

Ageing Detectives and Terrorists in Lorenzo Silva's *El mal de Corcira* (2020): Rubén Bevilacqua's Memoirs of Violent Masculinities.

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Abstract

This article explores ageing and masculinity in Lorenzo Silva's novel *El mal de Corcira* (2020). The hard-boiled crime/detective fiction is associated in most cases with masculinity and patriarchy. In 1998, Lorenzo Silva started publishing his detective Rubén Bevilacqua's series, a collection of twelve novels so far. Bevilacqua belongs to the Guardia Civil, the oldest Spanish law enforcement agency, which has been associated with violent and patriarchal masculinity. This novel deals with a crime that prompts the 54-year-old Bevilacqua to narrate his actions as a twenty-five-year-old guardia civil fighting against ETA in the Basque Country thirty years earlier. The middle-aged detective recollects and tells the (legal and not so legal) actions of a twenty-five-year-old self within the context of the highly masculinised and violent environment of both the Guardia Civil and ETA. Through his storytelling thirty years after the events, Bevilacqua's life writing/memoirs offers the reader an account of a personal and a collective past that highlights the passage of time and prompts his regular readers to identify and feel their own ageing.

Keywords: ageing, hegemonic masculinity, femininity, homosexuality, ETA, Guardia Civil, Lorenzo Silva.

Introduction.

In Spain, crime fiction (novela negra) did not flourish until the 1970s --during the 'Transición' period—when, among others, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán started publishing the fictional saga led by the private detective Pepe Carvalho. Some scholars have highlighted that during the 70s the novels focusing on police detection were not many and were mainly written by male authors and preoccupied with police corruption.¹ Kathleen Thompson-Casado and René Craig-

¹ Samuel Amell, 'La novela negra y los narradores españoles actuales,' *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* 20 (1986), 91-102.

José Colmeiro, 'The Spanish connection: Detective fiction after Franco,' *Journal of Popular Culture*, 28:1 (1994), 151-161.

René Craig-Odders, 'Sin, Redemption and the New Generation of Detective Fiction in Spain: Lorenzo Silva's Bevilacqua series,' *Ciberletras* 15 (2006), 28-41.

Odders² link the absence of the police procedural novel in Spain to political and ideological matters that lead to the public understanding of ‘the paramilitary police system as the corrupt enforcer of fascist rule under Franco which was reflected in the negative portrayal of the police typical to the detective novels of the post-transition years.’³ For instance, the Carvalho series by Vázquez Montalbán has been characterised as a sentimental chronicle of the Spanish transition⁴ that uses a popular genre to raise public understanding of the contemporary political present.⁵ The series aimed to assign a social role to literature, with each novel tackling a different aspect of the Spanish transition over almost three decades. According to Bayó Belenguer, ‘the detective becomes the ideal investigator of the social, economic, political and cultural background of criminals and victims from which emerges the author's 'moral chronicle' of post- Franco Spain’.⁶

The transition from private to police detective novels took place in Spain during the late 90s. The two most important fictional police detectives of the period were Alicia Giménez Bartlett’s Petra Delicado⁷ (the first novel of the series was published in 1996 and the last of twelve in 2020), and Silva’s Rubén Bevilacqua whose first novel of the series, *El lejano país de los estanques*, was published in 1998. Since then, another eleven books have been printed in intervals of two to three years. Both authors, Giménez Bartlett and Silva, depart from the usual male detective working with another male subordinate: Petra Delicado works with

² Kathleen Thompson-Casado, ‘Petra Delicado, A Suitable Detective for a Feminist?’ *Letras Femeninas*, 28: 1 (2002), 71–83.

Craig-Odders, ‘Sin, Redemption,’ 28-41.

³ Craig-Odders, ‘Sin, Redemption,’ 38.

⁴ Sandra Puvogel, *The Detective Fiction of Manuel Vázquez Montalbán*. (Diss., Michigan State U, 1987).

⁵ Susana Bayó Belenguer, ‘A Moral Chronicle: The ‘Carvalho’ Series of Manuel Vázquez Montalbán,’ *Romance Notes* 43:1 (2002), 23–35.

⁶ Bayó Belenguer, ‘A Moral Chronicle,’ 28.

⁷ Shelley Godsland in *Killing Carmens: Women's Crime Fiction from Spain*. University of Wales Press, 2007, and Nina Molinaro in *Policing Gender and Alicia Gimenez Bartlett's Crime Fiction*. Routledge, 2016 examine the importance acquired in Spain of crime fiction written by women, in particular by Giménez Bartlett.

Fermín Garzón and Rubén Bevilacqua with Virginia Chamorro, which according to Thomson-Casado clearly shows a conscious intent from both authors to suppress the hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy that have characterised the police. Furthermore, the novela negra of the last twenty-five years presents ‘a generally positive account of police work as well as police attitudes.’⁸

In an attempt to distance his novels from the scholarly discussions about whether they are novelas negras, hard-boiled, mystery or procedural novels, Silva proceeds to call his own subgenre ‘novela benemérita’:

Un género personal y particular que bebe de todos los otros mencionados, y que no aspira a cumplir con ortodoxia el canon de ninguna. Que procura aprovechar la enseñanza de los grandes maestros, y en especial los de la novela negra norteamericana, pero tiene a la vez vocación de hundir sus raíces en la realidad española contemporánea, con todas sus glorias y miserias.⁹

From the first to the last novel, social, political and gender issues happening during the last twenty-five years in Spain become the background against which all twelve novels are set: from narcotraffic to the Afghanistan war, from immigration to the mafias from the East to the endemic corruption in Spanish politics and institutions, and from women entering the police force to the role of women in society. Silva’s detective belongs to the oldest and for years most feared law enforcement agency in Spain, the Guardia Civil. In the last novel of the series, *El mal de Corcira* (2020), the fifty-four-year-old detective faces the murder of a former Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) member. This murder triggers Bevilacqua’s recollection of his first steps

⁸ Thompson-Casado, ‘Petra Delicado,’73.

⁹ Lorenzo Silva, ‘Teoría (informal) de la novela benemérita,’ ANPE. II Congreso nacional: Multiculturalidad y norma policéntrica: Aplicaciones en el aula de ELE, 26-27/09-2008. <http://www.culturaydeporte.gob.es/dam/jcr:a02bd41e-ff09-4b3d-b760-2f6c4749452b/2009-esp-09-02silva-pdf.pdf>.

almost thirty years earlier as a Civil Guard in the Basque Country fighting against the terrorist group ETA. Those were the years in which ETA committed the worst and bloodiest terrorist attacks, and many of them against guardias civiles. Contrary to previous novels of the series, Silva offers the readers in *El mal de Corcira* the story of the young Civil Guard Bevilacqua recounted by himself from the present time of the narration, thus alternating between past and present to explain and revisit the transformation of both the Guardia Civil and ETA. It does so through mainly two male characters from each group: Bevilacqua and Álamo as young civil guards and Joseba Sopelana and Igor López Etxebarri as ETA *gudaris* (Basque soldiers), plus some other secondary characters (male and female) who are tightly linked to the main ones and have the function of representing one aspect (stereotypical or not) of each group: the highly sexualised female terrorist or the violent and torturer guardia civil. Most of the characters will again come together in the present, thus offering the readers a clear perspective of the political, social and gender changes that may or may not have occurred on both sides since the late 80s and after ETA's dissolution in 2018, just when the novel ends.

It is important to underscore the two-fold concept of time that is presented in the novel: on the one hand, Bevilacqua's memoirs or flashback can be considered a sort of coming-of-age narrative that reveals not only his psychological, moral and professional growth from a young guardia civil to an adult one who acknowledges the wrongdoings of the Guardia Civil (e.g. the barracks of Intxaurreondo, GAL, tortures, etc.).¹⁰ On the other hand, the detective's investigation in the present facilitates a historical review of the Spanish political past capable of providing a more balanced perspective about the role played by the Guardia Civil in the fight against ETA; a perspective that admits the use of torture and the killings of terrorist in the

¹⁰ GAL (Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación) emerged in 1983 as a para-political armed force that practiced State terrorism against ETA. The Intxaurreondo barracks are the headquarters of the Guipúzcoa Civil Guard Command. From 1978 to 1987, the barracks come to be the heart of the Spanish government's anti-terrorist fight against ETA. Some of the interrogation practices perpetrated there were denounced as torture, as in the Lasa and Zabala case, alleged ETA militants who were murdered by the GAL.

hands of the GAL. Therefore, through his storytelling thirty years after the events, Bevilacqua's memoirs offer the reader an account of a personal and a collective past. Besides, his present recollection of these past events highlights the passage of time and may prompt those readers who have followed the series to identify with the ageing characters and evaluate their own ageing. But those reading just this book (having or not lived during the worst years of ETA's terrorist attacks) can assess the changes that occurred in Spanish society from the late 80s to the present.

Both terrorism and a (military) police force like the Guardia Civil have been gendered as masculine and have been also characterised as spaces in which hegemonic masculinity is their defining factor.¹¹ Likewise, those highly masculinised environments define the role assigned to female police officers or female terrorist members: their extremely masculinised femininity.¹² The pages that follow will explore the gendered representations in and across two important hegemonical masculine organisations: terrorism and military policing (ETA and the Guardia Civil) in this novel by Silva. It argues that the passage of time is used by Silva to highlight the more modern democratic and gender equality aspects that the Spanish Guardia Civil has developed since 1988. However, Silva's use of stereotypes and clichés around male and female ageing and gender roles leads to a depiction of the Guardia Civil as a law enforcement body still anchored in hegemonic masculinity. Similarly, ETA's terrorism is still represented as highly gendered and hence it still represents the same constructions of masculinities and femininities of those present thirty years ago. This article will first address the concept of hegemonic masculinity and the role gender plays within terrorism and policing, in general, to better contextualise the specific cases of the Guardia Civil and ETA. Secondly,

¹¹ Raewyn W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995).
Raewyn Connell & James W. Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept,' *Gender & Society*, 19: 6 (2005), 829–859.

¹² Jack Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998).

it will explore how these hegemonic masculinities have evolved throughout the years by highlighting Rubén Bevilacqua's and Virginia Chamorro's desexualisation in the last novel. Clear signs of gender inequality remain within the contemporary Guardia Civil, which are presented alongside the serene overcoming of Bevilacqua's and Chamorro's (never consummated) sexual attraction, thus stressing the depiction of the ageing process as one of desexualisation and intellectual gain and maturity. However, the hegemonic masculine (and even toxic masculine) part of the policing job and terrorism, as will be explained, is still present.¹³

Hegemonic Masculinity.

In their reformulation of the notion of hegemonic masculinity,¹⁴ Connell and Messerschmidt established that masculinity is not a fixed concept that homogenises but rather different constructions of masculinities that 'are configurations of practice that are accomplished in social action and, therefore, can differ according to the gender relations in a particular social setting.'¹⁵ The concept of hegemonic masculinity, then, is 'the combination of the plurality of masculinities and the hierarchy of masculinities.'¹⁶ Hegemonic masculinity is a dominant way of supporting men's power in society and its main features are authority, control, subordination of women and nonhegemonic men, heterosexism, aggressiveness, competitiveness, strength and capacity for violence, among others.¹⁷ Men do not need to comply with all the above-

¹³ I am not arguing that the patriarchal and hegemonic masculinity of the Franco's dictatorship is still prevalent in all areas of Spanish society and institutions and organisations; I am just focusing on the Guardia Civil and ETA. Lorraine Ryan & Ana Corbalán have rightly claimed that Spain has witnessed a more diverse and heterogeneous portrayal of masculinities. For an in-depth analysis of the reconfiguration of masculinity in contemporary Spain, see Lorraine Ryan & Ana Corbalán, *The Dynamics of Masculinity in Contemporary Spanish Culture* (London & New York: Routledge, 2017).

¹⁴ Raewyn Connell *Gender and power: society, the person and sexual politics*. (Sydney Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987).

¹⁵ Connell & Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity,' 836.

¹⁶ Connell & Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity,' 846.

¹⁷ Connell, *Masculinities*.

mentioned features to be masculine; on the contrary, they can even display stereotypically feminine behaviours while keeping their hegemonic masculinity.¹⁸

Andrea Waling has traced the concept of toxic masculinity and has noted that it emerges from the concept of hegemonic masculinity. That is, toxic masculinity refers to certain toxic practices of masculinity that have caused the discrimination and oppression of those individuals with sexual and gender identities that do not fit the heteronormative norm. Different aspects of what constitutes toxic masculinity have been addressed by a variety of scholars, as Waling explains, from aggressive heterosexual behaviour resulting in gender-based violence and homophobic practices, to the objectification of women.¹⁹ Waling has also noted that the notion of toxic masculinity brings along the concept of healthy masculinity, which has been defined by some scholars as containing some aspects of femininity such as being emotional but still keeping masculinity as its main element.²⁰

Connell and Messerschmidt acknowledged that gender is relational and therefore masculinities are defined in contrast to femininities, hence highlighting the need to pay more attention to ‘the historical interplay of femininities and masculinities.’²¹ Often approached as a reaction to hegemonic masculinity, emphasised femininity is the pattern of femininity that gathers the most support in society and is based on cultural constructions of sociability, compliance, and sexual receptivity to men.²² However, it is important to note that (emphasised)

¹⁸ Richard de Visser & Elizabeth McDonnell, “‘Man points’”: Masculine capital and young men's health,’ *Health Psychology*, 32:1 (2013), 5–14.

¹⁹ See Bryant Sculos, ‘Who’s Afraid of ‘Toxic Masculinity?’’ *Class, Race and Corporate Power* 5:3 (2017), 1-7.

Terry A. Kupers, ‘Toxic masculinity as a barrier to mental health treatment in prison,’ *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 6:6 (2005)

²⁰ Andrea Waling ‘Problematising ‘Toxic’ and ‘Healthy’ Masculinity for Addressing Gender Inequalities’, *Australian Feminist Studies*, 34:101 (2019), 362-375.

²¹ Connell & Messerschmidt, ‘Hegemonic Masculinity,’ 848

See also Michael S. Kimmel, ‘Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame, and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity.’ *Theorizing Masculinities*. (Edited by Harry Brod and Michael Kaufman. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 1994) pp. 119-141.

²² Connell, *Gender and power*, 24.

femininity is defined entirely as a contraposition to (hegemonic) masculinity, thus sustaining the binary and the othering of femininity.

Kimmel argues that ‘homoerotic desire is cast as feminine desire, desire for other men. Homophobia is the effort to suppress that desire’.²³ Fred Fejes expresses that, despite acknowledging that masculinity is a cultural construction, Connell bases her concept on sex thus discriminating homosexuality by contrasting it with heterosexual masculinity. Through the insertion of homophobia as a characteristic of hegemonic masculinity, gay masculinity and gay men are excluded.²⁴ Furthermore, according to Fejes, heteronormativity and patriarchy have realised the political power that gays and lesbians have acquired in contemporary society and therefore have developed ‘new ways of regulating same-sex desire and practices.’²⁵ That is, far from seeking equality, patriarchal and hegemonic masculinity appropriates the space that homosexuality could occupy and creates new regulations of sexual desire and sexual practices.²⁶

Another important concept that needs to be addressed is Halberstam’s female masculinity, which has been considered from different perspectives and, heteronormative or not, as something either negative or positive, as an expression of the prevalence of patriarchy or as a healthy alternative to what is perceived as normative femininity.²⁷ The development of queer theory has underscored the subversive potentials of female masculinity and reclaimed it as a way of interfering with hegemonic gender and sexuality.²⁸

²³ Kimmel, ‘Masculinity as Homophobia...,’ 130.

²⁴ Fred Fejes ‘Making a gay masculinity,’ *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 17:1, (2000)113-116.

²⁵ Fejes, Making a gay,’ 114.

²⁶ Fejes, Making a gay,’ 115.

²⁷ Halberstam, *Female Masculinity*, 9.

²⁸ A radical different position is taken by radical feminism by considering that masculine actions, masculine roles, and masculine creatures are viewed as antithetical to and the problem of the movement toward women’s liberation. See Judith K. Gardiner, ‘Introduction’. (*Masculinity studies and feminist theory: New directions*, Edited by Judith K. Gardiner., New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 1–29.

Masculinity and Police: The Guardia Civil

Despite the increasing number of women in the police force, policing has traditionally been deemed as a gendered institution that replicates gendered identities. In this sense, hegemonic masculinity is central to describe police work. Hunt considered that policing is defined by its masculinity in opposition to femininity.²⁹ This binary parallels men and masculinity with a masculinised policeman who fights crime, carries guns and has a combative personality.³⁰ Likewise, policemen are considered to feature an exaggerated heterosexual orientation accompanied by misogynistic and patriarchal attitudes to women.³¹ Furthermore, according to Prokos and Padavic, the increasing presence of women in law enforcement has either boosted hegemonic masculinity among policemen or has provoked fear that policewomen will expose corruption and violence.³² The lack of masculine characteristics in policewomen has been employed as the justification to exclude women from policing and the military. However, as Silvestri points out, despite

the opportunities presented to radically reconfigure the cultural conceptualizations of being a police officer through a greater emphasis on community work, care for victims and better investigative skills, the police orientation to action, danger, and excitement does not appear to be waning.³³

²⁹ Jennifer Hunt, 'The logic of sexism among police,' *Women and Criminal Justice*, 1:2 (1990), 3-30.

³⁰ Susan E. Martin & Nancy Jurik, Nancy (*Doing justice, doing gender: Women in legal and criminal justice occupations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 2006).

³¹ Marisa Silvestri, 'Police Culture and Gender: Revisiting the 'Cult of Masculinity',' *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 11: 3 (2017), 289-300, (p.283).

³² Anastasia Prokos, & Irene Padavic, "'There oughtta be a law against bitches': masculinity lessons in police academy training,' *Gender, work & organization*, 9: 4 (2002), 439-459.

³³ Marisa Silvestri, 'Police Culture,' 295.

Individuals with non-traditional sexual orientation or gender identities frequently encounter significant barriers in traditionally masculine occupations such as policing³⁴ and the military.³⁵ Gay and lesbian police officers have faced (and continue to face) the same gendered and sexualised discrimination as heterosexual women in policing do. Gay discrimination is based on the common stereotypes that characterise male homosexuality within police culture as the opposite of machismo.³⁶ In the case of lesbians, the misogynistic and patriarchal values towards women and heterosexism play an important role in their discrimination.³⁷ In Spain, very few studies have explored the role of the LGBTQ+ collective in the Armed Forces and the different Police branches (national, regional and local). Sánchez Herrera claims that homophobia within the military and police is the result of the late incorporation of women and with it the deeply rooted hegemonic masculinity.³⁸

Founded in 1844, the Guardia Civil is the oldest law enforcement agency in Spain and has the peculiarity of its double character; it is both a civilian force and a military entity responsible for civil policing under the authority of both the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defence. Fátima Arranz rightly argues that the double nature of the Guardia Civil is what reinforces its hypermasculinity given that both strands reproduce a construction of gender based on patriarchy.³⁹ In addition, since its inception, the Guardia Civil, mainly based in rural areas, has been associated with corruption, violence and cruelty.⁴⁰ Moreover, during

³⁴ Roddrick Colvin, *Gay and Lesbian Cops: Diversity and Effective Policing* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2012).

³⁵ Elizabeth Kier, 'Homosexuals in the U.S. Military: Open Integration and Combat Effectiveness,' *International Security*, 23:2 (1998), 5–39.

³⁶ Jennifer Brown & E. Campbell, *Stress and Policing: Sources and Strategies*, (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, Chichester 1994).

³⁷ Mark Burke, *Coming Out of the Blue: British Police Officers Talk About Their Lives in the Job as Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals*, (London: Capsules, 1993).

³⁸ Carlos Sánchez-Herrera, 'Comparativa de las actitudes hacia el colectivo LGTBI en las Fuerzas Armadas y en la población civil,' *MODULEMA* 3 (2019), 45-62.

³⁹ Fátima Arranz, 'Ser guardia civil desde la diversidad sexual y de género: una aproximación sociológica cualitativa.' *Revista de investigaciones Sociológicas*, 170 (2020), 3-18.

⁴⁰ Mariano de Rementería y Fica, *Manual of the Baratero*, (Boulder, Colorado: Paladin Press, 2005).

Manuel Ballbél Mallol, *Orden público y militarismo en la España constitucional, 1812-1983*, Madrid, Alianza Editorial, 1985.

the years of the Francisco Franco (1939–1975) dictatorship, the Guardia Civil was identified as one of the law enforcement organisations strongly supporting Franco by using police brutality. A bit more than five years after Franco’s death, on 23 February 1981, the guardia civil Lieutenant Coronel Antonio Tejero Molina participated with other military forces in the failed 23-F coup d’état.

In 1988, a new law allowing women to enrol in any of the military forces enabled a very slow process of the increasing presence of women in the Guardia Civil. In 2003, a new regulation permitted the use of the ‘cuarteles’ with housing for the guardias civiles for homosexual couples and families. These steps towards gender and sexual equality in the Guardia Civil, as Arranz explains, provoked ‘toda una convulsion silenciosa en la cultura organizacional masculina del instituto armado.’⁴¹ Despite all the progress towards recognising gender and sexual diversity, female guardias civiles have been mainly relegated to office work and as of 2018, they were only 10% of the force.⁴² According to the study conducted by Arranz, gay, lesbian and heterosexual women in the Guardia Civil have adapted to the hypermasculinity of the force by adopting masculine behaviour, the use of the uniform, bodybuilding and excellent work performance.⁴³

Masculinity and Terrorism: ETA.

Connell has argued that hegemonic masculinity may help ‘understand the dynamics of violent organizations’ and ‘explain the cultural embedding and specific shape of violence in communities where physical aggression is expected or admired among men’.⁴⁴ As violence is the defining feature of terrorism, there has been a tendency to equate terrorism with

⁴¹ Arranz, ‘Ser guardia civil,’ 6.

⁴² Arranz, ‘Ser guardia civil,’ 7.

⁴³ Arranz, ‘Ser guardia civil,’ 15.

⁴⁴ Raewyn Connell, ‘On Hegemonic Masculinity and Violence.’ *Theoretical Criminology* 6:1 (2002), 89–99.

masculinity.⁴⁵ However, as Dominique Grisard has explained with regards to the left-wing terrorism of 1970, many women are members of terrorist groups and carry out violent actions, and therefore it is necessary to explore the relationship between violence and femininity. She underscores how institutional (police, media, academia, culture, etc.) representations and histories of terrorism have played an important role in creating the link between toxic masculinity and terrorism, thus determining a representation of the female terrorist that emerges from the combination of two aspects: gender and terrorism. Laura Sjoberg and Caron E. Gentry remind us quite rightly of the common belief that ‘women are not supposed to be violent’⁴⁶. Discourses around violent women, according to these scholars, aim to deny women rational thought, and agency and label women’s behaviour according to three models: the mother, the monster and the whore in order to preserve the patriarchal notion of femininity as fragile, pure and subordinated to men.⁴⁷ Other scholars tell that there is a social and cultural gendered construction about terrorist women that places them as only operating at the level of support and hence reproducing gender stereotypes.⁴⁸ Sexuality and gender stereotypes must have had a fundamental role in the lack of academic analysis around male and female homosexuality and terrorism. In clear correlation to the representation of the military and police forces in terms of manhood, virility, aggressiveness, violence, etc., terrorism shares this notion of hegemonic masculinity, a notion in which heteronormative sexuality is the only one possible. Subsequently, it is important to note that the research of secondary sources about the involvement and participation of gays in terrorism undertaken for this article has yielded no results.

⁴⁵ Sam de Boise, ‘Editorial: is masculinity toxic?’ *NORMA*, 14:3 (2019), 147-151

⁴⁶ Laura Sjoberg and Caron E. Gentry, *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics*, (London: Zed Books, 2007), 2.

Other important scholarly work on women’s participation is Brigitte L. Nacos’ ‘The Portrayal of Female Terrorists in the Media: Similar Framing Patterns in the News Coverage of Women in Politics and in Terrorism’, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 28:5 (2005), 435-451

⁴⁷ Sjoberg and Gentry, *Mothers*, 12.

⁴⁸ Eulalia Pérez Sedeño, ‘Terrorismo y estereotipos de género.’ *Isegoría*, 46 (2007), 233-247.

ETA was founded in 1959 to fight against the repression of Basque culture and identity by Francisco Franco. During the first decade, ETA mainly targeted members of the security and armed forces, but from the 1980s ETA broadened its focus by directing the attacks to politicians, public figures, supermarkets, etc. Carrie Hamilton maintains that only 8% of ETA were women,⁴⁹ and both Pando and Rodríguez⁵⁰ and Stewart King⁵¹ claim that despite the low number of women in ETA their representation in cultural text and media has had more impact than that of their male counterparts. For instance, two female ETA terrorists captivated the social and cultural imaginary both in the Basque Country and in Spain: Idoia López de Riaño, *La Tigresa*, and Dolores González Katarin, *Yoyes*. Idoia López de Riaño was perceived and represented as the *femme fatale*, a highly sexualised figure that inscribes terrorist violence on the female body.⁵² Not only that, according to Matías Antolín, *La Tigresa* was a terrorist who seduced guardias civiles with the hope of shooting them in the mouth.⁵³ By contrast, *Yoyes* (who was the first woman being part of the organisation's leadership in the 70s but who did not commit any terrorist attack) has been portrayed as the figure of the mother as she was assassinated in front of her three-year-old son by ETA in 1986, once she had come back from exile and had decided to leave ETA.

Basque culture and nationalism have been characterised as heteronormative and masculine. Within this context, ETA's violence is represented as hypermasculine, and hence only few women were able to be part of the group, but homosexuality also seemed not to have space within. For instance, few cultural texts have approached homosexuality and nationalism

⁴⁹ Carrie Hamilton. 'Re-membering the Basque nationalist family: daughters, fathers and the reproduction of the radical nationalist community.' *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 1:2 (2000), 153-7, p.160.

⁵⁰ María Jesús Pando & María Pilar Rodríguez, 'Las mujeres de ETA: activismo y transgresión,' *Arbor*, 196:796, (2020), a554.

⁵¹ Stewart King, 'Fear and Fascination: women, ETA and the crisis of masculinity in contemporary Spain,' *Violent Depictions: Violence across Cultures*, eds Susanna Scarparo & Sarah McDonald (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006).

⁵² Pando & Rodríguez, 'Las mujeres,' 3

⁵³ Matías Antolín, *Mujeres de ETA. Piel de serpiente*. Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 2002, 20.

in the Basque Country. One of the few is 1984 Manuel Uribe's film *La muerte de Mikel*, a film that portrayed the crossroads at which Mikel, the homosexual nationalist, finds himself. Isolina Ballesteros and Joseba Gabilondo have explained Mikel's expulsion from his political party and his death as the materialisation of the impossibility of a homosexual to represent the Basque nation.⁵⁴

El mal de Corcira.

El mal de Corcira reunites and showcases most of the elements and stereotypes mentioned above. Furthermore, it could be argued that Silva's novel is based on previous cultural texts (journalistic, literary, cinematographic, etc.) to construct his characters, which seem to be based on previous social and political stereotypes around hypermasculine terrorism and policing within the specific context of Spain. Realising the questionable reputation of *la benemérita*, and perhaps trying to place his persona as an author in a less politicised space, Silva makes of Bevilacqua the exemplification of an equidistant individual: a guardia civil that evolves and embraces the modernisation of the force, as well as of a Spanish society quickly transforming within globalisation. The progressive change of Spanish society is not only reflected in the topics framing each novel of the series, but also in Rubén Bevilacqua's and Virginia Chamorro's ageing and their personality development and growth as private and public individuals.

Silva's novel is populated by characters whose gender role within the institution or organisation to which they belong is defined in terms of their masculinity and/or femininity, as well as their sexuality. The two masculine forces that represent violence and power, the Guardia Civil and ETA, are depicted in the novel in two distant moments separated by almost

⁵⁴ Isolina Ballesteros, *Cine (in)surgente*, (Madrid: Fundamentos, 2001), p.98.

Joseba Gabilondo, 'El anillo postnacional de Moebius: deseo y política en la literatura vasca reciente (2000–2012).' *Ínsula* 797 (2013), 33–35.

thirty years, thus making the passing of time and ageing a definitive factor to define the transformation experienced by the individuals and the institutions and organisations they represent. The intricacies of the violence surrounding both ETA and the Guardia Civil are rooted in strongly patriarchal and hegemonic masculinity that, despite the social and political development of Spanish society in the nearly thirty years separating the past of the narration (1989) and the present (2018), seems to have somehow survived. The passing of time in this novel is important because it affects not only the characters involved in the past and present plot separated by thirty years, but also those characters (and the readership) who have been part of the Bevilacqua and Chamorro series throughout the years.

The extent of the progress of the Guardia Civil from a violent past to a policing and detection role can be only perceived by the contrast created between the young Bevilacqua and the older one. Depicted in the present of the narration as an emasculated middle-aged man, Bevilacqua has left behind a past in which he was trained to fight terrorists within the parameters of hegemonic and toxic masculinity with which he does not completely identify. His years in the Basque Country coincide with the opening of the Guardia Civil to women but only as part of the information department, an issue that is addressed by Rubén Bevilacqua:

Era una niña, dudé que hubiera cumplido los diecinueve. No hacía más de un año de la entrada de las mujeres en el cuerpo: ella era la primera a la que veía de servicio y me asombró que estuviera justo ahí, en uno de los sitios más arriesgados. Luego me lo explicarían era tal la necesidad de mujeres que tenían en el servicio de Información, para seguimiento y labores encubiertas, que se habían apresurado a elegir de la primera promoción a unas cuantas ... Creo que ese fue el momento en el que me picó el gusanillo de hacer algún día un trabajo como aquel.⁵⁵ (pp. 37-38)

⁵⁵ Lorenzo Silva, *El mal de corcira*, (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 2020)

Acknowledging the gendered activities of Guardia Civil and the different roles men and women have in the fight against terrorism, Silva depicts a young Bevilacqua who leans towards a more feminised role within the Guardia Civil than the hyper masculinised one that he is expected to perform. The possible disparity or unbalance between his gender and his role is soon contrasted and complemented by his sexual relationship with a highly sexualised female terrorist, Haizea. It is important to note that Haizea's profile fits well the profile of the terrorist Idoa López de Riaño, *La Tigresa*, although in the present case it is the guardia civil who seduces the female terrorist to gather information.⁵⁶ Haizea is subjected to a continuous feminisation of the body despite her effort to masculinise it, whilst her masculinised terrorist activity is placed in her mind:

Haizea era alta, tan alta como yo o quizá un centímetro más, y ni la ropa ni el peinado, a pesar de su intención contraria, lograban enmascarar del todo la armonía de sus facciones y sus hechuras. Sus miembros eran largos y elásticos, sus dedos finos y delicados, sus ojos de un cálido color arena. En la rotundidad de su voz y en el fulgor de su mirada asomaba la dureza que imperaba en su mente, pero a veces se descuidaba y se colaban ráfagas de una brisa muy distinta, que soplaba desde alguna región del corazón (pp. 447-448).

Haizea has a leading role in the terrorist attack that is prevented by Bevilacqua's squad: she is about to shoot the victim when she is stopped by a female guardia civil and is arrested. At her interrogation, Bevilacqua, wearing a balaclava not to be recognised by her, enters the room to prevent another guardia civil from sexually torturing her. The young detective (and lover) saves the female terrorist from torture, something that he does not do when a male with the highest rank in the 'comando' is also interrogated naked and urinates out of fear on the

⁵⁶ Álamo, who is the prototype of toxic masculinity, calls Haizea 'pantera', Silva, *El mal*, 491.

floor. The interrogation scene is charged with violence, physical and verbal; and part of this brutality seems to be justified by the cruelty and brutality of terrorism. Nonetheless, whilst the femininity of Haizea needs to be protected, the masculinity and power of the male terrorist Joseba Sopelana are reverted to feminine weakness by stressing his incontinence or his sobbing when in fear. The latter comes to reinforce the hegemonic masculinity that characterises la Benemérita.

If there are plenty of examples about the violent and toxic masculinity that characterises the ETA *gudaris* in the novel,⁵⁷ some toxic and violent guardias civiles, like Rosas and Álamo, are found in the ranks of the Guardia Civil as well. For instance, Rosas, the guardia civil leading the interrogatory of the arrested ETA cell, clearly represents toxic masculinity when he punches Sopelana in the face or attempts to sexually torture Haizea. Although Bevilacqua is against this brutality represented by Rosas, he also realises that the use of brutality in the war against ETA is not going to be punished in the Guardia Civil. However, if hiding corruption or brutality in the past was the norm, it is now transformed across all the novels of the series in their unveiling and punishing. For example, throughout the twelve novels, Bevilacqua uncovers political corruption, dishonesty within the ranks of the Guardia Civil and in other police and military forces. In *El mal*, a character such as Álamo, who is paired up with Bevilacqua in the Basque Country and is characterised as a young macho filled with toxic masculinity, is in jail twenty-nine years later as a result of his corruption and violent behaviour.

If Bevilacqua's male ageing is characterised by an emasculation that allows him to become an excellent guardia civil detective and to distance himself from the hegemonic

⁵⁷ Joseba Gabilondo has explored the literary representation of masochist masculinity in the Basque Country and in relation to ETA. He argues that the violence of ETA constitutes and is linked to the foundation of the Basque nation. In addition, Gabilondo explains how the masculinity of the terrorists depicted in the novels by Bernardo Atxaga (*The Lone Man*, 1993) and Ramon Saizarbitoria (*Many Steps*, 1995) fetishize women as symptoms of political reality: women are either sexual objects—those non-Basque-- or non-desirable political subjects -- national mothers-- . Joseba Gabilondo, 'Terrorism as Memory: The Historical Novel and Masochist Masculinity in Contemporary Basque Literature,' *Arizona Journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies*, 2 (1998), 113-146.

masculinity that characterises the law enforcement agency, Chamorro's female ageing presents the notion that sacrificing motherhood for professional reasons places women in an unavoidable solitude and social failure. In the first few novels, Chamorro is a female guardia civil who originally wanted to be a soldier but could not pass the physical tests of the entry exams and therefore joined the ranks of the Benemérita. On several occasions across all the novels, Chamorro uses the uniform to show her authority and hide her femininity; that is, the uniform becomes an object that helps to masculinise herself to be accepted by her fellow male colleagues and those outside the Guardia Civil. But Chamorro's ageing and transformation is also evident throughout the series and the twenty years they cover. The reader of the series witnesses Chamorro's ageing as a female professional policewoman who must ponder what is more important, her profession or her personal life. At the end, Chamorro chooses (or the circumstances force her to choose) her professional life as the priority. Despite Silva's attempt to construct this character as a professional woman, the reality of her depiction through the perspective of Bevilacqua is merely the impossibility to reconcile motherhood and policing. As Rubén Bevilacqua tells Virginia Chamorro when discussing the possibility of adopting a child, 'Espero que se te pase. Tendrías que dejar esto. No es trabajo para madres' (p.360). Thus, this dichotomy between policing and motherhood results in a highly masculine notion of the police force in which motherhood is not possible and posits Chamorro as the mature woman who looks at her unachieved motherhood as a frustration: 'Virginia no solía aludir a aquello, su maternidad frustrada. Cuando lo hacía, me dejaba siempre sin saber qué decir, sobre todo porque yo gozaba, seguramente sin merecerlo, del don de la paternidad' (p.360). The absence of motherhood is described as suffering while being a father is labelled as joy and as a gift. The fact that Chamorro, almost beyond her reproductive age, will no longer be able to fulfil her maternal role places her as an incomplete woman, hence reinforcing the patriarchal mentality of the not-so-modern Spain of 2018. Another sign and reality of ageing women

highlighted in the novel is Chamorro's realisation that at 43 'No me hago ilusiones, diga lo que diga mi madre. Empiezo a entrar en la edad de la invisibilidad.' (p.69) Chamorro blames her age for being shot at the beginning of the novel and compares herself to Bevilacqua's clean record. Her loss of physical sharpness is replaced at the end of the novel with a demonstration of her intellectual ability to master interrogation techniques that contrast to those of Rosas many years earlier. The intellectualisation of the female guardia civil, however positive, also underlines the patriarchal notion of the decline of the female body after 40 due to go against the fertility clock, thus highlighting the disparity between male and female ageing.

Furthermore, in contrast to the depiction of Chamorro's ageing as physical decline due to her renunciation to motherhood and her necessary masculinisation, the life course and the ageing process experienced by Aurora, who worked with Bevilacqua in the Basque Country, strengthens not only the impossibility to reconcile motherhood and being on the front lines, but also allows women to age gracefully:

Cuando fui a verla a su oficina aquella mañana ... pensé que el paso del tiempo no había sido con Aurora tan despiadado como lo había sido con otras, o con otros; quizá también conmigo mismo. Ya próxima a la cincuentena, seguía manteniendo el aire juvenil, incluso aquella apariencia de candor que tanto la había protegido y a la que tanto partido la había sacado en los muchos años en los que le había tocado ser la sombra de los pistoleros más sanguinarios. Ella continuaba en el servicio de Información, pero entre medias había sido madre y había pedido el traslado a la unidad de apoyo (p.98).

Again, ageing and motherhood are core elements in the description of the progression (or lack) of professional life of any female character. The Guardia Civil is a strongly structured institution and officers for the most part begin their careers at the bottom and work their way

up a series of structured ranks. As readers, we learn that over the years Bevilacqua, and other characters like Pereira and Chamorro, have been promoted and have worked their way up through the ranks, but female characters have faced more difficulties and had to make more professional and persona sacrifices due to their gender.

After the three years spent in the Basque Country, Bevilacqua returns to have a ‘quiet’ personal and work life as a detective in the information department. He has a son with his girlfriend, gets married and then divorced. When Virginia Chamorro is assigned to work with him, he slowly starts to be sexually attracted to her, but he can control his sexual desire and hegemonic masculinity to preserve their working relationship. On some occasions, he has sporadic relationships with other women, although as he ages his sexual drive diminishes and in this last novel it completely disappears. Similarly, Bevilacqua's first-person narration constantly underscores not only others’ ageing but by comparison his own. His emasculation is not only complemented by his physical decline: ‘Con el hígado colgando por las comisuras, me dije que empezaba a ser viejo para aquello’ (p.114) but also by continuously bringing up intergenerational differences within the Guardia Civil:

Percibía una deliciosa ingenuidad, más que descortesía, en aquella soltura con la que la gente de su edad tuteaba sin distinción a todo el mundo; incluido a mí, que podía ser su padre. Me imaginé con su edad, hablándole de tú a un dinosaurio como yo ... La duda que me acometió a continuación era si los jóvenes habían dejado de percibir aquel peligro o si las personas maduras de mi generación, por culpa de nuestra desorientación generalizada, les parecíamos inofensivas (120).

This contrast between younger and older generations is key in *El mal de Corcira*, and it is used to portray age difference as conflictive. Age separates generations in terms of social and

ideological engagement with regards to gender roles and sexuality, a conflict that occurs across all institutions as the novel establishes from the beginning.⁵⁸

It is an intergenerational and homosexual relationship that ends in a murder what constitutes the plot trigger of this novel: a middle-aged Igor López Etxebarri, a former ETA terrorist and police informer who has served his jail term for around twenty years, is found dead in the island of Formentera. His homosexuality as well as his frequent dates with younger men is soon revealed. The homophobia of the heteronormative and hegemonic masculinity of the Basque society, as it is represented in the novel, is shown from the initial pages of *El mal*: Igor must travel outside the Basque Country to freely express and experience his homosexuality. The homosexuality of the old Basque terrorist disrupts the stereotype of violent masculinity that is predetermined in the mind of the reader and therefore creates surprise and further curiosity in solving the case. The more information the reader is offered about Igor's homosexuality, the less of a toxic perpetrator he becomes, thus resulting in momentarily questioning the notion of masculinity linked to terrorism. Igor's physical description as well as past terrorist activities are that of a fit virile body, consequently fitting one of the types of gay men that Oscar Guasch suggests as prominent in pre-democratic Spain: the *maricón*, an 'active ('top') homosexual male, with a masculine appearance and virile outlooks.'⁵⁹ As the lack of literature around homosexuality and terrorism demonstrates, the difficult identification of terrorism and homosexuality seems to be rooted in the notion of male homosexuality as a synonym of effeminate. While the effeminate gay does not pose any danger to the virility of the heterosexual male and patriarchal society, the virile gay may jeopardise the masculinity of the figure of the terrorist. In *El mal* the tension between a modern country that accepts and

⁵⁸ See Vern L Bengtson, Neal E Cutler, David J Mangen & Victor W Marshall, 'Generations, cohorts, and relations between age groups,' *Handbook of aging and the social sciences*, eds R. H. Binstock and E. Shanas, (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1985), 304–338.

⁵⁹ The other type is the *mariquita*, an effeminate male. Oscar Guasch, 'Social stereotypes and masculine homosexualities: The Spanish case. *Sexualities*,' 2011;14: 5 (2001), 526-543, p.528.

embraces homosexuality represented by Formentera and Madrid, and an old and patriarchal one, represented by the Basque Country, is made explicit. It is important to note that Spain pioneered the legalisation of same-sex marriage in 2005, and therefore the homophobic attitude toward homosexuality that the novel describes in the present of the narration in the Basque Country reminds of the same homophobic atmosphere of the 80s portrayed by Uribe in *La muerte de Mikel*. Perhaps the reason for the explicit description of the sex scene on the beach between Igor and his young companion that is captured by security cameras rests on the contrast it creates between Igor's homosexuality and the phallic and castrating mother, as well as the toxic masculinity of Joseba. Following almost the same characterisation of the castrating and phallic mother presented in *La muerte de Mikel* and the hypermasculinity of ETA's nationalism, Silva presents a castrating mother who is horrified by her son's homosexuality and tries to hide it. The same can be said about the rejection Igor has to endure from his old terrorist comrades, as the character of Joseba Sopelana exemplifies by killing him for both being a police informant and a homosexual.⁶⁰

Joseba Sopelana suspects that Igor was a an infiltrated and informant working for the police and not a terrorist. His suspicion increased after finding out about Igor's homosexuality while they were both in different jails. From Joseba's homophobic point of view, a *gudari* cannot be homosexual and therefore he needs to kill him.⁶¹ Igor is depicted as neither a man nor a woman, neither a terrorist nor a guardia civil. Also, his tendency to date young gay men is sometimes presented through the stereotype of the *silver daddy* and/or predator, hence

⁶⁰ For a comprehensive account on homosexuality in Spain, see Alberto Mira, *De Sodoma a Chueca*, (Madrid: Egales, 2004) and Santiago Fouz-Hernández, 'Identity without limits: Queer debates and representation in Contemporary Spain', *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research*, 10:1 (2010), 63-81.

⁶¹ It is interesting to note some resonance to the case of *Yoyes*, María Dolores González Katarain. Yoyes was the first woman to enter the senior ETA leadership. In 1980 she decided to leave the organisation to start a new life as an exile in Mexico. In 1985 she returned to San Sebastian and was considered a traitor by his former comrades, who killed her in front of her 3-year-old son in 1986.

exposing both stereotypical homophobic perceptions of homosexuality and ageism, as displayed in the interrogation of Igor's last young companion by Bevilacqua:

--¿Ha ido más veces con hombres mayores?

--Muchas veces.

--Sin que el hombre mayor le invite, digo.

(...)

--¿A usted nunca le atrajo a mi edad una mujer mayor?

Me quedé pensando.

--Es posible, hace ya tanto que casi ni me acuerdo (p. 332).

In *El mal*, the passing of time is core. Rubén Bevilacqua is constantly referring to the age of every character he meets and links almost all of them with widespread stereotypes: the fat man in his forties; the muscular and fitted policeman in his fifties; the athletic and thus successful ageing of the Lieutenant-General Pereira who is in his sixties; the wrinkled woman who is around sixty; or the ageing of his mother. These stereotypes deployed all belong to the binary successful ageing versus ageing as decline; binary to which the detective continuously draws on to refer to his physical decline. In the book, the idea of successful ageing relates to a youthful lifestyle.⁶²

Ageing in *El mal* is structured around the changes experienced by the characters between 1989 and the present of the narration; that is, the physical and intellectual changes that occurred in the characters, how they were then and how they are now. Seriality, as Oró-Piqueras and Wohlmann claim, can open original understandings and perceptions about the realities of

⁶² Stephen Katz, *Cultural aging. Life course, lifestyle and senior worlds*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 188–202.

age and ageing, stability and change, and temporality.⁶³ These realities are offered to at least two different readerships:⁶⁴ on the one hand, the readers that have followed the series and therefore know and have also aged along with the characters; on the other hand, the readers of this specific novel, who can identify themselves with the main characters and share some of the aspects of their ageing and gender identity but have not aged along with them. In the first case, the readers engage with a life course perspective and therefore some type of affective attachment may be part of the relationship between the reader and the characters. Readers age along with the characters and experience the same social and political reality as Spanish citizens. This ageing along with the characters, and at the same pace, can be experienced as time-specific and as a life course perspective. In this latest novel, Silva offers this type of reader the possibility to remember with Bevilacqua their own experience of what happened in Spain from 1989 to 1992. As a result, the novel combines a remembering of the past from the perspective of a fifty-four-year-old heterosexual man with a historical chronicle of one of the defining episodes of the history of Spain and its impact on the present of the narration: the dissolution of ETA. Also, the novel comes to celebrate and applaud some sort of transformation and modernisation of the Guardia Civil from its violent masculinity of the 80s to a more intellectual and gender inclusive force in the 21st Century. This modernisation is presented through the character of Virginia Chamorro. In clear contrast to the brutal interrogatories in Itxaurrondo⁶⁵, Chamorro is in charge of the interrogatory of Sopena in the present time. She is skilled and carries it out in a very intelligent and peaceful manner, never using any physical force. Although this interrogatory showcases the powerful mental skills of the female guardia civil against the declined physical virility of the middle-aged terrorist, the final effect is not to

⁶³ Maricel Oró-Piqueras & Anita Wohlmann, 'Serial Narrative, Temporality and Aging: An Introduction' *Serializing Age: Aging and Old Age in TV Series*, (Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag, 2015), 9-22.

⁶⁴ It could be argued that there is a third type of readership, the reader who reads the whole series in a short period of time. In this case, the reader may still experience temporality in its linearity but in an intense and fast pace.

enhance the important figure of the female guardia civil but to highlight the decadence of the figure of the terrorist.

Conclusion

El mal de Corcira, the twelfth novel of the Rubén Bevilacqua series, deals with one moment in the life of the guardia civil not covered in the previous novels of the series: his first steps in the Guardia Civil in the Basque Country. It is the 2018 Bevilacqua middle-aged man who evokes and narrates the three years that the other eleven novels never included. Bevilacqua's recalling and retelling of his experiences twenty-nine years earlier are filtered through his experience across the years and his understanding and of his position as a private individual and public servant in contemporary Spain. Having been part of a law enforcement institution characterised by its hegemonic masculinity, and following the features of the *novela negra*, the detective story of this novel reinforces normative conceptions of sexuality, gender and age.

In Silva's series, and more importantly in the last novel, the readers are offered a normative notion of ageing defined mainly as physical decline and lack of sexual drive. It also suggests that there is a substantial difference between two types of ageing masculinities: ageing as decline (emasculating, lack of physical fitness, etc.) and successful ageing (linked to fitness and healthy ageing). Sexual identity in ageing individuals does not interfere with the binary of successful ageing and ageing as decline, therefore it can be argued that sexual identity in *El mal* is linked to the sexist ageism that privileges hegemonic masculinity. Ageing femininities are subjected to the same binary but also the heteronormative and patriarchal aspect of motherhood. Women are portrayed as either mothers, not mothers, or monsters.

As the stereotypes analysed have shown, gender roles have changed since 1989 but not as much as one would expect them to evolve: it still preserves an evident gender and sexual

discriminations. The novel still displays the idea that despite the contrast between the 'then' and 'now' of the characters and their position concerning the binary male/female, masculinity/femininity and heteronormativity/homosexuality in the novel, the stereotypes they are based on eventually reproduce the same hegemonic masculinity that defines patriarchy. Characters who could deviate from the hegemonic normativity of the force such as Chamorro and Aurora end up conforming to the patriarchal dominant ideas of the Guardia Civil. Furthermore, homosexuality is exclusively located within the in-between space of terrorism and police informant, whilst in the *Benemérita* of the series, there are no homosexual guardias civiles. Hence, an analysis of this novel uncovers that the oldest law enforcement in Spain is presented as still heteronormative and patriarchal despite the passing of time.