely whether knowing—and not necessarily using—the language is enough to establish it as official. In this sense, Javier Tusell calls the constitutional text “una especie de exorcismo, porque no contiene ni

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3 In part, Moroccan interest in the Spanish language is a response to Hispano-Moroccan cooperation of recent years. On the web site of the Ministerio de educación y ciencia (http://www.mec.es/sgci/ma/es/estudierespa/estudierespa.shtml) it is stated that

Marruecos goza de una situación muy especial con respecto al español. Es el país que cuenta con más centros de enseñanza españoles entre colegios, institutos y centros de formación profesional, con un total de diez centros: Nador, Alhucemas, Tetuán (tres), Tánder (dos), larache, Casablanca y Rabat.

También es el país con más centros del Instituto Cervantes, Rabat, Casablanca, Fez, Tetuán y Tánger, donde cada año aprenden español muchos marroquíes de distintas edades y profesiones. (1)

Regarding the Romanian movement, in “Nace el primer partido político de rumanos en España” we are informed that one of the main political goals of the PIR is “la construcción de escuelas, centros culturales y bibliotecas bilingües” (2). According to Dan Bilefsky in “Spain Cooling on Immigrants”, as of February 17, 2007 “nearly 400,000 Romanians live and work in Spain – the third-largest foreign community, after Moroccans and Ecuadorans”.

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mandato ni prohibición algunos” (169). Further, Point 2 of Article 3 states that “las demás lenguas españolas serán también oficiales en las respectivas Comunidades Autónomas de acuerdo con sus estatutos”. It is unclear whether this stipulation establishes a directive to know and a right to use these other languages as with the Spanish language, but the implication is that official usage is limited to the relevant autonomous community. The peripheral nationalisms of Galicia, Catalonia and the Basque Country have taken the interpretation into their own hands by proposing a normalization of the use of Galician, Catalonian and Euskera in post-Franco Spain⁴. The importation of an additional official language such as Romanian not tied to indigenous regional tradition could represent a shift that would challenge concepts of Spanishness in new ways.

In theory, the European Union emerges as an optimal space to embrace this plurality due to its alleged “respeto de la diversidad de culturas y tradiciones de los pueblos de Europa” (Chávarri 147), which is summarized in the Union’s motto “United in diversity”. However, as Antonio Chávarri has noted, the Union uses symbols such as a flag (a circle of twelve yellow stars on blue background), an anthem (based on the “Ode to Joy” by Beethoven), a common currency (the euro) and a specific day of the year (May 9) as “Europe Day” that are more reminiscent of the nation-states or, in the Spanish case, the Franco Estado español. As Chávarri puts it,

lo que resulta evidente es que la Unión Europea, llena de diversidad y de distancias entre los estados que la componen, quiere darse a sí misma todos los símbolos que son propios de las naciones, y que suelen ser ancestrales y extraídos del fondo de su cultura. (143)

Time will tell if this attempt at European patriotism or, using Javier Tusell’s term, “patriotismo de la pluralidad” (“patriotism of the plurality”, 232) is a viable possibility for Spain and the rest of the Union members, and what the impact of this new entity will be on pre-existing concepts of identity. For example, Spanish is one of the twenty-three official languages currently recognized under the European Union, but due to the Union’s “policy of official multilingualism” it is very likely that the peripheral languages of Spain will become co-official in the near future⁵. In Chávarri’s words, “los Estados miembros intentarán, al menos España

⁴ For additional and more detailed information about the linguistic situation in post-Franco Spain see ¿Identidades españolas? Literatura y cine de la globalización (1980-2000).
Spanishness in the Spanish Novel and Cinema of the 20th-21st Century is an exploration of the general concept of “Spanishness” as all things related to Spain, specifically as the multiple meanings of “Spanishness” and the different ways of being Spanish are depicted in 20th-21st century literary and cinematic fiction of Spain. This book also represents a call for a re-evaluation of what being Spanish means not just in post-Franco Spain but also in the Spain of the new millennium. In the following pages the reader will find treatments of some of the crucial themes already mentioned such as immigration, nationalisms, and affiliation with the European Union as well as many others of contemporary relevance such as time, memory, and women studies that defy exclusivist and clear-cut single notions of Spanishness. These explorations will help contextualize what it means to be Spanish in present day Spain and in the light of globalization while also dissipating stereotypical notions of Spain and Spanishness, since, as Fernando García explains,

La imagen típica y tópica de peineta, confesionario y toreo se esfuma mientras se van perdiendo aquellas señas de identidad postizas, nada acordes con la pluralidad de culturas. [. . .] España ha cambiado [. . .] Cada día más europea, España se sienta sin complejos entre las grandes potencias culturales del mundo. (319-20)

It is my hope that this study will inspire future reflections and further dialog about what it means to be Spanish now and throughout history.
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PART I

FROM MEMORIES OF THE CIVIL WAR
TO PROPOSALS OF AN ALTERNATIVE
SPANISHNESS
It was Nietzsche who argued most persuasively that remembering and forgetting, that the imposing power of the historical and the unhistorical, are equally necessary to the health of nations. The compelling challenge that societies as well as individuals must face, of course, is to know under what circumstances to instigate forgetting or to engage in remembering. We make such decisions institutionally through our political and legal practices, as well as collectively, through what might be termed the will of the people. In both cases, however, our understanding of time, and in particular, our understanding of past time, is critical. But even then, to know when to forget or to remember, and to know in what manner either should be carried out, is vexed by political, social, and cultural encumbrances.

The past often is evoked as a source of power by those who wish both to authenticate their own standing and deny standing to others. Since we seek to understand our place within the world largely through the narratives that we create, and since, as Paul Ricoeur has convincingly shown, time is the ultimate referent of narrative, it would seem helpful and even necessary for us to explore how time permeates our identity both individually and collectively. Past time in particular resonates deeply in our efforts to convey the fullest sense of identity— it enables us to define the nature of our communities in relation to all that has come before us.

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6 Paul Ricoeur argues this point throughout his *Time and Narrative* as he explores the ways in which fiction and history share narrative concepts.
In Spain in the twentieth century the use of time in identity-making has followed two opposing propositions. These might be termed “the past embraced” and “the past renounced,” which prompts the correlative concepts of “the past as usable,” and “the past as impracticable.” Early in the twentieth century, for example, writers such as Unamuno, Azorín, and Machado registered a series of small continuities from the past that accreted to larger patterns of meaning. The past for these authors became what Paul Ricoeur (fleshing out the work of Reinhart Koselleck) refers to as “the space of experience,” which points to the persistence of everyday events from the past into the present, and through which chronology provides a foreseeable trajectory. In other words, the past is embraced and is usable. In contrast, writers of the avant-garde during approximately the same period (e.g., Gómez de la Serna, Jarnés, Pérez de Ayala) repudiate the idea of a “space of experience” in favor of a horizon of expectations in which the present is emergent, unique, and unpredictable. For such writers the historical past is denounced as a prison-house in which traditional and familiar perspectives too often close the future to dynamism and transformation. Put another way, the past simply becomes impracticable.

The two general concepts of time that I have mentioned (embracing the past and dismissing the past) broadly shape Francoist and post-Francoist views of Spanishness from 1939 to the present. It is important to point out, however, that at times these concepts do not necessarily stand opposed to one another. In Francoist Spain, for example, it was not a matter of setting out to forget purposely or to remember willingly, but rather it became an official and pragmatic exercise to construct an origin and an end for the nation using both remembering and forgetting, and to create the illusion that both (origin and end) were already and naturally found in the world. In other words, stories were narrated whose purpose was to exploit past time as a natural anchorage for the national identity. The primary tool for this under Franco was historiography, which the regime used to define the traditions within which Spanishness could be perceived.

Generally speaking, we might define traditions as accumulations of meaning that remind us of our position as heirs to a symbolic order from the past. Of course, tradition implies continuity, but it also urges a chain of interpretations and reinterpretations through which we receive and put into practice the beliefs and convictions that come from another time. For the Franco regime, however, something quite different obtains. Tradition

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1 Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 3: 208
does not require interpretation in their view, and it certainly does not result from the construction of anything at all. Instead, for Francoist historiography, tradition forms part of the natural and divine order of things. In this way, defining the essence of national identity does not fall to hermeneutics but rather to revelation. Religion, ethics, heroic deeds, great men, and a host of other narrated concepts and events form the founding sense of Spanishness under Franco, and it is the task of historians primarily to reveal the pertinent meanings of the past, not to interpret them.

During the Franco regime dissident constructions and revelations were largely restrained or wholly suppressed in favor of what Spanish historian Florentino Pérez Embid termed “el sentido permanente de la historia” of Spain.8 In other words, there could only be one meaning to Spanish history, and its use in defining Spanish identity in the present required strict adherence to this single meaning. Such a claim is exemplarily drawn within the Francoist tradition of Spanishness by Federico García Sanchiz when he writes the following in 1945:

España es el único país de la Historia donde no puede haber ni ha habido, ni hay diferencia alguna entre la constitución moral y religiosa y la constitución histórica nacional. . . . No se puede ser español y no ser católico, porque si no se es católico, no se puede ser español. El que diga que es español y no es católico, no sabe lo que dice….Caballeros y cristianos son todos en España.9

This emphasis on Christianity serves as a synecdoche for the larger issue of how the past informs identity under Franco, for it points to the foundational ethno-cultural elements of Spanishness rather than to strong civic identification. Generally speaking, we might say that civil affiliation with the nation implies membership through a series of choices, and these choices come to constitute one of the cornerstones of most modern democracies. Choice suggests an uncoerced and labile identity that may vary over time according to interpretations of constitutional and institutional principles. Most importantly, in terms of time, civic affiliation projects a temporal scheme that is always forward looking. In contrast, ethno-cultural definitions suggest a static and exclusionary understanding of identity, and they inevitably point to heritage. For Francoist Spain, the ethno-cultural model was crucial, especially because

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9 García Sanchiz in Rodríguez Puértolas, Literatura fascista española,” 2: 993-94.
the regime represented itself as “la coronación de un proceso histórico,” which in turn allowed it to offer itself as a cynosure for Spanishness. But equally important, this same ethno-cultural model demanded exclusion from Spanishness for all aspects of the past that might rupture continuity. In this way the idea of Spanishness could be settled once and for all through unambiguous hoariness, with any deviation impugned as a dangerous heresy.

Under Franco the fixedness of the past as an anchor for the present ossifies Spanishness into a précis of traditions and discourses that are not just appropriated in order to sustain the Regime’s authority, but also commodified to buttress the national economy. This is perhaps best represented in the stunning growth of the tourist industry in Spain during the 1960s, when the slogan “Spain is different” helped to attract tens of millions of foreigners to the country. Spanishness became a spectacle for consumption with heritage sold as a glittery souvenir. But clearly, the Regime promoted a Spanishness unable to be disengaged from referents of origin and essence. In other words, Spanishness was vendible, but it was not interpretable. Indeed, the appeal of Spain lay primarily in its perverse ability to develop a modern service structure for foreigners (the economically necessary “Other”) within a discursive practice that froze the nation in another time. For Spain it was not a matter of keeping up with other countries in Europe, but about being different from them. And Spain was different because it had been restored to the way it had been when it was authentically Spanish. Spain was marketed abroad not simply as having traces of the past threaded through its culture, but of having that past fully occupy the present for the delight of non-Spaniards whose modern and progressive otherness stood in stark contrast to the ethno-cultural heritage that made Spain different while always keeping it the same.

As I have suggested, the Francoist “revelation” of the natural heritage of Spanishness also depended upon what it excluded from the past. More precisely, Spanishness was defined explicitly in the public sphere with significant absences. Not only the predictable ones, such as the ethno-cultural disappearance of the Jews and the Moors, but even the absence of an imperial Spain with a strong colonial tradition and a Bourbon legacy that helped to shape a more secular nation for nearly two and a half centuries. The purpose here was for the Franco regime to stake out a time and a tradition that restricted the voice of the public to only a few positions. The result, as we now can perceive, is the production of Spanishness.

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10 Franco, *Franco ha dicho*, 20.
egregious historical deceptions based on the cultivated unification of public prejudices against those who were excluded from Spanishness. The historians Manuel Tuñón de Lara and José Antonio Biescas put it this way, “[L]os vencedores del 39 quisieron hacer tabla rasa de toda aquella tradición que no fuese la suya, dogmática, institucionalizada, identificada como lo nacional; el resto es marginado, expulsado de la convivencia intelectual” (516).11 In this sense, the symbolic language of the past (of tradition, history, and origin) created a unified Spanish identity based on temporal and affective trickery, which of course is a way of creating unity that can be sustained over time only through the continual assertion of the original deceit.

With the transition to democracy in post-Francoist Spain, we might logically anticipate that the unhealthy restrictions on time in creating Spanishness under Franco would yield to a healthy use of time that promoted new and multiple voices. At the very least, one would think, past time would now be opened to modes of inquiry and possibilities for inclusion in the national discourse that had been largely denied during the Franco years. Certainly, to some extent this is precisely what happened: even during the early years of the transition, when the future of democratic Spain remained unsettled, memoirs, novels, films, and other forms of civic and ethno-cultural representation began to open time to scrutiny and to allow the absences of the past to have a presence. In more recent years, with the historical novel emerging as one of the dominant forms of fiction writing; with the monographs on Spanish history and national identity produced by the Real Academia de la Historia (e.g., España. Reflexiones sobre el ser de España, 1997 and España como nación, 2000); with historians such as José Alvarez Junco (Mater Dolorosa. La idea de España en el siglo XIX, 2002) and Juan Pablo Fusi (España, la evolución de la identidad nacional, 2000) exploring the history of Spanish identity from a broad range of perspectives; with the intense discussions surrounding the “Ley de la Memoria Histórica,” and with the creation of the many forums and associations for the “recuperación de la memoria,” it seems clear that the scrutiny of time, and specifically of past time, has gained prominence in Spain.12

11 Tuñón de Lara and Biescas, España bajo la dictadura fascista, 516.
12 The associations and forums related to memory and the civil war seek to call attention to the stories of the forgotten victims as well as to historical information in general about the war and its aftermath. A helpful starting point to learn of these associations is: http://www.memorialhistorica.org. This association offers links to numerous other websites related to the civil war and recovery of the past.
But there remains a lingering and pervasive problem: the overriding perception of the transition to democracy, and one whose legacy continues to inform the public sphere today, is the sense that forgetting, that a willed disremembering was enacted both officially and unofficially as a necessary strategy for directing the exploration of time away from the past. In this view, memory was perceived as a useful instrument for contesting what had occurred in the past, but forgetting is what would actually enable the nation to move toward reconciliation—hence the desire to place a prophylactic around the past to keep it at bay. It is this particular aspect of time that I wish to explore briefly here in relation to Spanishness and democratic Spain.

Above all, it was clearly understood in both Francoist and post-Francoist Spain that time could be used to solidify national identity. That Francoism drew forth the past to define the present, and that at least part of democratic Spain sought to disengage from the past so as to project toward the future, underscores a shared view that the past might serve not only as a powerful instrument of authority but also as a persistent and reliable one. Remembering or disremembering are strategic choices made in both Francoist and post-Francoist culture. But most importantly, for both Francoist and post-Francoist Spain, the decision to remember or to forget is rooted in a common understanding of the accessibility and fixity of the past. For Franco, the past engendered an authentic truth about the origin and essence of the nation. For post-Francoists, forgetting emerged as a strategy to seek protection from a truth that was out there in the world and available, but that might imperil the collective task of nation building. For those wishing to evoke the past in post-Francoist Spain, for those seeking truth, perhaps the antonym of forgetting was not remembering, but justice. In all instances, however, there exists the implicit belief in a past that is knowable, stable, and wholly usable as a source of authenticity. It is clearly important that the content of that authenticity differed in each case; but it also is critical that a shared belief in strategy and in the power of discursive practices for knowing the past lies at the root of both the Francoist and post-Francoist understanding of time and its fundamental influence on national identity.

Another way of framing the issue of time, however, pertains to the practices of postmodernism. First of all, it is clear that, after Franco, Spain had the opportunity virtually to make itself anew. In many ways (with the political and constitutional transformation the most obvious ones), this is precisely what occurred. In the broader cultural context of art, literature, painting, design, or the mores of sexuality, to name only a few, *La Movida* set off a postmodern paroxysm that pushed Spain to break from the
centeredness and stability wrought by Francoist traditionalism. But when it came to understanding time, Spain seemed to tremble at the prospect of ambiguity and uncertainty; it seemed to shudder at the possible loss of clarity and reliability about the past to which it finally had access. Hence to a large degree, when time was the issue, Spanish culture as a whole continued to have faith in master narratives and their ability to represent truths from past time. This in turn generated the desire to remember or to forget related specifically to how one wished to use the past in the present.

However, if we focus on postmodern proposals to shape the meaning of time, as occurred in the works of many artists (and especially in novelists and filmmakers), different possibilities for understanding and using the past are able to emerge. Somewhat curiously, a few lines from the poetry of Samuel Taylor Coleridge get most succinctly to the heart of the postmodern proposal:

What is There in Thee, Man, that can be known?
Dark fluxion, all unfixable by thought,
A phantom dim of past and future wrought.13

I am not proposing to transform Coleridge into a postmodern writer—he is far from that. But he articulates in this instance a fundamental postmodern position: that while coherence can be a modern virtue when it comes to exploring the past, it can also be a distorting constraint that seeks to compel stable and enduring truths when there can be none. This assertion obtains both for those who have sought to forget the past and for those who have sought to recover it.

Furthermore, the postmodern exigencies of ambiguity, multiplicity, and decentering—the “dark fluxion” of Coleridge’s poem—certainly diminish the thickness of the past as the center of identity in the present. However, the astute insight of Coleridge’s pronouncement, as well as the critical point for postmodern Spain, is that these very same qualities do not diminish the utility of the past. Indeed, these concepts make it possible to abandon the opposition between forgetting and remembering, and to reject the modernist insistence on master discourses that are able to reveal a single truth. As a result, it is possible (and perhaps desirable) to establish a different set of temporal parameters. In fact, the opening provided by postmodernism challenges the modernist view of master narratives on three crucial fronts: first, the postmodern makes certain that we see how reality is constructed through storytelling, and thus it rejects the Francoist precept that an embedded truth in the past may simply be revealed;

second, it urges that we not view the past as something done and unchangeable; and third, it points to the future as the principal point of reference for understanding the past. These premises dispute the traditional objectivity associated with the ethics of historiography and propose in their place a purely politicized imposition of meaning in relation to time. Of course, a politicized view is what we have had all along, even when it was camouflaged by narrative determinants which purported to represent a story about Spanishness offered as naturally told and obviously true. In the context of postmodern Spain, this means concretely that exploring the past is able to confer a range of complementary identities rooted in the vision of a future Spain whose identity can tolerate diversity and change: in other words, a future Spain whose identity might be otherwise.

I have avoided until now offering examples of the different uses of time to define Spanishness in specific texts—I have been more concerned with laying out how time might work in a conceptual way. But let me close with the brief discussion of a text that illustrates the postmodern fluidity that I have suggested lies at the heart of storytelling and temporal contingency, and that refuses to embrace the opposition between remembering and disremembering. The text is Antonio Muñoz Molina’s novel *Sefarad*, published in 2001. *Sefarad* is “about” many things, but above all it tells the stories of individuals and groups whose identity historically has been excluded from the mainstream because of religion, race, immigration, and even disease, among many other reasons. Identity formation on the margins implies exclusion from the central continuity of the nation, which generally means exclusion from history and heritage in discourses charged with fostering the national core.

The specific focus of *Sefarad* explores the time and space of Sephardic Jews, from their expulsion from Spain over five hundred years ago to their dispersal in the present. The Holocaust stands prominently in the novel for the historical trauma experienced by the Jews, which in turn is linked to identity formation through storytelling and history. On the one hand, Muñoz Molina locates identity for his characters on a temporal continuum in the novel—present and past are explicitly linked through historical markers of trauma. He portrays similarities among Jews living in fifteenth-century Spain, young Jewish women dying in concentration camps in Poland in the late 1930s, Sephardic Jews sent to Auschwitz from the Greek isle of Rhodes in the 1940s, and African immigrants making their way to the southern shore of Spain during the 1990s. On the other hand, the stories told about these people also depend on the social and political context of the present for their meaning. Nothing is naturally
revealed here as a universal truth; there are only narratives of past time constructed from the perspective and the needs of the present to move toward a desired future. Thus the myth of historical objectivity dissipates quickly and easily in these narratives. But most importantly, through the re-opening of the past, the postmodern perspective permits us, as Paul Ricoeur notes, “to revivify its [the past’s] unaccomplished possibilities.”

Put another way, whether one chooses remembering or forgetting, whether remembering or forgetting are imposed by others, the postmodern disallows the fixity of the past that lies implicit in each of these perspectives. The opposition between the two is thus fractured into many shards and fragments but not into a meaningless mess. In this way, time becomes precarious but not irrelevant.

One of many narrators in *Sefarad* makes the critical point about the inconstancy of time and the contingencies of storytelling in relation to identity:

> Sin que uno lo sepa, otros usurpan historias o fragmentos de su vida...gente que los escuchó y que los repite deformándolos, adaptándolos a su capricho...En alguna parte, ahora mismo, alguien cuenta algo que tiene que ver intimamente conmigo...y como no lo recuerdo tiendo a suponer que no existe para nadie, que se ha borrado del mundo tan completamente como de mi memoria. Partes de ti mismo se van quedando en otras vidas, como habitaciones en las que viviste y ahora ocupan otros...Muy lejos de ti se cuentan escenas de tu vida, y en ellas tú eres alguien no menos inventado que un personaje secundario en un libro, un transeúnte en la película o en la novela de la vida de otro.15

In this deftly synoptic assertion of the contingencies of identity-making, Muñoz Molina defines identity as a communion between time and various consciousnesses made manifest through stories. This communion can be perilous for those whose identity is at stake, or it can be liberating, but one or the other cannot be held as fixed and as finally true. As one of the narrators puts it, “No eres sólo una persona y no tienes una sola historia, y ni tu cara ni tu oficio ni las demás circunstancias de tu vida pasada o presente permanecen invariables.”

The challenge to identity-making based on the opposition between remembering and forgetting necessarily stems from the way in which we allow ourselves to perceive time. Rather than the continuity and permanence implied by this opposition, and rather than belief in a
discourse that transmits unalloyed truth, a more malleable approach to
time permits a concept of Spanishness that is at once substantial and
changeable. Zygmunt Bauman reminds us in Postmodernity and its
Discontents that “the hub of postmodern life strategy is not making
identity stand—but the avoidance of being fixed.”17 If this is the case, the
postmodern turn offers the possibility of unsettledness, which then allows
a future for the past through which meanings can be provoked rather than
dictated. This is what Muñoz Molina pointedly shows and tells us in
Sefarad. Such an understanding of time in contemporary Spain supports
ethno-cultural as well as civic claims to Spanishness, and this same
understanding opens identity-making to a dynamic and transformative
proliferation of times and voices.

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17 Bauman, Postmodernity and Its Discontents, 3.
In *The Movement-Image* (1983) and *The Time-Image* (1985) Gilles Deleuze’s establishes a well-known distinction between two kinds of cinema. The first kind, best exemplified by the Hollywood cinema of the pre-War period, obeys to the “sensory-motor schema”, by which Deleuze means the system of temporal and spatial coordinates which ultimately conforms to our everyday, commonsense world (1992: 210). This is a cinema dominated by the “action-image”, in which the existence of a protagonists (individual or collective) testifies to a Cartesian belief in the Subject as origin and locus of truth; where shots are linked through chains of actions and reactions as well as logical relations of cause and effect; and crucially, where “time is subordinated to movement” (Rodowick 9)—by which Deleuze means that time, in this type of cinema, is only represented indirectly (through montage) as the enchainment of rationally segmented, contiguous movements in space (1992: 29).

The second type of cinema in Deleuze’s paradigm, on the other hand, is characterised by a kind of “postmodern” mentality (Rodowick 75). In it, the faltering belief in totality, either from the point of view of the grand “organic” narratives or as it relates to the subject as (the myth of) a coherent and autonomous agency, leads to the disintegration of the action-image (75-76). The old alignment of space and time is here dislodged, while the break of the traditional links of cause and affect leads to a new breed of signs wherein the “power of the false” and the principle of “indiscernibility” become predominant (Deleuze 2000: 145).

The most compelling challenges to the cinema of the action-image and the “sensory-motor schema”, according to Deleuze, occur mainly in four waves: in the cinema of Yasushiro Ozu, in the emergence of Italian Neo-
realism in the late 1940s, in the French New Wave of the 1950s, and in the New German cinema of the 1960s (1992: 121; 2000: 212-214). Spanish film is conspicuously absent from Deleuze’s account. Its progressive character vis-à-vis the popular cinema of the Franco dictatorship notwithstanding, the Nuevo Cine Español of J.A. Bardem, Carlos Saura, Basilio Martín Patino et al. in the late 1950s and 1960s is still firmly dependent upon classic realist and naturalistic conventions, hence providing an unlikely testing ground for the type of cinematic and philosophical developments Deleuze is so fond of analysing in the films of, for example, Antonioni, Resnais or Godard. What is perhaps less known, however, is that in the second half of the 1960s, during the comparatively liberal interlude which started in 1966—with the promulgation of the new “Ley de Prensa”—and finished in 1971—the year in which the Francoist government abolished the “Interés Especial” category which had up that point secured some selective funding for non-commercial films (Riambau and Torreiro 1999: 54)—there existed in Spain a group of film-makers whose work, of a highly experimental and avant-garde nature, was indeed perfectly in tune with that of the most innovative of contemporary European directors, and which lends itself equally well to a Deleuzian analysis.

I am referring of course to the “Escuela de Barcelona”, the seemingly forgotten and underrated film group that emerged in Barcelona around the social circles of the so-called “gauche divine” in the wake of the city’s economic growth and cultural liberalisation at the time (Riambau and Torreiro 1999: 54). Members of the Escuela were, among others, the directors Carlos Durán, Joaquim Jordà, Jacinto Esteva Grewe, José María Nunes, Vicente Aranda, Jorge Grau and Gonzalo Suárez, and three of its most famous models-turned-actresses: Teresa Gimpera, Carmen Romero, and Serena Vergano. As Riambau and Torreiro point out, from its doubly provocative stance, both against the prevailing realist aesthetics of the Nuevo Cine Español and against local initiatives to create a Catalan National Cinema, the Barcelona School managed to win enemies from all sides, to the extent that “[n]unca un movimiento cinematográfico surgido en España, y mucho menos en Cataluña, despertaría rechazos tan beligerantes” (1999: 184).

Unlike its widely acclaimed, Madrid-based counterpart, the Nuevo Cine Español, neither during its short-lived existence nor in its immediate aftermath did the Barcelona School benefit from consistently favourable or