

**Neele Meyer**

## **Glocalizing Genre Fiction in the Global South**

Indian and Latin American Post-Millennial Crime Fiction

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Indian and Latin American Post-Millennial Crime Fiction

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Neele Meyer

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Crime Fiction

von  
Neele Meyer



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## Preface

This dissertation is based on a PhD project which I carried out as part of the DFG-funded Research Training Group 1733 “Globalization and Literature: Representations, Transformations, Interventions” at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München between 2013 and 2017. Besides funding my project, the research environment of the Research Training Group was an important stimulus for this comparative project on contemporary Latin American and Indian (English) genre fiction and it provided an excellent base to go beyond traditional philological disciplines.

Tracing developments such as the popularity of crime fiction and the development of the book market in two disparate regions with scarce literary connections required much more than desk and library work: With few exceptions, recently published titles were difficult to obtain in Europe and many books were only published during the research period. Furthermore, knowledge about the publishing industry largely remains with writers, publishers, literary agents and other stakeholders. My research on Indian and Latin American crime fiction has thus been a journey in many ways: The project required me to travel to acquire books, to present my topic and to meet researchers and publishing professionals engaged in a similar field. I had the chance to meet many of them and to engage in fruitful discussions which were sometimes the only way to get hold of certain phenomena. Recent developments in the publishing markets, for example, have been discussed in newspapers and magazines in the best case, but not been the scope of scholarly attention. At the end of this journey, I am thus much obliged to a long list of persons and I am extremely thankful for everyone’s insights, contacts, recommendations, support, encouragement and the opportunity to exchange ideas, which were essential to advance this project.

First of all, I would particularly like to thank my supervisor Bernhard Teuber for his continuous support and interest not only in the Latin American, but also in the Indian part of my project. A special thanks

also goes to my co-supervisor Susanne Klengel, whose engagement with Latin American and Indian literary connections has been very inspiring for my project and extremely helpful to reflect on the concept/term Global South. In this respect, the workshop “The Conceptual (Re)Locations of the ‘Global South’”, organized by the Global South Studies Center (GSSC) at the University of Cologne in 2016 and the works of Cláudio Pinheiro have been very insightful, too. I also had the opportunity to continuously exchange ideas about the Indian part of the project with Emma Dawson Varughese, whose publications have been instrumental for my reflections on contemporary Indian genre fiction in English. Her and other researcher’s talks at the conference “C21 Writings: The Cultures of New India” at the University of Brighton, in which I participated in 2016, provided an excellent opportunity to engage with the few scholars dedicated to this field.

During my research stay in Delhi in 2015, which was partly financed by the Bavarian-Indian Centre (BayInd), I had the opportunity to learn more about the research on Latin American and Spanish literature in India at Delhi University, where I interacted with researchers like Vijaya Venkataraman and Swati Babbar. I was also able to participate in the “Crime Writers Festival” and the conference “Crime and Literature” at Delhi University, which proved to be extremely useful events for my project. Furthermore, I would like to thank Pavithra Narayanan, Suman Gupta, Pooja Sinha and Gautam Chakrabarti who were all open to share recommendations and their expertise on contemporary Indian genre fiction. I also had the chance to meet with experts from the publishing field: I am grateful to Kishwar Desai, Karthika VK, Sridhara Aghalaya, Jaya Bhattacharji Rose and Pallavi Narayan for their useful insights into the Indian publishing market and genre fiction in English. I also thank Leonard Burger who provided me with the access to summaries of Nielsen’s 2017 study on the Indian publishing market.

Similarly, my research stay in Santiago de Chile and Buenos Aires in 2015 was crucial for the Latin American part of this dissertation. I had the opportunity to expand my corpus of novels and received

first-hand information on developments in the Chilean and Argentinean publishing market. I am very thankful for the recommendations I got from Mariano Siskind and for meetings with Ezequiel de Rosso, Claudia Ferrades, Oscar López, Gabriela Adamo, Carlos Santos Sáez, Martin Mengucci, Ezequiel Bajder and Mercedes Giuffré. In addition, attending the festival “BAN! – Buenos Aires Negra” has been extremely insightful as the event brings together the major stakeholders of Argentinean crime fiction. I also had the chance to participate in the 2015 edition of “Medellín Negro”, which is certainly the most important conference on crime fiction in Latin America thanks to the efforts of its organizer Gustavo Forero Quintero. Here and on many other occasions, I was happy to see that my presentation on Indian crime fiction received much interest in Latin America – and vice versa.

In Chile, I enjoyed very fruitful discussions with researchers like Clemens August Franken Kurzen, Marcelo González and Danilo Leonardo Santos López who have conducted excellent research on Chilean crime fiction. I am also much obliged to the consultants and publishers who agreed to share their expertise with me: Fernando Zambra, Paulo Slachevsky, Marcelo González, Juan Manuel Silva Barandica, Vicente Undurraga, Marcelo Montecinos and Galo Ghigliotto.

Overall, I was amazed by the openness and enthusiasm of everyone I contacted and met in the course of the research. Despite the difficulties publishers, writers and literary scholars face in India and Latin America, the commitment of everyone was truly inspiring. At the end of this journey, quantifiable data continues to remain a desiderata for future research, but all the recommendations and insights I received allowed me to examine a corpus of diverse crime fiction novels and to trace major developments in the respective publishing markets. This dissertation is in many ways the first comprehensive study that addresses phenomena like female detectives, journalist investigators, the modification of generic elements, space and technology in contemporary Indian and Latin American crime fiction. The research topic could certainly be expanded to include e.g. other Latin American countries,

various Indian languages or different genres altogether. Therefore, I am confident that this study will be useful for other researchers who are looking into similar topics.

I am also much indebted to my supporters in Munich who were a huge help to turn this project into the final dissertation. I would like to thank particularly Franziska Jekel-Twittmann and Anna-Katharina Krüger for all their suggestions, support and feedback during the writing and reviewing phase. I was very lucky to count on the support of Apoorva Gautam and Norulhuda Othman for their comments and (often last minute) proofreading. Last but not least, I am extremely grateful to Punit Bholā for his constant encouragement and patience during this intense phase, for always being there for me and for posing as the best test listener for my presentations. I would also like to thank my family who supported me in many different ways during my PhD research.

# 1 Introduction

There is certainly no genre that enjoys a wider and more lasting production, circulation and consumption on the global literary market than crime fiction. Recent studies regard it as a “truly global literary genre” or “world literature par excellence” since the genre’s conventions, topics and concerns are easily adaptable to any possible setting (Pepper/Schmid 2016: 1; 3). Ever since crime fiction’s emergence in 19th century Europe, it has gained presence on a global level and is now commonly read well beyond the traditional centers of global literary production. This is also increasingly the case for regions outside Europe and the US where the genre was long considered ‘unsuitable’ for local production. In regions of the Global South like India and Latin America, widespread corruption, impunity or the perception of state authorities as criminal were often cited as reasons for the unsuitability of crime fiction set in these regions (Singh 2011). One of the genre’s key concerns, the complete solution of an individual crime, similarly seemed out of place in this context.

Nonetheless, the growing presence of the genre in these regions suggests that former restrictions and rejections have been done away with. For Indian writing in English as well as for Latin American literature, a growing presence of crime fiction can be observed in recent years: Crime fiction production has increased in the last decade and turned into a boom genre if one is to believe enthusiastic writers, publishers and reviewers. Even more skeptical voices admit a rise in production since the turn of the millennium.<sup>1</sup> This phenomenon has so far mainly been discussed in newspaper articles and reviews and can be observed in bookshops or at literary festivals within India and Latin America. In academia, post-millennial crime fiction from both regions has not

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1 The growing production has for example been observed and discussed by Agustín de Beitia (2016); Marifé Boix García (2015); Sowmya Rajaram (2016) or Emma Dawson Varughese (2013).

received much scholarly attention so far. This thesis sets out to look into reasons for and implications of the rise of crime fiction in both regions.

To analyze the trajectory of the genre, I will follow a two-fold scope: The first scope of the thesis lies in scrutinizing the ways in which the emergence of the genre connects to changes in local and global book markets. For this part, I focus on aspects like the impact of multinational publishers, the history of the genre in both regions and local developments. The rise of the genre will be studied in the context of the book market and the publishing industry in which it is produced. The second focus lies in the analysis of a variety of corpus novels to examine how Indian and Latin American authors use and adapt the genre. Do they, for example, challenge and modify generic features? Overall, the analysis will contribute to study the evolution of the genre in the course of its circulation and adaptation to new contexts and thereby adds knowledge to the research on the impact of globalization processes on literary forms and literary markets.

Crime fiction can preliminarily be defined as a narrative text that focuses on the investigation of a crime by an investigating entity. In spite of being constantly subject to modification, the genre continues to be associated with a pseudonorm established by the classic British crime fiction novel and authors like Arthur Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie. The tension between clearly identifiable European roots and efforts of authors to locally anchor the genre in distinct settings and contexts all over the world makes crime fiction a highly 'glocal' genre. Drawing back on Roland Robertson's term (1996), this suggests that the genre is shaped by simultaneous processes of homo- and heterogenization in the course of its circulation and local adaptation.

To frame the parallel emergence of glocal phenomena in India and Latin America, the term Global South is used here to underline general power imbalances and how different regions are shaped by similar developments and transformations due to an integration into the global capitalist system and phenomena related to processes of glo-

balization. While inequality and exclusion certainly continue to exist in and between different regions, I am also taking into consideration changing and heterogeneous dependencies: While both regions have traditionally been framed in terms of their marginal or disadvantaged position, India or Latin America are actually shaped by more complex developments with heterogeneous consequences. Both regions are also shaped by economic growth and the emergence of a new middle class, which have led to a growth of consumerism and commodification. This has also had an impact on the respective publishing industries which can be referred to as emerging publishing markets due for example the growing presence of multinational publishing houses and the emergence of new independent ones. This thesis thus explores the effects of these complexities on literary production and dissemination and uses the concept Global South as a framework to address parallel developments in distinct regions like India and Latin America, or more precisely India, Argentina and Chile. Argentina and Chile have been selected as case studies for Latin America since they exhibit significant differences in terms of the publishing industry or reading behavior despite many similarities of these neighboring countries.

In spite of many parallel developments, India and Latin America are hardly ever brought into connection in comparative projects. This is particularly the case for the regions' literary production, one reason being that India and Latin America form part of the Anglophone and the Hispanic publishing and academic spheres respectively. If an exchange between these two publishing spheres is often limited, this is particularly the case for India and Latin America: Literary relations between both regions hardly go beyond the reception of Magic Realism or canonic authors. The basis of this comparative approach is thus a set of parallel developments in the global and local publishing field. While ties, direct exchanges or mutual influences between both regions' literary production are scarce, it is interesting to compare how the recent rise of the production of crime fiction is shaped by similar adaptation processes. Which impact does this adaptation have on the texts itself? Despite the global adaptation of crime fiction, the genre continues to be shaped – to some extent – by roots and models located in

the Global North. The presence of these novels evoke a pseudonorm which continues to have some validity. However, this pseudonorm is also subject to modification by writers who aim at producing ‘realistic’ or locally credible novels in a specific setting in which, for example, a complete solution of a crime does not reflect the reader’s expectations. Due to these tensions between roots and pseudonorm vis-à-vis modification and its wide production and dissemination, crime fiction in the Global South compromises an interesting case study to examine how globalization processes have heterogeneous and diverse effects on literary forms and markets.

## 1.1 Research Approach and Theoretical Framework

Among the common approaches to study the growing presence of crime fiction on the global literary market is the classification of the genre as a form of travel literature. This categorization describes crime fiction as a genre that easily adapts to any setting and gives readers from all over the world insights into specific cultures and locales via the framework of a familiar genre (see for example Lawson 2012). A closer look at the corpora of crime fiction published now in the Global South, however, challenges and transcends this perception: Authors from India and Latin America use a variety of strategies that contradict the idea of crime fiction as an introduction to a ‘foreign’ culture for European or US-American writers. The strategies that are explored in this thesis include for example the use of locally credible protagonists, local settings or the inclusion of untranslated passages in Indian languages crime fiction novels published in India.

Since the genre is so closely linked to the British colonial power, adapting the genre and challenging generic conventions is often automatically associated with a form of ‘writing back’. Adopting a postcolonial framework to study crime fiction from former colonies is an obvious choice for many scholars: However, authors from for example Scandinavia have also taken over the genre in a successful and profitable manner from its original centers in the UK, the US or France. While

Scandinavian authors often bend generic conventions, their works of are hardly grasped as ‘writing back’ to these ‘centers’ or as highlighting ‘indigenous’ or ‘subaltern’ approaches to investigation methods, laws or the criminal justice system. Crime fiction novels from the Global South, however, are usually read along this line – if one looks at edited volumes and magazines by Ed Christian (2001; 2010), Nels Pearson and Marc Singer (2009), Christine Matzke and Susanne Mühleisen (2006) and most recently, the Special Issue “Postcolonial Crime Fiction” of *The Journal of Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies* (2016; edited by Sam Naidu). The tools and concerns of postcolonial studies can certainly be used to examine contemporary Indian and Latin American crime fiction. Nonetheless, this might also be an imposed mode of reading and one should caution against automatically applying it to fiction written in former colonial countries even if local authors and readers focus on distinct concerns and topics. It is thus my contention that a postcolonial approach might not necessarily provide the most suitable framework to do justice to the diversity of post-millennial crime fiction novels and their authors.

This thesis follows scholars like Suman Gupta (2012; 2013; 2015) or Emma Dawson Varughese (2012; 2013; 2017), who took a closer look at the Indian publishing market in English without imposing a postcolonial framework. Dawson Varughese, for example, repeatedly points out that “post-millennial fiction in English from India is not recognizable by the tropes and guises of Indian postcolonial texts” (2013: 145). Instead, she underlines that literary production is dominated by a broader variety of topics and genres that address a local market. The majority of works are in fact written by local authors for local audiences and do not fit in what is considered ‘typical’ Indian or Latin American literature on the global market: A large share of authors refrains from producing exoticized or orientalized crime fiction stories which cater to the taste and expectations of international readers. Particularly in India, this has led to emergence of bestselling writers who are hardly known outside the subcontinent. This kind of localization has also been observed by Carolina Miranda for contemporary Argentinean crime fiction novels (2016: 82).

Drawing back on these observations, this thesis takes a more holistic approach that can be summarized as the glocalization of genre fiction and looks at the material conditions of production and dissemination as well as the content of the books. Many of the crime fiction novels draw back on local settings, characters and plots and they are often written by local writers for a local audience. Authors, editors and consumers of these texts are hardly ever marginal figures in a national setting, but rather from a local middle or upper class background. Indian and Latin American crime fiction novels that circulate and sell beyond a national market or are based abroad, however, are not excluded from this study. Instead, I advocate that crime fiction provides an interesting corpus to challenge the dichotomous view of international diasporic and “stay-at-home” writers (Dwivedi/Lau 2014: 2f.). This is of particular significance since the gap between what is considered Indian or Latin American literature on the global market – foremost few canonical representatives of magical realism or esteemed authors like Borges – and what is actually produced and read in these countries is widening. Besides revealing the porosity of this binary division of local/indigenous and global/diasporic literature, this thesis intends to broaden the horizon and go beyond the few canonical writers from these regions who are commonly read and studied internationally. Thereby, trends in Indian writing in English, Argentinean and Chilean literature are presented to a broader (academic) audience. In spite of the discussions about the increasing global circulation of literature, the corpus of works and writers from the Global South which “circulate beyond their region of origin” (Damrosch 2003: 4) remains rather limited. As mentioned in the beginning, local literary production and consumption – especially popular genres – have so far received hardly any scholarly attention. Irrespective of this disparity, Louise Nilsson et al. claim in the recent edited volume *Crime Fiction as World Literature* (2017) that crime fiction writers today mutually read and inspire each other on a global level:

Today, American crime fiction writers are as likely to be inspired by Swedish authors as the reverse, while writers in Bangkok closely follow the work of their Japanese and Italian peers. (2017: 3)

While this might be true for the circulation of Swedish and Italian authors whose books are widely translated and available in almost all countries worldwide, the claim of an “intercourse in every direction” (ib.: 2) fails to take into account the massive power imbalances in the circulation and dissemination of literature. This significantly disadvantages authors who are not located in the centers of literary production – which are rather congruent with the Global North. It can be presumed that the high-level production and circulation of the genre does have an impact on Indian and Latin American writers because foreign authors are widely available. But while a writer in the Global South is likely to be inspired by globally circulating counterparts, it is much less likely that his/her novel gets (translated and) published beyond his/her national market. Authors who circulate beyond this narrow market and made a name outside their home market have undergone a selection process whose conditions are determined by the demands of international publishers. Thus, while compilations like the Special Issue “Global Crime Fiction” of the Journal *Clues: A Journal of Detection* (2014) or *Crime Fiction as World Literature* attempt to adopt a “truly global scope” (Nilsson 2017: 3), they time and again draw back on a small, rather canonic corpus of writers from the Global South and miss out on the huge variety of works that are actually produced. While the compilations’ editors acknowledge that crime fiction provides an interesting case to scrutinize the impact of publishing conglomerates in general (ib.: 5), it is curious that the decisive power imbalances in the global publishing field are hardly ever addressed as a problem – even though they have multiple implications for literary production. The structural and material conditions that have an impact on the emergence of the genre point at power imbalances of the global book market as well as local strategies that counter these processes.

As indicated by the title “Glocalizing Genre Fiction in the Global South”, I take the global canon of crime fiction to be rather a ‘glocalized’ one, as crime fiction novels are closely linked to the specific local context in which they are set and sold. While being locally produced and consumed, the production cannot be considered isolated from international crime fiction novels. This international corpus of

works has been consumed and has influenced writers and shaped readers' expectations for decades. Even Indian and Latin American novels that only circulate in a local market can actually be considered 'glocal' books that are produced in increasingly connected, concentrated and commercialized literary markets. At the same time, politics of large publishers can be assumed to have an impact on crime fiction novels in the Global South. They might foster books along generic lines for a better marketability and classifiability in bookshops or reviews and thereby contribute to implement a globally homogenized system of generic classification. This situation posits the genre in an interesting tension between local and global developments that points at various asymmetries in the global literary field. While scholars of World Literary Studies have tried to expand the canon by revising definitions of world literature (David Damrosch) or advocate distance reading as a new methodology (Franco Moretti), others have been quick to point at contingencies of basic imbalances that work in favor of the centers of literary production and the globalized publishing industry. As critics like Graham Huggan (2001) and Sarah Brouillette (2007) have pointed out, authors from peripheral regions as are highly restricted in their market access, choice of formats and topics by the expectations of publishers and readers from the centers of literary production. Also critics like Aamir Mufti claim that only a small corpus of established canonic authors are taken into consideration whose works may actually be quite distinct from the kind of books that are currently produced and read in the Global South.

The Global South/North terminology has come into fashion in recent decades, partly as a replacement for terms like the Third World or the Postcolonial World and is used here to underline the similar position of regions like Latin America or India. In spite of the geographical distance and divergences that divide these regions, that stand in a certain opposition to the Global North. This is not meant in a strictly geopolitical sense but rather in relational one based on dependencies and power asymmetries. While these regions are often considered economically disadvantaged and dependent on the Global North, a definition along these characteristics falls short as various countries or regions of

the Global South have turned into important economic powers in the last decades despite persisting high levels of inequality. Due to the rise in economic power, a new self-confidence or focus on local identities can be observed in many regions. Economically as well as culturally, processes of globalization therefore engage with local responses and have different 'glocal' outcomes – and literary production and literary markets in these countries have not been untouched by these processes.

### **Research Questions**

To summarize, crime fiction occupies a unique position in the local and global literary field(s) and therefore provides an interesting example to tackle the complex entanglements as well as power relations between the Global North and South. The genre remains clearly associated with its roots in Europe and the US even though it has been present in the Global South for more than a century and has constantly been subject to generic hybridization and adaptation to new settings. The growing production of crime fiction brings up various issues about literary production and the development of the book market in the Global South which are examined here taking India, Argentina and Chile<sup>2</sup> as case studies. The overarching questions addressed here can be summarized as following: Which extratextual events and factors have an impact on the emergence of crime fiction in India and Latin America? Which generic elements and characteristics are used and modified in the course for this process? What conclusions can be drawn about the similarities and differences of the adaptation process in both regions with regard to literary production and the trajectory of crime fiction? These concerns are explored by scrutinizing developments in the book market(s): How are national or local book markets and publishing industries developing in the Global South? To what extent do multinational publishers have an impact on the circulation of literature in and beyond the Global South? What effects do concentration processes in the industry have on the local literary production and consumption practices? Do multinational publishers for example fos-

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2 The study period ends in 2016 as the research was conducted between 2013 and 2016. This is e.g. important in the case of Argentina as the effects of the economic crisis during the government of Macri are not examined here.

ter specific foreign (European or US-American) writers and genres? Are there new possibilities of agency emerging in this context? With regard to issues related to form and content of the books, the following questions are raised: To what extent does the actual literary production in the Global South correspond to what is perceived as literature from these regions on the global market? Who are the writers and which audience do they address? (How) Do writers address the skepticism towards the suitability of the genre in the Global South? Which aspects and generic conventions are altered and which topics and concerns are explored in these works? Finally, this analysis relates to some overarching concerns: What commonalities and differences could be detected between both corpora of novels? What are the implications if writers in/from the Global South increasingly draw back on crime fiction in spite of the genre's historical-geographical ties and generic limitations? And to what extent do these observations match or challenge the 'global' characteristics of the genre as discussed by scholars like Stewart King (2014), Andrew Pepper (2016) or Louise Nilsson et al. (2017)?

### **The Indian, Argentinean and Chilean Publishing Market**

Despite comprising very different regions of the Global South, India and Latin America are connected by historical experiences of colonialism and neoliberalism which had far-reaching consequences on the regions' respective economic, political and social situations. Both regions have large populations – 1.3 billion Indians versus 634 million Latin Americans in 2015<sup>3</sup> –, which are highly heterogeneous with regard to social, cultural and economic factors. These populations are mainly perceived as a unity from outside, as, for example, Walter Mignolo has pointed out for Latin America in *The Idea of Latin America* (2005). The same homogenizing perception can also be attributed to multinational publishers, who often perceive India and Latin America as one entity and a 'natural' extension of the English and Spanish language publishing sphere.

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3 These figures are based on the United Nation's Report "World Population Prospects. The 2015 Revision: Key Findings and Advance Tables" (2015: 1); the figure for Latin America includes the Caribbean.

With regard to India, this thesis focuses on the English language book market as the main field of growth and investment in the last decades. Currently, India is the second largest market for English books worldwide (Nielsen Bookscan 2015b: 2). Just in terms of quantity, Indian English fiction offers a huge amount of works to study. The growth of the English language book market has various implications for the role of English in India: Besides the highly polemic status of English as the language of the colonizer connected to a European/Western worldview and the location of knowledge and science. However, English is increasingly seen as a prerequisite for economic and social progress. While India has long-standing and dynamic literary cultures in a multitude of Indian languages, it is particularly the English language market that has been subject to changes in the last decade.<sup>4</sup> Language debates certainly connect to questions of authenticity, marketability and power. Paradigmatic for the (non-)effects of globalization processes on literature in Indian languages is Francesca Orsini's claim that "[t]he global does not incorporate the regional literatures of India. It cold-shoulders them" (2002: 87). Crime fiction has been adapted by authors who write in different Indian languages throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Since I am mainly looking at Indian fiction in English by Indian authors for an Indian audience, the imbalance between writing and publishing in English and other languages is not a central scope of this study. Furthermore, this thesis would not be able to do justice to the large variety of languages in India and their distinct situation in terms of production, dissemination and readership. The long history of adaptation of crime fiction in different languages, however, has been addressed in Chapter 3.1.2. As the readership of Indian fiction in English on the subcontinent has grown in the last decades, a new corpus of Indian commercial fiction has emerged and is often seen in close relation to the emergence of a new English-speaking middle class in the course of India's economic liberalization (Gupta 2012: 46ff.). The

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<sup>4</sup> The debates and polemics between Indian literature in English and Indian languages or between Indian writers residing in India and diasporic writers have been summarized by for example by I.A. Viswamohan (2013) or Nalini Iyer and Bonnie Zare (2009). However, it is not expedient for this thesis to reiterate these debates here. Examples for the case of crime fiction are discussed in Chapter 3.1.5.

economic transformations thus had an impact on leisure industries and consumer trends and therefore also on the literary production and reading habits. The recent growth of India's English language market reflects the changing situation and a more strategic use of English by a new group of Indian writers who write popular fiction for a local audience (Satpathy 2009: xxviii).

The development and sizes of Latin America's national book markets vary widely depending on which of the 20 national economies is studied. Exchange between these markets is scarce and mediated by Spanish publishers. Since it is not feasible to study the situation and corpora of the entire region, Argentina and Chile have been selected as two exemplary cases: The neighboring countries show various similarities as former settler colonies with a similar societal structure. Besides colonialism, it is particularly the uprooting experience of dictatorships in Argentina and Chile in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which shapes the relation between citizens and the state and its authorities until today. While inequality remains a major problem in Argentina and Chile, crime rates are relatively low compared to other Latin American countries. Nonetheless, crime rates are rising and along with that, it is often the perception or fear of crime that is growing disproportionately. When it comes to literary production and reading habits, however, Argentina and Chile differ widely: Chile's literary market continues to be highly dominated by imported books and foreign writers, while local book consumption is generally quite low. In Argentina, the local production and consumption of books is significantly higher. Additionally, the Argentinean book market was affected by import restrictions on books between 2012 and 2016 which had a strong impact on the availability of foreign books, but also meant an opportunity for local independent publishers. The evolution of crime fiction has undergone very different trajectories in both regions/nations: Argentineans have been avid producers and consumers of the genre throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Crime fiction is now often seen as one of the most prominent genres on the Argentinean market today (de Rosso 2014: 109)

while the emergence of crime fiction in Chile is – besides a few predecessors – largely a phenomenon of the post-dictatorial period which has led to a steady production of the genre from the 1990s onwards.

## 1.2 Chapter Outline

These distinct trajectories of the genre in India, Argentina and Chile are discussed in Chapter 3 and thereby provide a framework to contextualize the trajectory of crime fiction in these regions. Entitled “The History of Crime Fiction and the Publishing Market”, this Chapter explores the heterogeneous traditions of crime fiction and looks at the regions’ position in the global publishing market as well as current literary production in India and Latin America. Beside global entanglements, local phenomena such as the emergence of new local publishers are also addressed. Due to the scarcity of studies on local book markets and literary production in specific regions of the Global South, this part mainly draws back on market reports, interviews with publishers and newspaper articles which I have conducted and gathered in the course of my research activity. This part also highlights the heterogeneity of the Global South and depicts differences in India and Latin America and suggests that these entanglements lead to simultaneous processes of homo- and heterogenization and creative adaptations of literary forms and contents depending on local factors and materials which can be summarized as ‘glocal’ outcomes. Furthermore, major developments and trends in post-millennial literary production in general and crime fiction in particular in India and Latin America are discussed in this Chapter and provide a larger context for the analysis of the corpus of crime fiction novels in Chapter 4 and 5.

Before that, Chapter 2, entitled “Theoretical Framework: Globalization Processes and Genre Fiction”, explores the terms globalization, glocalization and the Global South as these concepts are of particular relevance for this thesis. The first part of this Chapter underlines the vagueness of definitions and asymmetric character of the term globalization and engages with Roland Robertson’s term ‘glocalization’, and current debates about the concept of the Global South. Particu-

larly the term Global South needs to be critically revised since it is often used as a mere replacement of terms like the Third World or the Developing World without doing justice to the changes that gave rise to a revision of these terms in the first place. The term Global South is used here to underline a parallel position of Latin America and India with regard to the (presumed) dependency on a global market as well as the emergence of new economic powers. To look at the development of the global and local book market, the Global South provides a useful framework to look at structures of dependency and influence that shape the (literary) market. These are nonetheless not absolute and always contrasted by local developments such as the impact of the state, local publishers or readings habits.

Furthermore, Chapter 2 provides a framework for the later analysis by exploring the characteristics and functions of genre fiction and crime fiction. In Chapter 2.2, the characteristics and functions of genre fiction as well its position in the book market/literary field are explored by drawing back on Bourdieu's literary field. Chapter 2.3 summarizes definitions of crime fiction, the emergence and prevalence of the classic British crime novel<sup>5</sup> as well as the constant and ongoing diversification of the genre. The distinct terminology and subgenres used in the English and the Spanish publishing sphere are revised here. This Chapter also examines various tensions and opposing trends which foster the evolution of crime fiction. These tensions include the contradiction between the genre's often-criticized artificial character vis-à-vis efforts to produce realistic crime fiction or debates about the escapist character of the genre and its simultaneous instrumentalization for

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5 As I will elaborate in this chapter, the term classic British crime fiction or the classic British model refers to archetypal works by e.g. Arthur Conan Doyle or Agatha Christie in the 19th and first half of the 20th century in the UK. Their works largely continue to determine the general perception of characteristics of the genre. Thus, even though the term evokes the idea that this model continues to be a standard, this is not the case with a view to crime fiction production but rather with a view to a perceived pseudonorm. A second term frequently used in this thesis is 'globally circulating crime fiction'. The term is used in contrast to the local corpus of crime fiction from Latin America and India and summarizes a corpus of crime fiction novels that are available in almost all countries worldwide and include classics like the Sherlock Holmes novels but also contemporary works by largely US-American, British and Scandinavian authors.

social criticism. The exploration of these tensions and the defining elements and characteristics of the genre provide a more general context for the analytical chapters. The final part of Chapter 2.3 looks into the debates about crime fiction as World Literature or a global genre by elaborating on the discontents and disparities that have been mentioned above briefly.

### 1.3 Introduction to the Corpus Novels

The corpus of novels studied in this thesis consists of 17 writers from India, Argentina and Chile who have published crime fiction novels between the turn of the millennium and 2016.<sup>6</sup> Most of the novels analyzed here are not easily accessible outside their respective countries of origin and even less so in English. Therefore, summaries of the novels including basic information about the authors or series are provided in the Glossary in Chapter 7.1. The corpus consists of the following novels:

#### **Indian Authors and Crime Fiction Novels:**

Madhumita Bhattacharyya (2012): *The Masala Murder*

Vikram Chandra (2007): *Sacred Games*

Kishwar Desai (2010): *Witness the Night*

Kishwar Desai (2013): *The Origins of Love*

Kishwar Desai (2014): *The Sea of Innocence*

Salil Desai (2014): *Killing Ashish Karve*

Tarquin Hall (2014): *The Case of the Love Commandos*

CK Meena (2008): *Dreams for the Dying*

Anita Nair (2012): *Cut Like Wound*

Anita Nair (2016): *Chain of Custody*

Kalpna Swaminathan (2010): *The Monochrome Madonna*

Kalpna Swaminathan (2012): *I Never Knew It Was You*

Vikas Swarup (2009): *Six Suspects*

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6 Marcela Serrano's 1999 novel is the only novel published before the turn of the millennium. But since Serrano's novel is certainly a pioneering work for female crime fiction in Chile, it has been included in the corpus.

### Argentinean and Chilean Authors and Crime Fiction Novels:

- María Inés Krimer (2013): *Siliconas express*  
 María Inés Krimer (2015): *Sangre fashion*  
 Flaminia Ocampo (2015): *Cobayos criollos*  
 Sergio Olguín (2012): *La fragilidad de los cuerpos*  
 Ricardo Piglia (2010): *Blanco nocturno*  
 Claudia Piñeiro (2011): *Betibú*  
 Marcela Serrano (1999): *Nuestra señora de la soledad*  
 Elizabeth Subercaseaux (2007): *Asesinato en La Moneda*  
 Elizabeth Subercaseaux (2012): *La última noche que soñé con Julia*  
 Mario Valdivia (2015): *Un crimen de barrio alto*

Besides various known writers, the works of debutants and new voices have been included here to give a comprehensive idea of the contemporary crime fiction novels that are produced and published in these regions. To do justice to the markets' diversity and to examine possible differences between various agents, the corpus includes works published by large multinational publishers as well as smaller, independent ones. The titles have partly been published by international publishers in the case of for example established writers like Vikram Chandra and Vikas Swarup but also other writers like Kishwar Desai who started her series with an Indian publisher but then had her novels republished by a foreign publisher who takes care of the novels' dissemination in the Anglophone publishing sphere. Individual works have been translated and published abroad – though not necessarily in English, but in French, German or Italian.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, authors who reside in India and Latin America as well as abroad are taken into consideration. An interesting case is the India-based journalist and writer Tarquin Hall, a British citizen who resides and publishes in India.

<sup>7</sup> To give a few examples, Sergio Olguín's *La fragilidad de los cuerpos* has been translated into French and Italian, María Inés Krimer's *Sangre kosher* into German and Italian. As for Indian authors, Kishwar Desai's *Witness the Night* has been translated into French, German, Portuguese, Spanish, Polish, Turkish and Hindi. Some of Kalpana Swaminathan's novels have been translated into Spanish, Italian and French. Overall, only individual works (usually the first novel of a series) have been translated and published abroad so far.

The corpus of novels is necessarily broad to do justice to the quantity and diversity of novels produced in recent years. This facilitates an exploration of various aspects and phenomena that recurrently play a role in post-millennial Indian and Latin American crime fiction but do not consistently appear in every novel. A reduction of the corpus would have been at the expense of many interesting recent and relatively unknown writers. It is the novels of established authors like Vikram Chandra or Ricardo Piglia which exhibit the largest overlap in terms of the modification of generic conventions or specific topics discussed in the analytical chapters. However, due to the scarcity of further secondary literature on the corpus novels, a discussion of a variety of novels was required to point out certain patterns and phenomena as opposing trends. Partly, different novels of a specific author are discussed in this thesis to elucidate distinct topics, crimes or settings that are of particular relevance for the analysis and underline certain tendencies. For example, Kishwar Desai's three novels have all been included: Her detective is in each novel required to find an alternative solution as the official path for a conviction and prosecution of the criminal is repeatedly blocked. Here, it is precisely the accumulation of similar scenarios that it is interesting to study and has implications for Indian crime fiction novels.

### **Presentation of the Analytical Chapters**

The methodology of Chapter 4 and 5 includes a mix of close and distant reading: Some works will be discussed in detail to highlight certain specificities while others are used to exemplify or quantify specific observations. The most characteristic feature of the corpus novels is certainly their heterogeneity, while certain patterns and characteristics can be deduced that point at particularities in the current adaptation of the genre. The analytical chapters focus on aspects and elements such as the figure of the detective and the criminal, generic elements such as the plot structure or the solution of a crime, the representation of space or the use of intertextual or metafictional references. Furthermore, topics which relate specifically to the transformations and entanglements that connect to the 'glocal' character of the genre like consumerism and realism also play a role in the analytical chapters. The

analysis is not divided into two blocks (India vs. Latin America), but are organized according to certain phenomena and themes. This structure allows me to highlight parallel developments and characteristics that can be found in both regions' corpora of crime fiction.

The analytical *foci* will help to address the questions that concern the forms and content of these works: Which strategies are used by authors to use and adapt the genre? Which common patterns and characteristics can be revealed? How does the use and modification of crime fiction relate to the debates on the global circulation and diversification of literary forms? How do these developments connect to heterogeneous effects of globalization processes on emerging publishing markets?

In Chapter 4, entitled "Protagonists: Detective Figures and Criminals", the protagonists of corpus novels, most notably the detective figures, are scrutinized. While reviewers as well as scholars sometimes take novels without an investigating entity into consideration, the corpus has been limited to novels which at least employ some kind of detective figure. The detective can be considered a key figure that holds the investigation together, serves as a mediator between the crime and the reader and offers an interpretative framework for other underlying concerns. The detective figures also serve as identification figures and have partly gained the status of particular 'brands': Archetypical figures like Christie's Hercule Poirot or Miss Marple are almost better known than their authors. The detective has been subject to diversification and includes figures like the eccentric mastermind Sherlock Holmes or more down-to-earth characters like Henning Mankell's detective Kurt Wallander. The latter type offers more potential for identification as insights into the detective's problematic private life are given. Recent studies particularly focus on the background of detective figures who are frequently from ethnically, sexually or socioeconomically marginalized groups and supposedly investigate on behalf of a specific community (see for example Krajenbrink/Quinn 2009 or Fischer-Hornung/Müller 2003). These considerations provide a foil to compare the detective figures employed in Indian, Argentinean and Chilean crime fiction novels. As explored in Chapter 4.1, the frequent

use of female detectives appears to be the norm rather than the exception in crime fiction from both regions. The prominence of female figures as detectives, but also as victims and supporters with active roles is one of the most striking parallel developments in Indian and Latin American crime fiction.

Chapter 4.2 takes a closer look at the journalist-detective and the role of media in crime fiction. Investigating journalists can partly be seen as a reaction to the mistrust against the police and state institutions which contributes to the emergence of alternative investigators. Moreover, I argue that the huge presence of media reflects the mediatization of society and the impact of this 'fourth power' on public life and crime prosecution.

In Chapter 4.3, the role and representation of the police in contemporary works is examined. In spite of the bad reputation of the police that has often been cited as the reason for the unsuitability of the genre in these regions, crime fiction novels depicting police investigators are on the rise. As I suggest in the analysis, the portrayal of corrupt and unreliable police officers has been revoked by more differentiated representations: A growing number of Indian, Argentinean and Chilean authors employ highly committed and dedicated police officers. Other authors portray more ambivalent police investigators – as well as criminals and victims – and thereby go beyond a common role allocation of good and bad characters that is typically associated with classic crime fiction novels (Glesener 2009: 16).

Who is the criminal Indian and Latin American crime fiction is an important question with various implications and examined in Chapter 4.4. Specific local staple figures like the fraudulent guru or spiritual leader in India are discussed as well as other characters like politicians, businessmen or doctors. These figures are supposed 'pillars of society' but nonetheless engaged in a multitude of criminal activities. In other cases, organizations or businesses are revealed to be involved in crimi-

nal activities. Partly, it is also society in general that can be blamed for adhering to certain standards, practices and social norms which lay the ground for certain crimes.

I argue here that while crime fiction is often seen as a vehicle to give access to marginalized groups and specific communities or milieus as argued by for example Christian Ed (2001: 1–2), many recent works in India and Latin America actually have a general middle class (and partly upper class) focus at the expense of marginalized groups. As I will explore throughout Chapter 4, this middle class is portrayed as heterogeneous and partly complicit in certain crimes. It partly adheres to specific social norms which help to legitimize domestic crimes or the exploitation of lower classes. Frequently, a ruthless, consumerist upper class which sees itself above the law is scrutinized during the investigation. These investigations thus also shed light on how changes connected to capitalism and processes of globalization affect this middle class on a local and everyday level. Chapter 4.5 addresses detective figures which are marginalized in terms of their function and power. In some of the novels, detectives are deprived of their central position which has significant implications for the narrative. This marginalization often goes hand in hand with a multiplication of plots, narrators and perspectives which is addressed in this subchapter and serves as a transition to Chapter 5, in which the modification of plot elements and other topics is scrutinized.

In Chapter 5, entitled “The Modification of Generic Conventions and Other Characteristics”, I analyze how generic features are used and modified by Indian and Latin American authors. The norm in terms of structure and plot elements continues to be associated with classic British crime fiction as a kind of archetype. According to this archetype – which has been challenged more often than not – the investigation and resolution of an individual crime is regarded as an invariable feature of the genre besides the employment of a detective figure (Zi-Ling 2015: 3; Pepper/Schmid 2016: 8). The aspect of closure is examined in Chapter 5.1. A modification of the typical end of the crime fiction novels which culminates in the solution of the crime is omitted in many

Indian, Argentinean and Chilean crime fiction novels. This strategy has significant implications as closure is traditionally associated with the restoration of a previously interrupted order. As demonstrated in Chapter 5.1, this strategy is generally used in Indian and Latin American crime fiction to draw attention to underlying structures of corruption or structural violence which impede a solution of the crime, but also connect to more philosophical and epistemological concerns, such as the relation between state and law or the possibility of justice. The use of metafictional comments and intertextual references is another strategy used by various Indian and Latin American authors. As will be examined in Chapter 5.2, these references are used for different purposes such as a critique of the unsuitability of the pseudo-normative British model. I argue here that these references highlight a familiarity with the larger corpus of crime fiction novels and situate a particular novel in a specific local or international tradition. However, a significant group of authors transposes the setting to India or Latin America but relies on the British model or other subgenres and remains faithful to the respective generic conventions but. Precisely because these novels respect the generic conventions, they also deserve a closer look to underlines the heterogeneity of the corpus novels.

Other issues that come to the fore in many corpus novels is the use of technology and aspects of consumerism and commodification which are explored in Chapter 5.3. The use of technology in investigations is explored here in comparison to the omnipresence of technology and forensic methods in many European and US-American TV series and novels. Another key topic is the increasingly consumerist society which is scrutinized in various crime fiction novels. As money increasingly dominates every aspect of human life, also a commodification of the human body can be observed in various novels and will be scrutinized in this subchapter.

Consumerism and commodification are also keywords with regard to the novels' settings that are examined in Chapter 5.4: Crime fiction is often considered an "urban genre par excellence" (Anderson et al. 2012: 26) and used to detect changes in the cityscape. As is explored in

this subchapter, the detective figures often function as urban flâneurs who portray a specific city in the course of their investigations. I argue here that the transformations of the changing cityscapes are depicted in terms of their function in a capitalist, consumerist middle and upper class society. This is also the case for many Indian, Argentinean and Chilean authors who portray Buenos Aires, Santiago and various Indian metropolises in their novels. I claim that contrary to the reputation of crime fiction as a new form of travel literature, contemporary novels are rather void of iconic and touristic landmarks or exotic features. Instead, they rely on local neighborhoods, everyday nuisances and the emergence of the neoliberal city with malls and other places of consumerism. Thereby, historical dimensions are erased and spaces of poverty omitted or marginalized.

A curious phenomenon is that, in spite of the international character of crimes and criminal networks that are depicted in most novels, the setting is almost exclusively limited to a national urban space. With few exceptions, even corpus novels that deal with inter- or transnational crimes such as drug trade, human trafficking or international terrorism are limited to this narrow national focus. The question how this limitation collides with the global characteristics of the genre is explored in the thesis: What do these national limitations mean for the apparently 'global genre'? As mentioned in Chapter 1.1, I advocate a 'glocal' approach here and suggest that the globalization of the genre leads to simultaneous processes of homo- and heterogenization or a creative adaptation of specific forms and themes which depend on local factors and materials and lead to different 'glocal' outcomes.

The diverse corpus and the various figures, plot elements and themes that deserve a closer analysis provide a multitude of examples of the use and modification of the genre and raise issues about the agenda of crime fiction writers in the Global South. It also connects to the general question how and to which extent does the global circulation affect and alter the genre and its conventions: Are new subgenres or patterns introduced in crime fiction novels from the Global South? What is the impact of local conditions on the level of the plot? These

points will be explored along with a reflection about the benefit of a South-South comparison between Indian and Latin American crime fiction as summarized in the conclusion in Chapter 6. Furthermore, I will discuss the findings of this thesis with regard to literary markets, forms and content and thereby address the question how the study of crime fiction in the Global South contributes to debates about the globalization of genres as well as the discontents of World Literature.



## 2 Theoretical Framework: Globalization Processes and Genre Fiction

This Chapter provides a theoretical framework for the further analysis focusing on three main themes. Chapter 2.1 discusses the terms globalization, glocalization and the Global South. The terms will be critically reviewed and the use of these terms in the context of this thesis will be elaborated. Chapter 2.2 explores the terms genre fiction and popular fiction and examines the tension between norm and variation as well as the relation between the book market and genre fiction. Furthermore, the effects of globalization processes on the production, circulation and reception of genre fiction are addressed here and provide a context for a better understanding of the particular case of crime fiction. In Chapter 2.3, the trajectory and characteristics of crime fiction will be explored to provide a foil to which current Indian and Latin American crime fiction can be compared later on. Besides exploring notions of realism, fear, the everyday and social criticism as the main drivers for the modification of the genre, a final subchapter connects to the discussion of the global character of crime fiction and power imbalances in the global publishing market that were already briefly mentioned in the introduction.

### 2.1 Globalization, Glocalization and the Global South

#### 2.1.1 Globalization – A Contested Term

Over the last decades, globalization has turned into an almost omnipresent term used to describe multi-dimensionally entangled changes on economic, cultural and political scales. A myriad of publications from very different research areas have tried to grasp the term globalization which remains notoriously vague and elides an all-encompassing definition. Its prominence has led to a new perspective of history as determined by contact and mixing of cultures with a global rather than national scope (Reichardt 2010: 25). However, the novel charac-

ter attributed to globalization is often questioned by researchers who point at predecessors and early stages of economic, political or cultural entanglements. It is argued that globalization phenomena can be traced back to antiquity or early modern periods and have merely intensified since then (Osterhammel/Petersson 2003). Yet, commonly, it is the period from the 1970s onwards that is associated with globalization (James/Steger 2014: 418). This indicates that globalization on the economic or political level is closely associated with the global expansion of capitalism and neoliberal politics. Similarly, for this thesis, the more recent developments and effects of neoliberalism on regions like India and Latin America and their integration into the global capitalist system are of relevance.<sup>8</sup> Their economic liberalization had significant and diverse effects on the book market and literary production that I trace in following chapters.

The global expansion of the capitalist system has been described by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000) as a global space of sovereignty that has no outside, a more or less seamless structure modelled on the US yet with no clear leading center. Their model largely resonates with the often-conjured 'disappearance of the (nation) state': the loss of power of the nation state vis-à-vis other transnational actors and powers (Reichardt 2010: 13). Borders of nation states have partly become more permeable in the last decades, but other border have emerged or have been reinforced which reflects for example in trade or migration restrictions. While no global supranational sovereignty has emerged so far, institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund often appear as neo-imperial hegemonic forces (Randeria/Eckert 2009: 10). This scenario applies particularly to the

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8 The emphasis of the impact of the regions' integration into the global capitalist system is not meant to play the legacy of colonialism in these regions. The colonial era also needs to be taken into consideration as it laid the foundation for current developments in India as well as Latin America with regard to economic and political domination, migration to and from the colony, religion or language. Also, in terms of the publishing industry, circulation of literary forms and taste, a strong impact of the colonial period can be detected (for India, see for example Joshi 2002). For the case of Argentina, Jorge Luis Borges stated in his famous essay "The Argentine Writer and Tradition" that Argentins'd tradition is "the whole of Western culture" (Borges 1943; quoted in Damrosch 2014: 396).

economies of the Global South. However, globalization has also seen the emergence of important economic powers in the Global South and new collaborations which do not necessarily follow a North-South direction. David Held et al. underline that globalization is a dynamic and open-ended concept with unclear outcomes (1999: 7). This, however, goes hand in hand with a new consciousness of global relations and entanglements, therefore a turn to connectedness, networks and flows are central metaphors to describe these processes (Reichardt 2010: 56; 92). This corresponds to Anthony Giddens' definition of current globalization processes as "the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa" (1990: 64). This has also led to new possibilities for diverse constituencies to join forces, particularly by those who have not profited from economic globalization (Lopez 2007: 3).

For this thesis, an understanding of globalization as an asymmetric and uneven process that leads to an increasing connectedness on various levels is most pertinent. Nonetheless, these processes may not necessarily lead to a global homogenization, but have rather different and sometimes opposing effects in different places (Reichardt 2010: 54). The results and perception of these processes differ widely and are sometimes contradictory. Zygmund Bauman's statement that "[g]lobalization divides as much as it unites; it divides as it unites" is thus very astute in describing this dialectic relation (1998: 2). Bauman also states that "[a]longside the merging planetary dimensions of business, finance, trade and information flow, a 'localizing', space-fixing process is set in motion" (ib.: 2). This describes a parallel dialectic movement termed 'glocalization.' Micromarketing strategies adapt the capitalistic production to specific local conditions and thereby also contribute to a diversification of products and meanings. These strategies are pursued in various business areas and contrast the idea that global expansion necessarily leads to homogenization (Robertson 1995: 29). As will be explored in Chapter 3, multinational publishers use glocal strategies and increasingly do business in India and Latin America with local products for a local audience. Partly, the influx of

these foreign products has also provoked a new focus on local practices and traditions. The term glocalization, popularized by Roland Robertson, is thus useful to bring these distinct reactions together. Robertson challenges the binary of global and local as a false dichotomy and instead sees “the simultaneity and interpenetration of what are conventionally called the global and the local” as complementing forces (1995: 30). Similar to Bauman, he points out that globalization does not override locality, but rather plays a role in the construction of locality which is designed in relation to the global. This can be seen as a process to rework or resist globalization, as Jonathan Rigg suggests (2007: 20).

Robertson furthermore claims that “the contemporary assertion of ethnicity and/or nationality is made within the global terms of identity and particularity” (ib.: 26). Entities like ‘home’, ‘community’ and ‘locality’ are challenged by processes of globalization and are therefore (re-)designed and defined in opposition to the global. These processes occur in parallel to the growing awareness of a global connectedness (ib.: 31). Ulrich Beck and Raimund Fellinger similarly suggest that globalization is narratively constructed at a local level and thus has an impact on everyday life and local practices (1998: 23). Out of this protean dialectic, scholars from different backgrounds have observed and studied how ‘the global’ is constructed at a local, everyday level. The term everyday is difficult to define and, as John Storey has argued, mainly carries negative connotations such as being uneventful or repetitive (2014: 2). He has pointed out that “it is the experience of the ordinary routines of daily existence and the structures and assumptions that normalize and legitimize these routines and make other routines seem abnormal and illegitimate” (ib.: 2). Far from being self-evident, however, the everyday is constructed and varies according to different conceptualizations (ib.: 3). Increasingly, everyday life is dominated by the influence of consumerism: According to Mehita Iqani, “consumerism is the defining feature of society today, and consumption a defining feature of the everyday practices of social life” (2012: 2). This reveals the impact of capitalism which affects individual ways of life as one is constantly confronted with the products, images and messages of

consumption – particularly via media representations. According to Iqani, this evokes an “insatiable need and an unprecedented freedom of choice” to consume (ib.: 2). Drawing back on Michel de Certeau, John Storey points out that these consumption practices also give the possibility of resistance which challenge an imposed use of certain products (ib.: 89). A new emphasis on the everyday can therefore also be observed in research: Geographer Jonathan Rigg for example has studied “everyday geographies” as “geographies of globalization” in the Global South (2007: 22). In an example from literary studies, Anke Biendarra has focused on what she calls the “authentic everyday” as a characteristic of contemporary German literature while looking at effect of globalization practices (2012: 15).

This means that global phenomena can also be studied on a local everyday level – which is also increasingly the case of the Global South: While poverty and inequality have usually been the scope of research about the Global South, it is now increasingly the elite and middle classes and their consumption practices that come to the fore in research projects about the Global South (see for example Iqani 2016; Nimis 2014). This thesis goes in the same direction and integrates into the broader scope of studies which look into the effects of globalization processes in the Global South by focusing on consumption practices with a focus on literary production.

### 2.1.2 The Global South

This part addresses the conceptualization of the term Global South and firstly looks at definitions and characteristics of the concept to give a better idea about how it has been theorized in distinction to formerly used terms like the Third World. While inequality and exclusion certainly remain widespread problems in the Global South, the changing and heterogeneous dependencies connected to economic growth will also be addressed. Furthermore, I will look into significant changes that have already been mentioned before like the emergence of a middle class, consumerism and efforts of scholars to connect the concept to a new positionality of thinking.

The term Global South has come into fashion since the turn of the millennium and is increasingly the subject of research projects. Many of these projects intend to follow the call for new transregional approaches by detecting existing cultural, economic and political ties between different regions of the Global South or they challenge the dominance of its counterpart, the Global North (Rigg 2007: 2). The term is frequently used by development agencies like the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Drawing back on the terminology of ‘North-South’ used in the Brandt Commission reports in the 1980s, the term was popularized by the 2004 UNDP initiative ‘Forging a Global South’ and the more recent UNDP Human Development Report “The Rise of the South” (2013). Following the UNDP’s use of the terminology, I will use both terms Global South and South (as well as their Northern counterparts) interchangeably in the thesis. The term has gained popularity in academic discourses across disciplines: In sociology, for example, it has been widely used to study new social movements (Rosa 2014: 851) while other fields like media or literary studies are also adopting the term (see for example Nimis 2014). Firouzeh Nahavandi uses Global South as an established concept that does not require a definition or critical reflection in his monograph *Commodification of Body Parts in the Global South* (2016). Overall, the protean and open character of the term is frequently underlined along with the call for further conceptualization.

### 2.1.3 Definition and History of the Term

The Global South is often associated with the “poor developing nations living in the Southern Hemisphere”, while the term actually goes beyond this simplified economic and geographic definition (Pinheiro 2013: 11). The Human Development Index is often used to categorize specific countries as part of the Global South (Bartlett 2013: 2). The UNDP operationalizes the term as an umbrella term for specific countries, while scholars often underline that it is neither an existing entity nor a strictly geographic or political categorization. Instead, they consider it a new location for theory. It is generally agreed that the Global South is a conceptual term that needs to be defined in relation

to its other, the Global North, taking into account the “relationality and instability of the positioning” (Klengel/Ortiz Wallner 2016: 8). This suggests that the Global South and North are not mutually exclusive entities with fixed boundaries but rather an interconnected space (Iqani 2016: 7).

The Global South increasingly replaces other concepts that have turned out to be insufficient or inadequate to grasp contemporary global power imbalances and inequalities. The Third World, for example, is clearly associated with the Cold War era and its focus on the need of (financial) support, while concepts like the Non-Western, Underdeveloped or Developing World have deterministic, subservient or patronizing connotations (Iqani 2016: 8; Willems 2014: 9). While the term Global South is partly praised as innovative and experimental, it is not entirely free from such connotations, since it draws back on the fact that many former colonies and poor countries are located in the southern hemisphere. The term has also been criticized for its inchoate conceptualization and for similarly evoking deterministic development-oriented approaches which project the Global North as the model of development (Rigg 2007: 910).

While the Global South is often understood synonymous with the postcolonial world (Comaroff/Comaroff 2012: 113), recent attempts to conceptualize the Global South are considered “a departure from the limitations of postcolonial theory” (Garland Mahler 2015: 95; see also Lopez 2007). The colonial experience of regions of the Global South is not perceived as an exhaustive criterion to explain recent developments such as the rise of the BRICS countries or Chinese investments in Africa (see Shinn/Eisenman 2012). On the other hand, Australia and the US are usually not considered part of the Global South in spite of their colonial experience. In Latin America, postcolonial theory has also been partly rejected as an orientaling and patronizing move from Western academy (Garland Mahler 2015: 111). There is a consensus that postcolonial studies cannot easily be transferred to the Latin America situation: As Jenny Haase has pointed out, the situation in Latin America was quite distinct from former English or French col-

onies with regard to historic, cultural, linguistic, social and economic factors (Haase 2009: 27). Nonetheless, regions commonly seen as the Global South are confronted with comparable challenges and historic experiences of colonialism and neocolonialism (UNDP 2003: front cover; Dirlík 2007: 16). The term Global South thus acknowledges the shared colonial experience of Asia, Latin America and Africa as well as their relation to the centers of power.

### **Poverty versus Inequality**

Particularly scholars who focus on inequality and social movements use the term to refer to the struggle and resistance against the economic and political dominance of the Global North and institutions like the IMF or the World Bank (Levander/Mignolo 2011: 4; Slovic et al. 2015: 2). It is in this context that the Global South is often seen as “a world of protest” and applied to theorize hegemony, marginalization and resistance (Prashad 2012: 9). New social movements or initiatives like the World Social Forum are frequently quoted as examples by the author. However, these movements are so diverse that they can hardly be summarized under a single political orientation or common agenda. These movements partly draw attention to the downsides of the global capitalist system, which fits in with Alfred Lopez’ vision of the Global South as “the recognition by peoples across the planet that globalization’s promised bounties have not materialized” (2007: 1). As only specific economic sectors and not whole countries profit from the global capitalist system, the Global South therefore also reflects a debate on how to improve the untenable relationship between rich and poor countries (Pinheiro 2013: 11). Poverty and (partly) growing inequality rates, as well as other problems such as corruption and high levels of criminality seem to be characteristic for the Global South. I would emphasize here, however, that rather than absolute poverty, it is the huge contrast between wealth and poverty that is a major characteristic of the Global South (Iqani 2016: 12). Critics have often pointed out that the binary terminology of Global North/South is too homogenizing and overlooks differences within these areas (Satpathy 2009: xxi). Overall, the term points at the economic division and

power imbalances of poorer and richer countries. However, the binary has also been applied to study intranational inequalities or islands of wealth in the South and vice versa.

Historically, imperialism and the exploitation of the South have contributed to the North's economic power. The afore-mentioned implementation of neoliberal policies fostered by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have significantly shaped the economic, political and social situation of many countries which are considered part of the Global South (Prashad 2012: 98). But while some countries – like India or China – have been able to emerge as leading economic powers, other countries have profited far less from these transformations. Global entanglements between these national economies resonate to some extent Immanuel Wallerstein's world-system theory (2004). This theory differentiates between core, semi-peripheral and peripheral regions which are inextricably linked as one world-system. According to this model, the core exhibits a high level of development in terms of technology and production while the periphery mainly serves as a supplier of raw materials and unprocessed data (Comaroff/Comaroff 2012: 1). However, while the Global South often remains in an imbalanced state of dependence, the North is similarly increasingly dependent on raw materials and cheap consumer products from the South (Iqani 2016: 8). The binary power division is also challenged by globally operating companies from the Global South, which are often still referred to as "Third World Multinationals" following Lewis T. Wells' eponymous book (1983). However, they are of growing importance for the global economy (Prashad 2012: 137). The economic crisis of 2008/09 is often seen as a turning point for the awareness of the "Rise of the South" as its economies continued to grow while the crisis was felt much more in Europe or the US (UNDP 2013: 1). This is seen as an indicator of less unidirectional North-South influences (Comaroff/Comaroff 2012: 25). In terms of macroeconomic development, economists like Alvaro Mendez point at the economic growth of many countries and the increasing share of the global gross domestic product that is accounted for by the Global South (2015: 15). The 2013 UNDP report estimates that by 2020

the economic output of Brazil, China and India would surpass the combined production of the six largest European and North American economies (UNDP 2013: iv).

The concept Global South as used in this thesis advocates a new multi-focal world order “whose *axis mundi* is no longer self-evidently in the north” (Comaroff/Comaroff 2012: 16). New economic collaborations seek to counter the dominance of the North and show that the Global South is not merely a passive recipient of these processes. The UNDP Report “The Rise of the South”, emphasizes the need to strengthen links within the Global South, which are predominantly of economic nature: The report quotes that the share of world merchandise trade in the Global South rose from 8.1% to 26.7% between 1980 and 2011 and cites the supply of affordable medicine from India to other countries of the Global South as one benefit of these exchanges (UNDP 2013: 3). However, while these so-called South-to-South relations refer to “a network that intentionally leaves out the global north” (Levander/Mignolo 2011: 8), most of these initiatives do not bypass the US or Europe completely. Initiatives are, as the UNDP shows, often mediated or facilitated by its Northern counterpart. Yet, the UNDP report underlines that the Global South is not merely a passive recipient of funding from the North, but also takes up an active role in the global economic system.

Global migratory flows have also had a major impact on entanglements between North and South. While it is generally migration from South to North that is the scope of analyses, migration within or between countries of the South actually outweighs the dimensions of South-North migration, but has long been ignored by economists and researchers. In the report *South-South Migration and Remittances*, Dilip Ratha and William Shaw estimated that “74 million, or nearly half, of the migrants from developing countries reside in other developing countries” (2007: 2). Lesley Bartlett emphasized that in Asia and the Middle East almost 80% of all migration flows take place between neighboring countries (2013: 3).

The perception of these economic and migratory processes, however, varies widely and reflects the heterogeneity of the Global South: On a very general level, the neoliberal course and opening of the economy are overall perceived as steps in the right direction in India and associated with the creation of new job opportunities and the emergence of a new middle class despite of various discontents about neoliberalism (Ross 2016: 7; Baviskar/Ray 2011: 3). As a result of this growth, internal migration and urbanization are large-scale phenomena as citizens move to the city aspiring social ascent. Jan Ross interprets this as evidence of the general ambience of progress and prosperity in parts of the Global South (2016: 7). In Argentina, by contrast, neoliberalism is judged very critically and associated with the impoverishment of large parts of the population and the economic crisis of 2001 (Grimson/Kessler 2005: 86). Chile is often perceived as ‘the Switzerland of Latin America’ due to its stable economic growth and job market. Yet, the country is also affected by widespread inequality and the dismantlement of the welfare state. Reactions to neoliberalism are very mixed (see for example Benedikter/Siepmann 2015) – this insinuates that the regions grouped under the term Global South are by no means homogeneous. Taken together, these economic measures have had a significant impact on the population in many regions in the Global South.

### **Middle Class Growth and a New Focus on (Media) Consumption**

Overall, the share of the world’s middle class population living in the Global South is growing steadily. The UNDP report states that “the middle class in the South is growing rapidly in size, income and expectations” (2013: 2). More detailed case studies about the development of the middle class such as Henrike Donner’s study on India (2012) point out that the definition of middle class encompasses a wide range of different backgrounds and income groups. Argentina, which has long perceived itself as distinct from other Latin American countries precisely because of its large middle class, has seen a growing gap between well-to-do and poor sectors of society.

While poverty and inequality have usually been the scope of research on the Global South, it is now increasingly the elite and middle classes and their consumption practices that come to the fore in research projects. Mehita Iqani has for example studied “ideas of aspiration, social mobility, luxury and leisure” in the Global South (2016: 7). A middle class focus can also be found in Indian and Latin American crime fiction: The middle and upper class represents the majority of readers and protagonists of these works – often at the expense of other social groups as will be discussed in Chapter 3. In both regions, processes of globalization have had a wide impact on consumption practices, formats and content of literature and the media. With reference to the growing media presence in the Global South, John Nimis has pointed at the high impact of narratives that can be accessed through new media which are strongly shaped by their engagement with the North:

[F]or a majority of the world’s population, their experience of a larger world is refracted through complex narratives—such as films, music videos, and television series—many of which are produced for an audience on the opposite side of the world, but almost all of which are available anywhere through new media. This means that people in the Global South have access to a multitude of images and texts that give them a vivid sense of their own locale as “Other” to the North. (Nimis 2014: 1)

Mehita Iqani has pointed out that consumption practices are mainly understood from the perspective of Europe or the US, which also has an effect on the results of these studies. She claims that “[i]deas about consumption in the Global South are to a significant extent produced and constructed by media representations of consumption there” (Iqani 2016: 3). Thus, she turns to study media representations in magazines to trace what version of reality is produced in the Global South. Wendy Willems suggests to analyze media products in the Global South as hybrid and heterogeneous cultural products (Willems 2014: 11). Similar to several researchers quoted above, she points at the relation between the global and the everyday by focusing on the “everyday life experiences of ordinary people but always situated against

the background of crucial processes such as neo-liberalization” (ib.: 7, 15–16). Here, it is particularly TV series that provide examples of the everyday, changing consumption practices, hybrid adaptations and the multi-directedness of flows and cross-connections. These studies also reflect conflicting reactions to processes of globalization in the Global South where positions span between those who advocate an opening or Americanization of those who demand a new focus on local identities or specificities. The critique of a supposed Americanization reflects the fear of homogenization that also reflects in the rise of popular culture in general (Storey 2014: 7–8). With the discussion of the term glocal and the complexities and divergences of the Global South in mind, it is clear that the result of globalization processes are neither a complete Americanization or Europeanization nor an isolation from the US or Europe, but a locally distinct and selected adaptation according to different contexts (Reichardt 2010: 104–105).

### **The North-South Divide and a New Positionality of Knowledge**

In spite of parallel and partly ambiguous developments; the growing economic and political collaboration and the (re-)negotiation of identity concepts, the Global South has not emerged as a new kind of collective identity. An often-quoted problem that hampers the establishment of South-South relations is a general orientation towards Europe or the US that can be observed in many countries. Attempts to challenge this unidirectional orientation are developed by academic scholars who use the concept of the Global South. They draw on the complex and changing relationships of economic or political dependency, but seek also to counter the situatedness of theory and knowledge production. The North-South divide remains very present as knowledge production continues to be largely located in the North, as has been pointed out by Jonathan Rigg:

Conceptual and theoretical approaches and frameworks that have their roots in the North are used to frame and explain the South. Rarely does the flow of knowledge run counter to this stream and even more rarely is it seriously considered that the South might have something to teach the North. (2007: 4)

This imbalance has been criticized by many scholars, for whom the Global South basically means the struggle of independent thought and a new positionality of knowledge which challenges the universalizing tendencies of Western scholars (see for example Pinheiro 2013: 12). This critique is certainly not new and has been a primary concern of postcolonial scholars, but it has gained new weight now in the face of the debates and theorizations of contemporary globalization processes.

Claudio Pinheiro has criticized the imbalance as usually “scholars of the South produce data to be interpreted by intellectuals of the North” and sees the approach as an “opportunity to confront the international division of academic labor” (Pinheiro 2013: 12). The sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos speaks of emerging “epistemologies of the South” in his eponymous book (2014) and criticizes the “monoculture of scientific knowledge”. He further advocates epistemological diversity and a dialogue between different forms of knowledge (ib.: 207). The lack of practical applicability of these meta-reflections for social movements and the problem that these discussions are primarily led and received by researchers trained in Europe or the US, have frequently been raised and are partly also addressed by scholars themselves (see e.g. Bortoluci 2015: 231–232).

A growing number of scholars and research groups from different research areas focus on theorizing Southern perspectives. These initiatives include the Global South Unit (GSU) at the International Relations Department of the London School of Economics and Political Science to the interdisciplinary Global South Studies Center (GSSC) at the University of Cologne, Germany. The only South-South research, the Programa Sur Global, was inaugurated in 2013 and is based at the Universidad de San Martín (UNSAM) in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Researchers focus on comparative or contrastive studies that look at cases of the Global South and examine linkages that have remained obscured so far. Thereby, they aim at deprioritizing the North and draw attention to other sources of globalization (Satpathy 2009: xxiv). Susanne Klengel and Alexandra Ortiz Wallner’s observation that South-South relations have also been overlooked in

the South itself is very acute in this context (2016: 8). The editors focus on actual examples of exchanges that go beyond an epistemological scope. They advocate the term 'SUR / SOUTH' as an alternative "figure of thought for a change of perspective, for a shift of focus towards the concrete framework of exchange, signified through the materiality of topics, forms of knowledge and experiences" (ib.: 9).

### 2.1.1 Literature in/from the Global South: Lack of Exchange and Parallel Developments

While a South-South dialogue has long been present in academic fields such as social and economic sciences, literary studies apparently have remained within their philologies and respective frameworks. They have largely kept up the division between the English or the Spanish-speaking world and their literary productions. Recently, literary scholars have increasingly started to use the Global South as a framework which replaces terms such as Commonwealth or Third World Literature to designate Non-European or US-American literature (Satpathy 2009: xix). Lars Eckstein and Anja Schwarz' edited volume *Postcolonial Piracy: Media Distribution and Cultural Production in the Global South* (2014) includes a multitude of case studies from Latin America, Asia and Africa on the challenges and meaning of book piracy. Piracy is partly seen as a mode of resistance to globalized cultural circuits used in the Global South. The different regions' (neo) colonial situation is often underlined as the common denominator among different regions, even though, as laid out above, the conceptualization of the Global South today often parts from a postcolonial framework.

Among the publications which focus on interaction and connection among the countries of the Global South is also Isabel Hofmeyr and Michelle Williams' *South Africa & India: Shaping the Global South* (2011). They use the term Global South as a more or less congruent and updated version of Postcolonial Literature and do not engage in theorizing the term. In *Forget English* (2016), Aamir Mufti talks about the impact of publishing and reading habits of the Global North on "societies of the Global South" (2016: 9), but does not elaborate on his

understanding of the term. Alas, direct literary relations and exchanges between India and Latin America remain scarce and generally focus on the wide circulation of Magical Realism, which has for example been examined by Mariano Siskind (2014). Other examples have been studied in Susanne Klengel and Alexandra Ortiz Wallner's *Sur / South: Poetics and Politics of Thinking Latin America-India* (2016). The edited volume traces examples of cultural, literary and intellectual interrelations and includes contributions about the reception of Rabindranath Tagore, Victoria Ocampo or Octavio Paz in India and Latin America as well as other filmic, cultural or intellectual exchanges. The Brazilian telenovela *Caminho das Índias* (in English *India – A Love Story*)<sup>9</sup> started in 2009 and, set in modern-day Rajasthan (India) and Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), it can be seen as one of the few examples of a South-South connection that has appeared on mainstream television.

In spite of these intents to establish new South-South (literary) relations or to detect older ones that have been overlooked so far, the existing exchange of Latin American and Indian literary and cultural production is best described as an extensive disconnect – or “mutual ignorance”, as Bernadette Vega (2012: 82) has termed it. This can be seen as paradigmatic in the Global South. Even within Latin America, books by Latin American authors hardly circulate beyond national level. Direct cross-regional or intracontinental connections between for example publishers or bookstores remain scarce. Instead, a Latin American book needs to pass through the centers of literary production in Europe and the US to have a chance to get published in other parts of Latin America and, even much more unlikely, in other regions of the Global South like India. Roberto Bolaño's works are available in India, but the choice remains largely limited to representatives of Magic Realism like Gabriel García Márquez or Mario Vargas Llosa. The situation in Latin America is comparable if any author other than

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<sup>9</sup> The series has been discussed by Gian Luigi De Rosa (2012) and Marcia Perencin Tondato (2012). Perencin Tondato has contextualized the series in a frequent post-millennial tendency of Brazilian producers to develop telenovelas set abroad. Thus, the series can be understood as a development which she terms “turismo ficcional” rather than an actual example of a South-South dialogue.

Salman Rushdie or Arundhati Roy is sought. At the same time, contemporary writers from India and Latin America often lament the obligation to draw back on expected formulas like Magic Realism to be successful internationally. Yet, the word about the fatigue with Magic Realism and the emergence of new writing styles and forms has apparently not got around from India to Latin America and vice versa; authors like Márquez continue to be seen as the prime example Latin American writing.

If common tendencies are to be identified in the current literary production in both regions in spite of the heterogeneity of their corpora of works, writing about violence or an aesthetics of violence is a dominant topic which is a shared concern of Indian and Latin American authors. This group would include for example novels by Roberto Bolaño, narco or sicairesque novels in Latin America (Sánchez Prado 2006: 35ff.). In India, writers like Aravind Adiga or Jeet Thayil as well as Vikram Chandra portray the 'Dark India' focusing on wide-scale corruption and poverty (Dwivedi/Lau 2014: 9; Phillips 2016: 11). The same is the case for successful post-millennial movies like *Ciudad de Deus* (2002) or *Amores perros* (2001) or *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008). The representation of India and Latin America as regions marked by different forms of violence has been criticized as a new exoticization for a European or US-American audience which perpetuates the image of a wild and violent Global South. At the other end of these debates about power and authority, however, authors and producers argue that they merely depict their own everyday experiences in a condensed form. However, an imbalance can be detected as only few of these contemporary works are translated and/or published abroad, while the awareness of and interest in the local literary production in both regions remains scattered.

This thesis is thus based on an understanding of globalization as an asymmetric process with diverse and partly opposing effects in different locales. While the impact of globalization's economic dimension is paramount and linked to the expansion of the global capitalist system, phenomena also connect to political, social or cultural changes.

Robertson's concept of glocalization is thus fruitful here to reconcile the simultaneity of homo- and heterogenization. I am using the concept of the Global South here to relate to similar developments in disparate regions which are in an ambivalent position of dependency and colonial legacy, but have partly also been able to profit from liberalization and processes of globalization. In addition to the emphasis on underdevelopment and poverty, I have explored notions of the rise of the South, the growth of a middle class and the impact of media and technology here. I thus advocate an understanding of the Global South that takes into account the complex developments and changing dependencies and explore regions of the Global South as places of production and creative adaptation of global phenomena which for example reflect in the cultural production and the book market. Thus, the concepts Global South and glocalization are used as a framework to relate to comparable experiences of India and Latin America whose literary production and book markets continue to be shaped significantly, but not exclusively, by its counterpart, the Global North.

## 2.2 Popular Genre Fiction

Before discussing the trajectory of crime fiction in general, this subchapter takes a brief look at the terms popular fiction and genre fiction to give a broader framework for the emergence, characteristics and functions of crime fiction in the final part of Chapter 2. Besides the tension between norm and variation, the relation between the book market and genre fiction will be addressed here drawing back on debates about literary fiction and genre fiction and Bourdieu's theorization of the literary field. Furthermore, consequences of globalization processes on the production, circulation and reception of popular fiction and genre fiction are tackled to provide a context for the particular case of crime fiction.

Crime fiction is generally considered popular fiction – neutrally or derogatively – which has various implications for the circulation and reception of the genre. Popular fiction genres emerged during the 19<sup>th</sup> century closely connected to changes in the publishing industry,

growing literacy rates and a larger readership in Europe and the US (Glover/McCracken 2012: 4). Works are often considered to be produced for the purpose of entertainment, relaxation and escapism from the everyday. Sales figures speak for themselves as bestseller lists worldwide are dominated by genre fiction. This Chapter therefore advocates an understanding of genre fiction that is shaped by and reacts to different forces: it connects to market forces, readership expectations, predecessors and the specific functions which are used and modified in a respective context.

The terms popular and genre fiction are often used synonymously; partly, genre fiction is regarded as a subcategory of popular fiction. In English, the terms popular genre and literary genre are often used interchangeably though literary genres suggest a wider understanding of the term genre (Hoffmann 2012: 23). David Duff has defined genre as a “recurring type or category of texts, as defined by structural thematic and/or functional criteria” which exhibit a high degree of standardization (2000: xiii). Literary genres are generally perceived as one of the most frequent and important ways to organize literary texts on the basis of commonalities in terms of their form, function, structure or content. Even recent scholars often draw back on Klaus Hempfer’s research on genres. He defined genre as a “Begriff für Textgruppenbildungen unterschiedlichen Allgemeinheitsgrades, die diachron wie synchron in Opposition zueinander stehen“ (Hempfer 1997: 251). While genres are partly used to refer to larger groups or patterns of texts like the tragedy or the comedy of Aristoteles’ *Poetics*, the term is also applied to smaller groups that are connected by an overall theme, style or other devices. Of relevance in this thesis is a narrow understanding of the term genre with a specific focus on thematically oriented genres like crime fiction. Hempfer has already pointed at the unstable character of a genre as a relational term, which will be further elaborated shortly. This understanding of genres, however, has evolved over time. As John Frow has pointed out, neoclassical literary genres in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe were considered rather normative than descriptive and supposedly had a universal validity (Frow 2007: 52). The term genre itself, as well as related terms such as the evolution of a genre are

borrowed from natural sciences and modelled on the idea of species or genera as specific types or sorts (ib.: 52). However, Frow as well as other scholars have pointed out the problems with the term as genres are cultural products “which can only with difficulty be mapped onto facts of nature” (ib.: 53). The adaptation of biological terms has various shortcomings and limitations such as the fact that biological genera are not interfertile while literary texts certainly are (ib.: 53). *Vis-à-vis* the earlier understanding of genres as natural entities, nowadays the perception of genres as constructed and conventionalized forms of communication prevails (see for example Neumann/Nünning 2007: 4). This also means that new genres can always emerge or be invented. Genres also serve as a means of orientation since readers know how to read a specific text and what to expect at different stages of the plot. It therefore provides a framework for the interpretation of a text. In opposition to the supposed natural character of genres, Adena Rosmarin has pointed out that these frameworks come into being out of specific needs and are not inherent natural qualities of texts:

Once genre is defined as pragmatic rather than natural, as defined rather than found, and as used rather than described, then there are precisely as many genres as we need, genres whose conceptual shape is precisely determined by that need. (Rosmarin 1985: 25)

Accordingly, Rosmarin defines genres as “a classifying statement” rather than a preexisting class (ib.: 46). In spite of the fact that genres are imposed from outside on a text they have nonetheless become conventionalized over time. This is precisely what leads to the impression of genres as prescriptive or natural entities.

These observations bring the construction process of a generic text into the limelight: Brian McHale has underlined that if literary objects “are constructed, not given or found, then the issue of how such objects are constructed [...] becomes crucial” (1992: 3). This also accounts for genre fiction which can be regarded as sites of knowledge, power and authority. Who can determine what a genre is or how it evolves are as important as the effect of genres. Frow has observed in this regard that

“generically shaped knowledges are bound up with exercise of power” and elaborates that “far from being mere ‘stylistic’ devices, genres create effects of reality and truth, authority and plausibility, which are central to the different ways the world is understood” (2007: 2). Genres can be regarded as “bodies of shared knowledge” (Neumann/Nünning 2007: 13). Birgit Neumann and Ansgar Nünning have furthermore pointed out that genres do not emerge in isolation but in a complex field of tensions and power relations between intra- and extratextual forces: While relying on certain traditions and generic features, genres also depict and negotiate social contradictions or responses to cultural necessities (Neumann/Nünning 2007: 12). Genres are often considered conventionalized frames to structure reality and thereby engage in meaning-making practices. As they connect to cultural values and collective ideas, the study of genres can also give access to how certain experiences are framed and interpreted (ib.: 14). This relation to reality and cultural specificities can be seen as the main driver of the dynamic history of genres. Frow has summarized in this respect that

[g]enre is neither a property of (and located ‘in’) texts, nor a projection of (and located ‘in’) readers; it exists as a part of the relationship between texts and readers, and it has a systemic existence. It is a shared convention with a social force. (2007: 102)

Genres therefore suggest a way of reading a text and direct the reader’s interpretation. At the same time, however, Frow also reminds that genres can never be seen as “straightforward guidelines” due to the complexity and instability of genres (ib.: 4). Nonetheless, specific generic conventions or characteristics offer an orientation for readers as well as for writers – but it is precisely this predictability that is frequently criticized and set in opposition to the quality of literary fiction.

### 2.2.1 Literary vs. Genre Fiction Debates and Bourdieu's Literary Field

Some scholars suggest that “there is no genreless text” as literary texts always exist in relation to other texts (Heath 2004: 164). Genre fiction is commonly grasped as a part of popular fiction and in opposition to literary fiction. In spite of the suggested adversarial character of both terms, no clear-cut line exists between popular and literary fiction. Popular fiction is usually negatively connoted and seen as inferior to its perceived opposite. However, both terms are notoriously vague in spite of their frequent use by scholars and laymen alike and basically understood as an opposite of the other. This oppositional relation, however, can hardly be substantiated with defining characteristics. As Ulfried Reichardt has pointed out, the difference between popular and literary fiction is subject to change over time and not necessarily graspable on the level of the text (2010: 101). Instead, it depends on how a text is understood, read and interpreted by its readers as meaning is produced in the moment of consumption.

Suman Gupta has historicized the relation between popular and literary fiction and pointed out that both terms developed through distinct and unconnected rationales that connect to different social dynamics. While literary fiction compromises what has usually been understood by an academic elite as ‘Literature’, genre fiction developed outside of this sphere following the rationale of the market and thus draws back on a different notion of genre (Gupta 2016: 219). Literary fiction was initially coterminous with the novel as the only kind of literary fiction which conferred both terms with a specific worthiness. Any fictional text outside this realm was named in accordance with production and circulation mechanisms as commercial fiction or pulp fiction rather than in terms of their content (ib. 215). The establishment of the term genre fiction thus meant a shift of attention towards the content of these works. However, a division between literary and genre fiction continues to exist, as Gupta points out:

The phrases exist in different registers, signifying the competition for control between different aspects of the literary establishment: the elites who had established institutional ways of studying and evaluating fiction texts; and the relatively recent capitalist producers and disseminators of fiction texts for the broad reading market. (Gupta 2016: 220)

Gupta furthermore points out that the adversarial relation between both terms came into currency in the 1970s and is closely connected to processes of globalization in the publishing market such as the increasingly uniform use of generic names (ib.: 221). In spite of the different rationales, both terms are used by the publishing industry which largely functions along generic lines. Publishers also included literary fiction in the same manner in their corpora: Literary fiction is marketed as a “mega-genre of the *genre fiction* sort” and thereby “conferred some of the characteristics of genre fiction” (ib.: 224; emphasis in original). On the other hand, canon-revision and the inclusion of cultural studies in academia have led to the emergence of new areas of research on commercial novels, bestsellers etc. or to the inclusion of creative writing programs (ib.: 223–224). Thus, while a “convergence between institutional academe and market enterprise” can be observed from both sides (ib.: 223), literary fiction and genre fiction draw back on distinct trajectories and are thus not just antonyms that can be defined by opposing characteristics traceable inside texts.

As the market rationale has already suggested, genres are also subject to market forces and instruments of the publishing industry which similarly have an impact on a genre’s emergence and evolution. The publishing industry and their practices on genres needs to be taken into consideration: Paratextual references for example are a major feature of the organization of literary texts and ever more rely on a generic affiliation that facilitates an easy marketing. Thus, titles, subtitles or the design of book covers often function as signifiers that point at a specific genre (Hoffmann 2012: 32). Thereby, a publisher has a strong impact on how specific works are read and – on a long-term basis – have an influence on the development of a genre. The expansion of publishing conglomerates comes along with processes of standardiza-

tion and homogenization which may also accelerate the production and circulation of popular genres like romance, crime fiction or science fiction that are fostered in certain ways by publishers. These processes will be elaborated on more closely when looking at the specific case studies of India, Argentina and Chile in Chapter 3. The growing sphere of influence of a few ‘big players’ in the global publishing market gives rise to the fear that only books that are likely to generate easy profit have a chance to get published (Gupta 2016: 224). A stronger orientation towards genre fiction certainly appears to be an appealing move here as an international (if not universal) way of organizing literary production. This facilitates a marketing along generic lines in different places. Due to a focus on short-term success, it is feared that more complex and innovative titles might not be published (Sapiro 2014: 159). Nonetheless, the “expectation of innovation” of readers runs counter to this risk and suggests that a complete focus on standardized commercial products is not a promising long-term strategy for publishers (ib.: 149).

These fears of a growing dominance of commercial titles vis-à-vis others with a more long-term impact strongly resonate Pierre Bourdieu’s two poles of the literary field. In *The Rules of Art*, Bourdieu described the literary field as a field which has gained autonomy from state control over time and which exists in relative (in)dependence from the economic and political field in a larger field of power (Bourdieu 1995: 114). Bourdieu describes the literary field of a specific historic moment and place (19<sup>th</sup> century France) and his observations cannot be transferred one-to-one to any context, but his theorization of the literary field is nonetheless important to understand certain dynamics in literary production. The position of the field is also not fixed and subject to change in competition with the other fields in the general field of power. Thus, the field is shaped by a dualism of internal and external struggles and power dynamics. The literary field is organized according to two different principles of differentiation and hierarchization: economic vs. symbolic capital or financial profit vs. prestige. With a view to popular genre fiction, it is mainly Bourdieu’s division of the two poles that structure the literary field that is important here.

The literary field is according to Bourdieu's conceptualization structured by two opposing poles with a different rationale. Authors which focus on a small-scale avant-gardist production – 'art for art's sake' – outside the restrictions of the market are situated at the autonomous pole. Thus, this pole has also been termed the subfield of restricted production. Products are not expected to generate short-term profit, nor do they react to a preexisting demand and are mainly consumed by other producers (Bourdieu 1995: 121). In fact, producers at the autonomous pole eschew a commercial success and focus on a long-term accumulation of symbolic capital which might eventually also connect to economic profit (ib.: 142). Consecrated by the education system, works situated at this pole of the literary field might eventually turn into lasting bestsellers and via long-term processes of familiarization, these works might also become acceptable for a larger audience (ib.: 147; 159). This phenomenon underlines the dynamic character of the literary field. The heteronomous pole or subfield of large-scale production, by contrast, is oriented towards a mass-market production that focuses on short-term economic profit at the expense of long production cycles. Thus, authors situated at this pole supposedly follow the demands of the market, and may generate an economic profit as a short-term reward, but cannot generate as much prestige or symbolic capital as their antagonists (ib.: 121; 142). A pursuit of financial profit also raises the suspicion of neglecting literary quality. Bourdieu has pointed out in this context that "[a]n enterprise moves closer to the 'commercial' pole the more directly or completely the products it offers on the market respond to a *pre-existing demand*, and *pre-established forms*" (ib.: 142; emphasis in original). This quote illustrates that genre fiction quasi exemplifies the characteristics associated with this commercial pole and respective debates about literary quality since genre fiction writers draw back on pre-established forms and/or are marketed along this line.

The dynamics of the literary field are according to Bourdieu determined by factors such as class which have an impact on the tastes and habits. Who has the power to intervene in this field as a consecrating authorities is a complex issue and subject to change over time. Strug-

gles about the “monopoly of the power to consecrate producers and products” (Bourdieu 1995: 42) thereby continue in the present as ever more gatekeepers from the publishing sphere like agents, reviewers or awards have an influence on this process (see for example English 2005). Bourdieu himself described these struggles and contestations as the “fundamental stake in literary struggles” which add to the dynamics of the field (ib.: 42). The division of the literary field on the one hand requires very different writers, which – if situated at different poles – might have nothing in common and mutually ignore each other. On the other hand, also different publishers with respective visions of short and long term success and prestige are required (ib.: 218). The fears about the growing influence of publishing conglomerates can be read as a threat to the autonomy of the field in this context. This means that the logic of the economic field is extended to the literary field.

While Bourdieu’s literary field is certainly an indispensable model to understand the dynamics about literary production, it nonetheless remains schematic and does not completely capture the complexities of literary production at every moment. Arguments are based on generalizations and assumptions about values and class. For a better understanding of the dynamics that shape the reception and production of crime fiction, the concept of the binary field is nonetheless interesting – but it also challenges the binary division. Crime fiction is at a first glance clearly associated with the heteronomous pole of large-scale production due to its status as a genre for easy consumption. It is often argued that stories are supposedly not reread as they lose their appeal once the reader knows the identity of the murderer (Keitel 1998: 101). While genre fiction is generally associated with a lower class audience, it is often secretly consumed by middle or upper class readers (Cawelti 1976: 104). Furthermore, the fact that many prototypical series like Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes or Agatha Christie’s Miss Marple have been eagerly consumed on a global level does not match the short production cycles of the commercial pole. Besides, the genre has frequently been adopted by writers who are associated with the autonomous pole like Jorge Luis Borges or Umberto Eco

(Tani 1984: 32). Louise Nilsson has also pointed out that “[t]he most ambitious crime novels occupy a space in between both categories or even participate in both” popular and literary fiction which depends on the specific time, place and readership (Nilsson 2017: 4). Authors commonly adopt the structure and devices of the genre for a different purpose and parody or subvert it. Thereby, they challenge the genre’s position in a global or local literary field. As will be elucidated in Chapter 3, this has also contributed to a distinct reception and status of the genre in different regions: In Argentina, the genre has been appropriated by canonic literary fiction writers, while in India, the genre is regarded as cheap, serialized entertainment literature in Indian languages.

### 2.2.2 Norms and Variations

In spite of a certain normative power, genres are not prescriptive, but rather descriptive concepts that are subject to change. They are usually based on a minimal characteristic such as the presence of a crime in crime fiction or a love interest in romance stories. This minimum, however, is not regarded as a sufficient criterion for a definition: Rather than defining characteristics, it is a family resemblance in the sense of Wittgenstein that is applied here. Wittgenstein (1953) used the term for entities that stand in a specific relation but do not necessarily have a shared common feature among all entities. This is also the case for genre fiction which suggests that genres are not unities or objective entities with a fixed set of characteristics but rather complex terms and can be transformed. Nonetheless, prototypes exist in some cases and occupy a special function due to their wide familiarity among readers and writers. However, prototypes are usually culturally specific and not applicable to international contexts. Crime fiction is certainly an exception here as the genre’s prototypical predecessors like Arthur Conan Doyle or Edgar Allan Poe enjoy a lasting international popularity. However, prototypical relations fall short on describing the complex relations inside and between genres as not each work necessarily connects to the prototype in the sense of a common ‘core’ (Hoffmann 2012: 27).

The popularity of a certain model also requires a constant renewal to keep up the interest in the genre. It is thus particularly the mix of familiarity and novelty that accounts for the reading pleasure (Cawelti 2004: 1). Ulrich Suerbaum introduced the term *Variationsgattung* in this context which highlights the notion of variation as an important feature of some genres (1967: 443). In spite of the impact of variations, a certain notion of normativity is a prerequisite to identify a text as part of a certain genre. Authors can allude to the specific system of the genre by using what Manfred Pfister (1985) has called a *Systemreferenz* in German – a reference to a generic system in opposition to an individual text. These intertextual references can be seen as a basic feature for the recognition of genres. Of relevance here are only clearly recognizable references to the generic system. Wider architextual relations in the sense of Gérard Genette (1997) are not expedient in this context. Besides, references to individual prototypical texts can also be used to point out generic affiliation if these texts are widely known (Pfister 1991: 51–58). The significance of Sherlock Holmes for crime fiction novels is certainly a case in point here. The widespread familiarity with specific genres also gives authors the possibility to refer to them in a self-reflexive or metafictional manner. They can play with the readers' expectations and frustrate them to create to a specific effect. These references will be of particular impact when looking at inter- and meta-textual references in the analysis of the corpus novels in Chapter 5.2.

These observations insinuate that genres have some core features, but are nonetheless unstable constructs whose conventions are constantly (re)negotiated by authors, readers and reviewers. The border between a hybridization that contributes to the continuous development of the genre and a metaization that challenges its foundation, however, is fluid. As Birgit Neumann and Ansgar Nünning have pointed out, metaization and hybridization are the main catalysts for the development of an existing genre as well as for the emergence of new ones (2007: 18). Maurizio Ascari has acutely observed here that genres “cannot be defined as objective entities but rather as fluctuating, incessantly

shifting collective projections” (2007: 10). The continuity of core features that account for the formulaic character suggest a certain homogeneity that e.g. hold a genre together.

John Cawelti has conducted ample research on formula fiction, a term that can be equated with genre fiction<sup>10</sup>. To a certain extent, a formula dictates rules and suggests a fair play as readers know what to expect from a specific text. While formula refers to a certain standard, Cawelti sees a writer’s deviation from that standard as his/her individual accomplishment (Cawelti 1988: 123). He explains the success of formula writing with an “emotional security” offered by the conventionalization (ib.: 125). Formula fiction production is therefore driven by the tension between a need for order or security and a desire for diversity, surprise and escape from the reader’s usual frustrations and everyday life. According to Cawelti, formulas can cater for both by providing moments of excitement and uncertainty in a controlled framework (ib.: 126): Tensions and suspense are momentarily and usually solved in the end which offers a satisfactory solution for the reader.

The idea of a norm simplifies actual practices used by genre fiction writers, but in spite of the wide awareness of this fact, norms continue to have an impact on the production and reception of genre fiction as a kind of pseudonorm (Wieser 2012: 35). A genre is judged against this pseudonorm as realistic or artificial. Overall, the existence of a pseudonorm is a prerequisite that gives writers the possibility to transgress it (Gregoriou 2012: 124). While some norms are challenged, others are reinforced in the present: The omnipresence of TV series that follow a formulaic plot introduce and confirm new norms by consistently using the same structure and elements.

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10 Cawelti differentiates formula and genre. He refers to the latter term as broader literary categories like the tragedy (Cawelti 1988: 122). A formula, on the other hand, refers to crime fiction or the adventure story, which are, according to him, “larger plot types/patterns, maybe (not) universal, but popular in many cultures” (ib.: 122). Both terms refer to different phases as a formula might eventually turn into a genre (ib.: 124). The characteristics or conventions described as a formula, however, are congruent with the understanding of popular genre fiction in this thesis.

### 2.2.3 Functions and Characteristics of Popular Genre Fiction

David Glover and Scott McCracken have distinguished genuine expressions of popular taste from an imposed popular culture (2012: 3). With a view to the impact of the cultural industry, it remains questionable whether genuineness and imposition are still categories that can be differentiated or whether different processes and forces do not always already overlap and converge in any product. While genres like crime fiction are certainly not authentic indigenous genres in the Global South, many genres have been subject to consumption, reception and rewriting for decades and draw back on long-established traditions. The idea of genuine expressions of popular taste does not sit well with the practices of the literary industry which, according to Sandra Ponzanesi, “has shifted its focus from supplying potential audiences to planning them by fostering specific topics that sell well” (2014: 77). Publishers certainly focus on genres that generate profit and can easily be marketed along certain genre lines. Therefore, they do not only respond to a market demand, but also shape it or create new demands. This situation connects to the idea of the book market as a field of symbolic as well as economic goods which is guided by various rationales (Hoffmann 2012: 11).

Over time, established genres have turned into social-literary institutions which partly follow the expectations of readers for a continuity of generic conventions and partly creatively adapt and modify these conventions to do justice to new contexts and challenges (Neumann/Nünning 2007: 4). This suggests that genres stand in a specific relation to cultural, social and economic developments. John Cawelti has pointed out that genre fiction can only succeed as a means of entertainment and escape if a text employs figures, settings and situations that readers can relate to in a specific way (1976: 6). Seeing these texts as cultural products which reproduce “conventional ways of representing and relating certain images, symbols, themes and myths” also allows researchers to draw conclusions about collective concerns and fantasies at a specific moment (Cawelti 1988: 128). Besides expressions of

these concerns, however, the market-orientation of genre fiction needs to be kept in mind: Genre fiction may mirror values and concerns but authors also select, dramatize and use a multitude of other literary devices with an awareness of the market and readership they are catering for.

The conventions and pseudonorms that characterize genre fiction generate a specific horizon of expectation, to use Hans Robert Jauss' term. This horizon of expectation refers to an "objektivierbare[s] Bezugssystem der Erwartungen [...], das sich für jedes Werk im historischen Augenblick seines Erscheinens aus dem Vorverständnis der Gattung, aus der Form und Thematik zuvor bekannter Werke [...] ergibt" (Jauss 1970: 173–174). These expectations are evoked by references and signals in the text and its paratext. As already insinuated above, generic conventions can be regarded as "bodies of shared knowledge" and allow an act of communication by the anticipation and fulfillment of expectations (Neumann/Nünning 2007: 13). A deviation from these conventions, by contrast, is often seen as a frustration for the reader.

Another characteristic of genre fiction is the serial character of many works. The serial editions are in multiple ways connected to the commercial character associated with popular fiction: It encourages readers to continue consuming specific series and has therefore commercial advantages for publishers who can maximize their profits with little risk and effort (Vanacker 2011: 66–67). For authors, a series means a steady project and source of income. Furthermore, the serial structure has significant implications for the plot structure: Readers have the possibility to get repeated insights into a setting and protagonists who reappear in different instances and give the author the possibility for a continuous characterization (Erdmann 2011: 274). In socio-critical works, the serial character also allows for a "sustained investigation into contemporary society and its problems" that goes beyond stereotypical representations and images (Anderson et al. 2015: 3).

Scott McCracken has claimed that popular fiction “has always provided a structure within which our lives can be understood” due to its capacity to closely react to extratextual changes and to address particular anxieties (1998: 2). Therefore, it is also positively understood as an opportunity to revise certain standards and to popularize ideas among a broad audience that goes beyond privileged middle class readers (Glover/McCracken 2012: 126). The familiar narratives offer the possibility to address concerns and to reflect on norms and values. They allow to try out different attitudes and solutions with which the reader can identify or not (Dietze 1997: 257). Nonetheless, popular fiction also stands in an ambiguous relation to feminism and is partly blamed for reinforcing patriarchal structures and heteronormative sexual norms – a point that will be taken up in Chapter 4.1 when looking at women and crime fiction.

Genres or formula fiction not only have a bad reputation, but it is sometimes even considered forbidden for addressing topics like sex and violence which are feared to have a negative impact on readers (Glover/McCracken 2012: 6). The apparent inferior position, however, can also turn into an advantage as authors can reach a very different and much broader audience than for example literary fiction writers (Wörtche 2007: 175). This has also been pointed out by William J. Nichols who sees the marginalization of crime fiction as a strategic advantage to instrumentalize the genre for social criticism:

Irónicamente, es la popularidad de la novela negra la que la dota con la capacidad de atacar las contradicciones de la era de la globalización. El éxito de la novela negra aporta al género un lugar privilegiado dentro del mercado, desde donde adquiere una naturaleza híbrida que le permite criticar los valores centrales de la globalización: la liberalización y la privatización, la migración transnacional de personas y capital, el consumismo y la objetivación [...]. (Nichols 2010: 302)

While scholars claim that genres engage in the complex negotiations of problems that connect to processes of globalization it remains questionable whether genres still function as “problem-solving devices”,

which according to Franco Moretti “address a contradiction of their environment, offering an imaginary resolution by means of their formal organization” (2006: 73). Whether genre fiction has the capacity to provide ‘imaginary solutions’ remains doubtful vis-à-vis the complexity, the connectedness and the controversies about processes of globalization and their consequences resumed in Chapter 2.1. This claim will thus certainly be taken into consideration when looking at the canon of Indian and Latin American crime fiction.

In the introduction of *Globalizing Literary Genres. Literature, History, Modernity* (2016), Jernej Habjan tackles the relationship between genres and globalization. While genres are in principle antagonistic entities in a market and innovation-oriented environment of literary production, they continue to occupy an important role as has already been elaborated in this chapter. Habjan points at the different understandings, crises and reconceptualizations of the term genre (while referring to a broader understanding of genre) and at structural similarities between genres and globalization. Genres are seen as a case in point to historicize globalization:

The very persistence of generic structures within the rapidly changing literary and cultural production can help us acknowledge that economic and political globalization too reach well beyond the two or three decades that we usually call ‘our globalized world.’ (Habjan 2016: 1)

The existence and circulation of genres already draws back on a longer period while both concepts are strongly connected to the rise of modernity and the expansion of capitalism and thus can be seen as products of these processes. Genres – whether it is the novel as a meta-genre or thematically oriented ones like crime fiction – might thereby serve “as the window on the transformations that literary history shares with the history of globalization” (Habjan 2016: 3). World Literature Studies and other approaches that seek to reconceptualize the relation between globalization and literature have predominantly focused on the novel. They thereby reinforce notions of the dominance of literary fiction as the only type of literature that circulates and receives

scholarly attention on an international or global level. Drawing back on Frederic Jameson, Habjan recounts here that differentiation and unification are always connected processes. He underlines the standardization and diversification of genres in the course of their global circulation – which strongly resonates Robertson’s concept of glocalization (ib.: 4). This is what Franco Moretti has traced in his distant reading about the expansion of the novel as an instable product of global form and local reality (see Chapter 2.3.5).

Methodologically and thematically, Franco Moretti has certainly made an important contribution to the study of global literary phenomena with his focus on the global expansion of the novel in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Scholars from Mariano Siskind (2014) to Debjani Ganguly (2016) continue to treat the novel as a prime example to study the interrelations of globalization and literature. But also more specific genres that are increasingly considered popular fiction or situated at the commercial pole of the literary field compromise the scope of research projects as part of a reorientation to expand canons or trace hidden connections and relations. Genre fiction has come into the limelight due to factors that have been explored in the course of this subchapter: The genre’s wide readership, its long-standing local and partly globally circulating corpora of works, its particular proximity to social transformations and contemporary problems as well as particular relations to the book market. Studies often focus on globally circulating works and series and do not take into account the asymmetries of the global literary field or the respective local literary production – as recent publications on the global span of crime fiction have shown (see for example Louise Nilsson et al. [2017]; Stewart King and Stephen Knight [2014]). It is particularly the combination of an aesthetic perspective, formal devices and a social focus that is at the core of genre fiction. An interconnectedness is also observed by Habjan, according to whom genres “show how aesthetic permutations are themselves inherently social, and vice versa, how social contradictions are resolved in literature as always-already literary developments” (Habjan 2016: 3). This interrelatedness of texts and society in genre fiction already points at the stake literature has in engaging in specific

discourses and abstract phenomena like globalization. Thereby, literary texts stand in a particular relation to the specific phenomenon it describes: According to Michael K. Walonen, “a text does not just passively or fantasmatically ‘reflect’ its socio-historical referent, nor does it exist as an entirely detached and symbolic cultural act standing outside of history” (2016: 13). Rather than implying a documentary function, literary texts draw back on literary devices and strategies to create specific effects, but thereby also intervene in the construction of specific discourses. Anke Biendarra has pointed out in this respect that

one reason to analyze literary representations is that the abstract phenomenon of globalization cannot appear as such but needs to be approached indirectly. The discourse of literature mirrors the social conditions and developments in the age of globalization but does not reflect on it in terms of mimetically accurate representations. Literature instead sets its own emphases and comments (most critically) on the observed processes. (Biendarra 2012: 16)

Genre fiction can be considered a prime example to comply with this task as generic conventions serve as a basic framework that can be used to explore further topics directly or indirectly associated with processes of globalization and particularly its downsides. In spite of the lower level of prestige, the necessity to draw back on specific generic conventions and the link with predecessors of a genre might be limiting factors. Generic forms, however, stand out in terms of familiarity on the part of readers, reviewers and publishers. This facilitates the consumption and marketing of genre fiction. Overall, it is this interrelatedness of market factors, social context and form that makes genre fiction an interesting object of study. These interrelations will be explored for the case of crime fiction in the following subchapter.

## 2.3 Crime Fiction

This subchapter summarizes definitions, characteristics and subgenres of crime fiction as well as the history of the genre. These aspects are of impact for the later exploration of the evolution of crime fiction in

India and Latin America in Chapter 3 and the analyses in Chapters 4 and 5 with regard to the use and modification of the genre in recent crime fiction novels.

There is certainly no dearth of studies on crime fiction as the genre has been the scope of scholarly attention for decades. It is not conducive for this thesis to give a detailed account on the state of art of research on crime fiction due to the unmanageable number of primary and secondary literature produced. Thus, some of the main scholars and their research will be summarized here. A variety of works were published in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century by Peter Nusser (2009), Lee Horsley (2005; 2009), Charles J. Rzepka (2005), Martin Priestman (2003) or Stephen Knight (2004; 2006; 2010). Most of these studies focus on British or US-American works and tend to categorize the huge corpus of works that have emerged since the 19<sup>th</sup> century chronologically and in accordance to specific characteristics that led to the emergence of specific subgenres. Since then, a multitude of studies have also aimed to depict the diversification of the genre with a view to the employment of female or multiethnic detectives as well as postcolonial or multicultural crime fiction. Among the most important studies are Christine Matzke and Susanne Mühleisen (2006), Dorothea Fischer-Hornung and Monika Müller (2003) or Jean Anderson et al. (2012). Especially in recent years, researchers increasingly try to do justice to the global circulation and adaptation of the genre (Pepper [2016], Pepper/Schmid [2016], Nilsson et al. [2017] are some of the most recent examples). With such a geographic diversity, definitions and characteristics attributed to the genre are necessarily bound to specific times and spaces. Definitions of the genre are also diverse due to disagreements over the terminology and distinction of specific subgenres – in spite of the fact that the genre is dominated by strict conventions and plot elements. The controversies, however, reflect the constant evolution of the genre and already insinuate the ongoing heterogenization. Due to the diversity, it is a difficult endeavor to develop a definition that applies across time and place.

The differentiating criteria used by many researchers draw back on British or US-American works and might not be applicable to a larger corpus of works that also takes into account genealogies of the genre outside these centers. The genre's focus on a crime is a minimal consensus, though not a sufficient criterion to define the genre. It is often specified that the element of crime needs to be limited to one or a few individual crimes with severe consequences such as the act of murder. Other definitions focus more on the structure of the narrative, its length or the role of suspense (Hoffmann 2012:26). As an open definition, Nilsson et al. focus on the presence of the detective as a minimum characteristic (2017: 5), though on the other hand, novels without a detective have also been regarded as crime fiction novels (Knight 2004: xii). Charles Brownson's inventory of crime fiction is more specific and includes "a crime, a criminal, a detective, threatened innocent bystanders [and] a chronicler with partial knowledge" (2014: 12). The employment of a chronicler, or Watson-figure, who relates to a particular narrative situation is not a prerequisite of the genre, but a particularity of many classic British crime fiction novels. Overall, I would therefore advocate a definition of crime fiction that also resonates with Charles Rzepka's definition (2005: 10): I regard the presence of a detective figure, an unsolved crime and a focus of the narrative on the investigation as central characteristics of the genre. Therefore, novels that refrain from using a detective figure at all have not been taken into consideration for the analyses.

A modification and marginalization of some of these characteristics can be observed in various novels. Partly, the investigation is used as an entrance point to reflect on a different topic; in other cases, it is the detective whose role and function has lost significance. The difficulties to define the genre suggest that it is a *Variationsgattung* (see Chapter 2.2.2): Besides the presence of certain fixed conventions (a crime and a detective), other elements are subject to modification to keep the story interesting (Suerbaum 1967: 364ff.) The genre is therefore not constituted by a number of features that can be found in every crime fiction novel, but it is rather Wittgenstein's (1953) notion of family resemblance as discussed in Chapter 2.2.2 that applies to the genre.

This thesis consistently uses the term crime fiction vis-à-vis alternative terms like crime novel or detective fiction. The latter term is partly regarded as a subgenre of crime fiction, while both terms are often considered synonyms in other studies. Scholars like Tzvetan Todorov draw a line between crime/detective fiction and the thriller, but crime fiction is understood here in a less restrictive way. This also reflects in the discussion of terminology and subgenres of crime fiction in Chapter 2.3.3.

### 2.3.1 The Emergence of the Pseudonorm: The Classic British Crime Fiction Novel

Scholars frequently differentiate four types of crime fiction novels that also depict the evolution of the genre in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: the British crime fiction novel, the US-American hard-boiled novel, the thriller and the police procedural. These four are certainly not a comprehensive list of subgenres but reflect major developments in the evolution of the genre. In the following part, the characteristics of these subgenres will be summarized to provide a foil as well as a frame to understand the trajectory of the genre in India and Latin America in the 20<sup>th</sup> century discussed in Chapter 3. The evolution of specific aspects such as the figure of the detective or the importance of a resolution in closure is discussed in the introduction of the respective analyses in Chapters 4 and 5. Various overarching concerns that have significantly shaped the genre like the relation between crime fiction and aspects like realism, the everyday, violence and fear will subsequently be discussed in this subchapter.

While crime fiction is often considered a genre that emerged in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century due to changes in the way crimes were investigated, prosecuted and punished, a much longer history is sometimes attributed to the genre. Partly, the Bible or the Oedipus story are also said to include elements of crime fiction (Scaggs 2005: 13). The *Newsgate Calender*, in which stories about criminals were published in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the UK, is commonly seen as a predecessor of the genre (Nünning 2008: 5). While crime has always played a role in fiction,

those who advocate a short history point at the distinct characteristics introduced by Edgar Allan Poe in his C. Auguste Dupin stories. Poe's works were characterized by the role of the detective and the focus on his intellect or the principle of ratiocination as an investigation method based on the premises of a scientific and rational solution (Hühn 1987: 457). The emergence is seen as a consequence of various extratextual events and discourses like rationalism, positivism and secularism that fostered a new approach towards scientific explanations.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century also saw the foundation of institutions like the police and new approaches towards crime prosecution and punishment (Nusser 2009: 70–72; Scaggs 2005: 18). Furthermore, the emergence of the genre also connects to processes of industrialization, urbanization and the emergence of a new bourgeois class whose sensibilities were addressed in crime fiction: With a focus on fears for physical integrity and private ownership, the genre initially addressed an educated upper middle class. In crime fiction, they found their status and possessions temporarily threatened by a crime. These tendencies led to a naturalization of upper middle class status quo that had a lasting effect on the genre (Scaggs 2005: 47).

Poe and Conan Doyle established a model of crime fiction that has consistently shaped the readers' expectations and perceived norm<sup>11</sup> of the genre in terms of particular settings or conventionalized plot elements. This model therefore still continues to be perceived as a prototype with significant impact and constitutes a standard against which new works are necessarily compared. Following Conan Doyle and other writers, the model became particularly popular during the 1920s and 1930s, a period commonly termed as the Golden Age of

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11 Normative catalogues of how to write crime fiction novels were actually published by Father Knox and SS van Dine in the 1920s as an intent to regulate generic conventions and guarantee a 'fair play' between detective and reader. Nels Pearson and Marc Singer have however pointed out that Knox' "Decalogue" (1929) and van Dine's "Twenty Rules for Writing Detective Stories" (1928) maybe actually be "prohibitions against using clichéd devices" that had been used by crime fiction writers beforehand (2009: 15). Robin Winks similarly pointed out that Agatha Christie alone has broken the majority of these 'commandments' (1988: 13).

crime fiction in Europe. The Golden Age is usually blamed for presenting non-violent individual crimes in a period marked by the violence and mass killings in World War I. The popularity of the genre in the interwar period is explained as a form of escapism and reassurance via the presentation of individual crimes for which a culprit can be identified and singled out – which is not possible in a war-scenario (Grella 1988: 87). Novels produced during this period are also referred to as ‘whodunits’, clue puzzles, mystery novels or cozy novels<sup>12</sup>. The term Golden Age is certainly polemic and suggests a high and exemplary value of works produced during this period. Nonetheless, it is maintained here to underline the lasting impact of the model character of works subsumed under this term for the production and reception of the genre. To allude to the model associated with this period, the term classic British crime fiction novel is used throughout this thesis.

The classic British crime fiction novel is characterized by a rather fixed structure and order of plot elements. The characterization of protagonists or stylistic characteristics are subordinated to these structural elements. These works are shaped by the principle of fair play which allegedly provides the reader and the detective with the same opportunity to identify the murderer. The principle requires a specific narrative mode and the observation of certain rules as insinuated by Father Knox and S.S. van Dine. This model also requires a specific detective figure with a superior intellect and combination skills. The particularities of the detective figure and other protagonists are scrutinized in Chapter 4.1. The plot itself consists of a threefold structure with fixed elements: The narrative initiates with a crime, usually a murder, which involves a mystery. The murder is only a trigger for an investiga-

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12 The terms themselves are strong references to the central characteristics of the respective subgenre: The ‘whodunit’, an abbreviation of ‘Who [has] done it?’, alludes the supposed equal opportunity given to the detective and the reader to find the murderer. The clue puzzle is often used as a more neutral term for works produced during the Golden Age and points at the importance of gathering and interpreting clues. The term ‘cozy mystery’ or ‘cozies’ points at the small-town setting and an avoidance of sex, violence or politics and can partly be seen in opposition to the US-American hard-boiled. Similarly, the term ‘mystery fiction’ refers to the unsolved crime around which the plot revolves (Knight 2004: 220–221; 227).

tion and not depicted in detail. The mysterious character is underlined here by a complicated and improbable execution of a murder or the appearance of a dead body in an unusual (often locked) space (Nusser 2009: 24). The major part of the plot revolves around the investigation of the crime with a focus on gathering and interpreting clues. Clues are a central aspect due to their potential limitlessness and the use of red herrings or false alibis (ib.: 27). That the investigation is above all an intellectual task is underlined with the figure of the ‘armchair detective’ who uses his/her logical deduction to solve a case narrated by other protagonists (Scaggs 2005: 21). This scope does not leave any space for secondary plots such as love stories or further protagonists (Suerbaum 1967: 449). Also the group of suspects is usually limited to an in-group among whom the least likely person is commonly revealed to be the murderer. In a final scene, often referred to as the denouement, the detective shares his/her interpretation of the crime with an in-group and eventually reveals the murderer (Nusser 2009: 23–24). The narrative is built on the fact that the criminal’s identity is not revealed before the final scene in which the detective reconstructs the event of the murder in all relevant details (ib.: 30). This usually leads to a confession of the criminal who is consequently convicted, but not necessarily arrested within the frame of the narrative. With the identification of the murder, the criminal is singled out and a previously interrupted order is restored, as will be elaborated on more in detail in Chapter 5.1.

Tzvetan Todorov has pointed at the two-fold generic structure of classic British crime fiction which “contains not one but two stories: the story of the crime and the story of the investigation” and ideally “have no point in common” (Todorov 1966: 44). The story of the crime is absent and retrospectively reconstructed by the detective in the course of the story of the investigation. The story of the crime informs what really happened while the story of the investigation has no connection with the former and “explains ‘how the reader (or the narrator) has come to know about it’” (ib.: 45). The investigation has no meaning in itself and can be regarded as a mediator between the reader and the story of the crime. It is usually narrated by a mediator, the detective’s assistant who chronicles the investigation during which the detective

and the reader compete to reconstruct the story of the crime. The narrator keeps up the readers' interest by using elements of curiosity and surprise (ib. 47).

Suspense is certainly an important aspect of crime fiction novels. Defined as the “[u]ncertainty (together with the desire to diminish it) about how the story will develop” (Porter Abbott 2008: 242), the inclusion of suspense intends to keep the narrative interesting for the reader and thereby contributes to a perception of crime fiction as a genre made for fast consumption. Ulrich Suerbaum has differentiated between *Zukunftsspannung* and *Rätselspannung* (1967). The former term, *Zukunftsspannung*, refers to the unknown future outcome of a chain of events and is created by cliffhangers, delays or the inclusion of subplots. *Rätselspannung* concerns a curiosity caused by missing elements in an event that already happened in the past— such as the identity of a murderer (ib.: 446). If these information gaps are irrevocably solved before the end of the novel, an important stimulus for the readers gets lost, therefore a descent of tension must be avoided during the investigation. While the latter form of suspense was dominant in classic crime fiction novels, a variation of both forms is used in most contemporary works (Scholten 2010: 126–127). E. Segal has also pointed out that not closing an important information gap produces a surprise effect which might frustrate the reader (2010: 161). Suspense and surprise are therefore two major tensions evoked by the use and modification of the generic conventions.

### 2.3.2 A Diversification of the Genre: Hard-boiled Novels, Thrillers and Police Procedurals

Classic British crime fiction and the respective characteristics still constitute a ‘pseudonorm’, according to which the unsuitability of the genre in a specific setting is often attested. Nonetheless, this standard has constantly been revised and challenged. The apparently fixed formulaic structure turns out to be rather flexible. It is this tension between the standard/norm and the continuous modification of this model that is the most interesting feature of the genre. According to

Gabriele Dietze, it is the combination of a familiar and conventionalized plot and the inclusion of new elements or perspectives that make it attractive for readers (1997: 257). Also Gill Plain has pointed out for the development of the genre that “its survival has depended upon its capacity to surprise, and this in turn has had the result of creating a popular genre which constantly poses at least the possibility of subverting cultural ‘norms’ and expectations” (Plain 2001: 12). These transformations have certainly contributed to the genre’s ongoing popularity. Crime fiction has not only been imitated, but also been subverted in the form of parodies or pastiches such as the anti-detective novel<sup>13</sup>. As Plain has already pointed out, the subversion of the genre is an ever more important aspect and has been a major catalyst of the emergence of new subgenres like the hard-boiled novel.

The hard-boiled novel emerged in the 1930s in the US in direct opposition to the classic British crime fiction novel. In the context of the Great depression, the Prohibition and the growing presence of organized criminal groups, the British model seemed no longer suitable. Authors like Dashiell Hammett, Sam Spade or Raymond Chandler modified the genre and initially published their stories in pulp magazines like *Black Mask*. They aimed at writing a ‘realistic murder mystery’ to depict their surroundings adequately. These works depict a different social environment and show a different relation to violence. These changes also had an effect on the detective figure employed and the surrounding depicted, as will be elaborated on in the analytical chapters in 4.1 and 5.4. As the story is generally narrated by the detective himself, the Watson-figure becomes obsolete. Other figures such as the *femme fatale* emerge: While sexually active female figures were largely absent before, the *femme fatale* has an ambiguous role as a woman to whom the detective feels attracted but who is also involved in criminal activities and therefore poses a threat for him.

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13 The anti-detective novel, also studied as metaphysical detective fiction refers to short stories or novels by for example Jorge Luis Borges, Alain Robbe-Grillet or Paul Auster. These postmodern texts use self-reflexive, metafictional or parodic elements and often avoid narrative closure and have been studied by Stefano Tani (1984) or Patricia Merivale and Susan Elizabeth Sweeney (1999).

Violence is omnipresent and even the detective is not immune to it: The crimes investigated often only pose an initial problem and a “wide net of connected crimes (such as counterfeiting, blackmail, adultery, murder) is gradually brought to light” (Hühn 1987: 461). These connections involve rich and respectable persons and expose a relationship between the pillars of society and the underworld. This context requires a different methodology such as the chase or a frequent duel/shootout between the detective and its antagonist (Cawelti 1976: 143). Due to these modifications, the plot is less oriented towards a resolution at the end of the investigation and other aspects come into the limelight. In a society in which crime is omnipresent and involves many agents, it is no longer possible to single out one criminal (Hühn 1987: 461). These stories reflect a “[loss of] faith in the possibility of finding an objective truth and of establishing a simple order” due to which the solution becomes secondary (ib.: 464). Several of these guidelines of hard-boiled crime fiction were discussed by Raymond Chandler himself in his seminal essay “The Simple Art of Murder” (1984 [1950]), that is repeatedly alluded to in the course of this thesis. Overall, plot elements that structure and characterize the British novel, the event of a crime, an investigation and the resolution or conviction of one or various criminals are largely maintained and therefore underline an affiliation to crime fiction.

This is also the case for other subgenres like the thriller or the police procedural. While the term thriller is sometimes used as an umbrella term to refer to crime fiction in general, it is in other cases seen in strict opposition to the Classic British crime fiction novel (Knight 2004: xii). The thriller is a highly popular genre ever since its emergence in the 1980s and is considered to address a more heterogeneous readership than the British model. It is associated with an action-led plot during which the investigation advances via chases, surveillance, fights and scenes of violence (Nusser 2009: 3). This subgenre requires a detective figure who is constantly on the move – as opposed to the armchair detective – and confronted with life-threatening situations. Overall, the thriller puts an emphasis on future-oriented suspense and heightens the level of threat by depicting international conspir-

acies or serial killers that may implicate entire cities or states (Glover 2003: 137–138). Also a multiplication of criminals is common while the detective is particularly fighting a master criminal who embodies the omnipresence of crime and evil (Nusser 2009: 180). This leads to a greater focus of the narrative on the criminal from whose perspective the narrative is partly told.

This focus on the criminal can particularly be observed in psychological thrillers such as Patricia Highsmith's works. The thriller, however, usually ends with a defeat of the criminal – often his death – which confirms the detective's superiority and leads to new adventures (Nusser 2009: 53). This defeat of the evil in thrillers has often been criticized as naïve as it suggests that evil can simply be eradicated by defeating the criminal who embodies it (Nusser 2009: 59). The thriller thereby often avoids addressing the roots of social ills and crime and simply draws back on a dichotomous vision of society as good or bad. This is also the case in the spy thriller, a subgenre that was particularly popular during the cold war era which were written by authors like John le Carré or Ian Fleming (see for example Nusser 2009: 117–122). Since the thriller is usually seen as a rather broad frame whose structure can be adopted to depict all kind of conspiracies, a multitude of subgenres have emerged in the last decades such as the erotic, the legal or the political thriller.

While the classic British crime fiction novel, the hard-boiled novel and the thriller overall use private investigators – amateurs or professionals – police investigators have also gained presence in the subgenre of the police procedural emerged in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in television series and novels. The subgenre is discussed more in detail in Chapter 4.3 as a foil to compare the emergence of Indian and Latin American crime fiction novels that employ police investigators. Overall, these works strike out due to their focus on police investigations, but often depict various unrelated cases in one novel or episode. Furthermore, a heterogenization of investigation methods used by the police strikes out as forensic methods, post-mortem analyses, profiling or interrogations are depicted (see for example Rzepka/Horsley 2010: 100). The diversification of crime fiction also reflects in a dis-

tinct terminology used in various languages that reflect the trajectory of the genre. In the following subchapter, a brief overview is given for the terminology used in Spanish.

### 2.3.3 Spanish Terminology

What strikes out for crime fiction in Spanish is first of all the lack of a consistently used umbrella term for the genre and secondly the emergence of new terms for specific Spanish and Latin American subgenres. Crime fiction novels are generally referred to as *novelas policiales*, *novelas policiacas* or simply *policiales*.<sup>14</sup> Partly, publishers and scholars also apply the term *novela negra* or *género negro* for the genre as a whole, while others apply the term for Spanish and Latin American novels that follow the model of US-American hard-boiled. The latter has also been translated as *novela dura* as a more literal translation of hard-boiled. The *novela negra* or *dura* is contrasted with the *novela de enigma* or *relato problema*, which refer to novels or short stories that follow the exigencies of classic British crime fiction novels which have also been called *policial clásico* in Spanish. Works summarized under these terms commonly focus on an exceptional crime with no relation to reality and partly overlap with other genres like science fiction. Besides writers like Arthur Canon Doyle or Agatha Christie, it is particularly Borges who is seen as representative of this variant (Wieser 2012: 37). Authors of the *policial clásico* generally highlight the parodic character of the genre in Latin America as a foreign model was long considered unrealistic in Latin America (Nichols 2010: 30).

According to Persephone Braham, the term *novela negra* originally related to the *Série Noire* of the French publisher Gallimard that initially focused on translations of US-American hard-boiled (Braham 2004: xiii). Therefore, the term *novela negra* provides a prime exam-

<sup>14</sup> The diversity of different terms is partly a result of the pluricentric character of the Spanish language and the complex trajectory of the circulation and adaptation of the foreign genre in different Spanish-speaking countries. Furthermore, also the fact that crime fiction novels are often considered and marketed as novels in the Spanish language market and that publishers do not use paratextual markers to inscribe books into specific generic traditions can also be considered an obstacle for the formation of a coherent terminology. In Germany, by contrast, the term *Kriminalroman* is consistently used by writers, reviewers and publishers (Wieser 2012: 42).

ple of the multi-directed circulation and adaption of the genre. The individual works summarized under this term share two main characteristics: a larger presence of violence and the instrumentalization of the genre for social criticism of societies in which crimes are rather the norm than the exception. Both characteristics are often described as particularities of the genre in Latin America. The different definitions and uses of the term *novela negra* have been compared by Glen Close (2008: 181). The latter has also pointed at a drift between the Spanish and Latin American *novela negra* in the last decades: Close observed a violent turn towards a “dirtier and more lawless urban social realism” in Latin American crime fiction in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (ib.: 23).

The local production of the genre is therefore less considered an escapist entertainment genre and rather a critical review of social, political and economic processes and/or the omnipresence of violence (Wieser 2012: 363). The inconsistency of the terminology therefore also reflects in the evolution of the genre as writers produce novels that do not (or no longer) fit neatly into translations of the English terminology. Overall, the genre is considered a suitable form to reflect on the state of society. William J. Nichols sees crime fiction as the new ‘literatura comprometida’ and has pointed out that

[e]n los últimos treinta años, dentro de la lógica económica del neoliberalismo, escritores en el arco latino se han apropiado de la estética y la poética del género negro para llevar a cabo su propia investigación de las contradicciones de la (pos)modernidad en sus países respectivos. [...] La novela negra les ofrece un espacio a estos escritores, desde donde señalan las inconsistencias y las idiosincrasias de los procesos de modernización donde las víctimas de los crímenes muchas veces son de las clases excluidas o marginadas de la modernidad. (Nichols 2010: 301)

Writers have explored the boundaries of the genre, as will be discussed in Chapter 3.2.3, and thereby contribute to a diversification of the genre and the emergence of particular subgenres. In other countries, it is particularly the *neopolicial* or *neopoliciaco* which has received

wide attention by readers and scholars. This particular Latin American genre can be considered a subgenre of the *novela negra* and is loosely based on the characteristics of the hard-boiled novel. The *neopolicial* follows the idea of crime fiction as *literature comprometida* that focuses on a criticism of social, political and economic conditions and often examines the legacies of the authoritarian regimes in Chile or Argentina. As the *neopolicial* has been a dominant mode of writing crime fiction in Latin America since the 1980s and 1990s, also newer tendencies have been observed such as the “post-*neopoliciaco*” coined by Glen Close, which is rather an intensification of the tendencies of the *neopolicial* with a stronger focus on criminal agents rather than on crime fighters (Close 2008: 52–53). Particularly in Colombia and other areas affected by high levels of violence, novels have emerged that are subsumed as *novelas de crímenes* (Wieser 2012: 360). These works focus particularly on the consequence of an omnipresence of violence and mean a shift away from an investigation and a solution of a crime that characterizes other subgenres.

The different terms addressed here depict the variety of the terminology used to describe crime fiction and subgenres in Spain and Latin America. The diversity is paradigmatic for the evolution of the genre in Spanish language regions, but the terms partly also overlap. While the general tendency observed in the evolution of the terminology highlights the use of the genre as an instrument for criticism and the presence of violence. This raises the question whether recent novels necessarily subscribe to these tendencies or whether a revision of the terminology is required to adequately describe post-millennial crime fiction in Latin America.

#### 2.3.4 Crime Fiction between Social Criticism, Realism, (Imagined) Fears and the Everyday

The evolution of crime fiction is overall characterized by various tensions that have already been mentioned in the course of this chapter. These include the tension between the often-criticized artificiality of the genre vis-à-vis the constant efforts of authors to realistically

depict spaces and crimes in a specific context. Secondly, tensions arise between the extraordinary and the everyday: A crime – usually a murder – constitutes an extraordinary act that interrupts the monotony of the everyday. The omnipresence of crime fiction in print and television has turned this extraordinary event into an everyday source of entertainment. The everyday also plays an important role in many crime fiction novels. This is especially the case for series which ever more focus on the detectives' private lives or for police procedurals which include everyday routine tasks of the police. The tension between the novel's supposed escapist nature and its instrumentalization for social criticism is the third aspect discussed in this subchapter. All these themes are overarching concerns for the genre and are elaborated here because they are the major catalysts for the evolution of crime fiction.

### **Crime Fiction and Realism**

An overarching concern that is addressed throughout the analysis is the complex relation between crime fiction and realism. Realism is a highly complicated and certainly subjective term as a mode of representation with particular socio-historical implications. With regard to crime fiction, realism is primarily of impact for the adequacy and accuracy of the representation of society, the investigation, a specific setting as well as stylistic elements. Whether the depiction and construction of these aspects resembles the experiences, expectations or imagination of readers is a key aspect for the praise or critique of a specific novel. Philip Howell has pointed out with regard to the depiction of urban spaces that

[r]ealism in this sense has nothing to do with correspondence to truths situated beyond discourse, but is rather a matter of accurately representing the shared experiential conditions of the city's inhabitants [...]. (Howell 1998: 372)

The novels thereby provide an illusion of reality by using references to extratextual places to ensure that the allusions are identified by readers and can evoke the intended effect. Besides this extratextual dimension, also an "in-text reality founded upon generically or historically

prescribed conventions” has been established over time and is identified by readers of the genre as realistic even if this reality is not congruent with the readers’ extratextual reality (see for example Zi-Ling 2015: 7; Cawelti 1976: 13). Overall, the focus on a realistic depiction also makes the crime fiction an interesting archive to address how violence and crime are treated differently in distinct localities or periods. The evolution of the genre relates to changes in terms of law and order as well as different investigation methods.

In classic British crime fiction, realism has often been presented as a necessity to guarantee a ‘fair play’ between detective and reader in their competition to solve the mystery. Here, a correspondence to reality is a prerequisite due to the rational and deductive mode of investigation (Gregoriou 2012: 52): Usually, it is the least likely but theoretically possible solution that is revealed to be the true solution in the end. These features, however, only can “alleviate the extreme unrealism of the claim that every case can be solved by a process of careful inquiry” (Knight 2004: 232). Besides, the possibility of a coincidence or an accident is usually excluded – which is certainly an artificial and unrealistic shortage of possible solutions. Also the fact that every case is necessarily solved within a short time span results in “impossible solve-rates customary in the genre as a whole” (Zi-Ling 2015: 8). The necessity of a solution is a basic feature of the genre with far-reaching implications as will be elaborated in Chapter 5.1.

The demand for realistic crimes and settings has been a catalyst for the development of new subgenres. The emergence of the US-American hard-boiled stands in direct relation to the constructedness and isolation of the British model as discussed in Chapter 2.3.2. In the context of the US Depression of the 1930s, the classic British crime fiction novel no longer appeared realistic (see for example Nünning 2008: 8). It is thus not surprising that Raymond Chandler starts his essay “The Simple Art of Murder” with the following claim: “Fiction in any form has always intended to be realistic” (1984: 1). As he does not perceive the British model as realistic, he proposes a new one in which the “realist in murder writes of a world in which gangsters can rule nations

and almost rule cities” (ib.: 19). The implausibility of these scenarios in hard-boiled novels, however, has also frequently been subject to criticism, as Yan Zi-Ling has summarized:

Most critics maintain that [...] American colleagues weren't much closer to realism themselves, if realism is taken to mean the conformity of characters, language and plot to everyday experience. Indeed, critics have rejected the notion of realism of detective fiction [...], almost without exception. Hard-boiled authors' use of violence is too frequent and too romantic to be absolutely real. (2015: 67)

It can be argued that the genre always draws back on highly constructed and exceptional crimes that compromise interesting narratives and investigations. Nonetheless, the humanization of the detective accounts for a more realistic figure which is no longer the intellectually superior armchair detective but an ambivalent human being that has to face violence (Ruffing 2011: 86). The police procedural similarly aimed at portraying police work more realistically than its predecessors by including routine tasks and by focusing on multiple crimes (Scaggs 2005: 30). To which extent police work as well as the methods of private investigators are misrepresented in these series, however, can hardly be estimated by a lay readership, as Zi-Ling elaborates:

Although real life experience of police officers is commonplace, we are just as much in the dark over the activities of official crime investigators as we are with the private variety. Even when the lone investigator is displaced by the collectivism of the procedural, we find the contrivances of neat closure and the telescoping of much of the routine that would otherwise make the narrative unbearably tedious. (Zi-Ling 2015: 8)

Individual series such as the US-American TV series *Columbo* and or documentary-style series about police work have been broadcasted in many regions worldwide from the 1990s onwards. They have led to what is often called the ‘CSI effect’: The popularity and frequency of these series led to the phenomenon that “the public expects police investigations and forensic procedures to mirror those observed in fic-

tional or factional broadcasting” (Lee/McGovern 2014: 148) – even though real investigators often underline the inaccuracy of the procedures and the dramatization of these representations. The same is the case for the claim of crime fiction novels to realistically depict police investigations as Yan Zi-Ling’s quote above underlines. Also other sub-genres like the spy thriller draw back on specific surroundings to which readers have no access and therefore cannot judge whether a narrative correctly depicts work processes of an intelligence service. At the same time, crime fiction novels offer access to specific surroundings and spaces which readers might not want to enter out of fear and therefore prefer a fictional representation (Wörtche 2008: 110).

Whether a crime fiction novel appears realistic in a specific setting or milieu is often stated as an important criterion for the production and salability of a particular novel – even though this is highly subjective (Geherin 2008: 8; Anderson et. al 2012: 11). Realism thus has market value: If a series is acclaimed for realistically depicting a local setting, this can turn out to be a unique selling point for the novels, as a manifold of series have shown. The setting overall has gained importance in crime fiction novels, as will be discussed in Chapter 5.2. Authors draw back on clearly recognizable urban spaces to add to the realistic impression of their novels. But according to Doris Wieser, various authors only succeed because of the readers’ lack of knowledge (Wieser 2012: 39). In other cases, it is precisely the local context and setting that is highlighted: Carolina Miranda for example has praised the Argentinean series *Negro absoluto* for its local focus which is “firmly anchored in the Argentinean millennium as it sets out to relocate crime, victims, investigators, perpetrators, settings and production to Argentinean soil” (2016: 82). A further relation to reality can be deducted from the amount of fictionalized crimes inspired by actual crimes which have been discussed in the media. Furthermore, even if crime fiction novels deal with constructed cases or inaccurate investigation processes, they nonetheless address topics and experiences that readers can relate to: insecurities, anxieties and changes or the betrayal of persons who are not what they pretend to

be (Worthington 2011: 4). These examples already point at how crime fiction is characterized by a permanent tension between the everyday and the extraordinary that will be explored in the next subchapter.

### **Everyday Crimes**

Crime fiction is frequently interpreted with a view to its particular relation to the everyday – a relation which has also been subject to change: While the artificial and constructed character of classic British crime fiction is usually seen as an interruption of the everyday, other subgenres are praised precisely for their accurate depiction of everyday processes (see for example Evans 2009: 11). Partly, the genre is modified to do justice to settings in which criminality and violence are indeed everyday events such as the *novela de crímenes* in Colombia mentioned in Chapter 2.3.3. Cities that comprise ‘capitals of crime’ in crime fiction are often actually quite peaceful places in Europe, but they are increasingly portrayed as places where extraordinary crimes take place with regularity. Thereby, crime fiction also builds up public concern about criminal threats (ib.: 6).

Contemporary crime fiction is also used to negotiate competing identity constructions and lifestyles that emerge because of or in opposition to economic, social or cultural transformations. As Evelyne Keitel has pointed out, it offers a space where (new) identity constructions that deviate from a reader’s everyday experiences can be tested and negotiated in the framework of familiar generic conventions (Keitel 1998: 105). At the same time, crime fiction is not only consumed by readers, but also give access to current everyday consumption practices that are depicted within these texts. According to Mehita Iqani, these “narratives about consumption which are at the margins” need to be studied for a more comprehensive understanding of economic and mediated processes of globalization that take the everyday as a starting point (2016: 3). The investigation of a crime frequently offers insights into the ruptures and tensions in the everyday life of the social environment of the victim or depicts everyday consumerist practices and changes in the cityscape. According to Charles Brownson, crime fiction novels exhibit “the sort of meticulous realism that pays close

attention to everyday details and ordinary experiences” (2014: 5). It is the everyday life of the detective that is ever more the scope of crime fiction novels and explored in subplots.

The global circulation of the genre and the emergence of new settings of series also establish a connection between the local and the everyday vis-à-vis globalization processes: Jenni Ramone has called crime fiction a “gateway to the everyday, a way to get under the skin of a foreign culture” (2016: 100). This statement underlines the idea that the crime investigation is partly merely a starting point for the exploration of wider topics. Whether crime is able to ‘get under the skin of a foreign culture’ and can provide insights into the everyday life of a particular culture is a more ambiguous topic. The comments suggest that these works are consumed by a foreign readership who might also not be able to judge whether the author confirms stereotypic ideas of everyday life in a specific setting. Particularly due to the continuous focus on criminality and the dark sides of society, it remains questionable whether the aspect of the everyday is not rather misrepresented or at least distorted while other aspects might be omitted. Eventually, because of the popularity of the genre, the unusual occurrence of a murder has become a standard topic in literature and television. The extensive production of crime series has made capital crime into an everyday event. It overlooks that the novels disproportionately highlight extraordinary cases – partly drawing back on spectacular crimes. In reality, however, the majority of murders occur in the boundaries of the everyday and the domestic and are not committed by strangers but rather by easily identifiable persons previously known to the victim (Evans 2009: 37).

### **Crimes and Fear**

The crimes and violence depicted in crime fiction novels have been subject to significant changes over time. In comparison to the “non-violent” bloodless and sanitized murders that dominated the classic British crime novel, current works often depict brutal violence or an environment in which everybody has blood on his or her hands (Scaggs 2005: 43). Crime are therefore closely related to other processes, or, according to Bran Nicol et al., “[c]riminality is a trope

by which wider social, cultural and political processes are understood” (2011: 6). While the genre is often seen as a mirror of society, it is actually more a mirror of imagined fears rather than a fictionalized account of current crime statistics. This relates to studies in social sciences: Lucia Dammert and Mary Fran T. Malone for example have pointed out how the fear of crime in Chile is nourished by the media. Irrespective of the actual level of crime rates, the constant thematization of violence has a significant impact on urban society (2004: 95). Also in Argentina, whose crime rates are relatively low in comparison to other Latin American countries, crime continues to be perceived as a bigger problem for the country’s development than its economic performance (Kessler 2009: 71). In the aftermath of the crisis in 2002, the growing inequality led to a wave of kidnappings, robberies and homicides (Dirección Nacional de la Política Criminal 2008). While crime rates have partly declined, the fear of victimization remains high.

It is similarly the fear of physical integrity that is highlighted – at the expense of other, more profound threats and risks. Slavoj Žižek has pointed out that the condemnation of physical violence as ‘bad’ helps to shift attention away from social violence. Popular discourse and media focus on the “brutal exposition of violence” such as terrorism or extremely violent crimes and thereby draw attention away from structural violence which might not even be perceived as violence, but as subtler forms of domination (Žižek 2008: 174; 9). A similar imbalance can be detected for white-collar crimes: As Zygmund Bauman has pointed out, “corporate crimes and tax cheaters are much less likely to be sentenced than pickpockets or burglars” (1998: 124). This is partly due to power relations, but also connected to the perception that those white-collar criminals are not perceived as a threat to safety (ib.: 125). Bauman’s observations on crime and safety are very insightful here. He compares crime fighting to a show:

Fighting crime, like crime itself, and particularly the crime targeted on bodies and private property, makes an excellent, exciting, eminently watchable show. The mass media producers and script-writers are well aware of this. If one judged the state of society after its dramatized rep-

resentations [...] the whole of human life would seem to navigate the narrow gorge between the threat of physical assault and fighting back the potential attackers. (Bauman 1998: 118)

A similar scenario can be found in many crime fiction novels and, as Barbara Fister has acutely observed, “[f]ear sells books” (2005: 43) – even if these books address imagined fears. Like Bauman, who called this disparity an ‘inflation’ of specific fears in the media, Fister has recounted that crime fiction “deliberately exploits anxiety in the reader [and] taps into topical social concerns using familiar formulas to produce suspenseful narratives” (ib.: 43). The record number of serial killers in Scandinavian crime fiction for example hardly relates to any real-existing threat in the region, but rather corresponds to imagined fears enhanced by media reporting. Fister uses the term “crimewaves” here to underline that current fears in society are nourished by the media and exploited by authors of the genre (ib.: 45). She identifies four contemporary anxieties that are frequently dealt with in contemporary crime fiction novels: urban violence, threats to the environment, child abuse and serial homicide (ib.: 44). Criminology studies underline that the public is mainly confronted with “conventional criminal offenses” (Rothe/Friedrichs 2015: 15). Crimes depicted in crime fiction, however, are usually murder, rapes, assaults and robberies as well as drug-related crimes and terrorism. This imbalance raises questions about the impact of crime fiction as an omnipresent genre on the construction of such fears and should be taken into consideration when analyzing crime fiction novels. This has also been pointed out by Fister, according to whom

fiction plays a role in shaping our personal understanding of the world, and in the marketplace of anxieties, the cultural signification of fictional crime mingles with the real thing, reflecting and influencing our perceptions of threat. (Fister 2005: 46)

Also Bran Nicol et al. underline that crime fiction shapes notions of criminality rather than merely reflecting them (2011: 6). While crime fiction novels strategically use elements that suggest to mirror extratex-

tual settings and processes, they focus on specific topics and themes that produce interesting narratives and salable books. Other more existential fears and uncertainties that cannot be pinned down on a particular crime are usually omitted in crime fiction. This includes fears that cannot be allocated to a clearly identifiable and punishable perpetrator (Bauman 1998: 119). These uncertainties, however, come to the fore in postmodern or metafictional crime fiction novels. This focus on current fears and underlying social problems makes crime fiction an interesting archive to study the transformation of (imagined) fears or social changes in a specific location.

### **Social Criticism and Entertainment**

Researchers like Charles Brownson or Scott MacCracken (1998) see popular fiction genres as engaging in a complex relation with the society or culture in which they are produced. Crime fiction is tied to the construction and presentation of crime in a specific culture. Furthermore, according to Brownson, “literary formulas (genres) are not arbitrary constructs but come into existence out of the needs and fears of their readers” (2014: 2). Besides affirming interests and attitudes, crime fiction also captures existing tensions in society and usually harmonizes them in the course of the plot. On a more controversial note, however, popular fiction explores “the boundary between the permitted and the forbidden” (Cawelti 1976: 34–35), allowing readers to enjoy the fascination of the forbidden without further consequences. Eventually, these formulaic works also contribute to accommodate changes. Besides its entertainment status, the genre can be used for various purposes and therefore opens possibilities to deal with, uncover or reflect on the local transformations which can be broadly connected to processes of globalization.

The instrumentalization of the genre for social criticism can already be observed in the works of hard-boiled authors who unmask the illusionary facade of the prosperous city and reveal structures of crime and violence (Nusser 2009: 131). According to Jeanne Ruffing, the genre has often been used as a vehicle for social criticism and addressed topics like racism and discrimination (2011: 23). She further elabo-

rates that crime fiction gives access to specific cultural knowledge and suggests that particularly ethnic crime fiction offers an “inadvertent learning” for readers as a side-effect (ib.: 46). Authors express their disillusionment about the consequences of globalization processes in a specific local setting by pointing at corruption and inequality. However, as Andrew Pepper has pointed out, they do not advocate a different system:

[U]nlike their counterparts who grew up in the direct shadows of the revolutionary tumult of the 1960s, [contemporary writers] demonstrate no faith in the idea that capitalism can be directly confronted and overturned. (2016: 229)

However, while not being politically committed, crime fiction novels do address the dark sides of globalization and neoliberalism. Compared to the focus on traditional, individual crimes, contemporary writers seek to address the connections between crime and neoliberal capitalism. They often use an individual crime as a mere starting point to depict underlying structural violence (Pepper/Schmid 2016: 10). More critical works point at certain problems and injustices in the political, economic or social system. They thereby explore how individual lives are shaped by these forces (Pepper 2016: 17). Contemporary novels often combine an investigation with social criticism or emancipatory concerns. A question that emerges with a view to the growing connectedness of the world is to which extent crime fiction authors are able to modify the genre to include current developments. Andrew Pepper and David Schmid have similarly pointed out “the possibility that there are certain foundational limits to the capacity of the crime novel” that impedes “to properly interrogate the complex and overdetermined terrain of global capitalism” (2016: 8). In Latin America, it is usually the discrepancy between social reality and modernity/modernization that is addressed in crime fiction (Nichols 2010: 300). Looking at Indian popular fiction in general, Rositta Joseph Valiyamattam has pointed out that “[p]opular fiction combining entertainment with serious social realism is being produced on an unprecedented scale in

India today” (2016: 152). Authors explore the dark sides of contemporary India where “ethical principals have become subservient to wealth, power and fame” (ib.: 216).

It is often suggested that crime fiction writers address problems that are ignored by the other media and reveal larger conspiracies or the hidden connections between legality and illegality. Also in comparison to a non-fiction books on similar topics, a crime fiction writer can reach a broader audience including readers who do not read non-fiction. Due to the wide-spread familiarity with the genre and its conventions, crime fiction is perceived as a “non-threatening format”, according Jeanne Ruffing (2011: 46). Furthermore, crime fiction writers are able to use various literary devices and strategies to present a concern a different manner than non-fiction authors. These strategies include the employment of a specific detective figure, the use of devices to create suspense and tension or the prospect of a relieving solution at the end. Authors can furthermore dramatize and personalize events drawing back on generic conventions and narrative means. It is particularly the unknown outcome and the controlled release of information and clues that create suspense and intend to capture the reader (Nusser 2009: 32). Furthermore, stirring up fears and releasing them are important devices used by authors (Gregoriou 2012: 50). Nonetheless, the investigation provides a useful frame to shed light on particular concerns such as drug trafficking, prostitution and other crimes that are not part of the everyday life of readers. Anke Biendarra’s resumption that “aesthetic and social documents intervene in the material world through their form and embody and allegorize social tensions of historical moments in polyphone ways” also applies to crime fiction (2012: 11).

The tensions between realism vs. artificiality or social criticism vs. entertainment that have been explored in this subchapter raise various questions for the analysis of post-millennial Indian and Latin American crime fiction: How do authors deal with the apparent prerequisite to realistically anchor the genre in a particular setting? Which strategies do they apply? Can changes be detected between works written

nowadays and older corpora such as the post-dictatorial crime fiction novel in Argentina and Chile or the long-existing tradition of crime fiction in Indian languages?

The final part of the theoretical Chapter explores how crime fiction production in the Global South relates to current debates in World Literature. Complicating the idea of crime fiction as World Literature or a global genre, it will be shown that these terms turn a blind eye to asymmetries in the global publishing market as well as to local literary production in the Global South.

### 2.3.5 Crime Fiction and/as World Literature in the Global South

Recent scholarship on World Literature often claims to have a global scope and to revise and broaden what is considered world literature. While the focus of the study of world literature has usually been literary fiction or the novel – which might be the reason why the study of genre fiction only came into the limelight recently (King 2014: 11; 14). Crime fiction certainly matches Damrosch's definition of world literature encompassing classics from around the globe, masterpieces from national traditions and windows into specific cultures (Damrosch 2003: 15). It is this third category that is usually emphasized with regard to contemporary crime fiction: Writers give insights into respective locales and cultures via an investigation carried out by a detective figure. This is the scope of many studies on the internationalization or global circulation of crime fiction, which point at the ease with which the genre travels from one culture to another due the similar plot structures, a fixed course of events, etc. (see for example Erdmann 2009: 13). Works analyzed in this context commonly employ minority detectives who can make use of a specific cultural knowledge and thereby give insights into his or her community as in Walter Mosley's *Easy Rawlins* series (see Anderson et al. 2012: 2). Discussions of crime fiction as a global genre commonly underline the global reach and readership of the genre as well as its multilocality (Knight/King 2014: 5–6).

With the greater reach of the genre comes a call for a new framework to study crime fiction that goes beyond a national approach and aims to understand crime fiction in a global context to do justice to current developments (King 2014: 8–10). With a view to this global reach in terms of audience and settings, Eva Erdmann creates a “World Map of International Crime Fiction” to identify blank spots on the map, as well as to explore how “changes in political territories, the break-up and rebuilding of nations, [...] and the new significance of regional contexts” reflect in crime fiction (2011: 282). While Erdmann’s project may certainly help to visualize the genre’s global circulation, it has been criticized by Pepper and Schmid for failing to take transnational dimensions of crime into account and for being uninformative about the genre’s capacities (2016: 2). Whether such an approach can take into account the imbalances of this global circulation and whether it can cover areas outside Europe and the US remains questionable as language issues and the lack of scholarly literature pose an obstacle.

Commonly, only a small corpus of established canonic authors is taken into consideration when addressing literature from the Global South. As I already suggested in Chapter 1, what is regarded as Indian or Latin American literature on the global market may actually be quite distinct from the books that are currently produced and read in the Global South. Thus, entanglements between literature and globalization can be identified on various levels. This relation has been the scope of reflection of many literary scholars, who, like for example Suman Gupta, underline that more than through material or technological processes, globalization is constructed by “how it is talked about or narrated” (2009: 64). This makes literature a prime archive when studying these narrations about globalization. Gupta names various aspects that are of interest to study these interrelations such as the thematic reflection of globalization, the use of literary texts or the interpretation to support a conceptual position as well as the effects of the book industry on literary production (ib.: 65–66). Overall, a literary text can contribute to “add knowledge about the discourses of globalization” (ib.: 69) and does not only mirror the complex and divergent processes understood as globalization. Rather than looking into the

idiosyncrasies of literary systems and genres in the Global South, I focus on the local adaptation of crime fiction as a globally circulating genre in this thesis. The genre's circulation and development is congruent with Franco Moretti's observation on the rise of the novel in general: As part of the one, yet unequal literary system the genre has similarly spread from the core to the semi-peripheral or peripheral regions of the world (or the Global South) (Moretti 2013: 46). According to Moretti, this literary evolution leads to a "compromise between western formal influence and local materials" – plus a local narrative voice (ib.: 50; 57). He uses the wave and the tree as two central metaphors to study this evolution and applies a distant reading of a multitude of studies on the emergence of the novel in various regions. According to Moretti, the evolution thus occurs in waves which spill over from one region to the next. This leads to a tree-like diversification due to the local materials and narrative voices and thus turn into branches of local traditions that transform the original genre (ib.: 56–57). The same can be observed with regard to crime fiction, which since its emergence in 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe has spread to almost all regions worldwide and diversified in the course.

Moretti has pointed out that "[a] target literature is, more often than not, interfered with by a source literature which completely ignores it" (2013: 47). The one-sidedness of these influences and adaptations remains strikingly similar today: Bestselling titles from the consecrating centers of literary production in Europe and especially in the US are often available in many countries of the Global South. Crime fiction is certainly a case in point here. As has already been mentioned in Chapter 1, Scandinavian or British crime fiction is read across India and Latin America; authors enjoy a great popularity and have been invited for literary festivals and book fairs. Their works are increasingly made available by globally operating publishing houses that hold growing market shares in India and Latin America's local market(s). The reverse flows of crime fiction novels by authors from the Global South that are translated and published in the centers of literature production are rather low. A South-South exchange is very scarce as already mentioned in Chapter 2.2.2.

This one-sidedness is apparently now challenged as crime fiction is regarded as a “truly global literary genre” and marketed as a new form of ‘travel literature’ that is accessible for readers worldwide (Erdmann 2011: 277; Pepper/Schmid 2016: 1). Steward King has emphasized that the “worldly way” in which crime fiction is consumed by readers who choose the same kind of genre again and again in a variety of localities. Writers like the US-American James Patterson profit from this large interest in crime fiction and foreign settings: For Patterson’s Private series, he teams up with locally successful writers who are familiar with the setting – such as Ashwin Sanghi for the Private India series (2014) – and publishes titles internationally. These books are marketed and sold like a brand: Patterson’s name signals familiarity and an expectable format – insinuating the consumerist aspect of a mass market genre – and can thus reach a much broader audience worldwide than Sanghi, in spite of his popularity as an English-language writer of Hindu mythological thrillers in India. Similarly, crime fiction set in the South is often promoted by writers with a secure seat in the North. Alexander McCall Smith’s *The No. 1 Ladies’ Detective Agency* series, set in Botswana is certainly the most famous crime fiction series set in Africa till date.

The global reach of the genre is described as a key characteristic of this global status (Pepper 2016: 8). Inequalities in the global literary system are often not addressed although they actually have a high impact on which books circulate from and to where. As has already been pointed out in the introduction, the circulation of crime fiction can hardly be called an “intercourse in every direction” (Nilsson et al. 2017: 2) as authors from the Global South continue to be significantly disadvantaged on the global literary market. While internationally successful writers are also published in the Global South and might inspire local writers, the opposite is a rare exception. Also scholars who underline the global status of the genre usually only resort to the few rather canonic authors from the South that have been published and translated into English. For Latin America, for example, it is usually the Mexican Paco Ignacio Taibo II and the Cuban Leonardo Padura Fuentes who are named and studied as contemporary Latin Ameri-

can crime fiction writers, while others are largely ignored. However, a much larger canon does certainly exist on national markets. Even contemporary writers who get translated and published abroad do not necessarily receive much attention in comparison to the established ones.

In terms of locality, an interesting observation has repeatedly been made by scholars: While inter- and transnational crimes increasingly broaden the scope of crime fiction novels, investigations of crime fiction novels are usually carried out locally. Similarly, Sam Naidu has pointed out that recent South African crime fiction usually deals with crimes that have international connections but are locally investigated (2016: 5). Pepper and Schmid see a tension between globalization and the state as central for the debates of the global character of the genre. According to the authors, crime fiction describes how the state reaches its limits when it comes to international crimes and the “deterritorializing impulses of global capitalism” (2016: 4–5). The emphasis on a local setting from which inter- or transnational crimes are scrutinized strongly resonates the concept of glocalization laid out in Chapter 2.1.1: The effects and consequences of globalization processes are perceived and interpreted locally. The need for a local setting is partly explained with the genre’s exigencies: Pepper and Schmid see the investigation of a single crime by a detective figure in one jurisdiction as a constitutive feature of the genre that impedes the depiction of larger unities of space and crime. The authors claim that writers thereby reinscribe state power and cannot adequately grasp and trace global connections (*ib.*: 7).

On the other hand, this corresponds to the idea that crime fiction is tied to how a specific culture or society constructs and represents crime at a certain historic moment (Knight 2014: 16). In his recent monograph, Andrew Pepper interrogates for example the changing relationship between state and capital in crime fictions novels (2016: 14) and thereby provides another example of the glocal character of the genre as universally present as well as locally and historically being at the same time. Nonetheless, the local setting does not account for the

provincial character that is usually attributed to classic British crime fiction novels set in small towns and villages, since “a specific setting can also be a gateway to much larger spatial categories and analyses” (ib.: 13). Through this gateway, crimes with international dimensions are scrutinized: International terrorism, drug and human trafficking or money laundering are among those that are frequently named. These activities are carried out by complex organizations that often resemble globally operating companies. Besides clearly illicit activities, many novels also address business activities based on exploitation and advantageous ties between business and politics. Thus, they show how “individual lives are shaped by the push and pull of larger social, political, and economic forces [...]” (Pepper 2016: 17).

The deep engagement with capitalism and its consequences have led to the emergence of new subgenres such as the Capitalist Noir (Pepper 2016: 232) or Neoliberal Noir (Kokotovic 2006: 15). Here, it is the downsides of neoliberalism or globalization that are commonly scrutinized via the investigation of an individual crime as a starting point (King/Knight 2014: 6). The Latin American *neopolicial* presents a subgenre that emerged in the 1980s and denounces economic and political conditions, but might not do justice to the heterogeneity of works published in the last years. The actual focus of many contemporary works lies in “the way in which structural changes to national and global economies produce conditions where crime is all but inevitable” (Pepper/Schmid 2016: 10). These concerns also mean a shift of attention away from the identification and revelation of the culprit: Pepper has pointed out that it “is not simply the question of who is guilty, for sometimes we know this from the start [...], but more pertinently *what* is to blame: what has caused this problem called crime’ in the first place?” (Pepper 2016: 2). It is precisely state authorities, politicians and the police who are frequently revealed to be corrupt and involved in criminal activities (ib.: 2). In other cases, it is the retreat of the neoliberal state that is connected to a rise of criminality as a way to balance the injustices of state power (Pepper 2016: 11). Besides economic and political problems, it is society that is scrutinized in contemporary crime fiction novels. The genre is often seen as a type

of social commentary which highlights problems commonly ignored such as structural violence and exploitation (Schmid 2012: 19; Nünning 2008: 3). These observations coincide with Scott Slovic et al.'s comment on literature from the Global South as a "frequent critique of the impacts of global capitalism, a force largely transplanted from the Global North" (2015: 9).

The large transformations that India and Latin America are confronted with play a role in many crime fiction novels. Against this backdrop, it is interesting to ask how writers adapt generic elements and contents and how they receive the transformations and tensions set out above that emerge in the particular context of economic liberalization, inequality, mediatization, the growth of the middle class, etc. in the Global South.

In accordance with the diversification of the genre for multiple purposes and the ongoing modification of generic elements and topics, I overall advocate a heterogenization of the genre in the Global South that cannot be merely grasped as a postcolonial writing-back or a corpus of books produced for a global market to give insights into a specific culture or context. I suggest that the genre is partly used to interrogate the downsides of current developments related to neoliberalism and integration into the global capitalist system, but generally focuses on rather traditional individual crimes and motives that give occasion to a negotiation of competing identity constructions and lifestyles in private relations and settings. While these problematics are often trivialized in other popular media such as for example India's Bollywood cinema or Latin American telenovelas, it can be argued that crime fiction offers a wider space to discuss the heterogeneous and complex effects of economic, political and cultural globalization processes and their impact on the (self-conception of the) regions' middle classes in the last decades. To give a more holistic picture of the context in which the corpora of crime fiction have emerged in India, Argentina and Chile, the history of the genre and development in the publishing markets and literary production will be discussed in the following chapter.

### 3 The History of Crime Fiction and the Publishing Market

This Chapter deals with the development of crime fiction in India and Latin America from its beginnings until today and looks into the commonalities and differences in the appropriation process of an initially foreign genre that arrived in both regions at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Furthermore, this Chapter will also look at the development of the publishing markets in India and Latin America to address the question if and to what extent the publishing market had an impact on the development of crime fiction in these two regions. As part of the Global South, India and Latin America and their book markets are subject to uneven flows of capital, goods and forms from the Global North to the South. It is particularly the role of large multinational publishing corporations which control increasing shares of the publishing industry in the South that will be examined here. However, other stakeholders such as local publishers, festivals, bookshops, the media but also the state's possibilities to intervene in the market will be studied to complete the picture and give a better idea of the heterogeneous developments of these markets. Rather than a mere imposition of a global model, local responses and the creative appropriation and reinterpretation of forms – especially with regard to crime fiction – will be analyzed: For which audience do these publishers produce, what kind of Indian and Latin American literature circulates in and beyond certain countries? How does the local or national production relate to the literature from both regions that gets published in the Global North?

Furthermore, intermedial and intertextual relations are briefly addressed in this chapter: What effect do foreign and local crime fiction series have on the readers' and writer's expectations of the genre? This point can only be outlined very briefly here due to a lack of studies and secondary literature. However, the presence of the genre in television or cinema as well as references to other local or international works or iconic figures can be seen as an indicator of the establishment

of own traditions or the identification with foreign ones. In a final step, important representatives and characteristics of recent crime fiction works which have been published since approximately the turn of the millennium will be explored in this chapter. Along with that, the connections or differences between the genre and recent literary production in India and Latin America in general will be discussed to see crime fiction in a larger context that will be of particular importance for the analysis of the corpus novels in Chapters 4 and 5. The findings on the Indian and the Latin American side are brought together in the final part of this Chapter to see which conclusions in terms of commonalities and differences can be drawn from the comparative study of India's, Argentina's and Chile's publishing market and literary production here.

## 3.1 India

### 3.1.1 Crime Fiction and India's Publishing Market

In India, little research has so far been conducted on contemporary Indian crime fiction; academic and other works that focus on the development of the Indian publishing market and Indian popular fiction in English remain relatively scarce. The few studies that have been conducted on these topics until date have mainly been carried out by researchers based in the UK: Suman Gupta and Tapan Basu coordinated the research project 'Contemporary Indian Literature in English and the Indian Market' at the Open University's Ferguson Center in 2007 (link to project website see Bibliography). Following this research, Gupta published two articles (2012; 2013) and the collection of articles *Consumable Texts in Contemporary India. Uncultured Books and Bibliographical Sociology* (2015), in which he observes different phenomena concerning current developments in India's publishing market. Pooja Sinha has focused on Indian crime fiction as part of her PhD thesis "Contemporary Indian English Genre Fiction: Conventions and Contexts in the Marketplace" (2013). Besides, Emma Dawson Varughese has written extensively about India's publishing market and what she calls 'Indian post-millennial fiction' in

various monographs such as *Reading New India: Post-Millennial Indian Fiction in English* (2013) and other recent articles. Publications that look into the position and changes of Indian literature and the global market are Pavithra Narayanan's monograph *What Are You Reading? The World Market and Indian Literary Production* (2012) and several recent edited volumes like A.I. Viswamohan's *Postliberalization Indian Novels in English: Politics of Global Reception and Awards* (2013), Krishna Sen and Rituparna Roy's *Writing India Anew: Indian-English Fiction 2000–2010* (2013) or Om Prakash Dwivedi and Lisa Lau's *Indian Writing in English and the Global Literary Market* (2014). These studies provide starting points for the discussion of contemporary Indian literature in English and the book market.

Studies with a specific focus on crime fiction are similarly scarce: Prabhat K. Singh gives an overview of new crime fiction novels in his introduction of *The Indian Novel in English of the New Millennium* (2013). S.A. Narayan includes ever more crime fiction novels in his annual report on new publications in India for *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* (2012; 2013; 2014; 2016). Pooja Sinha's thesis (2013) and Tanvir Patel's *Emerging Crimewallahs. Modern Developments in South Asian Crime Fiction* (2011) look into Indian crime fiction, as do the few studies on individual writers. Vikram Chandra's crime fiction works for example have been studied by Sheo Bhushan Shukla et al. (2010), S. Sridevi (2012) and Claire Chambers (2009). Early crime fiction works in Indian languages have been addressed by Markus Daechsel (2003) and Francesca Orsini (2004; 2009). 20<sup>th</sup> century Bengali works have furthermore been the scope of studies by Gautam Chakrabarti (2013), Suchitra Mathur (2006) and Pinaki Roy (2008).

However, to get a more comprehensive idea of the abundance of crime fiction in Indian languages as well as the current production of crime fiction in English, it is necessary to draw back on other sources. As Pooja Sinha has correctly observed, “[to] understand the contemporary book market in India [...] it is necessary to pay close attention to book reviews, newspaper articles, interviews and readers’ blogs” (2013: 78). The same accounts for the development of the Indian publishing

market in general: While India is usually highlighted as an emerging book market with a huge potential and growth rates that attract multinational publishing houses, the research and information about these developments is relatively scarce. No central agency compiles data and even publishing consultants struggle to get access to numbers (Mallya 2015: 85). Knowledge largely remains in the hands of editors who have access to tools like Nielsen Bookscan. The data provider compiles statistics in India since 2010 and is said to track 30–40 percent of the publishing market (Mallya 2015: 86). As an initial step to bridge this gap of data, the Association of Publishers in India (API) and the Federation of Indian Publishers (FIP) hired Nielsen Bookscan to conduct a market survey. The results were published in 2015, but due to the pricing model, it is largely inaccessible to those outside the industry.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, I largely draw back on Indian and international online and print media, especially newspaper and magazine articles, which I have consistently followed and analyzed during the research period and compared the results to information obtained from interviews with publishers as well as publishing consultants.

The lack of studies on the dynamics of the Indian publishing market can partly be explained by the recency of the phenomenon; thus studies may be on the verge. But it also resonates a gap between academia and the market in India: As recent compilations by A.I. Viswamohan (2013) or Om Prakash Dwivedi and Liza Lau (2014) illustrate, scholars often continue to focus on canonic authors and remain largely unaware of recent Indian popular fiction in English. Partly, scholars also dismiss current Indian fiction in its entirety as popular fiction that is not worth to study.

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15 Thanks to Leonard Burger, I got access to the executive summary and press release of the report. Much of this information has also been discussed in Vinutha Mallya's article "Nielsen Values Indian Publishing at \$3.9 Billion" (2016).

### 3.1.2 Early Indian Crime Fiction

Indian English newspapers that review new publications often give the impression that crime fiction has recently arrived in India (see O'Yeah 2010). But what is presented as a newly emerging genre is actually only a novelty with regard to India's English language publishing sphere. Crime fiction has a long history in the subcontinent. As Francesca Orsini explains in her works on early detective novels in North India (2004; 2009), the genre came to India 'ready-made' at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and met with immediate success. Markus Daechsel recounts in his study on Urdu crime fiction in the Punjab at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the genre was already well established in the 1930s. The corpus works included "fully acknowledged translations, unauthorized renditions and adaptations of existing literature to indigenous new writing" (Daechsel 2003: 23). Editors did not always adhere to the generic convention of classic British works: Daechsel for example refers to a title translation that gives away the identity of the murderer and thereby destroys the mystery of the whodunit (2003: 35). Detective fiction in Hindi already existed in the 1890s when the genre was introduced in India via Bengali. Editors in other Indian languages searching for new forms of entertainment literature were quick to take over the Bengali translations (Orsini 2004: 439–440). Priya Joshi's study about the circulation of British books in 19<sup>th</sup> century India shows that Indian readers had a preference for certain novels – especially popular fiction like G.W.M. Reynold's sensationalist series *The Mysteries of London*. These works circulated widely within in India and were translated into several Indian languages (Joshi 2002: 310). Joshi points at the impact that Indian readers had on the selection of certain types of the fiction as British publishing firms catered to their tastes (ib.: 28). While British literature was aimed at "propagating and legitimating Englishness", this selected consumption can be seen more ambivalently as a practice in which the foreign formats were recontextualized in multiple ways and influenced the works of Indian writers (ib. 4; 23). According to Joshi, the success of British popular fiction can be connected to "unexpected points of contact" and commonalities between British works and traditional

Indian narratives (ib.: xviii). Similarly, crime fiction became popular due to its reliance on recognizable conventions of genres that existed beforehand and offered both “recognisability and novelty” to its readers (Sinha 2013: 16). According to Orsini, the result was a combination of “genres reproduced” and “genres introduced”<sup>16</sup> (2004: 435). This hybridization accounted for differences in works in different languages and depicts the communities’ respective relationships to the British colonial power: Bengali crime fiction works are described as straightforward translations from the British model, and “depict a colonial society that is already fully adapted to British rule” (Orsini 2004: 461). By contrast, the Mughal Empire was still very present in their Hindi counterparts which drew back on traditional figures like the *ayyar* (spy in Hindi/Urdu) (Orsini 2009: 238). Conflicts with the colonial system, however, do not foreground in these early works. What shines through, nonetheless, is a negotiation of different validation systems: Written proves compete with physical signs as incriminating clues (Orsini 2004: 473). Detective stories in Hindi retained elements of older vernacular genres, while Urdu crime fiction included characteristics of adventure stories that were popular at the time in the Punjab and provided recognizable features for local readers (Daechsel 2003: 31).

It is Orsini’s and Daechsel’s contention that the success of the detective story is not only due to its formal adaptability, but closely connected to economic, social and technological transformations as well as changes in India’s literary field at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: In the 1880s, popular fiction started to be published on a larger scale in several Indian languages, and often included adaptations of English novels (Oesterheld 2009: 2). In the growing market for popular fiction in Hindi in the 1890s, the adaptation of crime fiction caused an “explosion of fiction” in the Hindi publishing

16 Orsini’s observations on detective fiction and also Daechsel’s articles about the history of the genre in India to a large extent match Franco Moretti’s study on the expansion of the novel in the one, yet unequal literary system (2013). This is curious since Orsini is very critical of “Moretti’s novel-based theses” and for example points at the fact that other genres were much more important in 19<sup>th</sup> century India than the novel in an earlier article (2002: 79).

industry (Orsini 2004: 437). In the case of Urdu detective fiction, the emergence of the genre “benefited from structural changes in the publishing market” at that time. Furthermore, social changes and economic growth that translated into a new strata of urbanized white-collar workers who were able to afford books and who showed interest in reading in Urdu over other languages written and spoken in the Punjab (Daechsel 2003: 31–33). One of novelties that were introduced by the genre and accounted for its popularity was the depiction of a realistic surrounding: In terms of language, setting, protagonists and crimes, writers realistically depicted a surrounding their readers could relate to. While characters and settings were naturalized, “the glamour of the detective’s fast life and smart brain” was maintained (Orsini 2004: 446). Detective figures used modern methods of deduction and scientific knowledge to solve a case, took fingerprints and used cameras (Daechsel 2003: 25; Orsini 2004: 457). This hints at another reason for the popularity of the genre: The detective figures and their stories can be seen as “windows into modernity” for their readers (Oesterheld 2009: 6): The stories were “overloaded with descriptions of contemporary symbols of modernity” such as communication technology, the railway system, medicine and consumption products (Daechsel 2003: 38). These items reflected a fascination and desire for social and technological innovations. Daechsel suggests that the foreign genre was adapted to convey local realism and modernity to a local readership: Readers and writers followed the example of fiction works that were popular among the colonial masters which was seen as a signifier of “metropolitan cultural superiority” (ib.: 35). This once again points at the varied meanings of the circulation and adaptation of British popular fiction in India at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### 3.1.3 20th Century Crime Fiction in Indian Languages

Crime fiction has been a popular genre in Indian languages ever since the 19th century. Popular writing or pulp fiction in Indian languages, however, has hardly received any media or scholarly attention during most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. An exception is Pinaki Roy’s 2008 comparative study of Sherlock Holmes and Byomkesh Bakshi. Byomkesh is

one of the most famous Indian detective figures who appear in Bengali stories by Sharadindu Bandyopadhyay published between 1932 and 1970. In contrast to early works that were seen as compliant with the colonizer and included mere copies of British detectives, Bandyopadhyay as well as the writer and filmmaker Satyajit Raj largely omitted any presence of the British in their works (Roy 2008: 7). Raj wrote a series on detective Feluda between 1965 and 1992, which, according to Suchitra Mathur can be read as a “dual postcolonial mimicry” that challenges both colonial and emerging nationalist discourses in India (2006: 107). Both series continue to be popular in Bengali and in translation until today and are regularly subjected to adaptations in TV series and movies. These adaptations account for a lasting pan-Indian popularity of both characters whose ‘Bengaliness’ is commonly underlined in the stories for example through their clothes. Competing knowledge systems or political events like India’s independence do not resonate in these stories. In many ways, the authors draw back on the characteristics of classic British detective stories including the Watson-figure who underlines the brilliant mind of the detective. Trying to do justice to the requirements of detective fiction and Bengal’s extra-textual reality, however, often resulted in a “divided loyalty.” According to Gautam Chakrabarti, this reflects in the novels as they drew back on a model European modernity and rationalism and did not correspond to the actual context in which the genre was adapted (2012: 264).

Crime fiction also prospered in various other Indian languages such as Malayalam, Telugu or Tamil; however, there is hardly any information on these bodies of works available in English. The popularity of Tamil pulp literature is underlined by Pritham Chakravarthy and Rakesh Khanna (2010: x); Kannada<sup>17</sup> detective fiction include writers like N. Narasimhaiah, who is said to have written about 550 novels (Times of India 2011). The Pakistani writer Ibne Safi wrote about 250 books in Urdu (Oesterheld 2009: 1). Hindi pulp fiction enjoyed its heyday between the 1960s and the 1980s, when single novels sold more than

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17 Kannada is a Dravidian language that is mainly spoken in the state of Karnataka, of which Bangalore – officially called Bengaluru since 2006, is the state capital.

500,000 copies or more (Pande 2008). According to Suman Gupta, even nowadays, the three top-selling authors of Hindi pulp fiction continue to sell 1.5 million copies a year (Gupta 2013: 168). Among them are Surender Mohan Pathak or Gulshan Nanda, who have published more than 250 and 150 novels respectively. Many of them have been adapted in Bollywood movies and both authors have a huge amount of followers without much media attention (Gupta 2012: 167). Works of these writers continue to be situated at the pole of mass production in India's complex literary field and are commonly sold cheaply in informal spaces such as books stalls at railways stations or on the pavement (Rism 2011). They do not receive any marketing, nor are works promoted in reviews or at book fairs. While popular fiction in Indian languages is often treated as a uniform genre produced for poor or lower middle class readers, many books are actually considered "staples for middle class readerships" (Gupta 2012: 167) and consumed secretly by "housewives, college students, frequent travelers, old-timers and aficionados" (Kaur 2012). The debates about content and readership of genre fiction in Indian languages has also found its way into English language novels: In Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* (2008) for example, the narrator extensively talks about the Hindi magazine "Murder Weekly". In CK Meena's *Dreams for the Dying* (2008), a woman protagonist recounts the pleasure of reading erotic fiction magazines in Malayalam on train rides, even though the magazines are not seen as appropriate literature for women by fellow travelers (see also Chapter 5.5.2). These examples show how fictional texts self-reflectively address debates about their own status.

So in spite of the low prestige, magazines and novels actually circulated widely and were a common source of entertainment in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Chakravarthy/Khanna 2010: xi). The possibilities of entertainment have changed significantly with the arrival of satellite television in India in 1992 (Ghosh 2010; Kaur 2012). This has led to a recession in the industry; sales figures suddenly dropped and many publishing houses had to close (Kaur 2012). While big names like Pathak continue to sell, the title of Avijit Ghosh's article 'Cult status, but no market' (2010) provides an adequate description of the changes that the

mass-market pole of popular fiction in Hindi has experienced in the last decades. These changes are not just the result of increasing TV consumption but are rather connected to broader changes the country has experienced since its liberalization in the 1990s as discussed in Chapter 2.1.2.

### 3.1.4 The Contemporary Indian English Language Publishing Market

At the beginning of the 1990s, India was on the edge of a serious economic crisis and the government close to default. As part of an International Monetary Fund bailout for which India's gold reserves were brought to the UK and Switzerland, India adopted neoliberal economic policies (Rothermund 2008: 103). Since independence, the country had pursued protectionist economic policies that focused on import substitution and guided economic development (ib.: 97f.). However, this system effectively led to the bureaucracy-laden 'License Raj' and very moderate growth rates. Since the 1990s, high growth rates turned India into one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. New jobs have been created in specific sectors and led to the emergence of a new middle class (see Chapter 2.12). The situation of others sectors such as agriculture, however, is in the best case stagnant (Rothermund 2008: 104; 153ff.). Thus while economic liberalization is presented as a success story, it is also blamed for an increase in poverty and inequality as only few profit from the development.

These changes also had various implications on the Indian publishing market: Some popular fiction titles in English were produced throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but India was generally perceived not to have a large enough readership for English popular fiction as only a small part of the population read in English (Khair 2008: 61). In the last decades, this perception has changed substantially and "a hitherto non-existent or semi-existent internal market" for contemporary Indian writing in English has emerged (Gupta 2007: 2).

The English publishing market has experienced a recent growth and modernization following liberalization (Narayanan 2012: 6). Historically, while the (English) market was dominated by outposts of British publishers until India's independence, the government focused on the development of an own market shortly after that and compelled foreign publishers to work with local partners (Mallya 2015: 88). The (re)opening of Penguin India in the 1980s is seen as the beginning of trade publishing in India. Since restrictions on foreign direct investment for the sector were removed in 2000, multinational publishers like Random House, Hachette or Simon & Schuster have entered the market (Mallya 2015: 89). Nowadays, the Indian branches of HarperCollins and Penguin Random House dominate the market with domestic books and thus largely function like Indian-owned publishing houses (Lau/Dawson Varughese 2015: 92). They coexist with older Indian publishers like Roli Books or Rupa&Co., founded in the 1930s and independent publishers like Zubaan or Aleph Book Company. Recently, further publishers like Westland, Srishti Publishers or Fingerprint! Publishing have entered the market which apparently offers space and potential for all these different players (Gupta 2015: 28; Pal 2012). Individual key players have a huge impact on the industry as Narayanan has underlined (2012: 92–93). There are several examples of professionals such as Urvashi Butalia or Chiki Sarkar who, after working for multinational publishing houses, set up their own businesses (Chopra 2015: 378). Lamenting the scarcity of data on the Indian publishing market, Vinutha Mallya points out that reports usually fall back on an elaborate network of informers which primarily consists of retailers and distributors, in-house marketing and sales teams (Mallya 2015: 85). Publishing consultant Rob Francis similarly underlines that “India has a fast-growing and vital book industry which has very little knowledge of itself” (Francis 2007: 27).

According to a market survey<sup>18</sup> conducted by Nielsen Bookscan published in 2015, India is the sixth largest print book market in the world and the second largest English language market after the US in terms of market value (Nielsen Bookscan 2015b: 2). Growth rates are estimated to be as high as 20% annual in the last years and are connected to “an ambience of material prosperity” of the growing economy in general (Nielsen Bookscan 2015a: 1; Basu 2007: 28). In spite of India’s linguistic diversity, 55% of all trade sales are books written in English, while publications in Hindi have a market share of 35% (Nielsen Bookscan 2015b: 2). Publisher Ashok Chopra summarized that Indian publishing in English turned from a “cottage industry” into a “giant communications industry” (2015: 365). Overall, the Indian publishing market is seen as a market in consolidation, but affected by problems such as poor distribution systems, long credit cycles, lack of expertise of bookshops, and piracy (Nielsen Bookscan 2015b: 2–3; Padmanabhan 2004: 92–93). The influx of multinational publishers has contributed to the professionalization of India’s publishing market (Ghai 2008: 202): Publishers have introduced or adapted to global standards in terms of the format and appearance of books, awards, bestseller lists and retailing practices (Gupta 2012: 50). Book launches and other events like books fairs or literary festivals are now common practice and have experienced a fast growth in the last decade: India’s largest festival, the Jaipur Literature Festival celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017. Also Indian home-grown literary prizes such as the Crossword Book Award, the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature or The Hindu Literary Prize contribute to the promotion of respective books of Indian literature in English<sup>19</sup>. While fostering sales, these initiatives themselves are financed by corporate or media sponsoring.

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18 While trade books are in the limelight of the study, educational books comprise a market share of 70% in India (Mallya 2016: 85). The report in general was widely acknowledged, but its focus on English language publishing and publishers who use ISBN numbers raised questions about the accuracy of the data (ib.: 86).

19 The Sahitya Akademi, India’s National Academy of Letters, also confers an annual award to writers in 24 Indian languages, among them English. However, the Man Booker Prize continues to be the most distinguished award for Indian authors. Recent Indian awards like the Crossword Book Award are increasingly important to push sales.

This evokes the fears of a commercialization of Indian literature, but also supports the growing impact of new consecrators other than international publishers.

In contrast to the lack of attention from academia discussed in 3.1.1, India's English-language media plays a big role for this book market: Books are reviewed in Indian newspapers and magazines or promoted via marketing campaigns using social media. Publishing houses also increasingly rely on video trailers and social networks to promote their books (see Nerurkar 2014). Reviews in the media are such a widely used tool that journalists are among the major consecrating authorities for India's English language book market. Their praise is widely used to promote books: Endorsements on book covers and forewords are ever more present and have turned into an important sales tool that have an impact on print runs (Reddy 2006). The use of endorsements has turned into a common practice in India in the course of the last few years. It is interesting to note that while endorsements appear to be a common marketing instrument in the English language publishing sphere, Spanish language publishers largely refrain from this practice and mostly use uniform templates for book covers (see Chapter 3.2.4). Strikingly, recent Indian crime fiction books published since 2015 usually use endorsements which were much less frequent beforehand. Also new print runs of older book include endorsements: While for example Anita Nair's 2012 edition of *Cut Like Wound* was published without endorsements, the 2015 edition includes a quote from a review from the *Guardian* on the backcover. Consecrators assigned with this task are commonly journalists but increasingly also other Indian writers: Zac O'Yeah's *Hari. A Hero for Hire* (2015) was for example praised by fellow crime fiction writers like Mukul Deva, Tarquin Hall and Ashok Banker. This practice contributes to the establishment of a new Indian writing scene of authors who are perceived to be endorsed with symbolic capital to assume the role of consecrators. This practice has frequently come in for criticism. The writer and literary critic Pan-kaj Mishra complained for example that there is no "critical culture in English" in India as publishers "rely on celebrity endorsements to assess a piece of writing" (Reddy 2006). Besides celebrities, it is often

reviews in specific newsletters and magazines that are highlighted as markers for the popularity of a book. These include reviews in Indian and international print media which are usually included as endorsements on book covers. While endorsements name writers, journalists' names are often omitted. This practice points at the idea that certain newspapers function like brands that are associated with specific values and prestige and which can be exploited to sell a specific product.

It is interesting to observe that crime fiction novels are frequently compared or connected to non-Indian detective archetypes or crime fiction series, which will be further explored in Chapter 5.2.1 in which inter- and metafictional references in the corpus novels are studied. The entire practice of endorsements of Indian books by Indian connoisseurs gives proof of an independent Indian literary scene. However, the fact that the works of Indian authors are constantly compared to foreign forerunners and examples and are not connected to the existing Indian corpus of works contradicts these efforts, and points at the asymmetries of the Indian publishing market as well as its connectedness to the global publishing process as will be elaborated on in Chapter 3.1.5.

### **The Impact of Publishers and Readership: Sales and Retail Practices**

In contrast to the unofficial sale spaces associated with books in Indian languages, literature in English is increasingly sold by chains located in shopping malls. While book chains are more inviting for browsing, fiction sections generally only differentiate between foreign and Indian fiction, which complicates the promotion of specific books and genres. Online retail is perceived as a mixed blessing by the publishing industry: Companies like Flipkart and Amazon India already account for 40–50% of all book sales in India (Rose/Gowda 2014), but also offer more possibilities for small publishers and a greater choice of books. As book prices are not fixed, online retailers often give discounts with which traditional booksellers can hardly compete (Mallya 2015: 90). Ebooks, on the other hand, do not have a big market in India yet – in spite of the country's enthusiasm for technology (ib.: 85). Several

larger publishers and online retailers offer eBook versions of their titles and the digital publishing house Juggernaut Books was founded in 2016 to foster digital reading (Kuruville 2016).

Along with changing retail practices, also the role of the author is changing in India. While popular fiction authors like the aforementioned Hindi language crime fiction writers Pathak hardly ever received media attention or interacted with their readers, many of the new Indian English language writers are invited to literature festivals but are also covered in the 'Page 3' sections<sup>20</sup> of newspapers (Basu et al. 2006). They can attain a new position of symbolic capital in the sense of Bourdieu that popular fiction writers did not hold before. Furthermore, authors are often perceived or see themselves as spokespersons of a 'New India'. The most prominent example continues to be Chetan Bhagat, who has published seven novels and two non-fiction books since 2004 and sold more than ten million copies (Suren-dran 2016). Largely unknown outside India, Bhagat claims to "write about an India that the West is not interested in" (Bhagat 2014). He enjoys great popularity as "a spokesman for the social conscience of Indian youth" who writes newspapers columns and is very active on social media (Gupta 2012: 52). Bhagat's claim is particularly interesting vis-à-vis the common allegations of Indian (literary fiction) writers to produce exoticized narratives about India to comply with what international publishers see as Indian literature for an international audience. While beforehand, foreign recognition was often seen as a prerequisite to sell in the Indian market, new popular fiction writers deliberately focus on their Indian audience (Padmanabhan 2004: 95). The huge number of debutant authors strikes out and while the market is expanding, some agents see a widening gap between the mass market and the autonomous pole in India's English language market: According to Anurava Sinha (2015), a group of established writers who regularly appear on the shortlists of Indian literary awards is rather small.

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20 Page 3 sections refer to supplements that cover celebrities in Indian newspapers.

A clear-cut distinction, however, also increasingly becomes blurry as many fiction books are neither strictly popular nor literary fiction. In spite of the polemics about the literary quality of many of these new writers, the emergence of Indian popular fiction in English is certainly “an interesting marker of significant cultural and economic changes in India” to quote Tabish Khair (2008: 71).

Editors are precisely looking for new genres and are said to commission authors to write specific types of texts (Viswamohan 2013: 21). While literary agents are not the major gatekeepers in India’s internal market as of now, editors have a large impact in developing the market and can experiment what kind of literature sells. According to Kushal Gulab, HarperCollins Chief Editor Karthika VK for example has “actively sought writers to write the kind of books that Indian writers haven’t written in English to far” (2007: 5). The huge impact of editors on the market has also come in for criticism. Aditya Sudarshan complained for example that if “Indian English fiction are crammed full of ‘light reading’, it is because our editors felt like it” (Sudarshan 2010). According to Gagri Gupta (2016), a large share of books editors receive are crime fiction or thrillers, which reflects in the growing presence of genre fiction.

While only very few popular fiction books sell more than 100,000 copies and fit in with the idea of a mass-market bestseller, average sales figures are around 2,000 copies. Until a few years ago, books selling more than 5,000 copies were considered bestsellers. As sales figures are growing, the number has now gone up to 10,000 copies (Basu 2007; Pal 2012). Broken down for example by Khair (2008: 60) or Gupta (2012: 51), the number of English readers only compromises a tiny – though steadily growing – fragment of India’s total population. This share is however large enough to perceive India as an emerging market for books. Besides the impact of political and economic changes in India and the emergence of a new group of authors, the subcontinent’s book market is primarily able to grow because of the emergence of a new readership: Factors like rising literacy rates and larger disposable incomes of the middle class are commonly given as reasons (Nielsen

Bookscan 2015a: 2). With growing education levels and the perception of English as the key to professional success, a new readership for books in English has emerged (Kaur 2012). This new middle class<sup>21</sup> is highly heterogeneous and mainly determined in relation to its economic behavior, purchase power, consumption patterns and a quest for upward mobility (Donner/De Neve 2011: 4–5). As India's integration into the global market had wide effects on employment opportunities and purchase power, the middle class is also increasingly the target group of advertising campaigns. It engages with new possibilities and products that have become available in the face of the effects of liberalization on the Indian market. Nonetheless, products and tastes remain rather 'glocal'<sup>22</sup> in accordance with Robertson's observation on the heterogenization that occurs simultaneously with the global circulation of other consumer goods (1995: 29–30).

### 3.1.5 Contemporary Indian Literature and New Genre Fiction in English

When it comes to literature, this emerging Indian middle class also fosters a "turn to localism" (Kramatschek 2006): According to editors like Hachette India's Managing Director Thomas Abraham, this middle class "wants to read books that address its concerns, written in voices it can understand and a language it can relate to" (quoted in Gulab 2007). This new middle class might agree with Sidharth Bhatia (2009), who complained that Indian literary fiction – particularly globally circulating works – are often sold at unaffordable prices, dominated by diaspora dilemmas and questions of identity and an exoticized Indian reality. Debates around the authenticity and situatedness of Indian writers have been part and parcel of India's literary scene and their writers – this is particularly true for the canon of 'Indian literature' that circulates beyond India. Ever since the global success of Rushdie's

21 The old middle class, in contrast, was traditionally seen as comprised of government workers and professionals (Dawson Varughese 2013: 16; Donner/De Neve 2011: 4).

22 The adaption of menus of US-American food joints such as McDonalds, Pizza Hut or KFC to meet the taste of Indian customers is a prominent example. Girish Taneja et al. (2012) provide several case studies of the adaption process of global brands in the Indian market.

*Midnight's Children* (1981), a small group of Indian authors writing in English has been able to win international literary prizes and get translated (Ponzanesi 2014: 49ff.). Their works are read and studied in postcolonial or English literature departments worldwide and include topics like a postcolonial rewriting of the Western canon, revisions of Indian history or the traumatic experience of living in diaspora. The loss of home or fragmented identities due to a migratory experience or being torn between tradition and modernity are ever-popular tropes which have found a global readership. In the popular reading of these texts, these supposedly 'Indian' experiences are paired with the authors' biographies who are equally marketed as cultural ambassadors or authentic voices from the margins (Brouillette 2007; Huggan 2001). Writers in Indian languages, by contrast, are presented as strongly disadvantaged by power imbalances in the global publishing market (see for example Orsini 2002: 87). This has led to controversies about the limitation of topics and voices that supposedly represent India and a binary construction of the diasporic vis-à-vis these so-called 'stay-at-home-writer'. A paradigmatic dispute is a debate by Meenakshi Mukherjee and Vikram Chandra in 2000.<sup>23</sup> Recent stud-

23 The debate was initiated by an article titled "The Cult of Authenticity" published in the Boston Review in 2000. In this article, Chandra (2000) recounts a meeting with Mukherjee at a reading event in Delhi. In tune with an article titled "The Anxiety of Indianness: Our Novels in English", Mukherjee (1993) blames Indian English writers for an (over)use of supposed and unnecessary markers of 'Indianness' as local color which either exoticize India or present a diasporic writer's nostalgia. Chandra complains in his article that critics like Mukherjee act as "cultural commissars" or "gatekeepers of 'Indianness'" and feel entitled to decide what is properly Indian. This debate, which has provoked a multitude of reactions from authors as well as critics (see e.g. Rajeswari Sunder Rajan 2001a; 2001b), has sparked a larger discussion on questions of representation and authenticity in Indian writing, but can also be read as an assertion of positions of power in India's intellectual field. Chandra (2000) for example points at the arbitrary selection of Indian writing in India according to a writer's perceived 'Indianness' which largely ignores his or her literary merits. Critical voices, however often point at the monetary gains and media attention that diasporic writers receive as representatives of India as a whole abroad. At the other extreme, Indian language writers, often termed regional writers in this debate, remain marginalized. As Francesca Orsini puts it, "[the] global does not incorporate the regional literatures of India. It cold-shoulders them" (Orsini 2002: 87). Salman Rushdie's earlier assertion that "the prose writing [...] by Indian writers working in English is proving to be a stronger and more important body of work than most of what has been produced [...] in the so-called 'vernacular languages'" in his foreword of *The Vintage Book of Indian Writing*,

ies like Om Dwivedi and Liza Lau's *Indian Writing in English and the Global Literary Market* (2014) draw back on this binary view of Indian writers. However, Indian writing in English is certainly not limited to postcolonial writers circulating in the global market and authentic vernacular writers that cannot find publishers. The growing corpus of popular fiction in English published since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a clear indicator here. These works are according to Suman Gupta "different from, and even resistant to, the established Indian English literary fiction" as they "[make] a claim of local rootedness" (2015: 30).

### 3.1.5.1 Genre Fiction in India

Besides controlling the influx of foreign literature into India, multinational publishers have fostered a domestic Indian publishing market. They created a "giant niche market" by publishing popular fiction in English written by Indian authors for an Indian audience (Gupta 2012: 49) and thus significantly broadened India's literary field. Also popular fiction published by multinational publishers is mainly distributed within the subcontinent (Gupta 2015: 27). According to Sangram Surve, "Indian fiction books today outdo international fiction by 3:1" (2014). A 2016 example of Amazon India's fiction best-seller list (March 29, 2016) confirms this claim: Besides a few globally bestselling authors like Paulo Coelho or J.K. Rowling, the list is dominated by Hindu mythological thrillers/sagas and romance novels<sup>24</sup> by Indian writers like Amish Tripathi, Ravinder Singh or the above-mentioned Chetan Bhagat. These writings of and for India's new middle

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1947–1997 (1997: 50) has certainly contributed to deepen the division between the regional and the globally circulating writer. So while Indian language writers are often presented as voices of a 'real' India and a counterpart of the Indian English writer, Chandra uses a different conceptualization of a 'regional writer' in his article: He sees himself as a regional writer in a geographic sense whose writing focuses on the western suburbs of Bombay as a territory he intimately knows and which for him represents the Indian multilingual and cosmopolitan population (2000).

24 Romance novels have become a dominant genre in Indian popular fiction very recently. Many of these bestselling works are written by male writers. Snigdha Poonam (2015) has noticed that "[i]t's as if male and female writers are guided by different codes of romance—the former follow that of Bollywood, and the latter of *Sex and the City*". This observation is also matches a group of female Indian crime fiction writers who have published Chick-lit crime fiction novels that I will discuss more in detail in Chapter 4.1.5.

class are increasingly packed in the format of globally viable formula writing (Gupta 2015: 28): They follow the line of non-vernacular 'Western' genre fiction like 'chick lit', thrillers, science fiction, graphic novels or crime fiction (Dawson Varughese 2013: 17). Along with that, new genres which cater for particular interests in India like call-center narratives and cross-genres such as the mythological thriller have emerged and diversify the corpus of popular fiction in English (Sen/Roy 2013: 15; Dawson Varughese 2013: 17).

The emergence of genre fiction in 21<sup>st</sup> century India can equally be connected to the larger changes in the publishing industry described above, which is happening along the lines of a Western export of knowledge and technology with capitalist and neo-colonial undertones and a strong focus on professionalization and commodification. The conscious fostering of genre fiction by publishers mentioned in 3.1.4 is also a marketing strategy that facilitates the promotion of the book. It also shows how "domestic markets are invariably shaped by foreign markets" (Paul 2007). But beyond that, the emergence of genre fiction is also an internal issue and closely connected to changes in society and a new middle class readership interested in reading 'localized' popular fiction in English. Similar to early popular fiction in Indian languages, English genre fiction resonates Orsini's mixture of genres reproduced and genres introduced (2004: 441): A selected appropriation of globally circulating genres which are localized or mixed with vernacular genres and themes.

### 3.1.5.2 Language and Topics of Indian Post-Millennial Genre Fiction

In terms of language, many new writers write in "homegrown English" and include expressions in Indian languages. These strategies are used as a marker of authenticity for a local audience in distinction to the Standard English often used in literary fiction (Gupta 2012: 164). Authors refrain from explaining India to non-Indian readers and include expressions in Indian languages without translating or italicizing them (ib.: 50; Basu et al. 2006). Similarly, in contrast to popular fiction in vernacular languages, these works are rather void of any

regional markers and instead exhibit a pan-Indian or “non-regionalised sort of localism” (Gupta 2012: 51). As for the setting, most works are set in India, often depicting its emerging metropolises and for example focus on the corporate world or a city’s nightlife (Dawson Varughese 2013: 17, 45–46). The point made by Rachel Dwyer about the novel of the Indian popular fiction writer Shobha Dé applies to most Indian popular fiction works: “The west is not seen as being of great importance to anyone; it is sketchy and unreal, more of giant supermarket than a place of interest” (Dwyer 2000: 211). The same generally applies to Indian crime fiction, as I argue in the analytical Chapters 4 and 5. Nonetheless, notions of ‘Indianness’ – which constitute a dominant topic in these popular fiction works – are negotiated on the backdrop of the effects of India’s integration into the global capitalist market. Indian popular fiction in English can thus be seen as a product of the complex tensions between global and national/local awareness that the new middle class is confronted with (Gupta 2015: 26). The local is according to Pooja Sinha “reimagined with the goods and media images made available in post-liberalization India”, where consumerism and purchase power surmount the impact of older identity markers (2013 6). The tensions and contestations in these works depict a gulf of different views that coexist in India’s middle class space and often play out in the private sphere. Many novels propagate individualism as it is often suggested that “disturbances caused by societal-familial and workplace demands can be solved by the individual’s mind” (Dutta 2013: 169). Topics like the traumatic experiences of India’s colonial past or the uprooting consequences of diasporic experiences that are dominant in India’s postcolonial corpus find little or no space in Indian post-millennial genre fiction.

India’s liberalization has not only catered for economic growth, but also leads to controversial local responses for example from Hindu Nationalists who try to impose specific interpretations of ‘Indian’ culture – often equated with North Indian upper-caste Hindu culture. They see this culture threatened by what they proclaim to be the ‘Westernization’ or ‘Americanization’ of India from outside and from inside under the influence of minorities, especially Muslims (see for example

Anand 2011; Doninger/Nussbaum 2015). On the other hand, political campaigns such as the often criticized 2004 BJP election campaign ‘India Shining’, to name just one example, have been criticized for excluding the majority of India’s poor and rural population (Dawson Varughese 2013: 14). This makes Indian post-millennial popular fiction a political issue since it contests the globally circulating corpus of Indian postcolonial literature as well as competing current discourses within India and their respective notions of Indianess. Vis-à-vis these hegemonic processes and narrow interpretations of ‘Indianess’, popular fiction writers often advocate the freedom of choice, personal decision-making processes and provide space for individual identity constructions within a contemporary urban middle class setting.

These writings focus on a limited Indian middle class space and “[draw] upon shared experiences of the ordinary and the everyday” that their intended readers can relate to (Sinha 2013: 268). In this sense they connect to a more conservative understanding of popular fiction as “reinforcing what you already know of the world” (Singh 2007). Overall, these works distinguish themselves from Indian postcolonial fiction: As Emma Dawson Varughese has pointed out, “post-millennial writing in English [...] is less and less recognizable by the tropes and guises of postcolonial literature” (2012: 1). So in terms of content, forms, setting, language and audience, writers of popular fiction in India differ significantly from Indian postcolonial or literary fiction writers for a global market. This divide is not as clear-cut as it is often suggested: Diasporic writers also use elements of genre fiction; Vikas Swarup or Vikram Chandra for example are writers who resort to elements of crime fiction, but are hardly ever promoted as genre fiction writers. In addition to the apparently widening gap between Indian popular and literary fiction in English, India’s literary field is further complicated by literature in Indian languages. Suman Gupta even speaks of a schism of distinct print circuits for vernacular and English literature in India (2013: 165).

### 3.1.5.3 Fiction in Indian Languages in the Contemporary Indian Literary Field

While writing in Indian languages even today sells quantities that far exceeds the sales numbers of most English-writing authors in India, modernization and investments often seem to be limited to the English language publishing industry (Gupta 2012: 166). Within these respective literatures, different registers exist as Suman Gupta has pointed: Hindi literary fiction authors for example account for an own autonomous pole within the field whose writers and critics focus on literary value and eschews the commercialization of Indian writing in English as well as popular fiction in Indian languages altogether (ib.: 170–171). While these writers might circulate within confined elitist spaces, books in Indian languages in general continue to be marginalized within as well as outside India: They hardly get translated or circulate beyond India, continue to be sold in informal spaces and lack distribution channels as well as media attention (Purohit 2010; Chopra 2015: 36).

However, the changes in the English publishing sphere also had some impact on publishing in Indian languages: Various multinational publishing houses have now started imprints for books in Indian languages; HarperCollins for example has a Hindi imprint. Other publishers translate their own English titles into Indian languages or have started selling English translations of Indian popular fiction in Hindi etc. (see Gupta 2013). The Chennai-based publishing house Blaft became one of the pioneers in selling translations of Indian popular fiction like the anthology *The Blaft Anthology of Tamil Pulp Fiction* (2008). Blaft's founder Rakesh Khanna specifically went into publishing because he lamented the lack of popular entertainment literature in Indian writing in English (Hall 2013). Having entered the English publishing circuit, these works receive now a distinct reception and are discussed in India's English-language media. Through translation, these novels also appear in a new context: Instead of straightforward consumption products for the local market, they are now presented as "cute, exotic writing" (Hall 2013) or linked to nostalgic childhood memories of an exotic India (Banerjee 2012: vii). Authors like the

above-mentioned Hindi writer Surender Mohan Pathak are able to generate symbolic capital thanks to this new reception: After some of his works have been translated into English, he is now interviewed by magazines and invited to literary festivals (Hall 2013). Furthermore, festivals such as the Jaipur Literature Festival also provide a stage for writers in Indian languages. Similarly, the initiative Jaipur BookMark, started in 2014, serves as platform to foster the translation rights sale of books written in Indian languages.<sup>25</sup>

These examples give an insight into the asymmetric development and power imbalances that characterize India's complex contemporary literary field. A commercialized market dominated by multinational publishing houses which focus on developing recognizable formats of popular fiction in English for middle class readers has certainly emerged in the last two decades. However, the publishing industry is highly dynamic and the binary views of Indian writing for the global market vs. homegrown Indian fiction (or writing in Indian languages vis-à-vis English writing in India) creates a black-and-white scenario. Instead, spaces have opened up for independent publishers, books are published for new groups of readers and writers bend conventions of genres to follow their own agenda – or current market trends. Between bestselling popular fiction by new writers and literary fiction of esteemed authors at the other end of the spectrum, a manifold of writers occupy a space in between and thereby question this dichotomy. While writing in Indian languages is still marginalized, their publishers and writers have at least somewhat profited from online retail and other initiatives – though monetary gains rather than the promotion of India's linguistic diversity are the main stimulant for these activities.

The Chapters 3.1.4 to 3.1.6 have provided insights into the complexity of the India's publishing market and literary production. What can be detected are links between the emergence of specific genres and

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25 The initiative Jaipur BookMark runs a website where titles from various languages are listed whose translation rights are available (see Bibliography, section "Websites" for the link). Another project called Indian Literature Abroad failed in 2016 as the Ministry of Culture did not provide funding for translations (Sharma 2016).

social, political and economic events in India in general. Changes in the publishing sphere are furthermore in multiple ways connected to processes of globalization and respective local counter-movements. These observations provide a helpful framework to take a closer look at contemporary Indian crime fiction as a case study that epitomizes many of these developments.

### 3.1.6 Post-Millennial Crime Fiction in English

Indian crime fiction in English transcends many of these debates mentioned so far and is therefore an interesting case in point. Indian crime fiction is hardly ever leading the local bestseller lists, but a steady corpus has emerged in the last decade. The genre has according to Emma Dawson Varughese become “a dominant trend in the development of the post-millennial writing scene” (2013: 101). At a first glance, the new genre is associated with Bourdieu’s heteronomous pole, the pole of mass-production. Since not only debut authors write crime fiction, but also already established writers like Vikram Chandra or non-Indian authors like Tarquin Hall, the classification of the genre is more complicated.<sup>26</sup>

Until recently, there has been a general perception that India does not provide a suitable backdrop for crime fiction novels. Nonetheless, even foreign crime fiction from British classics to contemporary Scandinavian bestsellers is eagerly consumed by Indian English readers.<sup>27</sup> This is generally explained by widespread corruption, mistrust in institutions and the omnipresence of different forms of violence in daily life. As crimes in India are not expected to be solved or investigated properly in

26 Besides the British journalist Hall, the Swedish writer Zac O’Yeah is another prominent example. Both have been residing in India for years, published crime fiction series set in India and wrote newspaper articles on the development of the genre in India. Nonetheless, their status as ‘Indian writers’ and their legitimacy to write about India are frequently questioned. Both of them underline that the genre offers them a suitable framework to make sense of their experiences in India (Discussion at the Delhi Crime Writers Festival, 2015).

27 Until recently, the British crime fiction writer H. R. F. Keating’s Inspector Ghote was considered the most famous series depicting an Indian detective in English (see Tamaya 1993).

reality, according to Arjun Singh, “there isn’t much context for home-grown detectives or police procedurals” (2011). This perception has changed, however, as a series of very heterogeneous works have been published in the last decade. These novels draw back on different sub-genres, from Madhulika Liddle’s historical ‘whodunits’ featuring a 17<sup>th</sup> century detective to chick-lit crime fiction novels by Madhumita Bhat-tacharyya or Swati Kaushal. Interestingly, also two Sherlock-Holmes pastiches are among the recent publications: Jamyang Norbu’s *The Mandala of Sherlock Holmes* and *The Adventures of the Great Detective in Tibet* (2001) as well as Vithal Rajan’s *Holmes of the Raj* (2010). The subcontinent has also been the setting of two recent international crime fiction series: James Patterson has so far published two novels of his Private Series<sup>28</sup> together with the Indian writer Ashwin Sanghi: *Private India* (2014) and *Private Delhi* (2017). Shamini Flint’s chose Mumbai as the setting of *A Curious Indian Cadaver* (2012) which is part of her Pan-Asian crime series Inspector Singh Investigates. These publications promote India as a suitable crime fiction setting. During the same period, a number of non-fiction books on crime were published in India and often expand on cases that have raised huge media attention beforehand.<sup>29</sup>

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28 Patterson’s series accounts for a prime example of ‘glocal’ crime fiction located at a globalized pole of mass market production: He joins forces with local writers and is thereby able to produce a huge amount of locally set novels. As Sanghi told at the Indian Crime Writers Festival in 2015, both authors wrote the first book together without ever having met personally. This constellation might seem as a win-win-situation: Patterson himself is a globally known brand who publishes comparable works in various settings and thus mixes familiar elements and variations, which is in this case particularly the ‘exotic’ setting to which the local partner gives access. While Patterson can increase his output, local writers like Sanghi can increase their social capital by the joint publication: Sanghi had been a successful writer of Hindu mythological fiction in India before, but he was able to profit from the collaboration by getting published internationally and received greater attention in and outside the subcontinent.

29 To give few examples of non-fiction books with a similar focus on crime: Meenal Baghel’s *Death in Mumbai* (2011), Souvik Bhadra and Pingal Khan’s *Red Handed* (2014) and Avirook Sen’s *Aarushi* (2015) discuss criminal cases that have been widely portrayed and debated in Indian media. Other writers like Hussain Zaidi or Sandeep Unnithan have written extensively about Mumbai’s underworld and terrorism.

Several initiatives have contributed to the consolidation of crime fiction in English in India: Some Indian publishers have by now started specific imprints: Penguin Random House launched Blue Salt, an imprint dedicated to noir and crime fiction in 2013, HarperCollins started Harper Black in 2015. The Crime Writers' Forum for South Asia, founded in 2014, provides a platform to bring writers of the genre in India together and has organized the Delhi Crime Writer's Festival<sup>30</sup> (Vishav 2014). Hachette's publishing director Nandita Aggarwal mentioned that the interest in crime fiction has risen and more authors are exploring the genre (Wal 2012). It is interesting that this new corpus is not brought in connection with the long-existing tradition of crime fiction in Indian languages in India. Instead, as the example of the endorsements on book covers of crime fiction novels discussed in Chapter 3.1.4 has already suggested, new works are linked to British classics and current global bestsellers from for example Scandinavia. The suggested novelty of the genre, thus, says a lot about the divisions that characterize India's publishing market(s). Pooja Sinha observes that

[in] the case of textual referencing, these books mention Poirot or Miss Marple as detective figures, with not even a stray reference to Feluda or Bakshi; in the case of paratextual referencing, publishers promote them as Indian variants of the Western genre rather than in the tradition of regional detective fiction [...]. (2013: 162)

To give a few examples from endorsements of current works: Ravi Subramanian, who writes crime thrillers set in the finance sector, is always called "The John Grisham of Banking" on the front cover of his books (2012; 2013). Kishwar Desai's stories are described "as compelling as the stories of George Simenon's *Maigret*" (Desai 2012: Front cover). Tarquin Hall's detective Vish Puri is praised as "an Indian Poirot" (2010; 2014: Back cover) or compared to Alexander McCall's

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30 The Festival has been renamed Noir Literature Festival in 2017 and also introduced the first crime writing competition, the Indian Crime Fiction Prize (link to the website can be found in the Bibliography, see (see Bibliography, section "Websites")

Botswanan detective Mma Ramotswe.<sup>31</sup> Besides establishing links to foreign models, endorsements refer to the novelty and persuasiveness of new detective characters, suspense and the fast pace of the action. Besides, easy readability and the potential to reflect on modern India and current social tensions are also sometimes commented on.<sup>32</sup> The existence of a longer history of the genre in India is at best mentioned in a side-note when the emergence of the recent corpus is discussed.

In spite of this disconnect to existing Indian traditions, the emergence of post-millennial Indian crime fiction in English shows some similarities to 19<sup>th</sup> century works. Writers do not limit themselves to copying the foreign models or transpose them to a different setting, they rather adapt and bend the genre's conventions. Once again, changes in the publishing market, the development of a new readership and publishers who search for new forms contribute to the emergence of the genre in English. With a view to the long-existing tradition of the genre in Indian languages, it is more appropriate to talk about a reemergence of the genre.

The rise of crime fiction in India is not only a result of international publishers fostering globally viable genres, but closely connected to the characteristics of the genre. Similar to early crime fiction novels in Indian languages, post-millennial crime fiction in English can be equally described as “overloaded with descriptions of contemporary symbols of ‘modernity’” (Daechsel 2003: 38) or more specifically overloaded with Western and Indian consumer products. European and Indian designer brands are omnipresent and, detectives frequently

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31 The front cover of the 2015 print run of Hall's series published by Random House as well as Simon & Schuster includes a quote from Alexander McCall Smith. This quote is printed almost in the same font size as Hall's name. Thereby, Hall's series is linked to the corpus of ethnic crime fiction novels for international readers as McCall Smith's works are a prime example of this subgenre.

32 Endorsements are not used in any of the Latin American books that are part the corpus. This points at the heterogeneity of publishing practices in different regions. Therefore, no study of these quotes is conducted in Chapter 3.2.4. However, the common referencing to other Argentinean crime fiction writers within the plot suggests a larger independence of writers and the emergence of an own tradition that takes place in many Latin American countries (see Chapter 3.2.3).

enter the ‘shrines of consumption’ of New India and thereby comply with the characteristics of Indian popular fiction in general. These include for example nightclubs, luxury resorts or foreign restaurants. Detectives commonly have a passion for food<sup>33</sup>, which can be Indian or foreign cuisines, and other consumer products, thus insinuating the presence of multiple options that the detective-as-consumer can choose from. Computers and smartphones are omnipresent and a main source of information for the detectives. They often additionally rely on a hacker friend or have a connection to the police’s database to get access to further information. Technology is therefore often the key instrument here for a panoptic form of surveillance of suspects. The competition of different value systems that exposes the unsuitability of British investigation methods in India that was prominent in 19<sup>th</sup> century crime fiction in India is practically inexistent in current works.

The emerging corpus of crime fiction partly looks into problems connected to modernization, systemic misuse of power and corruption. These issues are commonly subsumed under the term ‘Dark India’, which refers to

the underbelly of urban India, the slums, the poverty, the destitution, the marginalisation, the crime and corruption, and in fact many social inequalities, exploitations, and corruption taking place on a daily basis [...].  
(Lau/Dwivedi 2014: 9)

These tensions have intensified with India’s uneven integration into the world market. Rositta Joseph Valiyamattam describes these works as “[p]opular fiction combining entertainment with serious social realism” which often use “brutally blunt honesty and dark yet humane

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33 Food plays an important role in various crime fiction series. It is often used as a local identity marker which enhances the novel’s ‘local flavor’ by describing a specific region’s cuisine (see for example Michelis 2010). In India, Tarquin Hall seems to be the only writer who has taken up this connection: His novels contain a multitude of references to Indian dishes which are also explained in a glossary. In *The Case of the Love Commandos*, the author even includes a section termed “Mouthwatering Dishes from the Vish Puri Family Kitchen” (2014: 289ff.) where he provides recipes for typical Indian dishes for (rather) Non-Indian readers.

humour” to lay bare the negative consequences of globalization (2016: 152). According to Hirsh Sawhney, crime fiction “forces readers to reckon with the inequality and cruelty inherent to modern societies” (2009: 14). He emphasizes that the dark side of India’s modernization has long been avoided by its “book-buying-and-publishing-citizens” as these stories could “threaten their guilt-free existence and the bubble of nationalistic euphoria” (ib.: 14). It is above all the abasement of morality and ethnic principles by those in power that is exposed and criticized by crime fiction writers (Joseph Valiyamattam 2016: 216). It is therefore not surprising that writers often draw back on real criminal cases which have received wide media attention in India but are partly not sufficiently prosecuted. This practice will be discussed in greater detail with regard to Kishwar Desai’s novel *The Sea of Innocence* (2013) or Vikas Swarup’s *Six Suspects* (2008). While justice is often denied in reality, these novels partly provide a fictional *ersatz* prosecution. Works by writers like Vikas Swarup or Aravind Adiga have been criticized for depicting physical as well as structural violence with a focus on injustice and poverty as a new form of exoticization of India for a Western audience (see Goh 2014; Banerjee 2013).<sup>34</sup> Most works, however, focus on the concerns of their middle class readership: To quote Pooja Sinha, “[the] Indian murder mystery reflects on sources of anxiety and disquietude within the middle class, and its social and moral codes (2013: 186). In that sense, these novels differ from internationally circulating writers who are criticized for using crime fiction elements as a new way of exoticizing India for international readers.<sup>35</sup>

34 A prime example of this criticism is certainly the movie *Slumdog Millionaire*, directed by Danny Boyle (2008), which is based on Swarup’s novel *Q & A* (2005). However, while Swarup is frequently accused of exoticization, other writers are exempted from this kind of criticism. Kishwar Desai, for example, lives in the UK and India, her crime fiction novels are published in both countries and have been translated into various languages. She addresses various instances of female victimization in contemporary India and could be equally accused of exploiting the topic of the plights of women in contemporary India which is certainly a topic that meets the zeitgeist and foreign interest in India. However, she does not have to face similar accusations.

35 Many of the works Goh discusses in his article do not match the definition of crime fiction used in this thesis. Aravind Adiga for example uses certain elements of crime fiction in *The White Tiger* (2008), but does not include a detective figure. For Goh, however, this precisely highlights that the criminal comes to the fore in Indian crime fiction while the role of the detective becomes oblivious (2014: 150).

According to Robbie Goh, the genre is used to expose structural violence and a climate of crime, corruption and injustice by exhibiting problems like “drug trafficking and drug use, crime cartels, corrupt officials and businessmen, rural landgrabbing (sic!) and caste violence” (2014: 147). However, a larger criticism of the political or economic system, and historic references are largely absent in most works written by Indian authors for an India audience. Similarly, the structural violence that India’s poor population is experiencing or the flashpoints of state oppression in Kashmir or Naxalite<sup>36</sup>-Maoist insurgencies are usually not discussed in Indian crime fiction novels.

The investigations track the fast pace at which India is changing; here parallels can be seen to the initial emergence of the genre in India in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the focus of works on a realistic depiction of local surroundings (see Chapter 3.2.2). Nowadays, changing cityscapes or heterotopic spaces such as luxury resorts in Kashmir or Goa as holiday destinations for Indian tourists are depicted. The settings are invariably Indian, usually clearly localized and realistically described, but void of any iconic buildings of historical or political significance. Instead, the focus is mainly on ‘everyday settings’ like middle class neighborhoods or the aforementioned ‘shrines of consumption’ like malls or restaurants. Also in accordance with the characteristics of Indian popular fiction in English, detectives are rather pan-Indian figures from a middle class background, though religious or ethnic markers are not particularly highlighted. This distinguishes them from earlier Indian detectives who were embodying regional identities like Byomkesh Bakshi whose ‘Bengaliness’ is frequently highlighted in his stories (Sen 2013). Instead, the scope is commonly on an emerging consumer society, which is depicted by the detective as a participant-observer. Some particular Indian characters have been created such as the fraudulent spiritual advisor, who appears in several novels as the wire-puller behind various criminal activities (see Chapter 4.4.1). An

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36 The Naxalites are radical communists named after the village Naxalbari in West Bengal where the group originated in the 1960s. They are members of the Maoist Communist Party of India which resort to violence and are known for their guerilla-style attacks. They are mainly active in India’s poor states in the center and east of the country.

interesting phenomenon is also the appearance of female detectives as well as the amount of women writers who have appropriated the genre in the last decade, which are studied in detail in Chapter 4.1.

The amount of detective and crime movies in Indian cinemas like Bollywood has similarly grown in recent years: Besides several remakes of older detective series like Byomkesh Bakshi, also new movies depicting various types of investigators have been released. Among them are Pradeep Sarkar's movie *Mardaani* (2014), Samar Shaikh's *Bobby Jasoos* (2014) or various of Anurag Kashyap's recent movies. Directors have also been quick to turn spectacular crime cases that have aroused wide public interest into movies. A prominent example is *No one killed Jessica* (2011; directly by Raj Kumar Gupta), a film about the Jessica Lal murder case which also plays a role in Swarup's novel *Six Suspects*. Besides, the Aarushi murder case<sup>37</sup> inspired movies like *Talvar* (2015, directed by Meghna Gulzar) or *Rahasya* (2015, directed by Manish Gupta). Foreign, especially US-American series like "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation" enjoy great popularity in India as well as many homegrown formats. Among these shows are for example the police procedural "CID" (Crime Investigation Department), India's longest running television series which started in 1998 and still attracts a huge viewership (Das Gupta/Bhatia 2015). Other series like the Indian TV series "Crime Patrol", which premiered in 2003, depict a lasting interest in true crime and spectacular cases. These series which draw back on a similar concept as "Savdhaan India – India Fights Back" (2012–present) show dramatized adaptations of real-life crimes and are supposed to have an educative function by presenting measures to avert crimes (Arora n.d.).

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37 Similar to Avirook Sen's book *Aarushi* (2015), both movies are based on the murders of a 14-year-old girl and a servant in Noida in 2008. While the parents have been blamed and sentenced for the double murder, they were acquitted in 2017 and the case remains unsolved. The case continues to be highly controversial. It is particularly the heavy intervention of the media in the case which had an impact on the investigation and public opinion that has frequently been criticized (Ward 2013: 244f.).

The expectation of an educative function is also expressed in the few studies on Indian crime fiction (Patel 2011: 256; Sinha 2013: 174). However, I would rather content that writers may partly want to raise awareness of ignored problems and draw back on local concerns to produce localized genre fiction, but nonetheless they also react to the perceived demands of the market.

With a view to the diachronic and synchronic diversity highlighted for the evolution of the genre in India in this Chapter, crime fiction provides an interesting genre to examine the multiple divisions of India's complex literary field. Crime fiction, as mentioned earlier on, transcends the entire spectrum of literary production and problematizes the binary conception of Bourdieu's concept of the literary discussed in Chapter 2.2.1. Most crime fiction novels actually occupy a more ambiguous position between these two poles and go beyond the division of local versus international/diasporic fiction in India. How this relates to the position of the genre in Latin America's literary field(s) and publishing market(s) will be explored in the following subchapter.

## 3.2 Latin America

### 3.2.1 Crime Fiction and Argentina's and Chile's Publishing Markets

The Latin American publishing market is similarly complex due to the fact that the region consists of 20 individual national markets who are very heterogeneous in terms of their publishing industry, readership, interests, state regulations, etc. With the exception of Brazil, the Latin American markets are significantly shaped by the influence of the Spanish publishing industry. Research on the Latin American book market(s) is – similarly to the situation in India – scarce. Especially comparative studies that look at various national markets are rare in spite of the common outside perception that the region's book market(s) and publishing landscape constitute one unity. In the region, the CERLALC (Centro Regional para el Fomento del Libro en América Latina y el Caribe) founded in 1971 in Colombia under the auspices of

the UNESCO, is the only institution which collects data for the entire Latin American and Caribbean region and promotes reading. In some countries like Argentina and Chile, book chambers similarly gather data and issue reports on the market, though their market coverage is far from complete. In Argentina, the foundations TyPA and FILBA promote reading and bring different market agents together. TyPA<sup>38</sup> has published two recent studies, *Interpretar silencios. La extraducción en la Argentina* (2013) by Valeria Añón and *La traducción literaria en América Latina* (2012) by Gabriela Adamo, about translations and Argentina's presence on the world's book markets. José Luis de Diego's monograph *Editores y políticas editoriales en Argentina (1880–2010)* (2014) also gives insights into the development of Argentina's publishing market. The consultancy PROMAGE analyzes the Argentinean publishing industry since 2008, but similar to Nielsen Bookscan primarily works with and for publishing houses. Several market surveys have been conducted, such as the study "El mercado del libro en Argentina" (2015), carried out by Juan Gómez de la Torre and "El mercado del libro en Chile" (2009) by Alfonso García-Lomas Drake for the Economic and Trade Offices of the Spanish Embassies in Chile and Argentina. Both surveys give overviews about the countries' book markets and book trade. The Observatorio del Libro y la Lectura, a joint initiative by the Universidad de Chile and the Chilean Book Chamber, has also carried out various reports and surveys on the books market and reading habits in Chile.<sup>39</sup>

In terms of the state of art of studies on crime fiction and its various subgenres, Latin American crime fiction has received substantially more scholarly attention than its Indian counterpart. The interest in the genre can be linked to the specific adaptation and its status in Latin America. More than anywhere else, the genre's status as a commercial or

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38 The Foundation TyPA (Teoría y Práctica de las Artes) is engaged in various activities in arts and literature and for example supports the trade of translations rights. The Filba Foundation is a NGO which organizes literature festivals in the Southern Cone as well as projects to foster reading habits in schools. For more information, see the link in Bibliography, section "Websites").

39 These documents can be accessed via the observatory's website, for the link see in Bibliography, section "Websites").

popular genre has been challenged by Latin American writers (Amar Sánchez 2004: 598). Crime fiction is more commonly associated with esteemed writers like Borges and Bolaño. While popular fiction novels have been produced throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, they have not been scope of many research projects. Whether crime fiction is a suitable and credible genre in Latin America is a question that runs like a red thread through critical studies. Answers to this question have varied over time depending on the influence of different subgenres and the political and economic situation of the region in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as I will elaborate on the following subchapters.

Research on the genre varies from country to country and can be said to correlate with the establishment of local traditions of crime fiction in the respective countries. Argentina already possessed an own tradition in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and has also been the scope of research for decades. Jorge Lafforgue and Jorge Rivera's *Asesinos de papel. Ensayos sobre narrativa policial* (1977) for example was one of the first studies published. The first comparative study in English, published by Amelia Simpson in 1990, covers the River Plate Region, Brazil, Cuba and Mexico and aimed at making the regions' rarely translated corpus of crime fiction novels available for readers abroad.<sup>40</sup> Monographs and compilations that examine individual countries or comparative studies within Latin America have increased in recent years (see Adriaensen/Grinberg Pla 2012; Craig-Odders 2006; Rodrigues-Moura 2010; Wieser 2012; 2013). Darrell Lockhart published an A-to-Z Guide about Latin American crime fiction writers in 2004. Besides the works of Rivera and Lafforgue, Argentinean crime fiction has been studied by Sonia Mattalia (2008), Josefina Ludmer (2004) or Ezequiel de Rosso (2012). Brazilian crime fiction has so far mainly been discussed in articles about individual authors and in a monograph by Hubert Pöppel (2004). Mexico and Cuba have also been the scope of various monographs; Cuban crime fiction has been studied by Persephone

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40 Before Simpson, the US-American scholar Donald A. Yates already contributed to the research and circulation of Latin American, mainly Argentinean, crime fiction and published secondary literature as well as the anthology *Latin Blood. The Best Crime and Detective Stories of South America* in 1972.

Braham (2004), Helen Oakley (2012) and Stephen Wilkinson (2006). The development of the genre in Mexico has been explored by Miguel Rodríguez Lozano and Enrique Flore (2005), Ilán Stavans (1993) and Vicente Francisco Torres (2003). Ralph Edward Rodríguez (2005) and Susan Baker Sotelo (2005) have studied Chicano crime fiction, while Latino or Hispanic crime fiction in the US has so far mainly been treated in articles and not been addressed in a comparative manner.

Clemens Franken Kurzen (2003; 2009, 2011; 2012) and Marcelo González Zúñiga (2014) have conducted a lot of research on the trajectory of the genre in Chile from its emergence to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Other researchers mainly look at the works of individual authors (see for example Gioconda Marún [2006] or Guillermo García-Corales [2002; 2008; 2010]). In Colombia, it is particularly Gustavo Forero Quintero who has advanced research on the genre in recent years (2012a; 2012b; 2013). As the host of the annual conference Medellín Negro, organized since 2010, he has significantly fostered the research and exchange on the genre in Colombia and Latin America in general. The trajectory of crime fiction in other countries has been explored by individual researchers for the case Ecuador (Cordero 2013), Venezuela (Monroy 2013) or Central America (Kokotovic 2006). This rise of scholarly attention reflects a new appreciation of crime fiction. Crime fiction authors also intervene in these debates: The Argentinians Mempo Giardinelli (1984) and Ricardo Piglia (1986), the Cuban Leonardo Padura Fuentes (1999) or the Chilean Ramón Díaz Eterovic (2010) have published essays discussing the rise and popularity of the genre in Latin America. While established writers have been well researched, the production of recent, i.e. post-millennial, crime fiction novels have not been the scope of many academic works so far.

### 3.2.2 Early Latin American Crime Fiction

Similar to the emergence of the genre in India, British detective stories have circulated since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in Latin America and enjoyed a great popularity. Unlike in India, crime fiction was more closely associated with European settings and writers and was initially

rarely adapted to a local setting. Amelia Simpson has pointed out that to understand the history of the genre in Latin America, one has to consider crime fiction as “an imported form that bears the imprint of other cultural and historical realities” and continues to be strongly associated with Europe and the United States until today (1990: 10). Nonetheless, according to the Cuban critic José Antonio Portuondo, by 1925, no genre had a greater following in Latin America than crime fiction in translation (1973: 97; quoted in Simpson 1990: 16). Ezequiel de Rosso has pointed out that stories involving crimes and criminals have existed in the region before, but the arrival of the genre from Europe brought along several novelties, especially the figure of the detective and the repackaging of the crime as an *enigma* or mystery (2012: 28–29). Besides the consumption of translated works, the initial phase corresponds to an “imitación de modelos extranjeros” (Adriaensen/Grinberg Pla 2012: 17). In Argentina, a local tradition of crime fiction already existed in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, while other countries like Chile or Peru only developed a major tradition in the last decades (Wieser 2012: 361).

In Argentina and Chile, the two focal points of this thesis, the genre initially circulated in translation or as ‘pseudotranslations’ in newspapers. The latter term refers to texts that claim to be translations but do not have a source text as they are actually imitations of the British model. Works by local writers, by contrast, were rather sporadic in both countries until the 1930s. Stories were usually published under English-sounding pseudonyms and often set in Europe. This is explained with the status of crime fiction as a mere entertainment genre (Noguerol Jiménez 2006; Franken Kurzen/Sepúlveda 2009: 17). Publishers were reluctant to accept crime fiction set in Latin America, as they believed that these works had no market and would not be viable commercially. Therefore, writers were obliged to use pseudonyms and foreign settings (*ib.*: 16). This scenario gives an idea of the impact of publishers’ and readers’ expectations on literary production at that time as the strong association of the genre with foreign settings consti-

tuted an unfavorable situation for local writers (ib.: 19). The adaptation of the genre to a local setting was therefore bound by various factors and the publishing industry played an important role here.

Among the first works which were written in 19<sup>th</sup> century Argentina are *La Huella del Crimen* (1877), written by Raúl Walesis, pseudonym of the Argentinean Luis Vicente Varela; Paul Groussac's *La pesquisa* (1884) and Eduardo L. Holmberg's *La bolsa de huesos* (1896).<sup>41</sup> Various stories written by Horacio Quiroga and Roberto Arlt are also regarded as early Argentinean crime fiction works and largely follow the model of the classic British crime fiction. Argentina's first full-length novel *El enigma de la calle Arcos* was published in a newspaper serial in 1932 (Simpson 1990: 32). Lostal<sup>42</sup> wrote a locked-room mystery set in Buenos Aires, which anticipates several strategies commonly used by later Argentinean crime fiction writers: The plot includes parallel investigations carried out by a police inspector and a journalist. Since the former turns out to be the murderer, Lostal challenges the trias of the victim, the perpetrator and the investigator and thereby the generic conventions (Lagmanovich 2001: 43). This suggests that the eminent question of the foreign status of the classic mystery novel already reflects in its adaptability in these early works (Barboza 2008).

### Beginnings in Chile

A local tradition in Chile emerged in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, several precursors of the genre already produced crime fiction at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: According to Clemens Franken Kurzen and Magda Sepúlveda, the story "La muerte misteriosa de José Marini" by Januario Espinosa, also a pseudonym, was the first Chilean crime fiction story which was published in a newspaper in 1912 (2009: 18). Olmos and other writers like Antonio Acevedo Hernández, who published short stories between 1927 and 1931,

41 All three novels are analyzed in detail in Sonia Mattalia's monograph (2008) and some have been reprinted recently; *La Huella del Crimen* was e.g. republished in 2009 by Adriana Hidalgo Editoria.

42 Lostal is supposed to be the pseudonym of an unknown author. This 'enigma' of the unknown author has given rise to many debates; some critics have presumed Borges to be the author of the novel (for the debate see Saïtta 2004: 121ff.).

make up a group of writers whose works were subsumed by Franken Kurzen and Sepúlveda as “El detective contra los inmigrantes” and account for the fears related to the immigration wave that Chile experienced in that period (2009: 19). A similar tendency has been observed by Gianna M. Martella and John Collins for Argentinean crime fiction of the same period: As the criminal singled out is usually an immigrant, these works provided a sense of security in a transitional period (2006: 53).

Alberto Edwards, pseudonym of Miguel de Fuenzalida, initiated a series of short stories featuring the detective Román Calvo in the magazine *Pacífico* between 1913 and 1921 (Ponce 2004: 72). A later publication directly established a paratextual reference to the British canon by using the subtitle ‘El Sherlock Holmes chileno’ (Noguerol Jiménez 2006). Franken Kurzen and Sepúlveda also mention several other early crime fiction writers like L.A. Isla, Philo Vance, Camilo Perez Arce (all pseudonyms). References to the classic British canon are very present in these early Chilean works. L.A. Isla’s “El crimen del Parque Forestal” for example evokes the narrative constellation used in Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories and includes a Watson-figure (Franken Kurzen/Sepúlveda 2009: 21). The editorial *Zig-Zag* initiated the first series of crime fiction in Chile in the 1940s which was compiled by genre writer Luis Enrique Délano (ib.: 21).

### 3.2.3 The Development of Own Models: Crime Fiction Throughout the 20th Century

The 1940s are generally seen as the beginning of a localization or territorialization of the genre in Argentina as several researchers have observed. This initiates the development of an Argentinean tradition of crime fiction. The appropriation of the genre during this period is still dominated by parodies that challenge the highly constructed and unrealistic cases and settings of the British model which other writers modified for their own agenda from the 1950s onwards (Wieser 2012: 112).

### 3.2.3.1 The Impact of Borges and the Establishment of an Elitist Genre in Argentina

During the 1940s, the genre acquired an ambiguous status between popular and intellectual literature (Mazzuca 2012: 13): On the one side, writers associated with the journal *Sur* showed interest in classic detective fiction and wrote sophisticated stories for an educated audience. They followed generic conventions and used it for complex thought experiments (Wieser 2012: 87). Particularly the works of Borges and Bioy Casares that had a lasting impact on the development of classic crime fiction in Argentina. They published for example the collection *Seis problemas para don Isidro Parodi* under the pseudonym Honorio Bustos Domecq in 1942. Both authors parodied the subgenre of the armchair detective by employing detective Parodi who solves cases while he is innocently imprisoned. The detective's name already alludes to the parodic intention of the stories. However, the parodies also point at the genre's ideological and epistemological premises and questions the rule of law as Parodi himself is not able to find out why he is in prison (Noguerol Jiménez 2006). Besides, realism was not an important criterion for Borges and Bioy Casares. Donald Yates described crime fiction as "a luxury destined in all likelihood to appeal to a relatively sophisticated reading public. It is essentially a type of literature that avoids direct contact with reality" (1964: 6). Like Yates, Borges understood crime fiction more as a "género ingenioso y artificial" which has nothing to do with the real activity of crime solving (Miranda 2015: 33). Carolina Miranda has similarly suggested that the import of a highly artificial and constructed foreign genre was also meant as a distancing of the Argentinean intelligentsia in the face of the rise of populism and Peronism in Argentina at that time (ib.: 35).

Borges' well-known story "La muerte y la brújula", first published in 1942 in the magazine *Sur*, also plays with the genre's conventions as his detective Lönnroth ends up being the victim. With this kind of experimental parodies, Borges and Bioy Casares contributed to the development of the genre and opened it towards a new group of upper class readers (Wieser 2012: 87). At the same time, they founded a national tradition of crime fiction to which Argentinean authors refer to until

today. Borges and Bioy Casares promoted a “conservative and literarily refined vision” of the genre in essays, reviews and anthologies (Close 2008: 12). In his essay “Leyes de narración policial” (1933)<sup>43</sup>, Borges refers to the commandments to write crime fiction which draw back on S.S. van Dine and Father Knox (see Chapter 2.3.1). They furthermore translated foreign works – especially British and French classics – and were editors of the prestigious series *El Séptimo Círculo*<sup>44</sup> published by Emecé from 1945 onwards (Wieser 2012: 88). While this series has an important impact on the circulation of foreign crime fiction not only in Argentina but in fact on the entire Spanish language market. The fact that only six of the 366 titles published between 1945 and 1983 were written by Latin American authors, however, reflects the lasting preference for foreign writers as masters of the genre (Simpson 1990: 16). Equally, Borges and Bioy Casares had an aversion against US hard-boiled novels which they considered vulgar and excessively violent (Close 2008: 94). Novels by US-American hard-boiled authors were only translated in the 1960s when the US hard-boiled slowly took over more mass-market oriented series and magazines.

### 3.2.3.2 Mass-Market Crime Fiction

In the era of *El Séptimo Círculo* – which Donald Yates famously described as a golden age of Argentinean detective fiction (Lafforgue/Rivera 1996: 12) – also more commercially popular fiction series flourished in Argentina parallel to elitist stories. This led to a commercialization of the genre which was dominated by Argentinean authors who continued to rely largely on English-language pseudonyms and settings in Europe (Wieser 2012: 88).<sup>45</sup> Their works are therefore gener-

43 The article was republished in Borges' *Textos recobrados, 1931–1955* (2001).

44 *El Séptimo Círculo* is certainly the most famous series of the period in Argentina. Other publishers similarly published translations and local works such as the *Biblioteca Oro* series by the editorial Molino. The series included works by S.S. Van Dine, Agatha Christie, Edgar Wallace, Raymond Chandler (Saitta 2015). After the turn of the millennium, the publishing house Planeta reissued all titles of the original *Séptimo Círculo* Collection.

45 This practice is elaborated on in the Brazilian crime fiction novel *Elogio da mentira* by Patricia Melo (1998). Set in contemporary Brazil, the novel's narrator José Guber is a mass-producer of crime fiction novels who uses English-sounding pseudonyms to produce mass market novels that are sold cheaply at kiosks. The fact that he uses

ally seen as a continuation of the imitative period. According to Sylvia Saítta (2015), various editorials started publishing genre fiction series which coincided with an expansion of the publishing market in general. Geared towards a mass audience, series include science fiction and adventure series as well as various crime fiction series: Besides *El Séptimo Círculo*, Emecé also published the *Colección Misterio*; Acme Agency initiated the series *Rastos y Pistas*, etc. (Saítta 2015). Emecé generally focused more on “colecciones de kiosco” based on the hard-boiled formula (Lafforgue/Rivera 1996: 20; 108). Close points out that these works were “cheaply made, hastily translated and briskly sold and resold at kioscos”; nonetheless, they introduced a new reading public to the genre which would not have read the stories of the *El Séptimo Círculo* writers (2008: 94). Many writers and translations remain unknown today, but one of the most important writers was Eduardo Goligorisky who published more than 30 stories in early hard-boiled magazines (Lafforgue/Rivera 1996: 24).

Thus from the 1930s onwards, the genre occupied an ambiguous position in Argentina between ‘high’ and ‘low brow’ literature (Amar Sánchez 2004: 598). It was adapted by writers who are located at opposing poles in the country’s literary field: In the era of *El Séptimo Círculo*, which was associated with the autonomous pole of the literary field, crime fiction in Argentina also turned into a “género de masas” which retained its popularity in the following decades (de Rosso 2012: 70). But since the market demand continued to be met with translations, the chances for local authors and popular fiction were still hampered (Wieser 2012: 112). Scholarly research on this corpus of works and writers from that period remains rather scarce; most scholars refer to Lafforgue and Rivera (1996) who in their sem-

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pseudonyms is explained by the narrator as an editorial exigency: “É uma exigência da editora [...]” (Melo 1998: 20). Following the generic conventions and freely drawing back on the plots of famous foreign works, Guber feels like he does a favor to less privileged readers whom he gives access to the masters of the genre (“fazendo um favor, eu dava ao leitor menos privilegiado a oportunidade de ler Shakespeare, Chesterton, Poe e muitos outros autores importantes” [ib.: 23]).

inal study identify respective writers and translators and name magazines or series that had an important impact on the circulation of the genre in Argentina.

Lafforgue and Rivera identify the 1950s and 1960s as the heyday of Argentinean hard-boiled – which coincides with the peak of the production of Indian popular fiction in Indian languages discussed in 3.1.2. Print runs were, naturally, much lower in Argentina than in India, but with ten to thirty thousand copies per title relatively high (Gómez de la Torre 2015: 21). A group of professional but largely unknown producers of the genre emerged in Argentina. The growth of commercial fiction can be seen as a consequence of a growth in demand here. As Néstor Ponce points out,

[el] crecimiento del mercado, a la vez, facilitó la aparición de escritores profesionales, con diferentes grados de dedicación al policial. Dicha profesionalización ilustra la posibilidad concreta de nuevos sectores sociales de incorporarse a la ‘república de las letras.’ (2001: 152)

Glen Close has also emphasized the international circulation of the genre which he sees as a particular example of a triangulation of intercontinental and transatlantic exchanges between Spain and different Latin American countries.<sup>46</sup> This concerned translations of US-American hardboiled novels as well as the respective local production (2008: 12).

<sup>46</sup> The directions of exchange have changed various times in the course of the 20th century: Argentina and Mexico catered for the introduction of the genre throughout Latin America while other national markets such as for example Colombia heavily relied on their imports (Close 2008: 12). Initially, many translations reached Latin America through Spain, but a change of direction occurred during the era of Franco: Due to the censorship in Spain, most US-American hard-boiled novels reached Spain via translations made in Argentina and Mexico (Close 2006a: 126). Hard-boiled novels therefore circulated as a kind of commercial “subliterature” between both regions (Close 2008: 15). The existing material and literary exchanges between Latin America and Spain, according to Close, also explain certain phenomena that are connected to the rise of the *novela negra* and the emergence of the *neopolicial* in the post-dictatorial periods in the 1980s. From the 1970s, a new exchange and presence of Latin American writers in Spain started when writers like Juan Martini went into exile in Spain and

### 3.2.3.3 The 1950s: Rodolfo Walsh and the Growing Influence of US-American Hard-Boiled

As the resistance to the hard-boiled novel diminished in the course of the 1950s and 1960s, the subgenre turned into “el modo canónico del género hasta la actualidad” (de Rosso 2012: 82). In many cases, realism remains the main criteria to judge whether crime fiction is a suitable genre that Latin American writers should adapt, while the classic British model continues to be used as the benchmark. Consequently, it is often argued that the genre does not match Latin America’s reality due to, for example, the commercial and industrialized character of the genre (Stavans 1993: 85). In 1973, the Mexican Carlos Monsiváis published the article “Ustedes que jamás han sido asesinados”, which alludes to the Tlatelolco massacre in 1968, and underlines the unsuitability of (classic British) crime fiction in Latin America due to the lack of crime prosecution in reality. He calls for a new socially engaged subgenre:

[Si] esta literatura aspirase al realismo, el personaje acusado casi nunca sería el criminal verdadero y, a menos que fuese pobre, jamás recibiría castigo. [...] [El] crimen, además, no posee una connotación expropiable: lo excepcional, lo desusado, no es que un latinoamericano resulte víctima, sino que pueda dejar de serlo. (Monsiváis 1973: 2–3)

The critical points that Monsiváis raises like the bourgeois origin of the genre and the lack of trust in the state and its institutions are frequently brought up by critics until today. Most of them dispute the genre’s suitability with the narrow definition of the British classic mystery in mind and omit the impact and characteristics of the US hard-boiled and other subgenres (Simpson 1990: 22). Other critics have also rejected the hard-boiled model for Latin America: Carlos Gamerro suggested for example that Chandler’s “Marlowe [...] terminaría flotando boca abajo en el Riachuelo a la mitad del primer capítulo” (Gamerro 2005).

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fostered the development of the *novela negra* from the other side of the Atlantic (Close 2008: 16).

Since the 1950s, a radical shift away from the model propagated by Borges took place: Mempo Giardinelli opines that “[if] there is one thing that defines Latin American detective fiction today it is, precisely, its determined realism” (Giardinelli 2004: xvi). A gradual politicization of the genre occurred in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and is until today highlighted as one of the distinguishing characteristics of Latin American crime fiction (Adriaensen/Grinberg Pla 2012: 10). Rodolfo Walsh is an important figure in this context as he used the genre draw attention to state violence during the dictatorship of Aramburu and the following governments (see for example Carreras/Potthast 2010: 208ff.). During the military dictatorship in 1977, Walsh was wounded by bullets and disappeared shortly after. He was a promoter of crime fiction in Argentina: Besides translating foreign works and compiling anthologies like *Diez cuentos policiales* (1953), Walsh published two crime fiction novels himself. Walsh is best known for *Operación Masacre* (1957) and *¿Quién mató a Rosendo?* (1969), in which he combines elements of crime fiction and investigative journalism as a tool to denounce criminal activities committed by the state. According to Simpson, Walsh’s works mean a “radical shift from the innocuous, puzzle model towards a politicized, committed text” (1990: 45), which had a lasting impact on the adaptation of the genre in Latin America. The generic conventions were challenged by Walsh with a very specific political purpose in mind: The combination of journalistic style and crime fiction is a major characteristic in Walsh’s works and runs like a red thread through the country’s crime fiction production until today.

The 1960s and 1970s in Argentina were marked by increasingly violent political conflicts, the emergence of guerilla organizations such as the *Montoneros* and economic problems which exacerbated during frequent changes of government and led to the military coup in 1976 (see for example Carreras/Potthast 2010: 211ff.). For crime fiction writers, the time before the military coup was a rather productive period; many authors published novels that drew back on the hard-boiled model but at the same time they started to localize their works in a contemporary Argentinean context (Simpson 1990: 60). Well-known writers

from that period are for example Osvaldo Soriano and Juan Martini. Martini's *El agua en los pulmones* or *Los asesinos las prefieren rubias* (1973; 1974) show similarities with the works of the US-American hard-boiled writers like Dashiell Hammett. In the latter novel, set in Hollywood and Buenos Aires, Martini employs two protagonists called Sinatra and Brando as detectives and Marilyn Monroe as the victim (Lockhart 2004: 135). These kind of blatant intertextual and intermedial links were used to parody the genre are characteristic for various novels of that period: In Soriano's *Triste, solitario y final* (1973), an alter ego of the author meets an aged Philip Marlowe in Los Angeles on the backdrop of the Hollywood movie world. The detectives' inability to solve a crime dominates a whole range of novels of that period (Simpson 1990: 58). Even though the setting of Soriano's novel is the US, it alludes to the climate of violence in Argentina in the 1970s. On the one hand, locating the setting abroad is a strategy frequently used by writers who actually refer to the current political situation in Argentina. The presence of Hollywood in these works furthermore alludes to the increasing cultural hegemony of the American cinema and the circulation of crime fiction through television and movie theatres from the 1970s onwards (Close 2008: 16).

The success of the genre in Latin America in the 1970s is connected to characteristics immanent in the hard-boiled subgenre. The pan-Latin American and Spanish subgenre that emerged from adaptations of the hard-boiled formula has been termed *novela negra* as discussed in Chapter 2.3.3. It captures a society in which crime is no longer considered an act of individual deviance, but it is rather inherent in the political system. Crime fiction was consequently used to reflect on violence and corruption in an increasingly fragmented society (Simpson 1990: 29). This reflects in the narrative strategies and staple characters that constitute the genre. Mempo Giardinelli connects the attractiveness of the genre to the possibility to adopt innovative perspectives such as first or third person narrators to focus on the perspective of the criminal or the victim (2004: xix-xx). The detective commonly turns into "un personaje de dudosa moral que procede de ámbitos marginales" (Barboza 2008). In Juan Pablo Feinmann's *Ultimos días de la*

*víctima* (1979), a paradigmatic novel of this period published at the height of the dictatorship, the contract killer hired for an assassination gets obsessed with his target and is eventually killed by the potential victim. The police, on the other hand, is unanimously perceived as corrupt and often the “primary perpetrator of criminal violence” (Close 2008: 109). Thus, it is not surprising that the *novela negra* often lacks police officers as well as detectives. While the adaptation occurred mainly at the expense of the detective figure, other genre-constituting elements such as the presence of a crime and an investigation are maintained by these writers (Barboza 2008).

Ezequiel de Rosso sees the 1970s as the next decisive moment for the development of the genre in Argentina as crime was increasingly used as a frame to discuss effects of the crises of the period in Latin America (de Rosso 2012: 58; 83). The *novela negra* has the potential to reflect on current political and social conditions of Argentina and thus crime fiction gains symbolic, cultural and eventually also economic capital as a locally adapted genre. An indicator of the establishment of the genre was for example the first crime fiction competition, the Primer Certamen Latinoamericano de Cuentos Policiales, organized by the magazine *Siete Días* in 1975. Borges was one of the jury members which awarded Ricardo Piglia a prize for the story “La loca y el relato del crimen” (Guzzo 2004: 147). New series appeared focusing on translations of hard-boiled and local works such as the Serie Negra, published between 1969 and 1977 by the editorial Tiempo Contemporáneo, which was edited by Ricardo Piglia (Lafforgue/Rivera 1996: 51). These steps advanced an institutionalization of the genre as writers were able to publish their works in better quality with more prestigious publishing houses (Close 2008: 95).

The military coup in Argentina in 1976 strongly affected the production of the genre as well as the publishing market in general and led to a decline in the production of *novelas negras* (Simpson 1990: 60). Many writers were prosecuted, went into exile or had their works (auto)censored (Close 2008: 109). After the return to democracy in Argentina in 1983, ever more writers wrote *novelas negras*. Similar phe-

nomena can be observed in other Latin American countries<sup>47</sup>. The consolidation of the *novela negra* is linked to multiple crises of the *década perdida* of the 1980s in Latin America. Besides the legacy of military regimes, the period was marked by the debt crisis that led to inflation, structural adjustment programs and the adoption of neoliberal economic policies<sup>48</sup> (Close 2006b: 147). Along with the rise of unemployment and poverty, exploding crime rates had a lasting impact on society (Craig-Odders 2006: 9). Even in countries with comparatively low crime rates like Argentina and Chile, the fear of victimization grew significantly and was often linked to other economic, social and politi-

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47 Similarly, the *novela negra* emerges in post-Franco Spain as a genre that addresses the disillusionment of the transition in the 1980s (Wieser 2012: 23).

48 The *década perdida* refers to the debt and adjustment decade of the 1980s (Gwynne/Kay 2014: 11). In very general terms, due to stagnating economic growth and incomplete industrialization efforts, many Latin American countries were unable to repay foreign debts at the beginning of the 1980s (Larraín 2014: 27). Mexico's inability to repay loans in 1982 had a snowball effect as investors ceased to give credits to Latin American countries. Also here, the outside perception of Latin America as a unity comes into play as the crisis in Mexico led to high volatility and the withdrawal of funds in the entire region (Gwynne/Kay 2014: 12). Turning to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), various countries were forced to carry out reforms and to open their economies to the global capitalist market. This led to a rise in foreign direct investment (FDI). But structural adjustment programs, often implemented by dictatorial regimes, also resulted in raising unemployment, falling wages and purchase power. This increased poverty and inequality in the region; but, while a growing part of society was excluded from economic participation, also a new relatively affluent consumer society emerged (Larraín: 2014: 27; see also Beckman 2013: xxix). In Argentina, the neoliberal economic course is closely associated with the presidential era of Menem from 1989 onwards. This period was marked by privatization, deregulation and fixed currency exchange rates. In spite of being a 'model student' of the IMF, this course led to hyperinflation and decline in jobs and ultimately to the economic crisis of 2001 (see Carreras/Posthast 2010: 242–251). In Chile, neoliberal economic policies were pursued during the dictatorship of Pinochet from 1975 onwards by the so-called 'Chicago Boys', a group of Chileans who had studied at the University of Chicago. The authoritarian regime was able to implement measures without curtailments as oppositional voices were suppressed (Rinke 2007: 162). Their measures led to a significant economic growth for the first years and increased living standards, but cuts in public spending and privatizations also increased inequality and poverty. Chile was similarly affected by the debt crisis in 1982 which showed the boundaries of economic growth (ib.: 162–63). Nonetheless, Chile's relative economic stability was appreciated by many foreign investors. After Chile's return to democracy in 1989, the government of the Concertación largely continued to follow neoliberal policies, but put a stronger focus on sociopolitical redistribution (ib.: 175–176).

cal insecurities. These insecurities translate into a fear of crime and victimization and have an impact on the social imaginary. As discussed in Chapter 2.3.4, this also reflects in crime fiction novels.

In the postdictatorial period, the genre was primarily used to explore crimes of the dictatorships and the neoliberalism. Continuities can be detected in the understanding of violence as an unavoidable part of society (Close 2008: 25). The novels produced during this period continued to be loosely based on the hard-boiled formula, but show a stronger sense of “reworking and rupturing several key conventions and thematics” of the genre (Rodríguez Abad 2006). Writers without trust in their country’s political system started to write highly cynical and satiric novels and expressed a pessimistic view of a society in which the criminal triumphs (Noguerol Jiménez 2006). Many works that followed this tendency have been subsumed as a new, specifically Latin American subgenre, the *neopolicial latinoamericano*. The *neopolicial* is not an entirely new phenomenon but largely draws back on pre-existing tendencies and points at a greater focus on specific issues that are treated in the framework of the genre. The *neopolicial* turned into one of the major strands of Latin American post-Boom writing whose writers favored a new form of realistic representation and focused on the everyday over the experimental modes of writing that dominated the Boom era in the 1960s and 1970s (Pellón 1996: 282; Noguerol Jiménez 2006).

One of the most important representatives of the genre in Argentina in the 1980s is Juan Sasturain. His novels *Manual de Perdedores I* and *II* (1985; 1987), initially published as a newspaper series, are seen as two of the seminal works of the *neopolicial* in Argentina. The defeating titles of Sasturain’s novels already suggest a failure of the investigation which can be regarded as paradigmatic for works during this period and connect to “the lack of justice and the impossibility of knowing the truth when this involves political authority” (Amar Sánchez 2004: 605). The non-solution of a crime – which will be discussed more in detail in Chapter 5.1 for contemporary works – is frequent in these works and compromises an important feature until today. The

individual crime is often displaced to a second level as the scope of the novel is on the revelation of structural violence which erases the limits between law and crime (Barboza 2008). As Persephone Braham has pointed out, the marginal or popular status of crime fiction “has allowed it to evolve into a tool of social criticism in a climate where the official press is unwilling or unable to perform this function” (Braham 2004: x). The *neopolicial* defies the interpretability of a crime and the possibility of truth (Noguerol Jiménez 2006). The novels are therefore highly self-reflexive and metafictional and do not adhere to the ideological premises of the classic British model. These metafictional reflections are one of the most striking features that are present in a many *neopolicial* novels and point at the “permanent contradiction in the *neopoliciaco* project between realism and heroic fantasy” (Close 2006b: 152).

Juan Sasturain’s works also provide an interesting example of the establishment of a local or national tradition of the genre as he names Argentinean writers along with foreign ones. The design, characters or paratextual references of the novels traditionally established intertextual links to US-American or European canonic works – a practice which is also followed in the vast majority of Indian works as has been pointed out in 3.1.6. *Manual de perdedores I*, however, includes references to the Argentinean corpus, which comes up in a conversation between the private detective Etchenique and the fictional crime fiction writer Giangreco<sup>49</sup>:

Más Hammett que Goodis, un poquito de Chase. ¿Usted leyó las cosas más recientes, Etchenique? [...] Los argentinos: Tizziani, Sinay, Martini, Urbanyi, Feinmann, Soriano sobre todo...Algunos cuentos de Piglia también. [...] yo vi la biblioteca de ahí atrás y no falta nada: los cien primeros

49 Etchenique shares his investigations with the writer Giangreco who writes crime fiction novels set in Buenos Aires (Sasturain 1988: 81). These entanglements of crime and writing or the mise-en-abyme-like interplay of fictional adaptations of crimes are used in a variety of novels.

números de Séptimo Círculo, dos estantes de Rastros, la Serie Naranja, el Club del Misterio. Hasta Mister Reeder está, Etechenique... (Sasturain 1988: 81)

Quotes like these show that by the 1980s, Latin America was actually perceived as a suitable backdrop for crime fiction. An affiliation with the Latin American backdrop is established here through quotes and references rather than through local color (Amar Sánchez 2004: 602). These kind of intertextual references can be found in many recent novels as will be discussed in Chapter 5.2, and reflect the establishment of the genre in Argentinean literature. Besides Argentina, the *neopolicial* was adapted and developed further by writers from various countries, especially in Mexico<sup>50</sup>, Cuba<sup>51</sup> and Chile. Important and well-known

50 The genre has a longer history in Mexico which has been studied by researchers like Stavans (1993), Torres (2003) or Rodríguez Lozano and Flores (2005). Rodolfo Usigli's *Ensayo de un crimen* (1944) is considered the first Mexican crime fiction novel (Wieser 2012: 91); early writers like Antonio Helú or María Elvira Bermúdez largely followed the structure of the whodunit (Braham 2004: 3). In spite of the criticism the genre expressed by critics like Carlos Monsiváis (1973) in the context of the Tlatelolco massacre, several writers of the Onda generation adapted the genre – particularly after Taibo's success. Taibo II is certainly Mexico's best-known crime fiction writer. His novels commonly interrogate the official history and are connected to popular culture (Braham 2004: xi). Rafael Bernal's *El complot mongol* (1969), published immediately after the massacre, can be seen as seminal for Mexican crime fiction as the novel points at the undemocratic nature of government and the brutality of security forces. Jorge Ibarguengoitia's novels, published in the 1970s, are close to true crime stories as he used crimes reported in newspapers to criticize the sensationalism of the media (Braham 2004: 72). Also in 21st century Mexican literature, crime fiction is an important genre and, following the hard-boiled subgenre is used to scrutinize violence and drug trafficking in the North of Mexico in close proximity to the *narconovela*.

51 The development of crime fiction in Cuba exhibits some peculiarities. After the Cuban revolution, a specific type of crime fiction novels was fostered by the government in which crimes were solved through the joint effort and cooperation of Cuban citizens and the police. The employment of a private investigator was not possible in these works. The criminals were unanimously secret agents from the US (Braham 2004: xiv). The novela policial revolucionaria was meant to have an educative function and was used as an instrument of propaganda, in which the revolutionaries always won (Noguerol Jiménez 2006). With the support of the government – for example in the form of writing competitions – crime fiction became a new mass literature genre in Cuba (de Rosso 2012: 79). However, the ambiguous use of popular fiction also stands out in the evolution of Cuban crime fiction: In the 1990s, new writers like Leonardo Padura Fuentes adapted the genre in its hard-boiled variant. He altered the dichotomy of good and bad characters and used the genre as a tool of criticism of Cuba in the un-

works are certainly Pablo Ignacio Taibo II's *Días de combate* (1976), the first novel of his Belascoarán Shayne series and Leonardo Padura Fuentes' tetralogy *Cuatro estaciones*. The *neopolicial* was a vehicle to express the disappointment with the revolutionary projects after the violent suppressions of the student protests in Mexico in 1968 – to which Monsiváis also referred to – and the problematic situation of Cuba after the collapse of the USSR (Blaine 2011: 3).

Close has observed that the *novela negra* in Latin America, compared to Spain, has experienced a much more violent turn in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Close 2008: 19), which can be connected to the high level of violence and fear of victimization that the region has been confronted with. This violence has found an expression in the greater presence of violence in the region's literary production (ib.: 23). Close also coined the term *post-neopoliciaco* as a new subgenre of the *novela negra* which is connected to the rise of public insecurity in the 1990s and focuses on criminal agents rather than on crime fighters (ib.: 52–53). However, this definition rather underlines the continuities of the subgenre and does not delimit it from the *neopolicial*. In many ways, the 1990s mean an intensification of former tendencies: An endemic spiral of violence is at the heart of many works like Mempo Giardinelli's novel *El decimo infierno* (1999): Giardinelli's protagonists loose count of the murders they commit and eventually even betray each other. The novel depicts a society in total fragmentation in which the crime is no longer motivated (Close 2008: 129). Signs of an increasing disintegration of the genre can also be observed in Luisa Valenzuela's *Novela negra con Argentinos* (1991). While the title alludes to the tradition of the *novela negra*, it plays with these expectations:

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certain climate after the downfall of the USSR (Braham 2004: x). The writer himself termed his novels *falsos policiales* as they make use of the plot structure and elements of crime fiction to reflect on Cuba's current situation (Matos 2000). Other writers like Amir del Valle have followed this new direction of Cuban crime fiction. Several series by Cuban-American authors like Carolina Garcia-Aguilera have also explored the situation of the Cuban diaspora in the US in their crime fiction novels. Helen Oakley's monograph (2008) and Persephone Braham's study (2004) offer more information on the emergence of the genre in Cuba and the works of writers of the Cuban community in the US.

The novel does not focus on an investigation or a detective, but rather on a criminal who hides clues that connect to his wife's murder which he committed without an apparent reason. Valenzuela's complex and fragmented novel thereby joins the corpus of rather open reflections on the possibility of justice and shifts away from the characteristics of the *novela negra*.

#### 3.2.3.4 The Late Emergence of Crime Fiction in Chile

According to the current state of research on the adaptation of crime fiction in Chile, the genre was not of major importance for local writers for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Among the few exceptions are the Inspector Cortés series written by the police officer Rene Vergara in the 1960s (García-Corales 2008: xxi) and a few stories published in the magazine *Pacífico* (Blaine 2011: 6). Only few writers who wrote crime fiction novels during the Pinochet era either in Chile or in exile have been studied e.g. by Magda Sepúlveda (1997). Thus, crime fiction did not arouse much interest from readers or writers alike until 1987 when Ramón Díaz Eterovic published *La ciudad está triste*, the first novel of his Heredia series. However, crime fiction turned into an important genre to deal with the legacy of the Pinochet era and the transition to democracy (Craig-Odders 2006: 9). Novels largely followed the characteristics of the *neopolicial*: Books published in the 1990s often exposed the state as a perpetrator of crimes and pointed at the lack of punishment or justice (Blaine 2011: 6) – though these fictional crimes are often solved and account for a type of *ersatz* reestablishment of law and justice denied in reality (Franken Kurzen/Sepúlveda 2009: 36). Detectives employed in this context are usually private investigators who cannot count on the police. Criminals are former members of the security agencies or businessmen who profited economically from the military government (Franken Kurzen/Sepúlveda 2009: 36). Besides, Clemens Franken Kurzen has identified a group of novels which emerged during the 1990s and focused on individual crimes, often in the context of domestic violence and family conflicts (Franken Kurzen 2003: 62). The second stream is advanced by writers like Alejandra Rojas or Marcela Serrano and very present in Chile's post-millennial corpus of works.

In spite of the late adaptation of the genre, Chile nowadays possesses a substantial corpus of crime fiction novels since the 1990s (Wieser 2012: 104). Among the most important and best-known writers of the period are Luis Sepúlveda, Poli Délano, Jaime Collyer, José or Roberto Brodsky. Also Chile's best-known female writer Isabel Allende published a crime fiction novel called *The Ripper* which was published simultaneously in English and Spanish in 2014. In the novel, a young girl helps her father, a police inspector, to solve a serial murder in San Francisco via an online game with a group of teenagers. Above all, two authors stand out as the main representatives of the genre in Chile: Roberto Ampuero and the above-mentioned Ramón Díaz Eterovic. Ampuero's and Eterovic's novels correspond to two thematic focuses of Chilean crime fiction identified by Franken Kurzen and Sepúlveda (2009: 33; 41): "El detective contra las grandes instituciones" and "El detective en la globalización." Both foci point at the power of transnational capital and multinational companies, while the detective investigates on behalf of those excluded from or marginalized by these developments (ib.: 41).

Ampuero has published seven novels featuring his detective Cayetano Brulé between 1993 and 2013. His works strike out because of the variety of settings located in Chile, Cuba and Europe and the complex background of Brulé, the Cuban-Chilean investigator, as well as his Japanese-Chilean assistant Suzuki. While Ampuero's novels are praised for their 'global' character<sup>52</sup>, he is criticized for not taking a political stance in his novels – two points which acutely reflect the contentions that Chilean crime fiction is confronted with. According

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52 While the term globalization is frequently referred to in secondary literature on Chilean crime fiction, authors usually do not specify what they understand as globalization (see Franken/Sepúlveda 2009: 41f.). The impact of international capital as a door opener for corruption as well as international crimes are analyzed. Ampuero's 'international' novels analyzed by Gioconda Marún (2006) are set in Cuba, Sweden and Germany, places which are mainly connected by the author's own "biografía global" (Marún 2006: 204). While there is no doubt about the international settings of Ampuero's novels, Marún's claim that the author "ha salido crear una comunicación global con otras culturas" (ib.: 204) remains very questionable as most 'global' features of Ampuero's stories at first glance fit in neatly into stereotypical depictions of national identities or the touristic glance on the respective setting.

to Marcelo González, Ampuero's novels exhibit "una mirada política más conservadora o de centro" and promote the vision that crime can be located in specific groups and is not an omnipresent social phenomenon (2014: 194–195). Besides, Ampuero's series does nonetheless questions the 'success story' of neoliberalism in Chile out of Valparaíso, Brulé's place of residence, which is juxtaposed by the multiple journeys abroad he carries out during his investigations. While often accused of following the demands of the book market, Ampuero has certainly created a crime series which looks into very local concerns and their far-reaching connections and implications. Ampuero's works are commonly contrasted with Ramón Díaz Eterovic's series. Eterovic has so far published 15 Heredia novels which depict the political transition in Chile. His novels deal with topics such as the disappeared during the Pinochet era in *Nadie sabe más que los muertos* (1993). Over time, Heredia's cases look more into the effects of the country's neoliberal political course, downsides and scandals than into crimes connected to the dictatorship. Marcelo González Zúñiga underlines Eterovic's political firmness as a supporter of the Chilean left whose detective reminisces about the era of Allende (ib.: 200). Eterovic's project to "ficcionalizar los crímenes de la actualidad" gives an account of a society in which criminality is omnipresent focusing specifically on the rapid changes occurring in Santiago. Here, Heredia presents a counterweight and critical observer (Franken Kurzen/Sepúlveda 2009: 36; 40). Eterovic is also a major promoter of the genre in Chile and has contributed to its theorization and catered for media attention: He has written a prologue for a monograph on his works by Guillermo García-Corales (2008) and participated in conferences and literature festivals in Chile and abroad. Eterovic and Ampuero are certainly the best-known crime fiction writers in Chile for now even though a rising, yet more sporadic production of the genre can also be observed in Chile which is fostered by larger and small publishers.

### 3.2.3.5 Institutionalization and the Promotion of the Genre from the 1980s

With the growing popularity of crime fiction in Latin America from the 1980s onwards, initiatives for the (international) promotion of the genre in the form of editorial collaborations or festivals started. This includes the foundation of the Asociación Internacional de Escritores Policiales, co-founded by Taibo II in Cuba in 1986, which awards the Premio Hammett for the best crime fiction novel published in Spanish. Additionally, the festival Semana Negra in Gijón, Spain, was initiated by Taibo II in 1988 and fosters an exchange between writers, especially those from different Spanish-speaking countries. During the annual festival, the Premio Hammett<sup>53</sup> is awarded. Therefore, the Semana Negra is also a consecrating institution that closely follows the development of the genre in Spain and Latin America (see Close 2008: 16). Most of these initiatives draw back on authors' initiatives and are perceived as pan-Hispanic platforms for authors to connect rather than as a promotional events to boost books sales. Yet, until today, only few books and authors like Padura Fuentes have been published in the entire Hispanic publishing sphere.

The specific impact of publishing houses, series and gatekeepers like editors on the establishment of crime fiction has been commented on *en passant* in the previous Chapter 3.2.2. Before studying the recent crime fiction production in Argentina and Chile, it will be helpful to take a look at the countries' book markets and publishing industries. Most of the series that contributed to the circulation of the genre in Latin America were discontinued during the dictatorial periods. Certain local consecrators – earlier writers like Borges, Walsh or Piglia as well as contemporary authors such as Taibo II, Juan Sasturain or Ramón Díaz Eterovic had and continue to have a lasting impact on the development of the genre in Latin America as translators, reviewers, editors or festival organizers.

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53 Besides the Premio Hammett, several other prizes are awarded at the festival. Since 2005, the organizers award the Premio Rodolfo Walsh for the best non-fiction book dealing with crime written in Spanish.

### 3.2.4 The Contemporary Latin American Publishing Market

The Latin American book market today is a rather ambiguous and complex field which is to a large degree shaped by asymmetric power relations with Spanish publishers (Añón 2014: 35). The Spanish publishing market has experienced significant processes of concentration from the 1980s onwards and is today dominated by two large publishing conglomerates, the Grupo Planeta and Penguin Random House<sup>54</sup>. The companies do not only dominate the Spanish market, but also focus on internationalization processes and increasingly do business in Latin America (Fernández Moya 2009: 36; Critchley 2012). While the presence of Spanish publishers in Latin America is not a new phenomenon<sup>55</sup>, the neoliberal era has resulted in a consolidation of these processes (Close 2006a: 131). Spanish publishers took over many Latin American publishing houses in the last decades. While these multinational groups are often blamed for focusing on bestselling authors and topics that are of interest for a broad readership, they also possess a large symbolic capital due to their wide reach and the amount of esteemed writers and prestigious collections published by them (Safirstein 2014: 124).

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54 The Grupo Planeta currently owns about 100 imprints like Seix Barrel, Destino, Emecé, Espasa-Clape, Tusquets; Penguin Random House has for example Aguilar, Alfaguara, Debate, Debolsillo, Grijalbo, Plaza & Janés and Sudamericana under its wings (Arnscheidt 2015: 72).

55 Spanish publishers have been doing business in Latin America since the beginning of the 20th century, when a first phase of internationalization of Spanish publishers took place. However, they were often confronted with high prices, transportation and distribution problems which hampered their business activities (Fernández Moya 2009: 27). During the Franco regime, the dominance of Spanish publishers was replaced by publishing houses based in Buenos Aires and Mexico, which were often supported or founded by Spanish republicans in exile (ib.: 35). A second phase of internationalization started in the 1960s when publishing houses like Planeta opened subsidiaries in Mexico, Colombia and Argentina and gained market shares as many Latin American publishing houses had to close during the crisis in the 1980s (Fernández Moya 2009: 40; 43). Planeta – but also other publishers – consolidated their position at the beginning of the millennium by buying local publishing houses like Minotauro (2001) or Emecé (2002) (Gómez de la Torre 2015: 20). Penguin Random House bought Argentina's most important local editorial Sudamericana in 1998, among other takeovers (ib.: 21).

Especially in the context of Spain's economic crisis since 2008, which has led to a significant drop in book sales in Spain, Latin America was often seen as a 'sheet anchor'. According to an article by Carlos Geli, Spanish publishers mentioned during the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2014 that the ratio of the sales volume of books sold in Spain and Latin America had changed significantly in the previous five years from 70:30 to 40:60 (Arnscheidt 2015: 73; quoting Geli 2014). The direction of trade remains highly asymmetrical: While Spain exported books worth 340 million USD to Latin America in 2012, it merely imported books worth 10 million USD from Latin America (Symmes Coll 2013: 131). It has often been criticized that Spanish publishers see Latin America as a "prolongación natural del estrecho mercado nacional" (Fernández Moya 2009: 24). This is nowhere more evident than in the purchase of book rights: Publishers commonly reserve themselves the rights for all Spanish-speaking countries, but do not necessarily publish a title in different countries and thereby actually hamper the circulation of books. As the writer Juan Villoro pointed out, "[lo] que más se ha globalizado es el silencio: los grupos editoriales compran derechos globales pero publican sólo en el mercado local de cada autor" (Nadal/García 2005: 33). Thus, getting access to books from a neighboring country is still a cumbersome affair in many cases.

This economic and cultural dominance of Spanish publishers has an impact on which books and authors circulate beyond a respective country. These disconnections challenge claims of crime fiction as a globally free-floating genre which writers from all over the world read and inspire each other (see Nilsson et. al 2017: 3). To describe this situation as an "intercourse in every direction" is a euphemism as the Latin American case shows (ib.: 2): Works consecrated in the Global North do circulate widely and can be bought in many Latin American countries. The works of Latin American writers, by contrast, are often not even available in a neighboring country. This is not only a result of a lacking intraconnectedness within Latin America but also of the above-mentioned company policies of multinational publishers. Like in India, the situation is not only black and white: Besides multinational publishers, various other stakeholders from smaller publishers

to governments also have an impact on the market development. What also needs to be kept in mind here is the impact of local interests. Similar to the focus on local settings, protagonists and concerns that dominate Indian post-millennial genre fiction, the low levels of Inter-Latin American exchange could also point at specific local interests. Marifé Boix García has pointed out for example that books which do well in one country in Latin America often fail in others (2015: 98).

Furthermore, Spanish literary awards like the Premio Planeta or the Premio Cervantes are of huge importance for the transatlantic market. The success in Spain continues to be a precondition for many writers to be acknowledged in Latin America (Arnscheidt 2015: 73). The best-known Latin American writers usually have contracts with Spanish publishers and are represented by Spanish literary agents, which can also have an impact on the content of their works. Like Indian writers on the global market, these writers have to appeal to (publishers' expectations of) a larger Spanish audience (Castro 2008: 96). Decisions on which books get translated are taken in Spain and strongly biased on books written in or translated into English as a 'bridge language' (Añón 2014: 38; Adamo 2012: 19). This imbalance reveals various parallels to the situation in India: Which books circulate on global publishing market and reach Latin America continues to be determined by the centers of literary production in the Global North. As I have already pointed out in Chapter 2.1.2, a South-South exchange either within Latin America or between different areas of the Global South similarly largely continues to go via centers like Europe or the US.

#### 3.2.4.1 Readership, Taxation and Pricing Regulations

While Latin America is often perceived as one publishing market, conditions, regulations and readership vary vastly among different countries. Only a few countries like Argentina and Mexico have long established publishing houses, distribution channels and bookshops, while other countries' publishing markets are still in their infancy (Boix García 2015: 79). Unlike in India, publishers are not confronted with a complex linguistic situation in Latin America. However, reading cultures differ significantly among countries: A 2011 survey has shown

that in Argentina – which has certainly the most avid readers in Latin America – about 40% of the respondents read at least one book per month while one third declared themselves non-readers (Sistema de Información Cultural de Argentina 2011: 102). In a survey conducted in Chile in 2009, 58.6% of all respondents stated not having read a book in the last 12 months. 41.4% of the respondents had read at least one book, but the number of frequent readers was significantly lower than in Argentina (Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes 2011: 4).

The small market and the lack of readership are often mentioned as particular obstacles by Chilean publishers, but also import and pricing regulations have an impact on the market: Chile for example traditionally imports most of its books. As the book trade is not exempted from import fees or value added taxes and the country does not have a fixed book price, books are generally perceived as expensive consumer goods: Matías Cociña for example showed that popular international bestsellers like J.K Rowling's Harry Potter novels are more expensive in Chile than in any other country (2007: 69)<sup>56</sup>. While editors have long advocated abolishing the value added tax on books, some also point out that books published by Chilean publishers in Chile are not much more expensive than other consumer goods.<sup>57</sup> It is rather imported books which distort the price perception. The small number of copies and high printing costs that result from the lack of a reading culture are further reasons stated as obstacles for Chile's publishing industry.

Argentina, Latin America's third largest publishing market after Brazil and Mexico, has a fixed book price since 2001 (Gómez de la Torre 2015: 3). The country's book industry is affected by high inflation rates and regular currency devaluations which have a huge impact on

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56 *Harry Potter y la Orden del Fénix* costs the equivalent of 23.73 USD in Chile while the price in Germany was with the equivalent of 12.25 USD relatively cheap (Cociña 2007: 69; calculations based on the exchange rates in October 2006).

57 According to a study carried out in 2001, the average price for a Chilean book was about 12.70 USD including VAT (see Symmes Coll 2013: 140). However, also some the works of Chilean writers Roberto Bolaño or Alejandro Zambra are published abroad by Anagrama Spain, imported and sold at the high price of foreign titles (Observatorio de Políticas Culturales 2012: 110).

the book industry and turned books into hardly affordable consumer goods. According to consultant Fernando Zambra, book prizes have increased more than 30% in the last three years. Before Argentina's economic crisis in 2001, the country was swamped with "colecciones a muy bajo precio lanzados por los medios masivos y distribuidas en los quiscos de diarios y revistas" (Diego 2014: 213; 217). Many of them were books that remained unsold in Spain went on sale in Argentina. The currency devaluation made the import of books from Spain less profitable and led to a drastic reduction in book imports and left book shelves empty in Argentina (Kan 2015). Import restrictions on books and other goods that were in effect from 2011 till 2016<sup>58</sup> resulted in a drastic drop in book imports to Argentina (Gómez de la Torre 2015: 3). Currently, in contrast to Chile, multinational publishers publish about 90% of their books in Argentina under an Argentinean ISBN number (ib.: 26). While these publishers largely control the Argentinean market – Añón talks about a market share of 75–80% (2014: 63) – local authors make up a large share of the sales figures: consultant Fernando Zambra estimates that 40–50% of the titles sold in Argentina are written by local writers. This reflects in the country's bestseller lists: In 2014, for example, 11 of the 30 bestselling titles in Argentina were written by an Argentinean author (Gómez de la Torre 2015: 10).

Import regulations reveal how the state has an impact on the book market, but governments intervene in the book market in various ways, for example by purchasing books or fostering translations. While these initiatives are very rare in Chile, the Argentinean government has developed several programs such as the above-mentioned foundations El Libro, TyPA or the Programa Sur, all of which support translations and trade book rights (Gómez de la Torre 2015: 7). In recent years, the Argentinean government has also purchased large amounts of books and thereby fostered the market (Maslaton 2015).

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58 After the change of government at the end of 2015, the majority of these import restrictions were dropped. The consequences of this liberation on Argentina's book market were not yet foreseeable at the end of the research period of this project, but were heavily debated by various stakeholders (see for example Frieria 2016).

#### 3.2.4.2 The Impact of Local Publishers and Corporations on the Market

Latin America is producing more books for its own market – whether it is multinational publishers who print more titles in Latin America or literary agents who increasingly make contracts directly with Latin American publishers instead of going through Spain (Fernández Moya 2009: 43; Critchley 2012). Latin American as well as international book fairs are of large importance to connect publishers and present works published in the respective countries (Kan 2015). An interesting indicator of this intra-regional orientation is also the fact that Latin America as a whole was named guest of honor of Latin America's most important book fair, the Feria Internacional del Libro de Guadalajara in 2016. This move precisely points at the connections and deficits that characterize the region's book market(s) (Cruz 2016).

The amount of Chilean writers published by Planeta or Penguin Random House in Chile has risen from about 10% a decade ago to 15–20% nowadays and editors in general receive more and more manuscripts. Latin America's publishing markets are overall growing: Between 2000 and 2013, the numbers of titles registered at ISBN agencies in Latin America has grown from 60,000 to 194,000 per year (Morotti/Nawothka 2015). Sales numbers have increased in Argentina – due to the import restrictions and greater reading habits – though the number of copies per title sold has grown much more than the total number of titles (Neto 2014). Selling more than 3,000 copies of a title is considered a good result for small or medium publishers in Argentina, which usually publish 500 copies of a title (Gigena 2015). Large best-sellers can sell more than 75,000 copies and in some cases even reach sales numbers of 150,000 copies. Even in a difficult market like Chile's, new publishing houses and bookshops have opened in recent years (Traslaviña 2015). The number of copies per title in Chile is lower than in Argentina and ranges between 500 and a maximum of 2,000 copies (Observatorio de Políticas Culturales 2012: 107). Ebooks and online retail are not major distribution channels for books in Latin America so far and only compromise a market share of one or two percent (Balmaceda 2016; Müller/Gras 2015: 11). Yet, the registration of titles as

ebooks has grown significantly in the last years from five to 20 percent. Various online retail platforms do business in Chile and Argentina but are generally run by book chains or publishers. Multinational enterprises like Amazon do not have local websites in both countries, but imported books can be order via other local websites.

Latin America's book markets are not completely dominated by multinational publishing houses – such claims obscure the impact of local publishers. The growth figures are partly related to the appearance of small independent publishing houses called *microeditoriales* in Spanish, which usually publish up to 10 titles per year. Taken together, these *microeditoriales*<sup>59</sup> have a significant market share and presence (see for example Gómez de la Torre 2014: 23–24). They are fostered by independent bookstores – most of them concentrated in Buenos Aires – which account for 40% of all book sales (ib.: 4). This shows that the last decades were not only characterized by a concentration, but also diversification and heterogenization of the publishing market (Müller/Gras 2015: 11). In Argentina, this parallel development started with the foundation of small publishing houses in the 1990s (Diego 2014: 210). When in the aftermath of the 2001 crisis many books stores remained empty and staff from the publishing industry was laid off, new independent publishing houses were founded to 'fill the gap' (Larraz 2014: 11). In the decade to follow, they were increasingly appreciated for the quality of their books and are often seen as much more innovative than their large competitors (Gigena 2015). They often set the tone for new developments in the market: Often authors and new genres are initially successful with small publishers and consequently copied or bought by larger ones (Diego 2014: 227f.).

This trend can also be observed in Chile, albeit on a smaller scale: The number of Chilean *microeditoriales* is constantly growing. The two organizations that unite most of Chile's independent publishers, the Asociación de Editores de Chile and the Editores de la Furia<sup>60</sup> have

59 For a list of Argentinean *microeditoriales*, see for example Adamo (2012: 40–41).

60 Both of these organizations provide an important platform for independent publishers to sell their books at book fairs. Editores de Chile derived from the Pan-Hispanic or-

gained many new members in the last years (Traslaviña 2015). Many of these publishers are dedicated to less profitable genres like poetry, as well as non-fiction and literary fiction in general which are situated at the autonomous pole of the literary field (Symmes Coll 2013: 144). Appreciated for good quality, smaller publishers usually focus on literary fiction, though some have specialized in specific genres: The Argentinean editorial Vestales for example publishes mainly romantic fiction after detecting a gap of popular fiction originally written in Spanish (Gigena 2015). Some players such as LOM, a medium-sized Chilean publishing house, have been on the market for longer and do possess Pan-Latin American connections to other publishing houses. These publishers also focus on new strategies to sell books beyond their national market: They increasingly opt for coeditions with independent publishers in other countries (Kan 2015). Thereby, they avoid shipping and custom fees and contribute – on a low level – to the circulation of books within Latin America and to Spain and counter the dominance of the large publishing corporations.

Looking at the structure of the publishing markets in Latin America reveals the complexity and ambiguity of the publishing fields which cannot be grasped with Bourdieu's binary model (1995). Different agents including multinational and local publishers, literary agents, the state and readers have an impact on the types, status and sales numbers of books published. Differences can already be observed in the publishing markets of neighboring countries like Argentina and Chile. The globalization of the publishing market had various effects on the books produced in these countries and accounts for simultaneous processes of homogenization and heterogenization in terms of genres, topics and authors (Saferstein 2014: 119).

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ganization Asociación de Editores Independientes, founded in 1998, which represents 45 independent publishers and for example focuses on coeditions and the organization of the book fair Primavera del Libro in Santiago (Symmes Coll 2013: 137). The Cooperativa de Editores de la Furia is a collective of more than 30 *microeditoriales* which started its activities in 2009 and organizes the book fair Furia del Libro (Vargas Rojas 2015).

### 3.2.4.3 The Production of Crime Fiction and the Impact of Television Series

The huge impact that specific crime fiction series and their editors had on the popularity of crime fiction in Argentina in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is not repeated in the country's post-millennial publishing market. Even large publishers like Planeta do not have special imprints for Argentinean crime fiction and writers are rather marketed as part of the broader category of Argentinean fiction. Three independent publishers have their own series: The collection *Negro Absoluto*, for example, edited by Juan Sasturain, is part of the editorial *Aquilina* and so far comprises about 20 novels. Carolina Miranda took a closer look at the series in a 2016 article and pointed out that

*Negro Absoluto* was born out of an effort to consolidate domestic crime fiction by relocating it to national geographic, cultural, social, and historical backdrops. Its characters are well rooted in local culture and operate in unmistakably domestic locales. (2016: 83)

Miranda's observations strongly resonate considerations about Indian post-millennial genre fiction in terms of the local rootedness of these works (see Chapter 3.2.5): The collection *Negro Absoluto* similarly focuses on domestic settings, which is for example visible on the covers that preset snapshots of Buenos Aires that local readers recognize (ib.: 82–83). A second example is the successful collection *Extremo Negro*, which was initiated in 2012 by the publishing group *Del Nuevo Extremo* (Ventura 2014). The latter has hosted four contests for crime fiction writers so far and according to its editor Carlos Santos Sáez, the publishing house has received about 2,000 manuscripts in four years. Íñigo Amonarriz Gómez, a Spaniard based in Argentina, founded *Revólver Editorial* in 2014 after noticing a lack of variety in crime fiction in Argentina. He initially published Spanish crime fiction that had been published by small publishers in Spain but increasingly also focuses on Latin American authors (Abrevaya 2016).

In Chile, the production of crime fiction is also increasing, but more limited to individual works – besides a small number of long-standing series. The affiliation to a specific genre is usually not given away by the design of the book as publishers largely use the standard design of general series or imprints. Also crime fiction writers themselves often eschew the label of the genre. Mario Valdivia's *Un crimen de barrio alto* (2015) and *Tres balas para el diputado* (2015) are exceptions to the rule as the covers clearly draw back on characteristics of globally circulating crime fiction such as the use of a black background and a red font. In contrast to the growing presence and importance of blurbs or endorsements in India (see Chapter 3.2.4), these practices remain uncommon in Latin America and are thus not used to draw connections to the genre. Generic affiliation is also not highlighted in Argentinean and Chilean bookshops which usually distinguish between national, Latin American and international writing. These are just two examples which show that the genre is not really used as a marketing category to promote specific types of books in Latin America. A big contrast to the practices discussed by Claire Squires for the British market can be observed (2007: 5). Also the serial character of works is not highlighted: While the name of the detective is often mentioned on the cover to establish a connection to specific series in English-language markets, this is not a common practice in Latin America. *Policiales* sections sometimes exist in larger bookshops such as the iconic Ateneo Gran Splendid in Buenos Aires but these sections usually only include international titles. Instead, the increased production of crime fiction has been noted in a myriad of newspaper articles and reviews as well as some academic papers that look into individual novels. Ezequiel de Rosso has claimed for example that one third of all bestselling titles in Argentina in the last decade use at least elements of the genre (2014: 109).

The institutionalization and popularity are probably most developed in Argentina, which for example hosts three annual festivals dedicated to the genre: Buenos Aires Negra! (BAN!), the Festival Azabache Negro y Blanco in Mar de Plata, both organized since 2011, and the festival Cordoba Mata, which was initiated in 2015 (see Cordeu 2015).

Argentinean crime fiction writers have also been able to win competitions at various crime fiction festivals in Spain – a development which David Benedicte (2015) called the emergence of the “Argentinoir”. Chile’s only crime fiction festival Santiago Negro was last organized in 2014. The Chilean *Policía de investigaciones* (PDI) contributes to the presence of the genre in Chile by organizing an annual competition since 2013. Participants can submit stories that are based on crime investigations conducted by the PDI (*Policía de investigaciones de Chile* 2014: 4–5).

Crime fiction is also very present on television and cinema screens in Latin America. Doris Wieser has pointed at the long-standing presence of US-American series such as “CSI: Crime Scene Investigation” in the region and their impact on the horizons of expectations of readers and viewers of the genre outside the US (Wieser 2012: 64ff.). Also local series, which largely follow the characteristics of their US-American counterparts have been produced. In Chile, productions include for example the series “Brigada scorpion” (1997), written by Roberto Ampuero, or “Profugos” (2011–2013). “Heredia & Asociados”, a series based on Eterovic’s novels, was produced in 2004. In Argentina, the series “Disparos en la biblioteca” (2012) was a highly popular and innovative format hosted by Juan Sasturain. Sasturain acted as a detective and pursued investigations that led him to emblematic works of Argentinean crime fiction writers (Respighi 2012).

In spite of the growing production and interest in the genre, Latin American writers have not been able to gain a sustainable presence as writers of crime fiction beyond the Spanish-language market so far. Some works have been translated and published abroad, for example by Gallimard’s *Série noire* or the British Bitter Lemon Press. However, there are only few representatives like Taibo II, Leonardo Padura Fuentes and to some extent Claudia Piñeiro who gained an international reputation as crime fiction writers are invited to festivals or included in general compilations about crime fiction. Writers continue to be rather absent from the list of winners of crime fiction awards for translations. Awards like The Crime Writers’ Association’s

International Dagger or the International Prize of the French Grand Prix de Littérature Policière are commonly awarded to European or US-American writers. In 2016, a Chilean filmmaker and writer, Boris Quercia, was the first Latin American to win the latter award for his novel *Tant de chien* (2015), the second book of his Santiago Quiñones Trilogy. This move once again points at the asymmetries in the market for crime fiction novels: Quercia's first book, *Santiago Quiñones, tira* was published first in Spanish in 2010 by Mondadori Chile, then translated into French and published by the French crime fiction editorial Asphalte in 2013. The award-winning novel *Tant de chien* was first published in France in 2015 and – though it was originally written in Spanish – the original was only published in Chile in 2016 along with a reedition of his first book which was out of print before he won the award (Fajardo 2016; also see Quercia 2015: Copyright Page). After Quercia has apparently been able to find an audience and publishers in France, winning a foreign award has helped him significantly to gain media attention as a writer in Chile and to boost his sales numbers in his home market.

### 3.2.5 From the Post-Boom to Contemporary Writing in Chile and Argentina

Besides looking at recent developments in the publishing industry, a contextualization of contemporary literary production in Latin America, or Argentina and Chile respectively, will be helpful to gain a better impression of the region's current literary field(s) and to detect new tendencies in Latin American literature. This framework will consequently be useful to place the current production of crime fiction in the countries' literary fields.

The small number of Latin American crime fiction writers on the 'global' market is symptomatic for contemporary Latin American writers in general: Only few writers, most notably Roberto Bolaño, have been able to gain a greater presence outside Latin America. The genre that internationally continues to be closely associated with Latin American literature is the boom genre magic realism of the 1960s and 1970s. New

writers often see themselves confronted with these canonical figures and respective expectations of readers or editors (Robbins/González 2014: 2). Around the turn of the millennium, post-Boom movements such as the Mexican Crack or the South-American McOndo movement have tried to distance themselves from the mode of writing of the Boom writers and propagated a new diversity of modes of writing and topics in their manifests and anthologies (see Fuguet/Gómez 1996; Volpi et al. 2000). However, while these movements increased the visibility of various writers only individual ones like Jorge Volpi have been successful. Authors of these movements have generally found little reception abroad and are not as commercially successful as the Boom writers (Hoyos Ayala 2015: 195). Similarly, in Chile, the *Nueva narrativa chilena* of the 1990s propagated a new, realistic literature that took into account economic and technological transformations and was closer to Latin American reality at the turn of the millennium – according to propagators like Alberto Fuguet. While the post-Boom manifests were published almost two decades ago, no term has so far been coined for contemporary Latin American writing beyond the post-Boom. According to Jesús Montoya Juárez and Angel Esteban, the latter term has lost its vigor as a model of contemporary writing in Latin America (2008: 7). Joaquín Sánchez Mariño talks about the “post post boom” (2016), while Timothy Robbins and José Eduardo González have introduced the term *posnacionalistas*, the post-national generation (2014: 6). According to the authors, “the most important social changes that define their lives are in one way or another linked to the erosion of the nation-state and a fragile production of locality” (ib.: 6). This generation is above all characterized by the diversity of writings and the emergence of new forms as well as an intensification of existing tendencies and topics. Robbins and González point out various shared experiences that have an impact on this generation of writers and their writing. For the authors this includes the emergence of a global popular culture and its impact on the everyday, the rise of internet and technology, an apparent disinterest in politics and a delimitation of the setting to the author’s specific national context (ib.: 6–11). Also Anibál González has observed that

[el] rasgo más distintivo de esa visión se manifiesta en el rechazo a menudo muy abierto de estos escritores de utilizar sus países de origen, o incluso un ambiente genéricamente latinoamericano, para ambientar sus ficciones. En cambio, la acción de muchos de estos relatos tiene lugar en países como Francia, Alemania, Rusia, España y los Estados Unidos, y los personajes mismos no son necesariamente latinoamericanos (2012: 51–52).

However, novels in their vast majority continue to follow a North-South orientation, while novels that establish South-South relations are a rare exception. It is also González' contention that recent Latin American literature could be called *postnacional* in the sense that these writings cannot be categorized according to a writer's place of origin (2012: 52). While the suitability of the term postnational is debatable, the frequent use of settings that go beyond Latin America has been observed by various researchers as a striking characteristic of recent Latin American Literature (Strausfeld 2013: 38; Siebenmann 2007: 32; Trelles Paz 2009: 19). It is often seen as a strategy to reflect upon processes of globalization and neoliberalism and also shows that writers do no longer feel obliged to represent their country or Latin America as a whole (Hoyos Ayala 2015: 25). Novels set in Latin America commonly focus on the "gritty urban center in the throes of hypercapitalism, neoliberalism and violence" (Pollack 2009: 353). Mass media, the internet, technologization and the commercialization of society are topics that shape many contemporary novels: Malls, supermarkets and brands but also non-places in the sense of Marc Augé are common tropes in current works that have been analyzed for example by Héctor Hoyos Ayala (2015) or Luis Cárcamo-Huechante (2007). This equally exclusionary vision of Latin America has frequently been pointed out. Overall, many new writers are criticized for producing what established writers like Mario Vargas Llosa (2009) have termed "literatura light" – the commercialization of literature in Latin America. Some writers such as Santiago Roncagliolo have gained access to a market outside the region via Spanish literary awards and are once again confronted with allegations of a conflation of writing: Roncagliolo is criticized for using a neutral Spanish or resorting to formulaic writings to appeal to a larger Spanish-speaking audience (Castro 2008: 96; 103).

In spite of this critique, Diego Trelles Paz states in an anthology of young Latin American writers that popular genres are increasingly used by Latin American writers to discuss historic and political concerns:

[Y]a no resulta descabellado o poco serio abordar estos mismos temas históricos (de próceres y dictadores, conflictos armados y revoluciones) mediante géneros antes menospreciados por su carácter formulario y su arraigo popular, como el policial y la ciencia ficción. (2009: 24)

He points at a diversification of forms and techniques beyond the use of literary fiction or the *novela total* that dominated the Boom era (Trelles Paz 2009: 25). According to Trelles Paz, contemporary writers refuse to see the novel as a “género comprometido” which sets out to explain a historic period as a whole (ib.: 24). In terms of political motivations of writers, Robbins and González specify that what shines through in current novels is “not so much their rejection of politics, as it is the feeling the traditional political parties/political views in Latin America cannot be trusted to express their ideologies” (2014: 10). The legacies of the dictatorships remain an important topic in Argentinean and Chilean literature and continue to play a role in the background while novels are often set in the immediate present or the last two decades.

Crime and violence are topics have gained significant presence in Latin American literature and cinema in the last decades. This includes interpersonal as well as structural or symbolic violence which is often presented as a consequence of poverty, inequality, racism and rapid urbanization (Trelles Paz 2009: 21). The representation of crime and violence is often seen as an exoticization of violence or an updated urban variant of the exoticization of the region (Sánchez Prado 2006; Borsò 2014: 24). The success of movies like *Ciudad de Deus* (2002), *Amores perros* (2001) or *La virgin de los sicarios* (2000), set in Rio de Janeiro, Mexico City and Medellín respectively, or novels like Roberto Bolaño’s *2666* (2004) can be seen as paradigmatic for this development. Critics often claim that writers and filmmakers use violence as a kind of export product and contribute to an ongoing exoticization

of Latin America for European and US-American viewers and readers (Wieser 2012: 42). Violence connected to drug trafficking, however, has been a topic of major concern for many Latin American writers and led to the emergence of new genres such as the *narconovela* in Mexico and Colombia. Many of these works can be counted as crime fiction novels. Similarly, the *novela de violencia* has emerged and portrays a society in which extreme violence has been normalized (Tavares-Dos-Santos et al. 2016: 154ff.). The hero is replaced by the “dissolution of characters”, many of them nameless gang members, *sicarios* (contract killers) or mutilated and tortured dead bodies. The novels often reveal connections between the ruling class – politicians and businessmen – and criminals (ib.: 154). Furthermore, they often reveal drug trafficking and other illegal enterprises to function according to the rules and logic of capitalism (Pepper 2016: 242). Gustavo Forero Quintero has described this scenario as a “situation of anomie [...] in which the law has lost validity or cannot be applied in the narrative world” which is depicted in these crime novels (2015: 27). Since there is no order left that can be restored in this context, Forero Quintero uses the term crime novel or in Spanish *novel de crímenes* to distinguish these works from crime fiction novels in which good and bad characters can be identified and in which the investigating figure has an impact on the development of the plot (ib.: 28).

### **Crime Fiction Elements in Roberto Bolaño’s Works**

Roberto Bolaño is certainly the central figure of Latin American literature since he is not only the most prominent representative of contemporary literature in the region but also the single best-known Latin American writer abroad (see for example Pollack 2009). His own biography as well as his novels reflect a new self-conception of Latin American writers shared by the members of McOndo or Crack and their advocacy for a “movement away from national labels” (ib.: 2009: 360). Though commonly featuring Latin American protagonists, Bolaño’s novels are set in diverse locales across various continents and comply with a new vision of Latin American writing that is not necessarily located in Latin America. While Bolaño has been positioned as the ‘big brother’ of younger writers, his work is often read in the legacy

of or in opposition to the Boom authors, whose works continue to shape the horizon of expectations of foreign readers (Gutiérrez-Mouat 2014: 39). For the reception of his works in the US, Sarah Pollack has analyzed how the success of Bolaño's works after his death is linked to an overemphasis of connections between Bolaño's own biography and his novel *The Savage Detectives* (2007 in English): 'Repackaged' for an US-American audience, the novel was announced as a "thinly disguised autobiography" which focuses on the early life of the author, which superficially read fits into the imaginary of Latin America as a violent as well as exotic region (Pollack 2009: 358–360). These links, however, mean a conflation of the complex and ironic character of many of Bolaño's writings. Studying the literary merit of Bolaño's novels, Roberto González Echevarría has particularly pointed at Bolaño's tendency to absorb and recycle traditions in original ways (2010: 120). Novels like *Los detectives salvajes* or *2666* (2004) account for highly fragmented, and metaliterary structures, complex polyphone narrative strategies as well as multiple spatio-temporal levels which leave the reader as the only authority who can connect the puzzle-like structure. Bolaño's writings have been perceived as a new paradigm of 21<sup>st</sup> century literature and a model for Latin American as well as other writers (Rössner 2007: 515). His novels are described as "genre-defying" as specific genres such as science fiction or crime fiction are evoked, but systematically transgressed (Baker 2012: 28).

In *Los detectives salvajes*, the title already alludes to a crime fiction novel and the poets Ulises Lima and Arturo Belano occupy detective-like positions. The frame narrative deals with the search for Cesárea Tinajero, the disappeared founder of an avant-garde movement. However, the second section, which comprises about two thirds of the entire novel, moves away from the investigation and consists of a multitude of interviews which reconstruct the whereabouts of these protagonists in a time span of 20 years across various continents. The investigation is continued in the third section and, even though Tinajero can be spotted in the desert of Sonora, the novel does not end with a solution of the mystery but with a rather disenchanting outcome.

Whether *Los detectives salvajes* or other works written by Bolaño like the posthumously published *2666* can be considered crime fiction novels is disputed (Lay Brander 2015: 1). The extreme and constant transgression of the genre's conventions and that fact that its characteristics do not play a role in large parts of the novel can also be considered incompatible with the genre. *2666*, which consists of five very loosely connected parts, includes two investigations which play a role in different parts of the novels. These investigations concern the search for the writer Archimboldi by academics and the search for a serial killer in the North of Mexico who rapes and kills women. As Miriam Lay Brander has pointed out for 'La parte de los crímenes' which deals with the hunt for the serial killer, the focus on the investigation of a series of crimes basically matches the definition of crime fiction even though the novel encompasses a multitude of crimes and investigating figures (2015: 3). The novel alludes to various Latin American subgenres such as the mix of journalistic investigations and crime fiction or the *relato de enigma* which plays a role in the first investigation in "La parte de los críticos" (ib.: 5). The investigations do not solve any mysteries, but instead bring up new questions and thereby lead to an infinite loop or a new type of incomplete crime fiction novel which is so distanced from the prototype that it can hardly be taken up by other writers (ib.: 8).

Bolaño's reworking of the crime fiction novel and its subgenres may account for a continuation or exaggeration of tendencies that can be found in post-dictatorial crime fiction or the *neopolicial* as pointed out in 3.2.5. These tendencies also play a role in contemporary crime fiction such as the non-solution of a case or the marginalization of a detective figure. Overall, due to the length and complexity of Bolaño's writings, allusions to crime fiction are only one of many topics and strategies used by the author. Therefore, recent analyses of Bolaño's oeuvre often use current discussions about world literature like the global novel as a framework to read specific novels, (see for example Loy 2015; Pollack 2009). Bolaño's works and his status are of major importance when looking at current Latin American crime fiction novels due to the huge impact Bolaño had on Latin America's post-millennial literary production. His works are not analyzed in this disser-

tation due to this relative marginalization of crime fiction elements in Bolaño's *oeuvre* and as his novels have been subject to a myriad of academic studies in recent years.<sup>61</sup>

### 3.2.6 Contemporary Crime Fiction in Argentina and Chile

The general concerns of recent literary production also reflect in Latin American crime fiction novels: Contemporary crime fiction in Latin America overall continues to reflect on and deal with a violent present (Wieser 2012: 120): In the course of an investigation, the structural or systemic violence that lies behind the event of subjective acts of violence is uncovered (ib.: 11). Drug trafficking and drug-related crimes as well as the transnational links of these activities are common topics in Latin American crime fiction and also depict a prime example of a criminal business which is so complex and interwoven that the individual detective cannot even come close to grasp or solve it (Close 2006b: 149). The border between the crime fiction and the *narconovela* or the *novela de crímenes* is fluid and partly summarized as regional subgenres which are particularly present in Colombia and Mexico rather than in the Southern Cone. Nonetheless, the impact of drug trafficking on transit countries for transnational drug businesses like Argentina is frequently scrutinized by fiction and non-fiction<sup>62</sup> writers and plays for example a role in Sergio Olguín's *Las extranjeras* (2014) or María Inés Krimer's *Siliconas express* (2013).

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61 Vikram Chandra's novel *Sacred Games* (2006) shows certain similarities with Bolaño's novels in terms of extensiveness and complexity. However, crime fiction elements are much more at the center of *Sacred Games* than they are in Bolaño's works, even though Chandra similarly challenges many generic conventions. Therefore, *Sacred Games* has been included as one of the corpus novels. Overall, a comparison of the works of both writers with a focus on their adaptation or transgression of crime fiction would nonetheless be an interesting topic for future studies.

62 The impact of the drug business in Argentina has for example been addressed in Virginia Messi and Juan Manuel Bordón's *Narcolandia* (2014) or Cecilia González' *Narcosur* (2013).

Current works often continue to denounce the downsides of neoliberalism and failing governments which contribute for example to the growing social and economic inequality. This has been observed by Glen Close, according to whom the *novela negra* reflects

[the] franker enjoyment of spectacles of violence, and [the] understanding among Latin American writers that the fiction of the law presently offers a majority of citizens little protection from the harsh realities of contemporary, often corrupt, neoliberal capitalism. (2006b: 155)

While the genre is often presented as a direct mouthpiece of current problems, I advocate that there are various other factors which contribute to the popularity of the genre in Latin America. Besides the depiction of violence, works also include everyday scenes and marginal events (“acontecimientos cotidianos y marginales que contextualizan la anécdota policial”; Barboza 2008). I further argue that precisely in Argentina and Chile many works relate more to current fears than to actual threats: As I have already mentioned in 3.2.5, crime and murder rates are relatively low in both countries compared to other Latin American countries. But as delinquency has risen since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the fear of delinquency has also augmented disproportionately (see for example Rotker/Goldman 2002 or Dammert/Marloné 2004). This fear is exploited in recent works of authors like César Aira or Juan Martini and corresponds to the view of literature as a social commentary. William J. Nichols sees as connection here to the Latin American tradition of adopting literary discourses as “el medio preferido para examinar la realidad social” (2011: 300). While the genre – especially the *neopolicial* – was used to denounce political crimes and state violence, it is now neoliberalism and the negative outcomes of globalization processes that are at the center of critique expressed in recent crime fiction novels. Thus, these which can be once again considered “literatura comprometida” (ib.: 301) which addresses problems like

la liberalización y la privatización, la migración transnacional de personas y capital, el consumismo y la objetivación, el aburguesamiento de los espacios urbanos y la marginalización de las clases obreras, la falsificación por los medios masivos de comunicación y el control de información por las clases dirigentes. (ib.: 301)

The model that current authors often continue to draw back on is the US-American hard-boiled. Current works can also be seen as an intensification of tendencies that already marked post-dictatorial crime fiction. Partly, the term *neopolicial* continues to be used while other critics have pointed at a departure from the subgenre – which can be observed within individual series: In Díaz Eterovic's Heredia series, for example, the 2002 novel *El hombre que pregunta* is set in an intellectual and academic setting that differs significantly from his earlier novels (Pellicer n.d.).

Besides the few established series that emerged in the late 1980s and 1990s, contemporary works in Latin America are largely independent novels. Among the few recent exceptions are Olguín's Veronica Rosenthal series, María Inés Krimer's Ruth Epelbaum series as well as Ernesto Mallo's detective Lascano novels. Other writers like Piñeiro or Subercaseaux are thematically consistent but do not use recurrent detective figures. Rosa Pellicer (n.d.) has observed that Argentinean authors increasingly fictionalize criminal incidents discussed in the media – which also reflects in many Indian works. Besides, the presence of novels that focus on individual crimes in the private domestic sphere, as identified by Clemens Franken for Chilean crime fiction in the 1990s (2003: 62), has increased significantly. Elizabeth Subercaseaux' novels or Miguel de Campo's *Sin rendición* (2014) follow this line and focus on the revelation of shattered private relationships which are scrutinized during the investigation of a crime. Authors like Pablo de Santis, Carlos Gamerro or Guillermo Martínez, on the other hand, have resorted to more classic crime fiction models. This is an Argentinean phenomenon as authors here draw on the tradition of the Séptimo Círculo authors which Doris Wieser has termed "ludic crime fiction" (2012: 12). These authors similarly question the

'laws' of the classic British model and have published intellectual novels which use for example mathematic or linguistic methods to solve a crime as in Guillermo Martínez *Crímenes imperceptibles* (2003) or Pablo de Santis *La traducción* (1998). According to Laura Ventura (2014), these novels have the "capacidad de camuflarse en poéticas o en formas narrativas que, en apariencia, no le son propias". De Santis even claims that "el policial ha invadido totalmente la literatura [...] el policial atrapó a todos los géneros" (Lucan Picabea 2012). While this view might be a bit exaggerated, the genre certainly continues to challenge the apparent dichotomies between high and popular fiction and transcends the poles of mass and restricted production of Latin America's literary fields (see also Braham 2004: 16). In Argentina, the genre continues to be perceived as part of a corpus of literary fiction (Ostrom 2011: 210) – which, as pointed out in Chapter 3.2.2, dates back to early adaptations of the genre in Argentina.

Current novels challenge basic dichotomies that dominated classic crime fiction novels such as the state as the guardian of the law vs. the criminals. These dichotomies are not reliable categories in Latin American crime fiction and which have a big impact on for example the protagonists (Wieser 2012: 361). Contemporary detectives continue to be private investigators or journalists, as well as literary critics or other scientists (Noguerol Jiménez 2006). The employment of police inspectors, in contrast, is rather the exception to the rule. Neither detective figures nor narrators function as moral instances in many investigations. While Marcela Serrano and the Mexican writer Miriam Laurini were until recently rare examples of women writers/protagonists of the genre, authors and/or investigators are increasingly female (Choi 2012: 8–11). The growing presence of women in contemporary crime fiction novels is a striking phenomenon which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.1. The detectives as well as the victims are commonly from a middle or upper class background. Claudia Piñeiro's *Las viudas de los jueves* (2005), to give just one example, depicts the effects of the recession on the eve of the economic crisis of 2001 in a gated community outside Buenos Aires. The protagonists have a middle and upper class background and try to protect themselves from the poor

masses outside the gated community (Griesse 2013: 59). The inequality portrayed in these novels is discussed from a middle class perspective while poor and marginalized characters only play secondary roles.

A shift of focus from the detective to the criminal has been observed by various scholars (for example Close 2006b: 154). However, the recent crime fiction novels that are analyzed in this thesis do not subscribe to this tendency. This is partly due to the definition of crime fiction outlined in Chapter 2.3.1 which requires some kind of investigating figure. However, the tendency that can be observed here is rather the inclusion of subplots and details of the investigation rather than a stronger focus on the criminal. However, this is just one of the strategies used by contemporary Latin American writers to adapt and challenge formal elements of the genre like in India, many authors have their cases solved and either draw back on other strategies or may also follow the generic conventions, as will be examined in Chapter 5.1.

The transgressive and experimental character of these works reflects also in a frequent use of metafictional elements, which is often assessed as one of the most interesting aspects of Argentinean crime fiction (Adriaensen/Grinberg Pla 2012: 19). Marcelo González Zúñiga has identified metaliterary and intertextual references that allude to the constructed character and limitations of the genre as central characteristics of post-millennial Chilean crime fiction (2014: 32–33). Authors thereby break with the demand for realism in crime fiction which reflects in the failure of the detective to solve crimes or the experimentation with formal elements in works written between 2000 and 2010 (ib.: 32–33). Interesting recent Chilean writers discussed by González are for example Carlos Tromben, José Gai, Gonzalo Hernández, Alberto Fuguet or Sebastián Edwards.

In terms of settings, Marcelo González Zúñiga has observed a greater diversity in contemporary Chilean crime fiction novels published between 2000 and 2010. According to his study, the dictatorship and the transition are no longer in the center of current works as novels are increasingly set in the present or the period before the dictatorship

(2014: 6–7). Also Danilo Santos López underlines the shift away from the 1980s and the Pinochet era as one of the most striking developments of recent Chilean crime fiction (2009: 71).

The same is also true for Argentinean works: Compared to the international settings that are said to characterize especially contemporary Latin American literature, recent crime fiction novels rather limit themselves to national territories – an observation also made by Ezequiel de Rosso (2012: 9). Carolina Miranda has similarly underlined that the Negro Absoluto collection focuses on a “domestic setting” and seeks to relocate crime, victims, investigators, perpetrators, settings and production to the Argentinean soil” (Miranda 2016: 82). Besides a few exceptions such as Roberto Ampuero’s series or Martínez’ *Crimenes imperceptibles*, crime fiction novels are usually set in Argentina or Chile respectively. International connections are established via the crimes investigated or the detectives’ or victims’ backgrounds, but the detectives hardly ever go abroad to investigate. While the (capital) city is usually of huge importance for the plot and the setting of many crime fiction novels, the village or the suburb are of growing presence as well (Pellicer n.d.). Such spaces include the gated community outside of Buenos Aires (see Piñeiro 2005; 2011), the suburb in the urban periphery (Piñeiro 2007) and the remote village in the province (Piglia 2010) as well as touristic towns in Tucumán (Olguín 2014). Few writers or novels also use non-localizable, almost fantastic settings such as Puerto Esfingue, the setting of De Santis’ *La traducción* or Puerto Apache, the slum in which Juan Martini’s eponymous novel (2002) is set. The depiction and use of these spaces are analyzed in detail in Chapter 5.4.

The Argentinean writer Andrea Yungblut (pseudonym Andrea Milano) could be said to reconnect to the practice of writing crime fiction under foreign-sounding pseudonyms in new ways: She has published a crime fiction series using the pseudonym Lena Svensson which set in the Swedish village Mora and headed by detective Greta Lindberg. In contrast to earlier writers, whose pseudonyms were usually not revealed, Andrea Milano’s website (for the link see Bibliog-

rahy) includes information about her various pseudonyms and the genre fiction series published under her respective pseudonyms. This choice of pseudonyms and settings indicates a change of orientation as neither the US nor the UK are taken as models here, but rather Sweden as a producer of globally circulating crime fiction novels. Yungblut thereby provides an interesting example of the diversification of the genre in contemporary Argentina.

### 3.3 Conclusion: Commonalities and Differences

In this chapter, I have summarized and compared the trajectory that crime fiction has undergone in India and Latin America from the 19<sup>th</sup> century until today by focusing on different stages of adaptation, the book markets and publishing spheres and the characteristics of post-millennial crime fiction novels. I have diachronically and synchronically mentioned the major agents and stakeholders that contributed to the establishment and production of crime fiction in both regions including for example authors and publishers. This Chapter thus serves a basis to identify parallels, continuities and discrepancies between India and Latin America but also within a country's tradition and provides a foil for the analysis of current works in Chapter 4 and 5.

As I have shown in 3.1.1 and 3.2.1, the state of research on the emergence of the genre in India and Latin America varies from country to country. Particularly the state of art on the publishing market and recent literary production is rather scarce. The long existence and evolution of crime fiction is largely congruent with Franco Moretti's "law of literary evolution" (2010) (see Chapter 2.3.5): In both regions, crime fiction was initially a foreign genre and closely associated with its European origin, but met with interest among local readers for various reasons. Since then, the genre has undergone a similar trajectory which included phases of imitation and territorialization marked by a compromise between "western formal influence and local materi-

als” (Moretti 2013: 50). This led to the development of own models and subgenres. In the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the genre was constantly modified to do justice to readers’ expectations and local realities. While crime fiction was long associated with British settings and produced by writers who used British pseudonyms in Latin America, the production of localized crime fiction in various Indian languages started much earlier. Therefore, the genre has been subject to diversification and localization in both regions which for example led to the production of long-standing series in Indian languages or the emergence of specific subgenres such as the Latin American *neopolicial*.

The recent emergence of a new corpus of English crime fiction novels in India and the growing importance and presence of the genre in Argentina and Chile were shown to be phenomena that are closely related to developments in the global as well as local book markets and to the institutionalization of the genre. This Chapter has pointed at power imbalances of Moretti’s one, yet unequal literary system (2013) that have a huge impact on the development and circulation of literary production on a national and international level. Crime fiction, far away from being a globally free-floating genre which is written and read everywhere, is limited in terms of its circulation by various factors that continue to cause disadvantages for the majority of writers situated in the Global South. Multinational publishers increasingly dominate the respective local publishing spheres which has heterogeneous consequences for the local literary production and the book market. This already strikes out when comparing neighboring countries like Argentina and Chile. Publishing houses publish ever more local writers and thereby contribute to a glocalization of specific formats, but also have an impact on the international circulation of literary products. While for example Scandinavian writers are available in India and Latin America, the presence of crime fiction writers from these regions on the global market is limited to a few representatives like Roberto Bolaño. I have furthermore looked at various other stakeholders that have an impact on the respective local book markets such as local publishers, engaged authors or the state which also shape the

literary field. They do not only contribute to the heterogenization of the book market parallel to processes of homogenization, but also set the field and conditions in which crime fiction circulates and prospers.

Further particularities such as the different, yet increasing degree of institutionalization of the genre in terms of festivals or editorial series and differences such as genre-based marketing and sales strategies in India and Latin America compared to for example Europe have been addressed. I have also pointed out that the genre transcends the division of local and global (often called diasporic) Indian and Latin American writers and complicates a binary view: With growing local literary production, for example, writing for an international audience is no longer the only game in town for Indian and Latin American writers. Differences in terms of the genre's positioning in the countries' respective literary fields strike out: While the Indian crime fiction is mainly considered part of a new corpus of popular fiction – though individual authors go beyond this classification, too –, crime fiction in Argentina has a much wider dispersion in the country's literary field and has often been adopted by esteemed literary fiction writers. Due to this transgressive character, the genre is an interesting example to look at the “supposed adversarial relationship” between literary and genre fiction that is often seen as a given in European or US-American literary markets (Gupta 2016: 213), as discussed in Chapter 2.2.1.

The genre was long perceived as unsuitable in India's and Latin America's respective socio-political and economic context due to for example inequality, corruption and impunity of those in power. Critique, however, usually refers to the classic British murder mystery as unrealistic and ignores the constant process of adaptation that the genre has undergone in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which led to the emergence of a variety of local and international subgenres. The common denominator is therefore merely the frame of an investigation of a crime carried out by an investigating figure (see Chapter 2.3.1) which has been used for a variety of purposes ranging from entertainment to social criticism. Differences in the use and modification of subgenres are striking: US-American hard-boiled novels have been of major impor-

tance for Latin American writers ever since the 1960s, while these works do not play a big role in current Indian crime fiction novels in English. Own local subgenres such as the *neopolicial* have not emerged in India so far and current works are rather seen in connection to – or distinction from – the British archetype. Furthermore, inter- or paratextual references that would connect recent works to the long-existing corpus of crime fiction in Indian languages are largely eschewed. The (lack of) references can also be seen as a marker of the degree of establishment of an own tradition: While the genre is presented as a novelty in India, Argentinean authors, by contrast, commonly relate to local predecessors in paratextual references as well as in the text itself.

The works produced in both regions are similarly heterogeneous in terms of plots, settings and characters and modify generic features, as I will examine with regard to the corpus novels in Chapter 4 and 5. The emergence of crime fiction in India and Latin America in the post-millennial publishing market is in various ways a glocal phenomenon: The situatedness of writers, the publishing market and the status of the genre all contribute to a diversification of the genre in India and Latin America. Also the content and generic features are modified in connection to local as well as global influences and result in a diversification of the genre that will be analyzed in detail in Chapter 4 and 5 to identify commonalities and differences between both regions' production. Since most of the novels discussed were produced in recent years and are neither well known nor easily available, I provide short summaries of the corpus novels in the Annex (Chapter 7).

## 4 Protagonists: Detective Figures and Criminals

In this chapter, the detective figures that play a role in the corpus novels are scrutinized. The following introduction summarizes the importance of the detective for the genre and explores the figure's trajectory from the 19<sup>th</sup> century until today. The ongoing diversification of the detective is also the scope of the analysis. Chapter 4.1 to 4.3 study three types of detectives which frequently appear in the Indian and Latin American corpus: the female detective, the journalist detective and the police investigator. All three types represent either specific local and/or new figures in the Indian and Latin American context, but as the analyses will show, repeatedly play a role in the corpus novels. In Chapter 4.4, I take a look at the detective's antagonist, the criminal and explores what kind of criminal figures are frequently used in the corpus novels. The implications of particular figures such as the evil guru or pillars of society engaged in criminal activities are furthermore discussed. In Chapter 4.5, two phenomena are studied which have significant implications for the protagonists of crime fiction: the marginalization of the detective and the multiplication of plots. Overall, this Chapter advocates a diversification in terms of the type, appearance and impact on the narration that follow the claim for realism or the adaptation of the genre of social criticism. Protagonists are very heterogeneous but predominantly representatives of a diverse Indian and Latin American middle class.

Crime fiction novels traditionally employ a set stock of characters which can be determined as the victim(s), the criminal, the detective and a group of persons who are unable to solve the crime such as suspects or the police (Cawelti 1976: 147). The detective can be seen as the most significant figure here as he<sup>63</sup> is of particular importance for the plot and the main driver of the narrative. The investigation of a sin-

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63 I am deliberately using the masculine form here since detective archetypes are usually male. The diversification and the greater presence of women as investigators is a topic that will be addressed in the following subchapters.

gle crime by an individual protagonist accounts for the basic definition of crime fiction (Pepper/Schmid 2016: 8). As Heather Worthington has pointed out,

the detective function remains constant. Above all else, the fictional detective, whatever his or her guise, methods or motivation is driven by the desire to find out, to discover, to explain and to rationalise acts and deeds which resist simple solutions. (2011: 32)

While the detective is historically closely associated with the formation of the police in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, his figure and role can already be found in earlier texts such as the bible (ib.: 16). Other studies on crime fiction partly include narratives that omit an investigating figure. However, I consider the detective an essential figure and a prerequisite for the selected corpus novels. Charles Brownson has pointed out that the detective “[draws] to himself many psychological and cultural desires and fears” and is therefore “a nexus through which such issues could be understood, studied, accommodated, and perhaps ameliorated” (2014: 1). Similarly, Stephan Knight has pointed out that

“[t]hrough faith in a detective who represented some form of value – disciplinary, rational, psychological, imaginative or simply physical – the massive genre of crime fiction was able to shape forms that both recognised and offered at least passing resolutions to contemporary anxieties, especially the displaced fear of death. (2010: 219)

It is not surprising that specific detective figures like for example Sherlock Holmes are better known than their authors and enjoy an iconic status. The detective initially appears in a moment of crisis to reestablish an existing order in classic British crime fiction. While this expectation continues to shape readers’ horizon of expectation, the detectives’ ability to restore an interrupted status quo is an aspect that is constantly challenged by later crime fiction writers (see Chapter 5.1).

The detective stands in an interesting yet ambiguous relation to the reader: On the one hand, both are commonly seen as competitors when it comes to solving the case investigated in the novel. On the other hand, however, the detective also serves as a figure with whom readers can identify. This is especially the case for the so-called ethnic detective (Glesener 2009: 16). The police are often presented as incapable of solving a crime, therefore readers tend to side with the detective as an external investigator and attribute special skills to him (Schlovskij 1998: 16). The methodological approach applied by the detective is of particular importance. Once again, classic crime fiction novels continue to shape the image of the detective who uses deduction, observation and combination skills to identify clues and judge statements from witnesses (Nusser 2009: 44). The ‘principle of ratiocination’ suggests a rational and objective way of investigation based on scientific methods and the detective’s particular skills. This methodology culminates in the figure of the armchair detective who draws his conclusions from logical deduction while refraining from any physical activity (Scaggs 2005: 21). Furthermore, the detective traditionally holds the power of interpretation over the investigation. As Maureen Reddy has pointed out, crime fiction initially includes different voices but turns monologist as “the detective silences the others” (1988: 6). On a different note, the detective is seen as the one who differentiates relevant clues from irrelevant ones and can thereby “reduce the polyvalence to the one true meaning, the true story of the crime” (Hühn 1987: 455). Drawing back on Todorov’s two narrative strands of crime fiction (1966: 44), the detective’s activity can be described as an act of reading the story of the detection. This reading also constitutes the story of the crime: Fragments and clues are combined to a conclusive story and the deeper meaning is revealed once the story of the detective reaches its end (Hühn 1987: 457–458). The detective eventually summarizes the story from his point of view. While the story of the detection is often narrated from the point of view of the Watsonite narrator, the detective uses direct speech in this final scene (Gregoriou 2012: 11). The detective clarifies all doubts while the narrator is still in the dark and his solution is usually not questioned. This idealized vision has been challenged in many crime fiction novels in which the

detective is unable to solve the crime or comes to the wrong conclusion (see Chapter 5.1). The detective increasingly loses his power to determine justice and meaning, and, to quote Hühn again, “[although] he is frequently still able to read the truth in the text, he can no longer extract it, as it were, and employ it to remedy injustice and disorder in society (1987: 461). It is precisely through the subversion of this apparently fixed course of events that the detective can draw attention to specific problems and fears. As the detective loses authority, other aspects and figures such as the criminal come into the limelight. Partly, the apparently fixed division of roles are loosened and sometimes even reversed to point at similarities between for example the detective and the culprit or victim (Nünning 2008: 1).

These observations already insinuate that the detective figures are constantly changing in accordance with the setting in which they investigate as well as changing definitions of crime, truth and justice. This has led to a diversification and development of new archetypes. Nonetheless, the protagonists and narrative situation of the classic British murder mystery have not lost their importance as a point of reference to judge and compare other works. It is particularly the Holmes-and-Watson-constellation of Arthur Conan Doyle’s series that had a lasting effect. This constellation refers to an eccentric genius detective with extraordinary intellectual skills who tries to come up with a rational explanation of a mystery drawing back on his deductive skills (see for example Nusser 2009: 73). He is accompanied by a mediocre companion, the Watson-figure, “a chronicler with partial knowledge” (Brownson 2014: 12), who can never compete with the detective but serves as the narrator of his stories. He underlines the brilliance of the detective and supports him, but he is also necessary to maintain a distance between reader and detective. The intradiegetic first person narrator does not have access to the detective’s thoughts and feelings. He thus recounts the investigation from an outside perspective which leads to an asymmetric mode of communication; a delayed explanation of the crime is only provided by the detective in the end (Segal 2010: 176). Watson provides the reader with information about possible clues – but also wrong leads – and is often said to strengthen the reader’s

self-confidence: While he can never match the detective's intelligence and skills, the reader is certainly better than Watson (Nusser 2009: 46). The mode of narration also presents the detective as a distanced and unemotional character who is not interested in the social implications of the cases he investigates. This constellation is often seen as the archetype of crime fiction and binding example even though the model has constantly been challenged since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many of these characteristics have been done away with in US-American hard-boiled novels as the eccentric armchair detective seemed no longer tenable. In the violent environment in which the hard-boiled detective is located, he is no longer immune to violence: The detective has to face physical threats, but is also equipped for it. A shift can be noticed here from the purely intellectual exercises to a competition of physical strength. The detective stands out from a corrupt and violent society as a lonely outsider. Nevertheless, he is a cynic "man of honor" with his principles (Chandler 1984: 20). Instead of a brilliant man with extraordinary skills, he is rather a struggling everyday figure, who drinks, suffers from poverty and loneliness, has sex and resorts to violence (Nünning 2008: 8; Worthington 2011: 25). Similarly, the mode of narration is altered and sets a strong focus on the detective: He is often a first-person intradiegetic narrator whose insights into his thoughts and feelings establish a greater intimacy between detective and reader (Moore 2006: 15).

Both types of detectives have a rather strained relation with the police. This is a curious phenomenon as early predecessors of the genre in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century were usually accounts of police detections. Later, the police inspector remained largely marginalized until the emergence of police procedural in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Heather Worthington sees this as a class-related problem as early police officers were usually from a lower class background and required a certain social mobility to be able to investigate in the middle or upper class sphere (Worthington 2011: 19). In the case of British crime fiction, the incapability and incompetence of the police is meant to underline the heroic character of detectives like Sherlock Holmes (Nusser 2009: 46). The police in the hard-boiled novel, by contrast, mean a veritable threat for

the detective (Nünning 2008: 8). This complicated relationship, however, has been questioned by new detective figures and the emergence of the police procedural. The latter focuses on “realistically representing the activities of a police force” by portraying a single police investigator or a team of investigators who solve a crime largely by following routine procedures (Segal 2010: 183–184). As police procedurals are increasingly popular in literature as well as on TV, their protagonists become ever more specialized and include pathologists, profilers or forensic experts (see for example Rzepka/Horsley 2010: 100). Heather Worthington has remarked that

it is increasingly difficult to make such a figure credible in the face of media-fostered public understanding of the complexities of real detection. Where there is an amateur protagonist, he or more commonly she will often work in employment which in itself incorporates investigative elements, for example journalism [...] or writing. (2011: 31)

An antagonism between amateur and professional investigators has various implications for crime fiction novels: The amateur does usually not get paid and can be seen as an idealist whose involvement slightly complicates the narrative, especially in crime fiction series. The reason why the amateur investigator repeatedly gets involved in a criminal investigation is more difficult to justify and especially in contemporary works hardly commensurable with the technology and sophistication of investigative methods. Thus, also amateurs usually require assistance and contacts with professional investigations. As Worthington has also pointed out, female investigators are more likely to be amateur detectives who for example get active to help a friend (ib.: 26). Besides professionals from the police, obvious choices are journalists, writers or academics who are similarly engaged in investigative work.

While it is often presumed that the protagonists of crime fiction novels are stock figures which mainly have a specific function in the narrative and do not develop, the constant use, alternation and global adaption

of the genre has led to a diversification of protagonists as well. This has consequences for the figure of the detective who is shaped as much by consistencies as by modifications.

While the detective's private life was for example not of major importance in classic British crime fiction, his or her daily life and private relationships increasingly make up subplots of their own (Erdmann 2012: 12). Thus, he or she is not only important as an investigator, but offers more potential for identification with the reader. The diversification has led to the greater presence of female detectives, as will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.1. Frequently, the detective is also described as a border-crosser or liminal character. He or she is often moving on the border of legality or crosses his or her personal borders in terms of physical exhaustion or moral standpoints. Furthermore, the detective moves with relative ease between different classes, cultures and settings and often has a different sexual orientation or a minority background him/herself (Pearson/Singer 2009: 12). The structure of a crime fiction novel appears as a suitable framework to portray cultural diversity i.e. by employing a detective from a specific community who gives insights into the community in the course of an investigation in a suspenseful and entertaining way. This is especially the case for ethnic or postcolonial detectives whose growing presence has been the scope of many scholarly works (see for example Christian 2001; 2002, Pearson/Singer 2009 or Matzke/Mühleisen 2006). Investigating figures are commonly seen as marginal or subaltern figures who use their special skills for an investigation in an international or trans-cultural setting. This has led to the emergence of new subgenres such as multicultural, (multi)ethnic, postcolonial, indigenous or subaltern crime fiction. As part of a specific collective community, the traditional image of the detective as a lonely outsider has been done away with (Fischer-Hornung/Müller 2003: 12). Peter Freese for example has defined the ethnic detective as a

criminal investigator who not only solves a murder mystery, [...] but who also introduces the reader to an unknown ethnic culture and belongs to a particular ethnic group, that is, to a community whose history, values, and

way of life differ from those of the so-called mainstream. His or her story inadvertently turns into an illustration of the ethnic friction and cultural confrontations and thus into a comment on the challenges of everyday life in a 'multicultural' society. (1992: 9–10)

Ed Christian has pointed out for postcolonial crime fiction that detectives employed in these works are marginalized figures and “always indigenous to or settlers in the countries where they work”, which necessarily has consequences on their ability to investigate (2001: 2). Freese is hopeful that these works offer an “inadvertent learning effect” about minorities (1992: 10) – an expectation that should be treated with some skepticism. This tentatively contributes to an automatic reading of detectives from for example former colonies as marginal figures who are struggling to assert themselves in mainstream society or a romantization of other cultures and ethnicities (Ruffing 2011: 86). Scandinavian authors are not treated in the same way, which suggests that the location from which such statements and expectations are uttered can be clearly located in the center of literary production. These works are sought to produce a learning effect for readers who are for example not located in the Global South or part of a minority. Furthermore, the thematic focus on crime (or more systematic forms of violence and marginalization) contributes to an ongoing perception of the respective society as marginal: As the genre portrays the respective society from the perspective of its crimes, other topics are generally neglected. This might lead to a petrification of existing stereotypes such as the view of Latin America as a violent continent. Similar to many postcolonial novels, such works draw back on and confirm stereotypical representations instead of challenging them. Thereby, they rather cater for an audience abroad than for readers of the respective community. In this context, the promotion of international or foreign crime fiction novels need also be seen as sales strategies that intend to raise interest by locating the familiar genre in a foreign setting. Therefore, while the detective might be a suitable figure to question power hierarchies and the situatedness of knowledge, an automatic association of non-mainstream detectives with these kind of struggles is not expedient. Similarly, reading crime

fiction as a kind of travel literature that gives direct access to cultural knowledge might be shortsighted. Jeanne E. Glesener has pointed out that crime fiction can at most be seen as an “introduction to foreign cultures”, while the detective does not necessarily occupy a role as a cultural intermediary or an “authentic insider” (2009: 16). The special significance and originality of these investigators is also increasingly put into perspective by the growing presence of mixed police teams which normalize the inclusion of crime fiction from different backgrounds or sexual orientations. These considerations show overall that the detective is an important figure who personifies and reflects upon various contemporary issues and concerns.

Contemporary Indian and Latin American crime fiction includes a multitude of works in which these concerns do not foreground. As I will show in this chapter, neither the marginal status of a detective figure nor his/her special knowledge or connection to a specific community play a prominent role in most novels. Instead, contemporary detectives are rather mainstream middle class figures which usually investigate in a national urban context. They challenge the idea of a detective marginalized by ethnicity, race or gender and rather highlight the plights and concerns of the middle class in these regions. Since the detective does not only have various important functions in the narrative but is also constantly subject to alterations to do justice to the respective context in which the investigation takes place, the detective provides an interesting starting point to study current crime fiction novels from India and Latin America. Questions that emerge in this context are for example: What kind of detective figures are employed in contemporary Indian and Latin American crime fiction novels and what kind of methods do the detectives use? How does the detective relate to or differ from archetypical figures of classic British or US-American hard-boiled novels? Can specific local figures be identified and what are their functions in the narrative? Building up on this introduction, the features and functions of the detective, the investigating figures employed in the corpus novels will be scrutinized in the following subchapters. Their analysis is divided in various parts which focus on female detectives (4.1), journalists (4.2), police investigators

(4.3) and the detective's antagonist – the figure of the criminal (4.4). In the latter part, certain criminal figures whose frequent appearance stands out such as the evil guru in Indian crime fiction will be discussed. The final subchapter (4.5) discusses various novels in which the detective or the investigation process are marginalized due to strategies like the addition of various subplots. The subchapter thereby serves as a transition to Chapter 5 which addresses various other strategies that are related plot elements and other modification strategies used by Indian and Latin American authors.

## 4.1 Not a Suitable Job for a Woman in the Global South: The Rise of the Woman Detective

Crime fiction has generally been regarded as a predominantly male genre in its various subgenres: Except Miss Marple as a rather asexual spinster sleuth and armchair detective, archetypical detective figures from Poe's Auguste Dupin to Sherlock Holmes or Chesterton's Father Brown have been male. Also female British Golden Age writers have traditionally employed male detectives. The US-American hard-boiled challenged the former tradition but did not do away with the male focus: The protagonists of works by Chandler and Marlowe are usually seen as urbanized heroes of the Western and thus very masculine and lonesome figures (Dietze 1997: 276). According to Gabriele Dietze and other scholars, this focus on masculinity relates to moments of crises of masculinity and thus asserts a male identity in the context of the Great Depression of the 1930s (ib.: 277). Women often appeared as a threat in hard-boiled novels and the projection of fears on female figures was a common strategy here (ib.: 14). The notorious figure of the *femme fatale* to whom the detective feels attracted while she is implicated in criminal activities can be seen as an expression of the fear of changing gender roles and female emancipation and is therefore a rather misogynic figure (Keitel 1998: 27).

From the 1960s onwards, the view that being a detective is an unsuitable job for a woman has constantly been challenged by women writers like the British writer P.D. James. Her eponymous novel *An Unsuitable Job For A Woman* (1972) precisely proves the contrary: Her detective Cordelia Grey is very well equipped to solve a murder case even though she eventually consciously decides not to reveal the truth as an act of female solidarity. Crime fiction is now frequently used as a site of gendered critique and a mediator for women's self-consciousness (Knight 2006: 26; Walton/Jones 1999: 12–13). No specific term for this subgenre has prevailed so far; the Spanish term *femicrime* or the German *Frauenkrimi* are partly used, but besides having a derogatory undertone, these terms also constantly bring up the question if it is a sufficient criterion for the author or detective to be female to group a huge variety of works (Gigena 2016). Vis-à-vis the frequent use of female investigators, Linda Mizejewski has pointed at the gap between female investigators that appear in novels and on screen and their lack in reality. In her opinion, these figures rather depict “social fantasies” than actual changes in the job market (Mizejewski 2004: 16). The frequent employment of detectives from an ethnic or sexual minority background partly goes in the same direction, as has been pointed out above. Evelyne Keitel has similarly noted that the female detective “stellt einen utopisch-illusionären Gegenentwurf zur relativen Machtlosigkeit von Frauen in patriarchalen Gesellschaften dar” (1998: 79). She agrees that female detectives are often utopic figures which nonetheless allow readers to assume a new role without having to face the consequences (“ein neues Frauenbild wird konsequenzentlastend durchgespielt”, ib.: 80; 105) and provide an alternative that gives reader the possibility to rethink his/her everyday life. The critic B. Ruby Rich's often-used quote underlines the greater mobility that female detectives experience:

Being a gumshoe gives a girl the right, like a passport, to cross borders previously closed, to unfix definitions, to ramble through society with a mobility long considered exclusively masculine. (Ruby Rich 1989: 24; quoted in: Keitel 1998: 78)

Whether these rewritings constitute a successful challenge of for example patriarchal conditions that these authors seek to criticize remains disputed: Some scholars see the appropriation of a male genre as an expression of a new female consciousness and a sign of emancipation that has changed the genre. Others argue that a mere rewriting rather confirms the existing order structure and does not mean a more substantial challenge of the conditions that marginalize women (Dietze 1997: 269; Irons 1995: xii). Jeanne Ruffing hat similarly pointed out how even a subversion of patriarchal conditions eventually confirms the order (2001: 49). The fact that the rewriting always takes place in negotiation with the masculine code is a problem that cannot be evaded.

Nonetheless, women writers, alter the genre by speaking from a woman's perspective, often using a first-person narrator which accesses the detective's thoughts and suggests a greater intimacy and potential for identification between reader and detective (Godsland 2007: 18). It is pertinent that female investigators reverse the gaze: Usually, the (often mutilated) female body is at the center of attention of crime fiction, while the male detective is the one who sees/observes – and thereby objectifies – women (Mizejewski 2004: 4). The detective also holds the complete authority to organize and interpret the events, which has far-reaching implications for the female characters that are usually merely looked at (*ib.*: 7). Thematically, women often use the genre to question gendered violence and its implications as well as the marginalization of women. Violence is only used as a response to female victimization and an act of revenge for men who deserve it (Godsland 2007: 93; 115). The gun is often rejected as a phallic symbol of male violence (*ib.*: 31). However, female investigators are also heterogeneous.

This is congruent with Evelyne Keitel's categorization of female detectives. Keitel distinguishes between 'little old ladies', amateurs and professional investigators (1998: 51). The 'little old lady' draws back on Miss Marple as the archetype of the Spinster sleuth. She excels through her age and experience, is financially and emotionally independent

and appears as a particularly trustworthy person. Besides, she has great observation skills and likes to 'snoop around', but can also make use of her contacts for example with the police (ib.: 65–66). Female amateur detectives draw back on a longer tradition, but pose a problem for the writer to come up with an explanation for her involvement in an investigation. Keitel also highlights the observation skills and financial independence of the amateur detective (ib.: 70; 72). Professional investigators are commonly private investigators, lawyers or police inspectors, for whom monetary gains are an important part of their motivation to investigate, thus salary negotiations are frequently depicted (ib.: 51; 74). Sara Paretsky's lawyer-turned-private investigator VI Warshawski provides an interesting example of this type of female investigator. VI Warshawski can be seen as a female version of the 'tough guy' of US hard-boiled novels who is for example frequently confronted with violence and has to defend herself. Though she is usually underestimated for being a woman, she always turns out to be physically and intellectually superior to male opponents. She commonly fights against members of society who abuse their power and influence rather than specifically address the suppression of women (see for example Irons 1995: xii–xv). In their lifestyle, investigators like VI Warshawski largely adapt characteristics of their male counterparts and for example often do not have a family but engage in changing love affairs (Godsland 2007: 25). John Scaggs has observed that the police procedural has been more resistant to a rewriting by women writers. Female investigators are thus more likely to work outside the system they aim to criticize for example as private investigators or amateurs who somehow get involved in the investigation of a crime (2005: 102–103). This is also the case in Indian and Latin American crime fiction novels, who include different types of female investigators, but not as police inspectors. However, women are sometimes part of a larger team of police officers. In addition, female characters often appear as important supporters of a male investigator. Other novels scrutinize the life of a female victim in the course of an investigation and thus equally provide further insights into the life of women in contemporary India and Latin America.

#### 4.1.1 Female Detectives in India and Latin America

Until very recently, crime fiction in India and Latin America continued to be a predominantly male genre with regard to writers and to investigating figures. This has been observed by Gayatri Rajwade (2010), who noted that “Indian lady-detectives are elusive literary creatures” or Francesca Gargallo (2010), who blamed contemporary Latin American crime fiction writers to be “grandes defensores del status quo patriarcal” for perpetuating the victimization of women in their works. An exception to the rule are female figures in Hispanic crime fiction in the US who have been employed by writers for a longer period.<sup>64</sup>

The few early Latin American women writers are often overlooked in studies of the history of the genre. Among them is Maria Elvira Bermúdez, one of the founders of the genre in Mexico, who published her first crime fiction novel *Diferentes razones tiene la muerte* in 1953. In her later novel *Detente sombra* (1984), Bermúdez also employed Latin America’s first female detective, María Elena Morán (see Choi 2012: 13). In Argentina, María Angélica Bosco published *La muerte baja en el ascensor* in 1955 and Syria Poletti *Historias en rojo* in 1969. Both writers largely followed the *relato-enigma* model propagated by Borges (Simpson 1990: 48) (see Chapter 2.3.3). From the 1980s onwards, more women writers started to publish crime fiction novels. As Sara Rosell has pointed out, most of them were already established writers and could therefore rely on a loyal audience when they started to publish crime fiction (2001: 94). In the last decade, male and female authors have started to employ ever more female investigators and have given women not only a greater presence but also a broader spectrum of roles. The reasons for this development will be explored in this Chapter and can be connected to the global presence of women

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<sup>64</sup> Contrary to the absence of Latin American female detectives, various Hispanic or Latino writers in the US published female-headed detective series from the 1990s onwards. Among the most prominent series are Marcos McPeck Villatoro’s Romilia Chacón series, Lucha Corpi’s Gloria Damasco series and Carolina Garcia-Aguilera’s Lupe Solano series. These series have received substantial scholarly attention and have been studied according to the position of the ‘Latina detectives’ as border-crossers between two cultures and spaces (see for example Knepper 2009; Rodriguez 2002 or Müller 2003).

in crime fiction. Writer Horacio Convertini sees the rise of women in Argentinean crime fiction as a “consecuencia del efecto Piñeiro” (Gigena 2016). He refers to Claudia Piñeiro’s 2005 novel *Las viudas de los jueves*, which opened the stage for numerous other female crime fiction writers<sup>65</sup>. The female investigator of Piñeiro’s novel *Betibú* and various other detective figures created by María Inés Krimer, Flaminia Ocampo, Sergio Olguín and Marcela Serrano will thus be examined in the following subchapters. In Chile, the number of women crime fiction writers is growing more slowly. Besides Serrano and Subercaseaux, novels that can be considered part of the genre have been published by Alejandra Rojas in the 1990s or by Orietta de la Barra (2009). A few female writers like Gabriela Aguilera have been included in Eterovic’ anthology *Letras rojas: cuentos negros y policíacos* (2009).

The presence of female investigators is growing more steadily in India. Even though India’s first novel figuring a female detective written into English, Kamala Sathianadhan’s *Detective Janaki*, was published already in 1944, Indian crime fiction has generally been a male-dominated genre in any Indian languages. Women have enjoyed a slightly greater presence in Bengali crime fiction. Among known writers are for example Suchitra Bhattacharya, who published the Third Eye series that featured the female detective Mitin Mashī (Ghatak 2015). The esteemed Tamil writer C. S. Lakshmi, who uses the pseudonym Ambai, has published crime fiction stories which employ the female detective Sudha Gupta. Her stories have also been translated in English as *As the*

65 In addition to the Argentinean crime fiction writers that are studied in this thesis, a multitude of Argentinean women writers have published crime fiction novels in recent years. Among them are Florencia Etcheves, Elisa Bellmann, Gabriela Cabezón Cámara, Mercedes Giuffrè, Selva Almada, Elsa Drucaroff, Tatiana Goransky, Andrea Yungblut or Solange Camaüer. Camaüer for example won the Spanish Premio de Novela Negra Ciudad de Getafe for her volumen of three novels *El muerto quiere saber de qué se trata* in 2014. Andrea Yungblut or Milano, who was already mentioned in Chapter 3.2.6., provides an interesting example of the variety of works published with her crime fiction series set in Sweden and has so far published five novels with the Argentinean publisher Vestales under the pseudonym Lena Svensson. Many of these writers are not well-known abroad and have not been studied so far. However, there are also writers who are represented by foreign agents who have been published in Spain, translated or included in anthologies such as *Buenos Aires Noir* (2016), the Argentinean edition of the French *Asphalte Noir* Series, edited by Ernesto Mallo.

*Day Darkens* (Bhatt 2016). Shashi Deshpande, a well-known Indian writer who writes in English, has published two crime fiction novels, *Come Up and Be Dead* (1983) and *If I Die Today* (1982). According to Mukta Atrey and Viney Kirpal, these novels “do not qualify as serious works” and are omitted from their study of Deshpande’s writings without any more detailed explanation (1998: 10). This judgement is symptomatic for the reputation of the genre at the turn of the millennium.

Post-millennial crime fiction novels in India frequently employ female detectives. The corpus includes female authors, but also male authors increasingly use female detectives: Ashok Banker published the first all-women crime thriller *Blood Red Sari* in 2012. The novel is part of the Kali Rising series and depicts three women from Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai who are supposed to cooperate to look into the murder of a social activist based in Dubai. Piyush Jha has the female police inspector Maithili Prasad tracing a serial killer in *Raakshas: India’s No. 1 Serial Killer* (2015). While many women writers employ diverse female investigators, it is interesting to note that male authors also increasingly employ female investigators as protagonists or team members in minor roles. Female detectives have also gained a greater presence in Indian cinema in recent years: To give just two recent examples, Pradeep Sarkar’s movie *Mardaani* (2014) and Samar Shaikh’s *Bobby Jasoos* (2014) both included female detectives.

In the analysis of this subchapter, I will take a closer look at this widespread phenomenon and analyze female figures employed as investigating figures to address the following questions: What kind of female characters are employed by contemporary authors? Do these figures connect to archetypical figures such as the spinster sleuth or the *femme fatale* or do authors rather follow other (local) traditions? With a view to the often problematic representation of women in other popular media and the capacities of popular fiction, one would expect these figures to stand in tension with the legacy of a patriarchal system and male dominated society in India and Latin America. Whether and how these crime fiction novels reproduce, question or subvert traditional gender constructions are thus interesting issues to be examined.

This brings up the question whether crime fiction may be a particularly suitable genre to give Indian and Latin American women a voice/space to renegotiate the role and (self)image of women in modern India and Latin America. One further issue which connects this part to Chapter 5.4 relates to the use and depiction of (urban) space: How do these works relate to gendered spatial practices that commonly locate women in the private and men in the public sphere?

#### 4.1.2 Swaminathan's Detective Lalli

Kalpana Swaminathan's detective Lalli relates most closely to the conventions of classic British crime fiction. Often described as a "desi Miss Marple" in reviews (for example Sharma 2013), Lalli more or less corresponds to Evelyn Keitel's first type, the 'little old lady', which refers to figures like Miss Marple (1998: 51). Lalli takes advantage of her appearance as an innocent old lady, while she is actually a retired police officer living in Mumbai who is still considered the "Last Resort" to solve difficult cases (Swaminathan 2006: 10). Swaminathan's novels draw back on a Holmes-and-Watson-like constellation by including Lalli's niece Sita, a young writer who stays with her in Mumbai. Sita is a homodiegetic narrator with external focalization, so neither the reader nor other protagonists get access to Lalli's thoughts. Sita is thus the narrator as well as the interpreter. While she lives with Lalli and always talks of her as her aunt, each of the novels recount that Sita met Lalli in a moment of crisis when Sita lost her boyfriend and her job as a lecturer at university for defending a maligned student and has been living with Lalli since then (Swaminathan 2006: 1). Lalli and Sita do not use any surname, nor do their names evoke a specific faith or regional identity.<sup>66</sup> While the novels do not give any insights into Lalli's biography, it is clear that she is unmarried and does not have children.

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66 Sita emphasizes that her name is Sita and not Seeta (with a short i versus a long i). While latter version is the name of the Hindu goddess Seeta, Sita insists that she is named after a rose her father – a rose farmer – created when she was born. Sita translates her name as incandescent (Swaminathan 2012: 228).

For her investigations, Lalli relies on a wide network of informants. Lalli is presented as the brilliant mind who usually knows the identity of the criminal halfway through the novel by using “pure deduction, based on evidence” and eventually confronts the culprit in a final round-up that takes place in her house – which closely resembles the fixed plot structure of classic British crime fiction<sup>67</sup> (Swaminathan 2012: 118). Lalli’s appearance as a curious and chatty old lady is actually a door opener in many cases and allows her to get access to information through what appears to be innocent small talk. Sita is usually the person who stumbles upon a case, for example in *I Never Knew It Was You* she runs into an old friend at the airport who is found dead shortly after. She commonly finds important evidence by accident or intuition and is very emotional about the crime (ib.: 58; 72). Lalli by contrast remains calm and almost distanced; she describes herself as a “consulting detective” for whom an investigation equals to “collecting curiosities” (ib.: 45). Lalli often refuses to look at obvious clues such as the crime scene or the corpse. In *The Monochrome Madonna*, the apparent victim Sitara tries to pass on her diary to Lalli. Without even taking a look at it, Lalli immediately writes down the name of the murderer on a sheet of paper. Lalli instructs Sita to observe correctly but in accordance with her position as a Watson-figure, she is unable to compete with Lalli’s deduction skills.

Lalli and Sita are very liberal representatives of India’s middle class whose heterogeneity is underlined in *I Never Knew It Was You*. Here, both are juxtaposed with various protagonists who are similarly from a middle class background but have very different attitudes and opinions. The novel addresses the deaths of three young adults who were rejected by their families because of what is seen as non-normative sexuality – homosexuality or relationships with a person from another religion. So while marrying somebody from a different community can be a death sentence in some cases, it is not a major concern in others. Lalli and Sita for example do not succumb to the aforementioned struggles

67 Another example is the setting of Swaminathan’s first detective Lalli novel, *The Page 3 Murders* (2006), which takes place in a villa outside Mumbai which strongly resembles the trope of the isolated country house of Agatha Christie’s novels.

and are free from familial or societal obligations. Their investigations, however, resituate crime as a problem within families, as I will further discuss in 4.4.3.

In contemporary Indian and Latin American crime fiction novels, the archetype of the spinster sleuth or the consistent use of a Watson-figure as a narrative device are rather scarce. Besides Swaminathan's detective Lalli series, the only other exception might be Claudia Piñeiro's novel *Elena sabe* (2007) in which the eponymous protagonist-detective Elena is an old woman affected by Parkinson's disease. The unlikely detective is highly dependent on her medicine and barely able to move independently. Nonetheless, she does not want to accept that her daughter's death was suicide and she tries to hold someone accountable. Besides these two examples, however, most female detectives are younger or middle aged women, and authors often use a narrative perspective that presents their thoughts and ideas more openly.

#### 4.1.3 Kishwar Desai's Simran Singh Series

Kishwar Desai's detective Simran Singh is – like detective Lalli – an amateur detective. She is a 45-year-old social worker based in Delhi with a background in law who helps those without means, especially oppressed and exploited women. She expresses great anger against the corrupt and misogynic system she encounters and is personally strongly affected by the cases she is investigating. She is aware that her background and her appearance put her in a special position, which often works in her favor. To quote Simran, “[f]unnily enough, the criminal community often trusts me because I am such an oddity, with my convent-school Hindi and my salon-cut curly hair” (Desai 2010: 16). Complying with the global vices of the detective, Simran feels a strong urge to drink alcohol and smoke and does not care what others think about these habits. She does realize though that “[her] inability to conform” with society's norms and values can also be an obstacle (ib.: 140–141). In *Witness the Night*, Simran's return to her hometown in the Punjab confronts her with her own youth and frustrations she thought to have left behind. She meets her old

rival Amrinder again, who teases Simran for being an unmarried social worker (ib.: 195). Rather than offering female solidarity, women in the town actively support the patriarchal order and show no interest in helping Simran to advance her investigation. Similar to Swaminathan's detective Lalli, Simran's life story is only hinted at, but it is never really discussed how she became such a liberated, independent woman.

Simran is unmarried and childless at the age of 45 and topics like arranged marriage and motherhood do not mean a big concern for her. This attitude certainly deviates from the social norms and societal expectations in India. At the end of *Witness the Night*, she adopts Durga and thus has a women-only family. While Indian genre fiction by women writers is often said to refrain from talking about sexuality (see for example Ponzanesi 2014: 188), Desai includes several intimate moments in her series. Simran herself mentions several boyfriends and shows no regret of being single, as all the men she meets are usually "self-obsessed and boring" and too spoiled by their mothers (Desai 2010: 177). However, in all three novels, Simran meets various dubious men who turn out to be helpful supporters and she eventually starts a love affair with each one. The need of a male helper to solve the case initially appears to contradict the image of a strong and independent detective and repeats the claim that women writers reconfirm the patriarchic system by merely adapting the genre as has been elaborated in the introduction of this subchapter. On the other hand, these men are objects of the female gaze here and a middle-aged single woman who chooses a partner on her own and deliberately talks about sexuality, is, precisely in an Indian context, rather liberated.

The figure of the male helper partly appears as a *homme fatal* – commonly defined as a man "with whom the heroine has a sexual fling before discovering him to be deeply implicated in the murder she is investigating" (Priestman 1998: 58). This relation is reversed here as Simran and the respective *homme fatal* only get closer after the latter has established himself as a trustworthy supporter. These observations show how the boundaries of the 'female experience' are being pushed

by women writers in Indian crime fiction, as Emma Dawson Varughese has pointed out (2013: 108). This is also certainly the case for new detective series.

#### 4.1.4 Flaminia Ocampo's Unnamed Detective

As the figure of the 'little old lady' or a Sherlock-Watson-pair are largely absent in Latin American crime fiction by women writers, it is mainly private investigators and amateurs, often with a background in journalism or writing, who carry out investigations. Journalism or writing and crime fiction is the scope of Chapter 5.2.2, thus some female crime fiction series will also be discussed in that subchapter. In the following, I will discuss various examples of novels by women writers who have recently been published as part of the Argentinean publisher Aquilina's collection *Negro Absoluto* headed by Juan Sasturain.

Flaminia Ocampo's novel *Cobayos criollos* depicts a female detective who moves between different spaces – Buenos Aires and the US – and thereby evokes topics like exile and living in diaspora that are frequent concerns in Latin American literature but interestingly not a major topic in the novel. Ocampo's investigator is an unnamed female private Investigator with Argentinean roots who grew up in New York. While she has never been in Argentina herself, she is assigned by her boss to travel to Buenos Aires to investigate the death of Kathy Gateway, a representative of a US pharmaceutical company that produces antidepressants. As a first person narrator, the detective summarizes that her boss – only referred to as "Mi Jefa" – assigned this case to her because she is convinced that "al país de uno siempre se quiere volver" (Ocampo 2015: 11). The detective does not really share this view as her memories of Argentina are mainly shaped by her parents' accounts of Argentina's Military Dictatorship from 1974 to 1983<sup>68</sup> and she is

68 The detective mentions for example "autos encendidas, cuerpos quemados" or "[h]ombres arrogantes que aparecían en medio de la noche, envueltos de bruma, a veces con uniforme y a veces no, pero siempre con ese aire de tener derecho sobre la vida y la muerte de todos. Ésa es la única Argentina que conozco, la de los relatos de mi infancia" (Ocampo 2015: 21). Besides these references, however, the Dirty War and its aftermath do not present a bigger topic in this novel.

eager to return to the US as soon as possible (ib.: 20–21). Nonetheless, she frequently emphasizes that she is Argentinean but is treated like a foreigner by Argentines – a taxi driver of example compliments her as “¡Simpática por ser yanqui!” (ib.: 85).

During the investigation, the detective uses the cover of a real-existing journalist called Elena Asaire. Since the name can be found on Google, it enhances the detective’s credibility (ib.: 23). The detective does have some connections to the police in Buenos Aires, though her contact person Comisario U is largely absent and others do not seem to be very trustworthy. As a private investigator, she appears very professional in terms of her work routine, methods and equipment. She is very cynic and sarcastic in her behavior and thereby certainly alludes to the hard-boiled detective: She mentions for example that if she was not a detective, she would take a job where “solo se necesitara, como única cualidad, el cinismo. Abogada, por ejemplo” (Ocampo 2015: 41). At the same time, she appears rather clueless and confused and does not even play her role as a journalist very convincingly. During an interrogation, a woman points out that she does not deduce like a journalist (ib.: 102). However, she disguises herself wearing different wigs<sup>69</sup> and remains very reserved and unfriendly. The detective blames this attitude on her job: Since she always has to pretend to be someone else, she can never act naturally (ib.: 24). This is even more the case in Argentina because she feels that she is “en [su] país de origen pero sin entender sus códigos” (ib.: 55). On some occasions of her investigation, she has unpleasant and potentially dangerous occurrences and feels threatened: She finds out that somebody has entered her hotel room during the night, she is followed by someone in a taxi and almost falls into an elevator shaft (ib.: 57; 133; 194). However, it remains unclear if there is indeed a threat or if the incidents are mere accidents (ib.: 44). Her investigation consists mainly of watching endless video recordings of a party that the victim Kathy hosted at a hotel with psychologists and patients that use the antidepressant Zexed on the night she died.

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<sup>69</sup> She wears a grey-haired wig to keep men away as “[n]ingún hombre quiere seducir o maltratar a su abuela” (Ocampo 2015: 89).

The detective also interrogates those present at the party and reads reports about the victim, but the cumbersome study of various foot-ages of that night remains her main activity. Eventually, she finishes her investigation by sending a final report which contains the decisive hint to convict a perpetrator. The detective specifies that

[m]i jefa insista a menudo en que sólo quiere una frase, no un nombre o nombres, porque no es el trabajo de la agencia señalar culpable. El resultado de una investigación consiste en un detalle que puede ser mérito de las policías locales [...]. (ib.: 227)

She points out that this hint can also be a minor detail – in this case she recommends to examine the carpet of a doctor (ib.: 227). The conviction and confrontation are not her concern or task and also the credit for the solution goes to the police. Overall, the detective remains an indifferent professional investigator throughout the investigation and rather an anonymous consultant than a detective with a deeper interest in the case she is investigating. As the detective is also a first person homodiegetic narrator, the reader only obtains the little information conveyed by her and many conclusions cannot be fully understood by the reader.

#### 4.1.5 Bhattacharyya's Reema Ray Series

The boundaries of female experience are also pushed in Madhumita Bhattacharyya's detective series which is part of a group of female crime fiction novels that can be subsumed as chick-lit crime fiction<sup>70</sup>: Besides

70 The same accounts for Indian chick-lit crime fiction novels, which draw back on these elements in the narrative form of a detective story protagonized by a young woman investigator. The genre chick-lit emerged in the US and the UK during the 1990s and is commonly associated with the publication of Helen Fielding's *The Diary of Bridget Jones* in 1996 and the broadcasting of the series *Sex and the City*. The term 'chick-lit' was meant to be an ironic title of an edited anthology of new writings by women (Mazza/Jeffrey DeShell 1995), but quickly turned into a brand name used by publishers for a new corpus of lighthearted novels "with strong ties to romantic comedy, the confessional, and, to a lesser degree, the social satire" by women writers (Ponzanesi 2014: 157; Harzewski 2011: 16). The reception has been very mixed; while these works are sometimes seen as a redefinition of femininity, it has also been criticized as

the investigation of a crime, crime fiction novels like Bhattacharyya's also include coming-of-age stories of a young protagonist-detective. The series' protagonist Reema Ray is a private investigator (PI) and thus corresponds to the third type of Keitel's differentiation (1998: 51). Reema is a young woman based in Kolkata who took part in a variety of crime-related courses at a university in the US. After deciding against a career in the police, she set up her own detective agency and advertises herself as "Calcutta's 'most discreet investigator'" on her website (Bhattacharyya 2012: 27; 37). In accordance with the characteristics of a PI, Reema frequently refers to her income (or the lack thereof) and includes references to salary negotiations, contracts and company policies as part of her work procedures (ib.: 12). Her passion developed during her childhood: "I wanted to be a detective. [...] Equal part Sherlock Holmes and Hercule Poirot, a fetchingly female frame" (ib.: 27). The preponderance of references to European detectives is an interesting feature that will be discussed more in detail in 5.2.1. Furthermore, it is curious that Reema only names fictional figures as her idols. She recounts that she felt attracted to the guaranteed solution that crime fiction offers in her opinion when she was confronted with non-solvable problem of her parents' divorce (ib.: 42). As a PI, she is less idealistic about her profession and she is mainly hired for infidelity cases. Reema struggles to pay her bills. Therefore, she also works as a freelance food writer for a women's magazine (ib.: 5; 12). This activity also provides her with a suitable cover to investigate the murder of a spice trader which is one of the two cases she investigates in *The Masala Murder*. Under the pretext of researching for an article, she can move freely in Kolkata's restaurant scene and ask questions. Besides, Reema is also asked by her ex-boyfriend Amit to investigate the kidnapping of his wife. Amit is Reema's weak spot as he cheated on her when she went to the US and complained that she did not take care of him like a "good woman" would have done (ib.: 190). This still affects her even

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a backlash that perpetuates gender stereotypes (Altnoeder 2011: 89). As for chick-lit crime fiction in India, Smita Jain's *Piggies on the Railway* (2010) and Swati Kaushal's novels *Drop Dead* (2013) and *Lethal Spice* (2014) can also be considered part of this subgenre. Chick-lit does not have a long tradition in India but is now a staple product in Indian post-millennial fiction (Arora 2012).

though Reema – similar to Desai’s detective Simran – is otherwise an independent woman who does not care much about marriage and motherhood. When she meets Amit again during the investigation, however, she also comes to terms with the end of their relationship.

In terms of the double investigation, Reema initially feels that both cases are “out of [her] league” and go beyond her capabilities (ib.: 106). As she is able to solve them both, she eventually gains self-assurance. As a coming-of-age-story, this success does not only bring her appreciation from outside, but also makes her realize that she has chosen the right profession. Emma Dawson Varughese’s observation that Indian women’s fiction increasingly depicts decision-making processes of female protagonists acutely applies to *The Masala Murder* (2013: 43).

In a strikingly similar way to Desai’s Simran Singh series, Reema meets a dubious man during her investigation. Eventually, she finds out that he is a private investigator from Mumbai called Shayak who has been following her from the beginning. Reema only manages a breakthrough in her investigations after uniting forces with him. While the credit for solving both cases goes to Reema, Shayak points out to her that it is important for a private investigator “to work inside the system” and not against the police. This facilitates access to official evidence and avoids putting oneself and others at risk (Bhattacharyya 2012: 280): As Reema carried out her interrogations under the disguise of her work as a food writer, the police suspected her to be involved in the murder. After Reema has shown her detective skills, Shayak offers her a job at his security company in Mumbai (ib.: 279), which means that she has mainly gained experience and self-assurance and can now advance in her career as a PI. In the final scene, however, Shayak and Reema have a date on his boat and kiss and initiate a complicated relationship which continues in the other two novels of the series (ib.: 282).

#### 4.1.6 Krimer's Ruth Epelbaum

María Inés Krimer's detective Ruth Epelbaum is a female Jewish detective who has so far been the protagonist of three novels published between 2010 and 2015 which are set in Buenos Aires' Jewish community. While Ruth frequently gets requests to investigate in specific cases, no specific training is mentioned that would qualify her as a professional. In *Sangre Kosher* Ruth talks about her motivation to become a detective: “[C]uando los demás opinaban que debía abandonar mis investigaciones, prefería desoír sus consejos, aun los bienintencionados. La causa era siempre la misma: la fascinación por los que sufren” (2010: 61). To support those who are suffering, Ruth moved from Corrientes to Buenos Aires and looks into various murders and disappearances. *En passant*, Ruth thereby discovers cases of exploitation and organized crime including women trafficking in *Sangre kosher*, modern-day slavery in *Sangre fashion* or drug trafficking in *Siliconas express*.

However, Ruth's profession does not always meet with approval: At some occasions, Ruth is told that detective work is not suitable for a woman: “No es trabajo para una mujer” (Krimer 2010: 100). She laments the bad reputation of detectives in Argentina: “Acá los detectives tenían mala prensa. O eran servicios o eran canas” (ib.: 33). Previously, Ruth used to work in an archive in Corrientes and studied the history of the Swi Migdal, a criminal enterprise which lured thousands of Jewish women from Eastern Europe to Argentina and Brazil as well as some other locations and forced them to work in brothels a century ago (Vincent 2011). This interest, which also connects to the history of her own family, comes up times and again throughout all three novels. Furthermore, Ruth and other protagonists frequently use Yiddish words and sayings.<sup>71</sup> For the investigation, however, Yiddish is

<sup>71</sup> The Yiddish expressions include terms for family and personal relations: A man is for example referred to as a “schvarzer” (Krimer 2013: 146); Ruth's domestic help is called a “shikse” (ib.: 13). These terms are continuously used, but never translated. Proverbs and sayings, by contrast, are usually explained as the following examples show: “Como dice el refrán, muchos juegan y uno sólo gana. Fil shplín, un nor einer guevint.” or “Oif itlejn teirets kenmen guefinen a naie kashe. A cada respuesta se le puede encontrar una pregunta” (ib.: 2013: 51; 92).

not important. It is never used as a special language that is only understood by an in-group nor does it in any way contribute to the solution of any of the cases. Rather, it could be seen as a marker of authenticity or a strategy to underline the exotic character of this community.

It is unclear what brought Ruth to Buenos Aires, since she had a very ambivalent relation with the city, as I will further explore in Chapter 5.4. She for example states that she feels “tan prisionera en Buenos Aires como antes estaba en el Archivo” without further elaborating on this comment (Krimer 2015: 17). Ruth is 56-years old, divorced and lives alone in Buenos Aires. She is very close to her relatives and her domestic help Gladys. She mentions that men are not really interested in her because of her age: “Sin darme cuenta los hombres se fueron esfumando de mi vida y el sexo se convirtió en un recuerdo amable que me visitaba por las noches” (2013: 78). Nonetheless, she refers to various affairs she has had. Similar to some of the Indian female detectives, Ruth also meets a *homme fatale* in *Siliconas express*. Hugo, a man who disappeared after a short affair years ago, suddenly returns. It turns out that he works for a plastic surgeon involved in illegal activities (ib.: 12–13). Ruth slowly realizes that Hugo has probably been sent to find out about her investigation and finds his dead body shortly after (ib.: 123).

During her investigations, Ruth appears at the same time fearless and naïve: Rather than gathering clues and questioning suspects, she often focuses on other activities such as beauty treatments or trips to flea markets (ib.: 33; 2015: 39) – an aspect that will be addressed more closely in Chapter 5.3. While she is supposed to look for the murderer of a twin model or the son of the plastic surgeon, she does very little to advance her investigation. Instead, she comes across clues by accident or the person returns without any involvement from Ruth’s side. She usually comes across various corpses, but leaves the crime scene quickly without taking a closer look at them. When Ruth finds the dead body of an editor of a fashion magazine, at a party, she for example does not mention it to anyone and leaves (ib.: 55). Ruth neither wonders about the cause of death nor about the motive. When a cousin later asks her about the party, Ruth responds very colloquially that “[u]na editora

palmó en la fiesta” (ib.: 60). Ruth’s use of language, her casual encounters with dead bodies and her general attitude are reminiscent of US hard-boiled novels whose authors are repeatedly mentioned in the series. Carolina Miranda compares Krimer’s novels to the early novels of Sarah Paretsky’s VI Warshawski series (2016: 89). Since Ruth is a homodiegetic first person narrator, the reader does not receive more information and explanations than those provided by Ruth. This leads to blanks in the narrative that are not filled by the narrator.

The novels are thus ‘fast-paced’, but rather fragmentary and make it difficult to follow Ruth’s reasoning and motivation as times. This is especially the case when she stumbles upon a dead body and immediately leaves, hardly comments on this event and continues with her everyday activities. Overall, she gives the impression of a rather absent-minded detective who does not have much impact on the development of the investigation.

#### 4.1.7 Serrano’s Detective Rosa Alvallay

The Chilean writer Marcela Serrano created one of the earliest female Latin American investigator in her novel *Nuestra Señora de la Soledad* published in 1999. Serrano’s detective Rosa Alvallay has, at first glance, much in common with Krimer’s detective Ruth Epelbaum: Both detectives are divorced women in their 50s and rather disillusioned about their lives. They can be considered professional investigators following Keitel’s distinction though their professional formation is not discussed. Rosa for example studied law and sees her career as a private investigator not as a vocation but rather as “una cadena de fracasos consecutivos” (Serrano 1999: 37; 39). In terms of methods and degree of engagement in an investigation, however, Rosa differs significantly from Krimer’s detective: In contrast to Ruth Epelbaum’s detachment from the case she is asked to investigate, Rosa often gets very emotionally involved and highly dedicated to the cases she investigates. She recounts for example a former case that affected her so much that she got enervated as she was unable to eat (ib.: 71). The investigation of the case of the disappeared crime fiction writer Carmen Ávila,

who vanished during a stay in the US, also provides a frame for a reflection of Rosa's own life as she constantly draws comparisons between herself and the disappeared writer. In addition, Rosa repeatedly compares herself to Carmen's fictional detective Pamela Hawthorne. Rosa is proud that she has been hired for such an important case and suspects she has been chosen because she is a woman (ib.: 13). Carmen spent part of her life in Mexico, which comes up as one of her possible abodes. Therefore, it comes in handy for Rosa that she spent various years in exile in Mexico with her husband during the dictatorship of Pinochet before she returned to Santiago with her sons.<sup>72</sup> The novel is a first-person narrative that focuses on the perspective and thoughts of Rosa, though it includes passages of other fictional books which are of particular salience for the investigation and provide further clues, as will be discussed more in detail in Chapter 5.2.2.

Rosa has been hired by Carmen's husband, the economist Rector Tomás, after the police in Chile and the US have been unable to trace Carmen. Rosa initially interrogates Carmen's family, a fellow writer and her editor. All have different theories about Carmen, ranging from suicide to a kidnapping by the Colombian guerrillas, but none of these theories convince Rosa. She rather focuses on interviews Carmen gave in the past as well as her crime fiction novels. She points out a multitude of parallels between Carmen's biography and the novels' plots and settings. Particularly from the novel's dedications, she draws conclusions about Carmen's mood or state of mind. Thereby, she constantly wonders about the relation between a writer and her/his work (ib.: 93). Rosa's method of putting herself in the disappeared person's position via "un sinnúmero de recortes de prensa, cinco novelas, algunos videos y los testimonios de sus seres más cercanos" (ib.: 92) is of limited

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72 The legacy of the dictatorship shines through from time to time but does not present a central concern that connects in any way to the investigation. Rosa mentions that she herself did not have to go into exile, but she went with her ex-husband, who stayed on while she returned to Chile (Serrano 1999: 131). In this sense, Serrano's novel differs from many other Chilean crime fiction novels published in the 1990s by for example Roberto Ampuero or Ramón Díaz Eterovic who often examine the legacy of the military dictatorship and the Chilean transition to democracy via the investigation of a crime (see for example Quinn 2006: 296).

success: She finds out that Carmen was not happy with her life in Chile and her marriage, but realizes that something escapes her. Rosa can only advance the investigation once she follows her intuition and travels to Mexico (ib.: 92). During the investigation, Rosa is ever more impressed with Carmen's free spirit, her appeal to men and – presuming that Carmen disappeared out of her own will – the bravery to leave everything behind and make a new start.

Simultaneously, Rosa is increasingly dissatisfied with her own ordinary life as the following passages show:

[S]oy una mujer corriente, una fiel exponente de la clase media chilena, [...] nunca he sido importante para nadie, como le sucederá a un porcentaje altísimo de la población mundial. (ib.: 129)

Soy Rosa Alvallay, tengo cincuenta y cuatro años, nací en la zona central de Chile entre ese ignoto sector medio de la ciudad de San Fernando, me crié en un hogar donde nadie aspire a nada desesperadamente, no poseo algo extraordinario [...]. Nunca me he rodeado de lo glamoroso en ninguna de sus formas. [...] No soy escritora. No he deseado parecido. Y nadie me dedicara un libro como lo hizo él [...]. (ib.: 230–231)

Rosa perceives her own life as unspectacular and ordinary, which she blames on her small-town middle class upbringing and the narrow and sexist education that is ingrained in her thinking (ib.: 233). Carmen as well as her fictional detective Pamela Hawthorne thereby present interesting counterexamples: Rosa admires Carmen's careless relation to money and possessions and her courage to leave everything behind. For Rosa, however, money is an important issue as her frequent worries about whether her boss will cover her expenses for books or hotels show (ib.: 37; 202). As a single mother, she feels very dependent on money. Ironically, the carefree writer who has a lot of money in her bank account and withdraws everything shortly before her disappearance. At a late stage of the investigation, Rosa also realizes that money is actually a precondition to be able to start a new life. It is thus not – or not only – the writer's lack of concern about money and possessions

that allows her to disappear, but the fact that she owns money and can use it to undertake the necessary steps to start a new life – for example, she can buy her dream house and change her appearance (ib.: 233). Rosa thus wonders what kind of freedom she would have if she had different financial resources, while in her opinion many women do not give much importance to (saving) money (ib.: 233). This vexed and twisted relationship between money and freedom comes up times and again in the novel and is just one example of how the novel is used as a larger reflection about gender roles and the situation of women.

The detective story here provides a framework to reflect on the aspirations of women, the impact of the patriarchal system and related issues. Gendered spaces are of particular salience here, as I will elaborate on in Chapter 5.4. The novel for example establishes an opposition between Santiago as a place of oppression versus Oaxaca as a place where Carmen but also Rosa feel free and comfortable. Furthermore, Rosa observes a distinct male way of speaking: When she asks her ex-husband for a chronological and detailed reproduction of a conversation, she is reminded that “desde su punto de vista masculino, [...] los detalles desaparecían en favor de la esencia” and she has to contend herself with a short summary of the talk (ib.: 144). Rosa sustains her opinion by referring to Carmen’s fictional detective Pamela Hawthorne, according to whom “las mujeres eran más agudas en el campo de la investigación criminal que los hombres” due to their “percepción no objetiva” (ib.: 74). Rosa senses that Carmen could have gone to Mexico and continues her search there even though Carmen’s friends and family members have different theories. Rosa also reckons that her male colleague would never resort to Carmen’s books simply because “no supondría que podría encontrar claves allí” (ib.: 74). Thus her effort to constantly put herself in Carmen’s position contributes significantly to trace her in Oaxaca (see also Quinn 2006: 309).

Rosa's strongest lead is nonetheless the novel *La loba* by the Mexican writer Santiago Blanco<sup>73</sup>. She thinks that the writer refers to Carmen in this book and suspects that they were lovers during her former stay in Mexico (Serrano 1999: 150). After interviewing him under the pretense of being a Chilean journalist, Rosa manages to follow him from Mexico City to Oaxaca where he meets a woman who could be Carmen. At this point, Rosa realizes that she plays a key role for Carmen since she could blow her cover any time: "Me siento poderosa al sospechar que todo su futuro está en mis manos. Me desborda una emoción perversa" (ib.: 222). She goes to see Santiago Blanco again who can fill many gaps in Rosa's reasoning about Carmen's motive to disappear. She finds out for example that Carmen was raped in her house in the US and tried to commit suicide shortly before she met and later married Tomás. This final talk is not narrated as a dialogue but instead retrospectively summed up by Rosa as a kind of round-up of her investigation of Carmen's life.

Rosa reflects about her own life while scrutinizing Carmen's, but it is interesting that Carmen is never actually allowed to speak. Her writings and notes are interpreted by Rosa and everyone has a theory about her abode. Even when Rosa finds Carmen in Oaxaca, she only approaches her to ask for a lighter. A key concern in Serrano's novel is according to Shalisa M. Collins the "exploration of the feminine psyche of the disappeared author" (2012: 77). However, it needs to be pointed out that this investigation is mainly recounted by Rosa and shaped by her state of mind. Therefore, while her conclusions sound plausible, they cannot be verified. This is largely due to the structural characteristics of the genre: The two strands or stories identified by Todorov (1966) can be seen as a frequent 'shortcoming' of crime fic-

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73 The first Chapter of *Nuestra Señora de la soledad* is actually a Chapter from *La loba* which recounts a scene in a bar in Mexico where a singer tells that she dreams of a blue house. This scene becomes crucial later on when Rosa is in Mexico and by coincidence reads Santiago Blanco's book. She immediately realizes that the singer in the book is Carmen. By pursuing Santiago Blanco, she eventually finds the blue house.

tion novels that lay a larger focus on exploring the life of a (female) victim. While the victim's life is scrutinized in the course of an investigation, she is usually not given a voice to speak for herself.

#### 4.1.8 Female Victims and Helpers in Indian and Latin American Crime Fiction

Besides the role of the detective, women occupy a range of other roles in Indian and Latin American crime fiction novels. In this subchapter, I will discuss some further examples including female victims which are used to explore feminist concerns. The corpse generally serves as a binding element of the narrative and establishes a connection between the protagonists. Shelley Godsland has suggested that the corpse is a powerful means of redeeming and resurrecting female victims who are textualized not as individuals but as mere symbols and symptoms of the gendered aggression directed against them" (2007: 88). Taking examples like CK Meena's *Dreams for the Dying*, I will show that the novels actually allow a resurrection of the female victim as an individual by altering various generic elements and thereby give a voice to the victim. Furthermore, I will briefly give further examples of the diversity of female figures and refer to female protagonists who are not the main investigator, but nonetheless have a specific role in the narrative – like for instance the mother of the investigator in various Indian crime fiction novels.

##### 4.1.8.1 Female Victims in Meena's, Valdivia's and Subercaseaux' Novels

The exploration of the life of a female victim is at the center of CK Meena's novel *Dreams for the Dying*: The novel strongly focuses on the life of the victim Uma, who is found dead in her own house in Chennai. The novel includes a multitude of voices narrated by a third-person narrator with variable internal focalization. This results in a polyphone and fragmented narrative which gives a more complex picture of Uma and reveals that she led several parallel lives. The official investigation carried out by police officer S.I. Mageshwaran (Magesh) and his team lags behind these revelations. For the reader, it is clear

that Uma was killed by a man disguised as a waiter; though the details about the murder itself are not depicted (Meena 2008: 5–6). During the investigation, it turns out that Uma had a live-in relationship with the university teacher VK in Chennai and a husband in Kerala at the same time. In the very end, out of coincidence, it becomes clear that Uma had a love affair with a third man and was pregnant by him (ib.: 223). Since none of the men was aware of her double life, they are shocked. In addition, the police officer Magesh reacts with a mixture of fascination and disgust as he pieces together Uma's life: On the one hand he "[doubts] if he would encounter someone as interesting as her in all his life" (ib.: 223–224). On the other hand, he finds her "immoral behavior disgusting in the extreme" (ib.: 105). Therefore, Uma's violent death quickly loses importance vis-à-vis the revelation of her double life which is exploited by the media. A tabloid for example describes Uma as "an ordinary insurance company employee" by day and a "tempting mistress" by night (ib.: 108).

In contrast to Serrano's novel, *Dreams for the Dying* gives a voice to the victim: Since the narrative is not chronological, various passages give access to Uma's thoughts before her death via a third-person narrator with variable internal focalization. It is recounted that she grew up in Kerala and moved to Chennai for work after a promotion, nonetheless, her job is not at all discussed as a place of self-realization or larger importance for her (Meena 2008: 105). Uma is described as "a chronic daydreamer [who] aspired to nothing" and rather passively plays by society's rules (ib.: 103). Over time, she discovered that "the inside of her own head was the safest place to be" as nobody has access to it except Uma (ib.: 111). It is revealed that she intentionally kept her thoughts to herself: "How could she allow anybody to stray into the lush fields of her imagination, pluck fantasies out, or worse, trample upon them?" (ib.: 229). She developed her own measures to secure her own space and privacy, which she used for example to explore sexuality. The topic is e.g. explored in a diary, which is, according to Magesh "strewn with descriptions of sexual nature" (ib.: 76). He cannot make sense of it as the dates or names are omitted and only realizes in the end that he had chosen a wrong approach as he "had assumed that she

wrote the whole truth and nothing but the truth” which turns out to be wrong (ib.: 223). Besides, Uma reads a Malayalam sex magazine on her frequent train rides (ib.: 1). According to her, the magazine is an “effective question-repellant” to keep other passengers at bay: The “sight of a lone woman reading a sex magazine” scares everyone off (ib.: 35). But more importantly, it allows Uma to satisfy her “curiosity about the limits of human sexuality” in general rather than her own sexual desires (ib.: 37). The repellent function of the magazine, however, does not always work: Uma met both VK and her recent lover Bharat on train rides and she agrees to meet both of them again. Uma does not convey her real name and tells Bharat that her name is Radha. When she goes to meet him for a weekend in an expensive hotel, she initially feels like call girl (ib.: 91). The feeling is intensified by a makeover as Bharat has bought her a dress and hired a stylist to do her hair and make-up (ib.: 94). While she is flattered by Bharat’s attention, it is curious that she describes herself as “his creation, he could make of her whatever he pleased” (ib. 94). She remains utterly passive and does not oppose or reflect on his dominant attitude (ib.: 94). Therefore, in spite of these multiple relationships, the role of men in Uma’s life is rather ambiguous: Her different identities are only based on relationships to different men rather and not on her profession or her interests. In spite of this, she is neither very active in these relationships nor does she grant anyone insights into her thoughts and desires.

After her death, Uma’s husband and Bharat remain silent out of anger and even VK is confronted with the limits of his liberal ideals (ib.: 169; 224). Even though VK considers himself a self-proclaimed feminist intellectual, he realizes that “his thoughts were dangerously close to what he would have, in another man, dubbed as reactionary and sexist” (ib.: 224). While the three men get more and more silent as the narrative unfolds, Uma and her alter egos gain space to express their desires. The juxtaposition of her desires and reactions from (male) society highlights not only the double standards for sexuality, but also women’s limited space for self-realization or the creation of an identity outside the roles prescribed by contemporary Indian (middle class) society. As

the murder investigation develops, glimpses into Uma's thoughts and revelations of her double life raise questions about women's possibility to create a space of their own.

Female victims also play a role in various other novels like the works of Mario Valdivia and Elizabeth Subercaseaux whose novels focus on complex and multilayered cases which equally have a female victim as a starting point. However, unlike in CK Meena's novel, the Chilean counterparts do not necessarily set out to scrutinize the lives of women with a focus on any kind of feminist agenda. The problematic situation of women in Chile's patriarchic society is present, but hardly means the central concern of these works. However, while women are often unanimously seen as victims in Latin American novels, these examples point at a new diversity of figures.

Valdivia's *Un crimen de barrio alto* deals with the murder of the successful businesswoman Clarisa de Landa. While the investigation of her death brings up love affairs with rich and famous persons as well as a difficult marriage in the past, the focus is actually not so much Clarisa's inner life or her position as a woman in contemporary Chilean society, but rather on a banking scandal that connects to the murder. Valdivia's novel is one of very few crime fiction novels which gives a larger space to the description of the dead (female) body because of the uncommon position in which it is found<sup>74</sup>. While Clarisa is not given a voice, it becomes clear that she was killed because she saw through the illegal activities of various important bank managers. The focus of the novel is not so much on the female victim but rather on the gulf between the Chilean middle class and those with money and power. While the group of rich bankers are part of the second group, it is especially the

74 The novel starts with the following paragraph: "El cuerpo de la mujer está tendido en el suelo. Cruza la línea que separa la alfombra del mármol del piso de la sala. Perpendicular a él un charco color café de sangre coagulada dibuja una cruz extraña. Evidente que lleva muerto al menos un día. [...] A pesar de eso, y de los demás deterioros que la muerte desata en el cuerpo de los mortales, se deja ver con claridad la llamativa belleza que la mujer tenía en vida" (Valdivia 2015: 9). The position is repeatedly discussed and analyzed on photos taken at the crime scene, however, an objectification of the female body is not the main concern here.

police which represent the middle class, as I will elaborate in Chapter 4.3.5. The victim itself is therefore mainly a trigger to set off the investigation and of importance because of her social status, but she is not important as a protagonist.

Elizabeth Subercaseaux' novels show various similarities with Valdivia's. In *Asesinato en La Moneda*, Mariana Alcántara, subsecretary of the Interior Ministry, is murdered in La Moneda, the seat of the President, on her birthday. Various other scandals come to the limelight in the course of the highly fragmented narration that resembles a puzzle of different views and perspectives of the events on the day of the murder which are recounted by various protagonists. These scandals include for example a wrongly convicted rapist and implicates not only Mariana but also the Chilean President. Thus, like in Valdivia's novel, the scope is not so much focused on the life of the victim, but rather on a variety of crimes and conspiracies. In Subercaseaux' *La última noche que soñé con Julia*, Julia García suddenly vanishes at her own housewarming party just after she started a new life with the well-off Luciano Orrego. Once again, the novel's starting point are tensions in contemporary Chilean society. While Orrego is member of an important family and enjoys a consumerist lifestyle, Julia's ex-husband Jonás is a much more modest man. He continues to follow socialist ideas and has a negative attitude towards neoliberalism but also fails to fulfill Julia's longing for more comfort and social ascent. The novel thus again epitomizes tensions in neoliberal Chile. Subercaseaux' novel uses analepses in the course of the non-chronological plot structure and gives Julia ample space to talk about her longings and the breakdown of her marriage. As she follows her own aspirations and for example publishes a cooking book, her husband loses importance in her life and she feels drawn to Luciano Orrego (Subercaseaux 2012: Chapter 15). Debates between Julia and Jonás before her death are depicted in detail and give Julia the space to present the marriage and the separation from her point of view. The mystery of Julia's disappearance is ultimately solved by coincidence, but the larger mystery of the failure of her marriage is actually a topic that is given ample space.

#### 4.1.8.2 Investigating Mothers

The mothers of several investigators play a significant role in various novels. In the course of Tarquin Hall's Vish Puri series, for example, the mother of detective Vish Puri gains an ever greater presence. Mummyji, as she is always referred to, proves her talent for solving crimes against all odds. In *The Case of the Love Commandos*, it is first established that Mummyji has recently managed to catch a fraudster who posed as an electrician to rob elderly people. Mummyji, however, locked him up in a cupboard under the stairs and managed to get him arrested (Hall 2014: 33). Furthermore, during a family pilgrimage to Jammu, she gets suspicious of a couple and eventually manages to expose them as temple robbers. She basically has to fend for herself and is not taken seriously by others. Vish Puri tries to dissuade his mother from investigating though even his wife admits that Puri "behaved totally irrationally whenever he got wind of his mother 'playing' detective" and underestimates her skills (ib.: 4). Also the police in Jammu does not believe her suspicion about the couple. However, it is thanks to Mummyji that the culprits can be caught and she is interviewed on television while Puri's case is not even mentioned (ib.: 283).

A very similar situation occurs in Vikram Chandra's *Sacred Games*. While Sartaj Singh, police officer like his father, does not tell his mother about his work or personal issues, no secret can be kept from her eventually. He realizes that "Ma had spent decades tussling with a policeman" and has "developed her own skills at catching nuances and unvoiced truths" (Chandra 2007: 427). Sartaj is unable to fool her: When he arranges a call between his boss and an important underground leader at his mother's house, she immediately realizes that he planned it beforehand because he bought food and beer (ib.: 871). When Sartaj eventually dares to tell his mother about his new girlfriend, she is already well informed and counters "I am a police-walli also [...] I have friends who tell me things" (ib.: 942). Sartaj is also surprised about her taste in movies since she has started to like "really bad, blood-dripping, moonlight-and-screams horror series on television" and is increasingly of the opinion that the "the world [is] a bad place, and getting worse" (ib.: 428). Sartaj on the other hand realizes

that he does not know his mother really well: He is largely in the dark about his mother's experiences during the Partition (ib.: 426). The reader, however, is fully aware of the trauma she went through as it is discussed in detail in one of the novel's insets.

What becomes obvious in these two novels is partly protective but also strongly discouraging behavior of male investigators towards their mothers. Vish Puri as well as Sartaj underestimate their mothers; they try to shield the crimes they are confronted with every day from their mothers while they do not have an issue to work with female team members.

#### 4.1.8.3 Mixed Teams and Female Supporters

Also in novels which do not depict a female investigator as the main protagonist, the inclusion of women as supporters, superiors or members of mixed teams is increasingly frequent and linked to overall global tendencies in novels and series. In terms of gendered power divisions, these mixed teams do usually not face problems. While the struggle of a female team member to assert herself in the past might shine through, these conflicts are not the major concern in any of the novels.

Sartaj for example has to report to Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Anjali Mathur who works for the Indian Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) – the Indian intelligence agency – and is presented as an extraordinary woman who is constantly confronted with various issues that pose a national threat including for example counterfeit money and bomb threats (Chandra 2007: 336). She thereby defies long-established misogynic practices at the organization according to which

women couldn't be given field postings because they couldn't handle the kind of criminal elements that were the everyday providers and producers of intelligence, that women couldn't make deals and gives instructions to sweaty smugglers, border-crossing pretty criminals, drug-carrying mules, the illiterate and the vulgar and the desperate. So women were good at a desk, the reasoning went, they were fine analysts. (ib.: 336)

While Anjali does an important job, her marriage broke apart after four years as her husband complained about her “incessant travel and obsession with her career” (ib.: 339). This points at the double standards for careers for men and women: While pursuing a meaningful career in such an important organization would be seen positively for a man, Anjali was not supported by her ex-husband. Sartaj maintains a very restricted relation to her and she thus remains a side character: He provides Anjali with whatever information he has and she looks into it, but does not involve him into the RAW operations in any way nor does she provide more explanations to the reader about any of their operations. This kind of teamwork, however, is a crucial feature of many novels discussed in this thesis.

Vish Puri similarly works with a team of investigators which includes a woman nicknamed Facecream<sup>75</sup>. In *The Case of the Love Commandos*, she also appears as a volunteer for the NGO Love Commandos that supports lovers who try to run away from their dissenting families. She does a lot of fieldwork for Puri and for example travels to a village in Uttar Pradesh where she is confronted with the desolate living condition of the Dalits<sup>76</sup>. Besides investigating a murder, she pretends to be the new teacher of the closed public school and goes to an authority to complain about the poor quality of the food provisions for the school (Hall 2014: 65–66; 102). Facecream is presented as a strong and fearless person who stays in the village in spite of being threatened by higher-caste inhabitants and proves that she can fend for herself. She reveals at some point that she is so committed to the case because she herself is a Dalit and has escaped discrimination after moving to Delhi (ib.: 132).

In both of these examples, women are entrusted with difficult and dangerous tasks. The collaboration between the detective and female team member or superior is portrayed as unproblematic, while the problems they are facing to assert themselves at least shine through.

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<sup>75</sup> Puri's team members are usually only referred to by nicknames.

<sup>76</sup> Dalit is a term for scheduled castes, formerly often called untouchable or castles persons.

In Latin American crime fiction novels, the family dimension is missing as for example parental figures do not play a major role in any of the novels. Women are frequently helpers or part of mixed teams. María Inés Krimer's detective Ruth Epelbaum has an assistant, her maid Gladys, who partly contributes more to the investigation than the detective herself. She provides Ruth with specific information since she is married to a police officer who works in the forensic department (Krimer 2010: 32). Furthermore, she is very engaged in gossiping and well informed about the news (ib.: 32). Both have a good relation and appear to be friends in some instances, but nonetheless Gladys addresses Ruth with the formal pronoun *usted*, while Ruth uses the more informal Argentinean *vos* towards her (for example Krimer 2015: 138). This suggests that the hierarchies are not as flat as they seem. While Ruth underlines that she needs someone to discuss the case, it is actually Gladys who advances the investigations (as mentioned in 4.1.6). She informs Ruth about a sweatshop in Buenos Aires where Bolivian workers are exploited or knows about the criminal record of a man Ruth is hired to find (ib.: 84; Krimer 2013: 32). Gladys frequently comments on the growing criminality and talks about rapes, shootings and armed raids as everyday occurrences while simultaneously following her duties as a maid (ib.: 27; 37; 88). It is thus not surprising that Ruth gets the impression that "todos su relatos son una versión distinta de lo mismo" (ib.: 88). At the same time, Gladys cuts Ruth's hair, alters her clothes and does her household chores. She also contributes significantly to the solution of the respective case and can for example reveal the murderer in *Sangre Fashion*. Gladys finds out that the murderer is the twin sister of the model by checking the latter's mobile phone (ib.: 138). Also Ruth is aware that Gladys is a great support for her, even though she is more a lay assistant and does not officially part of Ruth's investigations.

Besides these three examples, women are part of various other teams of investigators: In Anita Nair's second inspector Gowda novel *Chain of Custody*, for example, assistant sub-inspector Ratna joins the previously all-male team. She is not afraid of getting her hands dirty or of

facing dangerous situations. When she is asked why she opted for this position though she could obtain a better position with her postgraduate degree, she replies harshly:

And do what? Push a few papers this way and that? [...] I want to be hand-on; haven't you seen how it is with women and children? [...] I didn't want to be stuck with administrative work which any fool sub-inspector can do. (Nair 2016: 272)

In Subercaseaux' *Asesinato en La Moneda*, which will be discussed more in detail in 4.5.1, a woman called Julieta Barros carries out various interrogations after the murder, but it is not clear whether she is an official police investigator. Valdivia's Comisario Morante works with a mixed team in *Un crimen de barrio alto*, and furthermore closely cooperates with a young psychologist called Adriana Vallejos. Morante sees in her someone with a similar motivation and work mode and hopes that they can continue to work together like before "sin descanso y con la intimidación de siempre, compartiendo viajes y hoteles, sin respetar horarios, dedicados cien por ciento a sacar un caso adelante" (Valdivia 2015: 71). In the course of the protracting investigation process, she is in charge of the interrogation of the victim's colleagues and furthermore supports Morante, when he is about to lose control in the course of the investigation (ib.: 242), as discussed more in details in 4.3.5. These examples show that even in novels in which women do not occupy a lead role as the main investigating detective, the presence of female figures is significant. One could refer to this development as a normalization of the presence of women in comparison to the earlier absence of female figures beyond the role of the victim.

#### 4.1.9 Conclusion: Women in Indian and Latin American Crime Fiction

This subchapter has shown that diverse female figures play a role in recent Indian and Latin American crime fiction novels. Compared to the scarcity of women detectives before the turn of the millennium, the quantity of female detectives alone shows that it is apparently now

considered a suitable profession for women in India and Latin America – at least with regard to fictional investigators. Besides the protagonist-investigator, female figures assume different role such as the victim, narrator and other helpers/supporters.

The female detectives include amateurs as well as professionals which are overall local figures. Swaminathan's detective Lalli provides a rare example of a detective who alludes to the archetype of the spinster sleuth. Ocampo's and Krimer's detective figures are partly reminiscent of US-hard-boiled detectives or Sara Paretsky's VI Warshawski for example in terms of the use of language or the violent environment in which they investigate. The detectives vary widely in terms of their background and motivation for their work and span between Desai's extremely engaged social worker Simran Singh and the distanced anonymous private investigator of Ocampo's novel. The professions of these female figures are diverse and include private investigators, lawyers, social workers, writers and journalists. Detectives partly follow a feminist agenda, but this is not necessarily the case. While police investigators are actually common in India and Latin America, it is conspicuous that no female police inspector is the lead investigator of any novel. They are generally only considered part of a larger team – which partly connects to John Scaggs point that women writers have shown more resilience to the police procedural (see Chapter 4.1). Indian movies, however, partly differ here from novels as women do appear as lead police investigators. In *Mardaani* (2014), for example, police officer Shivani Shivaji Roy investigates case of women trafficking. The detectives nonetheless usually have some contacts in the police or are for example in touch with a hacker to obtain information required to advance their case outside the police; Krimer's detective Ruth can profit from information provided by her maid's husband who is a police officer while other detectives largely rely on the internet to advance their investigation.

The female investigators are usually from a middle class background and live in a metropolis in India, Argentina or Chile. They are of different age groups from the retired Lalli to young women like Bhattacharyya's

Reema Ray or Olguín's detective Verónica Rosenthal, who will be discussed in Chapter 4.2.4. Most of the investigators are middle-aged women in their forties or fifties and even though they investigate in rather patriarchal societies, being a female detective does not pose a particular problem for any of them. In various cases, being a woman is actually presented as an advantage: Lalli can engage in apparent small talk to extract information, Simran finds she is often trusted because she is so peculiar and Serrano's Rosa Alvallay is convinced that female intuition and sensitivity are required to find the disappeared writer. The novels therefore often take up female stereotypes: As investigators are judged by their (male) surrounding in accordance with these stereotypes, they are underestimated – which ultimately means an advantage for them.

These female detectives investigate on behalf of persons who are usually also from a middle class background, but give an idea of the gulf of different positions that exist within a middle class space in the Global South. While the detectives represent very liberal and independent women on the one side, they are often juxtaposed by others protagonists without any agency. Conflicts between different sides surge particularly over the role of (middle class) women. The poor, by contrast, only play a role in exceptional cases such as Desai's *Origins of Love* which deals with the complex situation of poor surrogate mothers, or Olguín *La fragilidad de los cuerpos*, which portrays poor children in Buenos Aires. In Argentina and Chile, the investigators partly tackle conflicts between middle and upper class as topics like Argentina's fashion industry (Krimmer), Big Pharma (Ocampo) or banking scandals (Valdivia) are scrutinized during the investigation.

The investigations are in many cases narrated by the detective herself as a first-person narrator or by a third-person narrator with (varying) internal focalization. Thereby, the reader is granted access to the detective's thoughts, which also means a greater proximity and more potential for identification. Nonetheless, the detective's own background story is often omitted and therefore it is not clear how they became liberated investigators. An exception are chick-lit crime fiction novels

by for example Bhattacharyya which deal with the coming-of-age story of a young protagonist as discussed in 4.1.5. While it is often suggested that the psyche of women is explored in female crime fiction, this is not the case in many novels here. The novels which rather live up to this expectation are those in which the life of a female victim is retrospectively explored via analepses in Subercaseaux' *La última noche que soñé con Julia* and Meena's *Dreams for the Dying*.

While the lives of victims are at the center of various novels, the (mutilated female) body of the murdered victim does usually not receive much attention and thereby, an eroticization is also omitted. Here, particularly Argentinean and Chilean novels deviate from predecessors like Bolaño, subgenres like *narconovela* or the violence in Scandinavian crime fiction. The violence of the criminal act is commonly not a central concern while the emphasis is more on social exclusion or the crumbling down of relationships as will be elaborated on in Chapter 4.4.3. Even the gruesome family massacre in Desai's *Witness the Night* and the rape of Durga, are only pointed at and reimagined through the point of view of the detective, but not described in detail in any way.

Female sexuality plays an intrinsic part in various novels: On the Latin American side, the detective-protagonists of Krimer's and Olguín's series similarly discuss their sex life. For the Indian corpus, this is particularly striking because genre fiction in India is commonly thought to be "low on sex" (Ponzanesi 2014: 188). In Indian crime fiction, by contrast, Meena's protagonist-victim Uma reads sex magazines in *Dreams for the Dying* while Desai's detective Simran Singh starts affairs with supportive helpers. The paradox of this need for a male figure in various novels has already been commented upon in 4.1.3. On the one hand, it affects the independent standing of these female investigators; on the other hand, it also reflects the liberty of female investigators – even in their 40s and 50s – to engage in a relationship with a man of their own choice. These female investigators also subscribe to the

idea of border-crossers who enjoy an unrestricted mobility and move around freely anytime anywhere, as I will further elaborate on in Chapter 5.4, and thereby challenge gendered spatial practices.

The detectives therefore often push the boundaries of female experience. Especially for the Indian corpus, crime fiction series by women writers deviate significantly from other works by female authors: In very general terms, Indian women writing commonly foregrounds topics like motherhood, marriage and family. Novels often depict a female protagonist struggling to balance quests of self-realization vis-à-vis societal or familial constraints as studies by for example Liza Lau (2006; 2010), Ellen Dengel-Janic (2011) or Ute Weber (2003) have underlined. Before, women were often portrayed as helpless and unable to have an impact on their predicament, while recent Indian genre fiction usually depicts women caught up in decision-making processes, though a satisfactory solution is not always possible (see for example Dawson Varughese 2013: 43). Novels and especially Bollywood movies often trivialize or harmonize conflicts between tradition and own desires of women without offering a solution or show that these conflicts are easily compatible in the figure of the “homemaker-officer-goer-superwoman” (Lal et. al 2004: 6). The crime fiction novels add a different dimension by employing strong, independent and active female figures that strikingly take up new roles and professions of their own choice. Various standard topics like motherhood, marriage and household do not mean a concern for the detectives in Indian as well as Latin American novels and are overall rather absent. Family bonding and the relation to the detective’s parents, however, continue to be an important topic in many Indian novels. Besides, the detectives often lead a lifestyle that is comparable to that of other detectives from the Global North: they often drink and smoke heavily, have affairs and tend to go against societal norms. While the female detectives are not wealthy and often critical observers of an emerging consumer society, money is nonetheless an important topic in various novels. While a regular income is crucial for the young investigator Reema Ray in

Bhattacharyya's novel, Serrano's detective Rosa realizes that financial independence is a prerequisite for freedom as the disappeared writer can only start a new life because she has the savings to do so.

Overall, crime fiction is used here by women writers to address a variety of issues and to create new role models that differ significantly from the previous models. To some extent, they may be criticized as escapist figures with no relation to reality or blamed to petrify the patriarchal system for adapting a masculine genre – in many cases without even adopting a feminist agenda. While these figures are often unrealistic because of their strength and independence and because of the ease with which they generally carry out their investigations, crime fiction can be considered a testing-ground for new role models and spaces. Many detectives appear to be rather non-credible or unrealistic figures. Nonetheless, they match Keitel's observation that the female detective "stellt einen utopisch-illusionären Gegenentwurf zur relativen Machtlosigkeit von Frauen in patriarchalen Gesellschaften dar" (1998: 79). In accordance with the potential of popular fiction (see Chapter 2.2.3), the genre allows especially local female writers to assume new roles and perspectives. These figures may thereby help to depict and accommodate changes. Besides exhibiting a diversity of different female investigators, the corpus of Indian and Latin crime fiction novels depicts particularly glocal investigating figures which evolve in connection with the global circulation of crime fiction novels and series. They can be seen as a reaction to the increasing presence of female investigators in globally circulating crime fiction since they employ local counterparts which relate to actual changes in the role of women.

## 4.2 Journalists as Alternative Investigators and the Role of the Media

Journalism and media play an important role in many contemporary Indian and Latin American crime fiction novels and therefore certainly deserve a closer look in this thesis. Many investigating figures have a background in journalism or writing while in other cases it is the media

that has a big impact on the investigation. The various connections and functions will be scrutinized in this subchapter with a focus on media and journalism, while the question of writing will be looked at more closely in 5.2.2 to address questions of intertextuality and metafiction in the corpus novels.

Interconnections between crime investigation and media in crime fiction novels are hardly surprising given the huge impact media has on the representation and perception of crime. Murra Lee and Alice McGovern insist for example that “media coverage plays an integral role in the way in which the community frames and views issues of crime, law and order, and social control” (2014: 10). Crime, and the fear of crime, is canalized by media rather than based on the personal experience of violence. They also point at the rapid increase in crime reporting and crime series on television that have an impact on the imagination and fear of crime (*ib.*: 142). A similar effect can be noticed for crime fiction, whose emergence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is usually seen in connection with the beginning of modern policing itself: both draw back on similar social anxieties (*ib.*: 143). Nonetheless, the professionalization of policing can be seen as an important feature for the development of credible investigating figures such as the police officer and other characters to reinforce the law (*ib.*: 143). As I already discussed in Chapter 2.3.4, crime fiction is often seen as very perceptive of current fears, but can also be seen as a medium that creates and enhances particular fears such as the fear of serial killers whose fictional appearances do not stand in any relation to the extra-literary threat of serial killers (Gregoriou 2012: 57). While the media traditionally occupy a role in disseminating selected crime news to the public (Lee/McGovern 2014: 13), this scenario is often challenged by journalistic activities which draw back on own sources and go beyond official information provided by the police. Whether it is to obtain further information or to uncover scandals inside of the police, the journalist is usually regarded as a counterbalance.

The rise of the journalist-investigator in crime fiction often projects him or her as an ‘upholder of social justice’ in a corrupt environment. Beyond the issue of distrust in the police, the portrayal of journalism and writers in crime fiction also points at various other connections and affinities. Due to his/her familiarity with investigative works, the journalist but also the academic researcher accounts for a credible amateur figure. Heather Worthington has pointed out that “it is increasingly difficult to make such a figure credible in the face of media-fostered public understanding of the complexities of real detectives” (2011: 31). As the horizon of expectations requires a realistic representation of sophisticated methods and technology used by detective figures, the journalist-detective provides a viable alternative. Furthermore, due to the journalist’s professional interest in a specific unsolved crime to be able to write about it, the need to justify the involvement, interest and monetary compensation of an amateur investigator becomes obsolete. The presence of journalists and media also reflects the huge impact of media as a fourth power that e.g. influences the representation of criminal investigations. It furthermore reflects the increasing mediation of society, which particularly concerns India’s and Latin America’s (middle class) society where media has a growing impact on all aspects of life as has been discussed in Chapter 2.1.2.

Interestingly, the growing presence of journalists as fictional investigators comes at a moment when the idealistic view of journalists as ‘upholders of social justice’ and their authority in reality are ever more challenged: First of all, their authority to reveal and disseminate a specific truth is relativized by new participatory media as Sarah Niblock has pointed out:

[N]ew media technologies challenge one of the most fundamental ‘truths’ in journalism, namely the professional journalist is the one who determines what the public sees, hears and reads about the world. (2013: 91)

Furthermore, the conflicting interests of the idealistic journalist who investigates on behalf of public interest and the “profit motive of the news industry” has an impact on the investigation work and frequently leads journalist-investigators to question their position (ib.: 81).

In general, the figure of the journalist-investigator is a feature of globally successful crime fiction series. To mention a few important representatives: In Scandinavian crime fiction, Stieg Larsson’s Millennium Series features investigating journalist Mikael Blomkvist and Liza Marklund has employed the female crime reporter Annika Bengtzon, to give just two examples. In Scottish crime fiction, Val-McDemid’s female journalist Lindsay Gordon is an important figure. The above-mentioned tensions surface in these series, as Sarah Niblock has for example pointed out in her study of the representation of Blomkvist in TV adaptations of the Millennium series. Sarah Niblock shows that Blomkvist is confronted with the rapidly changing media landscape and consequently shifts from traditional methods of the journalist on his own to more collaborative ways of gathering information and data – for example by cooperating with the hacker Lisbeth Salandar (Niblock 2013: 80). While in principle the “process and practices of journalism were to center on presenting facts in a complete picture in order to achieve objectivity”, the supposed objectivity of the journalist is a criterion that has been done away with in the series (ib.: 92–93). Overall, the adaptation “subverts the traditional view of the heroic, autonomous reporter and replaces it with a flawed, vulnerable individual” whose journalistic work is strongly affected by his feelings and his instinct (ib.: 92–94). Marklund’s Annika Bengtzon, is considered the “best-known woman hero in modern Swedish crime fiction” (Bergman 2015: 111) and shows similar characteristics: Bengtzon continuously struggles to balance her profession and her private life (ib.: 120). She develops and progresses in the course of the ten books of the series which can thus be considered a “kind of coming-of-age story about a young woman who gradually learns to navigate the world” (ib.: 120). The employment of a journalist-investigator can also be seen in connection with the authors’ background: Stieg Larsson as well as Liza Marklund for example started their career as

journalists like many of their fellow crime fiction writers. Also in the Indian context, crime fiction writers often have a background in print or online media. Among the authors dealt with here are for example Madhumita Bhattacharyya, Kishwar Desai, Tarquin Hall and CK Meena. In the case of Argentinean and Chilean authors, Sergio Olguín is the only writer with a clear background in journalism.

The current employment of journalists as investigators already connects to a larger tradition in Argentina and is often seen as an expression of a long-standing lack of trust and perceived inefficiency of the police and/or state. This has led to the development of new archetypes. Most writers see themselves in a connection with the above-mentioned journalist Rodolfo Walsh, who combined crime fiction and investigative journalism as a political tool to denounce criminal activities by the state during the 1960s. Another famous example of a fictional detective is Osvaldo Soriano's *Triste, solitario y final* (1973), whose eponymous detective-journalist Soriano meets Philip Marlowe in Los Angeles as two failed investigators who look into the death of a comedian. Until today, the mix of journalism and crime fiction constitutes a common feature of Latin American crime fiction used by authors like the Mexican Mariam Laurini, Roberto Bolaño or Ricardo Piglia. The latter's detective figure and alter ego Emilio Renzi is a recurrent figure in Latin American literature. He has been the protagonist of several of Piglia's works and has been described by Carlos Fuentes as a "periodista, envejecido, cínico, útil e inútil para la prensa, perdido para la literatura" (2011: 346). Renzi is thus one of the detective-journalists who will be scrutinized in this subchapter as well as investigators with a similar background like Piñeiro's detective trio, Olguín's detective Verónica Rosenthal or the investigating journalists in Swarup's *Six Suspects*. They provide an idea of the range of journalist-investigators and also give insights into the roles and functions that journalist and the media occupy in the corpus novels.

### 4.2.1 Piglia's Emilio Renzi

In Ricardo Piglia's *Blanco nocturno*, Piglia's recurrent character Emilio Renzi<sup>77</sup> makes another appearance and comes to a village in the Province of Buenos Aires to write about the murder of the young Puerto Rican-American Tony Durán. Durán's stay in the village was in some way connected to the family of village's founder, the Belladonna family. Renzi takes over the role of the investigator when the village's police officer, Inspector Croce, is forced to withdraw from the investigation due to the intervention of Chief Prosecutor Cueto.

The novel is set in the early 1970s in a small unnamed village in the Province of Buenos Aires and thereby differs from the vast majority of post-millennial crime fiction novels which are commonly set post-2000 and mostly located in Buenos Aires. The structure of the narrative is complex, deeply nested and not chronological. It is narrated by an extradiegetic third-person narrator with variable focalization. The narrator generally stays in the background and largely omits the role of an organizing entity. Therefore, the novel is rather polyphone and it is often unclear from whose perspective the story is narrated or how reliable the narrator is. Thus, in large parts the novel seems to consist of rumors whose veracity cannot be confirmed. This narrative is juxtaposed with a long conversation between Renzi and Sofia Belladonna, the daughter of the family of the village's founders. These parts are integrated in the chapters narrated by a third person narrator from Renzi's point of view. Narrated in a fragmented manner, Sofia tells the history of her family and details about the victim's stay in the village (Piglia 2010: 208; 269). Nonetheless, Renzi remains skeptical about the family members and their connection to the murder victim.

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<sup>77</sup> The history of Renzi in Piglia's early short stories has for example been summarized by Susana Inés González (2002) and by José Manuel González Álvarez (2009). While it is not expedient here to discuss all of Renzi's appearances, the above-mentioned short story "La loca y el relato del crimen" and the novel *Respiración artificial* (1982) can be considered pertinent.

Renzi works for the newsletter *El Mundo* in Buenos Aires and is rather disillusioned about his job which he calls “su trabajo idiota de hacer reseñas bibliográficas en *El Mundo* y salir cada tanto a la realidad a perpetrar crónicas especiales sobre crímenes o pestes” (ib.: 185). Not many details are given about Renzi himself except that he considers quitting his job and staying in the village to dedicate his time to write a novel (ib.: 185). However, due to the further developments of the investigation, Renzi is eventually happy to leave the village and to return to Buenos Aires.

His mode of reporting raises questions about the accuracy of media investigations: The murder of a foreigner raises nation-wide media attention; therefore, Renzi is asked by his editor Luna to write articles that are of interest for their readers in the capital. The editor suggests for example to invent a connection to the guerrilla and confirms that the reports do not need to be entirely fact-based. He asks him to “inventar algo que sirva” (ib.: 113). When Renzi writes his first articles, he notes that they sound like “spaghetti-western” (ib.: 118). However, he quickly realizes that this is not so much because of his investigation, but because everything is a farce in the village (ib. 115; 117). The village patron Cayetano Belladona expresses his discontent about Renzi’s articles:

Uno las lee y piensa que este pueblo es un campo de batalla. Habla de fuentes no explícitos y eso, como siempre, cuando un periodista cita fuentes reservadas, quiere decir que está mintiendo. (ib.: 203)

Belladona thereby ignores the fact that Renzi’s omission of sources can have various reasons as he tries to protect his informants. Renzi’s national newspaper is juxtaposed with the local newspaper *El Pregón*. While *El mundo* follows the readers’ interests to increase sales number, Renzi finds out that the local newspaper *El Pregón* is in the palm of the hands of the Belladona family and the Chief Prosecutor Cueto. Shortly after the murder, an article in *El Pregón* states that Inspector Croce manipulated evidence and took a suitcase full of money from the crime

scene – similarly, the article omits naming any sources (ib.: 107). The article leads to Inspector Croce’s dismissal and the long-lasting rumor that he stole money from the crime scene.

Renzi learns more about the history of the newspaper from its editor Gregorio. He tells him that the newspaper has been there “desde la época del indio [...], para mantener unidos a los productores agropecuarios” (ib.: 112). In this sense, the small newspaper occupies an important community-building function. This strongly resonates Benedict Anderson’s considerations about the capacity of print media in nation-building processes (1983): What is written in *El Pregón* has a huge impact on the community as the information is uncritically consumed. The editor admits that he is not in good terms with Inspector Croce but blames this on “la tradicional tensión entre el periodismo y el poder” (Piglia 2010: 83). The article about Croce stealing a suitcase, however, reveals that such tensions do not exist between him and Chief Prosecutor Cueto or the Belladonna family which are actual persons in power. Overall, both newspapers do not follow the aim to report objectively or to reveal the truth, but are rather guided by interests of readers or patrons.

As the Japanese watchman continues to be blamed for the murder and little new information is provided, the media increasingly lose interest and also Renzi is asked by his editor to return to Buenos Aires. The scope of Renzi’s investigation shifts from the murder to the fate of a bankrupt automobile factory owned by Sofia’s brother Luca Belladonna. Guided by Croce, Renzi starts to comb through the local archive for information about the factory (ib.: 187). From newspaper articles and other sources, Renzi learns that the Chief Prosecutor Cueto is not only the lawyer of the Belladonna family, but also involved in a ghost finance company. This company purchased the car factory’s mortgage and is secretly in charge of its current confiscation (ib.: 265). Renzi and the dismissed Inspector Croce see a connection between Tony’s death and Cueto’s activities, but Renzi actually has little impact on the case. He assists a farce trial in which Luca Belladonna has to choose between saving the innocently jailed Japanese guard Yoshio or keeping his com-

pany. Luca opts for the latter, but shortly after that commits suicide out of guilt. The novel ends with a retrospective comment about Renzi's admiration for Luca: Renzi states that he remembers him "como alguien que había tenido el coraje de estar a la altura de sus ilusiones" (ib.: 297). Renzi's opinion is based on the fact that Luca continued his projects and even though the factory was already bankrupt. However, Renzi does not have any illusion about Luca's entrapment between two equally bad choices (ib.: 298). Renzi is thus overall a rather ineffective journalist-investigator. While Renzi discovers secret connections between the murder and Chief Prosecutor Cueto's activities, this information does not have any impact on the trial's outcome. Rather, *Blanco nocturno* marginalizes the investigation to focus on the complex situation and continuously questions the possibility of truth and justice via several strategies that are examined in detail in Chapter 5.2.3.

#### 4.2.2 A Crime Fiction Writer Turns Investigator in Piñeiro's *Betibú*

Claudia Piñeiro's *Betibú* (2011) deals with strikingly similar concerns as Piglia's novel – to the extent that she uses Renzi's above-mentioned quote about paranoid crime fiction as one of the three epigraphs that prepose her novel (Piñeiro 2011: 9). The possibility to solve an individual crime and prosecute those in charge is a dominant issue closer analyzed in 5.1.2. These questions are mainly raised by a female writer-cum-journalist Nurit Iscar. Piñeiro combines two common detective figures of post-millennial crime fiction in India and Latin America. Nurit Iscar is a middle-aged woman writer nicknamed Betibú after the comic figure Betti Boop<sup>78</sup> who is asked to write a non-fiction column about the investigation of a murder for the newspaper *El Tribuno*. Besides her, two journalists get involved in the investigation: Jaime Brena, former head of the "Policiales" section of *El Tribuno* and his recent replacement, a technology savvy young man only referred to as

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78 Betti Boop is a cartoon character created in the 1930s which has curly hair – like the protagonist Nurit Iscar. The title of the novel alludes to the Spanish phonetic spelling of the character's name.

“el pibe de Policiales”<sup>79</sup>. *Betibú* is a third person narrative which shifts between the points of view of various protagonists and thereby uses a variable internal focalization. The novel largely focuses on Nurit’s perspective, but also gives insights into the actions and thoughts of protagonists like Brena or *el pibe*. It thereby depicts different approaches to analyze the crime. The frequent and brusque changes are also a strategy to enhance tension.

Like the author Piñeiro, Nurit Iscar looks back on a career as Argentina’s best-selling crime fiction writer. However, after her only romance novel received very bad reviews, she turned to ghostwriting (Piñeiro 2011: 21–22). In *Betibú*, she is hired by Lorenzo Rinaldi, the editor of *El Tribuno* to write a non-fiction column about the death of the important businessman Pedro Chazaretta. The column can be seen as an addition which is useful in “las primeras etapas de un caso policial [cuando] no hay datos concretos o no trascienden y no queda otra que inventar, imaginar, ficcionalizar” (ib.: 94, 63). This simple dichotomy suggests that there is a solution and objective truth based on facts which just needs to be revealed. In the meantime, it is useful to include well-written fictionalized scenarios from somebody who is on-site. For her column, Nurit thus moves to the same community, La Maravillosa, and writes her column, but also gathers clues that raise doubts about the apparent suicide. In addition to the journalistic investigation, Nurit’s column has a greater liberty to include speculations and subjective impressions for example by commenting on the atmosphere and rumors that circulate inside La Maravillosa (ib.: 122). She is instructed to write “algo que a la gente la atrape” rather than to find out the truth (ib.: 77). It can definitely be seen as a strategic move by the editor to get access to a neighborhood whose access is closed for common journalists and to increase the newspaper’s sales numbers by taking advantage of Nurit’s social capital in the sense of Bourdieu as “la dama negra de la literatura argentina” (ib.: 76).

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79 In the English translation, he is called “the crime boy”. In accordance with the Spanish original, I will refer to him as *el pibe*.

The style of the reports proves to be an advantage for Nurit: Together with Brena and *el pibe*, she discovers a connection to a series of suspicious accidents that happened to a group of the murder victim's college friends, while the police officer in charge easily dismisses the cases as suicides. When the team reveals that the murders could be a late act of revenge for the rape of a classmate that occurred years back, Nurit confronts the businessman Gandolfini who is the younger brother of the group of college friends of Chazaretta. They suspect him to be the string-puller but do not have any incriminating evidence. When Nurit goes to confront him, Gandolfini replies to her allegations in a hypothetical mode and points out that "no hay fuente confiable que pueda citar" (ib.: 317). Even though she feels threatened, Nurit points out she does not face the same constraints as a journalist:

Yo no soy periodista, soy escritora, puedo contar sin citar fuentes, puedo dar por hecho algo que sólo está en mi imaginación. Es sólo cuestión de llamar a lo que escribo 'novela' en lugar de 'crónica', un detalle casi menor [...]. (Piñeiro 2011: 317)

In her last column, she announces her return to fiction where she can use all the information she gathered as fictional elements of her novel.

Brena and *el pibe* embody different types of journalists that are at first sight not easily compatible: Brena was formerly in charge of the *Policiales* section but then transferred for disciplinary reasons because he questioned the newspaper's credibility in a TV show (ib.: 30). Resonating concentration processes in the media industry, Brena is an opponent of the newspaper's policy to replace experienced journalists with younger ones who just graduated and earn much less (ib.: 31). Brena himself is an old-fashioned journalist with a large network of informants and connections. He is convinced that

un buen periodista de Policiales se apoya en eso, en los contactos que le pasan los dato que, tarde o temprano, se van a convertir en noticia. [...] No importa si los contactos son policías, fiscales, chorros, jueces o presos, sino que den el dato justo. (Piñeiro 2011: 34)

He knows the police officer Venturini who provides him with first-hand details about Chazaretta's murder and lets him see the scene of crime in exchange for gifts. Venturini himself is a rather suspicious figure who easily passes off the deaths as suicide and appears at crime scenes that are not in his jurisdiction. Brena emphasizes the importance of being out on the street and constantly tells anecdotes about famous and dedicated Argentinean journalists such as Walsh, Enrique Sdrech or Gustavo Germán González which will be discussed further in Chapter 5.2.1. He nostalgically sees journalists as "detectives neuróticos obsesivos, y tercos" who are obsessed with revealing the truth even if their effort may not lead to justice (ib.: 220). For Brena, it is very important to have an idol to follow, though he himself has lost his enthusiasm due to the profit-oriented course of the news industry and thinks about early retirement.

*El pibe* by contrast relies mainly on information from the internet – or as Brena disdainfully observes: "Generación Google: sin calle, todo teclado y pantalla, todo Internet" (ib.: 33). Initially, he struggles to get first-hand information due to the lack of experience and contacts. Brena and *el pibe* get closer to each other in the course of the investigation and benefit from each other mutually: While Brena e.g. has the knowledge to differentiate between a staged suicide and a real one by looking at the color of the face of the person (ib.: 193; 253), *el pibe* manages to find a contact person with a fake Facebook account. While Brena emphasizes that journalists need to disguise themselves, *el pibe* concludes that "[l]as nuevas tecnologías aportaron miles de disfraces" (ib.: 196). However, he is highly disappointed about the outcome of their investigation of the murder case and decides to quit his job and start a web portal for alternative news (ib.: 334).

Lorenzo's idea to get Nurit to write a column turns out to be a bad move for him. In her final report, Nurit reminds readers to be critical of news reporting. She explains that a more profound analysis of a specific story might exist but is not necessarily get published for various

reasons. She admits that in the case of the Chazaretta murder, she has information that she cannot share because she is pressurized (ib.: 330). Eventually, this leads to a kind of censorship:

Lo que pasa con esta noticia policial es trasladable a cualquier noticia y a la situación general de los medios hoy. Una agenda de prioridades informativas que deja afuera ciertas noticias es censura. (ib.: 329)

She thus recommends readers to consult as many different sources as possible to form an opinion and to use new media as a kind of resistance to the policies of dominant media companies:

La comunicación hoy dejó de ser emisor-receptor, la armamos entre todos. Jerarquizar las noticias de acuerdo con el criterio propio y no con la agenda impuesta es hacer contrainformación. (ib.: 330)

Interestingly, Nurit already anticipates what happens to her report: While editor Rinaldi stops Nurit's final report from being published, *el pibe* manages to share it online in social media and blogs and thereby performs exactly the kind of counter information Nurit talks about in this report (ib.: 335).

The use of new media as an alternative way to get information and to a certain extent justice is not limited to *Betibú*. Social media for example frequently play a role in Indian and Latin American crime fiction novels. Kishwar Desai's *The Sea of Innocence* (2014) is another prominent example in which an influential politician who cannot be held accountable for his involvement in crimes is brought down by incriminating videos that are shared on social media. Also in Tarquin Hall's *The Case of the Love Commandos*, detective Vish Puri insists that a copy of a video footage that incriminates two important politicians has to reach the news channels first and only then he will inform the police to ensure that "[p]ublic outrage will force them to act" (Hall 2014: 260).

Thus, while the journalist is used here as an alternative investigator for the various reasons mentioned in Chapter 4.2 (amateur character; not involved in the system, familiar with analytical work and research; presence in investigation easily justifiable), she/he often finds her/his paths blocked and cannot share this knowledge and hold the culprits accountable. Social media appear as a less censored and more participatory way to spread information and to augment the pressure of for example the police to act. This relates to a variety of actual cases that occurred in India in the last years where social media are increasingly used to close a communication gap between the police and citizens or to facilitate a proper prosecution of a crime (see for example Sachdeva/Kumaraguru 2015).

#### 4.2.3 Columnists and Reporters in Swarup's *Six Suspects*

In Indian crime fiction, journalists as protagonists have so far been less present as main investigating figures though they certainly play a role. An interesting example for their presence is Vikas Swarup's novel *Six Suspects*. The complex and polyphone crime fiction novel largely omits the presence of an investigating detective figure. Nonetheless, an investigating journalists and a TV presenter do play an important role in some parts: Most parts of the narrative (Chapter 2–19) retrospectively recount the story and motives of six suspects who all had a motive to kill Vicky Rai, the son of a politician. Chapters 1 and 20–25 – alternately titled “The Bare Truth” and “Breaking News” – add newspaper columns and newscasts by investigative journalist Arun Advani and TV presenter Bharka Das. These reports give latest updates about the murder investigation and thus create a kind of frame for the individual stories of the suspects. The column in Chapter 1 can be seen as a summary of the events that recounts Vicky's life and death and the story of suspects who have been arrested. The final chapters deal with the police investigation of the murder. In addition, a first person narrator appears in the last Chapter entitled “The Truth” and reveals himself

as an investigative journalist who killed Vicky. This journalist sees his murder as an act of vigilantism which was necessary due to the inaction of the police:

I had no personal score to settle with Vicky Rai. [...] I presume my action will be seen as vigilante justice. The act of a citizen who takes the law into his own hands when the actions of established authorities are insufficient. (Swarup 2009: 550)

No proof is given that this journalist is Arun Advani but some parallels exist as both followed Vicky's activities very closely for years (ib.: 19; 551). Nonetheless, Arun confirms in a TV interview that he will find Vicky's murderer which would suggest that it is not him. He declares that "[a] true investigative journalist cannot be swayed by his personal prejudices. [...] He must remain an impartial professional seeking only the bare truth" (ib.: 19). His crusade – as he calls it – is thus not against Vicky himself. He considers him "only a visible symptom of the malaise that has infected our society" (ib.: 19). Arun suggests that the "real culprit" can be detected by scrutinizing the motives of all six suspects. Of course, this could in retrospective be a red herring to avert suspicion from himself.

Arun thus conducts his own investigation and obtains information much easier than the police, as he reveals in his columns: First of all, he receives tapes with conversations recorded from Jagannath Rai's mobile (Vicky's father) and acknowledges this kind of "cooperation from members of the public" is his strongest lead (ib.: 516). Furthermore, Arun can easily reveal that the supposed key suspect Eketi, a tribal from the Andaman Islands whom the police considered to be a Naxalite<sup>80</sup>, is innocent. Arun recounts that Eketi trusted him because he treated him like "a fellow human being", while the police obtained his confession under torture (ib.: 531). When Eketi is shot in police

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80 The Naxalites are radical communists named after the village Naxalbari in West Bengal where the group originated in the 1960s. They are members of the Maoist Communist Party of India which resort to violence and are known for their guerilla-style attacks. They are mainly active in India's poor states in the center and east of the country.

custody, Arun writes an open letter to the President of India and openly accuses various persons to be directly responsible for Eketi's death. The accused Police Commissioner K.D. Sahay defends himself on television and cautions viewers "not to believe all that they read in the papers" (ib.: 523), thereby insinuating a competition between police and media about who has the authority to investigate and establish the truth.

Nonetheless, the novel does not establish a good-bad dichotomy between journalists and the police. One scene deals with a journalist who has come to know about the suicide of a woman with whom Jagannath had an affair and claims that he wants to know "the truth". However, Jagannath anticipates that everyone is corrupt and negotiates a deal: The journalist demands money and government advertisements in his newspaper in exchange for his silence (ib.: 242).

The anonymous first person narrator of the final Chapter could also be seen as an implicit heterogenic narrator<sup>81</sup> of the overall novel who recounts the entire investigation at length and consequently solves the crime in the final Chapter called "The Truth". This structure suggests a proximity to the classic detective story (see Chapter 2.3.1). However, the unnamed journalist only discloses his crime to the reader. He explains that he sneaked in as a waiter during the party and shot Vicky before hiding the gun in a secret compartment in his special shoe (ib.: 549). Since he refrained from telling his colleagues at the newspaper or his wife about it, the narrator-journalist is confident that he will never be punished and feels proud of "carrying out the perfect murder" (ib.: 551). The revelation of the narrator being the murderer violates the perceived 'fair play' doctrine of crime fiction novels. In *Six Suspects*, the narrator explains his decision to shoot Vicky in detail and states that as "a committed investigative journalist" he felt it was his duty to

81 For the individual stories of the suspects, different narrative voices, perspectives and modes are used. These include for example dramatic modes in the form of telephone calls for the Chapter about Jagannath Rai or a first-person narrator for the parts about the mobile thief Munna as well as parts that use a more mimetic mode like diary entries in the case of the actress Shabnam or the account by a third-person narrator with variable internal focalization for the story of the tribal Eketi.

kill Vicky (ib.: 550; 558). The narrator admits that he had put a trace on Vicky's phone two years ago and was thus aware of various crimes Vicky was involved in:

I heard ear-numbing accounts of how laws were broken and subverted, how evidence was falsified, how justice was trampled upon, raped, pilaged and sold to the highest bidder. (ib.: 552)

This denouement of the murderer as well as Advani's columns both shift the focus from the criticism of a corrupt elite to the apathy of India's middle class. The murderer accuses India of being "a nation of voyeurs" which people comfortably watch injustices broadcasted on television without fighting for a change (ib.: 551). He hopes that he might have lit a spark to wake people up as he observes protests that emerge after Eketi's death. Taking up the metaphor of disease and hygiene again, he laments the "epidemic of apathy in our country" and suggests "to cleanse the political system of criminal elements and to ensure that law-breakers do not become law-makers" (ib.: 518; 535).

Arun's columns are contrasted by the "Breaking News" chapters which consist of transcripts of broadcasts of TV presenter Bharka Das – who strongly evokes the real-life Indian TV journalist Bharka Dutt. Bharka Das gives live updates on the latest developments of the investigation of Vicky's murder. The immediacy of these transmissions is underlined by comments like "This is a rush transcript. This copy may not be in its final form and may be updated" (ib.: 519) that precedes these chapters. The newscast completes the picture of the investigation, but can also be seen as symptomatic for the "nation of voyeurs" which continuously follows this spectacular case on television. Das for example describes the suspects as "a motley lot, a curious *mélange* of the bad, the beautiful and the ugly" (ib.: 18) and receives live information from correspondents *in situ*. In spite of this sensationalist mode of work, Das emphasizes that she sides with the 'common Indian'. She for example comments on Vicky's acquittal of the murder of the bartender Ruby

Gill: “For the common man, it seems, justice is just a dream. It is a sad day not only for the family of Ruby Gill, but for every ordinary Indian” (ib.: 446).

Thus, journalism and media do play an important role in *Six Suspects* even though there is no journalist-investigator who guides through the entire novel. Instead, *Six Suspects* depicts the relation between media, crime and democracy in contemporary India by including various newsagents. They reflect the high impact of media on public opinion and the mediatization of India’s middle class in particular. The discrepancy between an elite that sees itself above the law and a middle class who is obstructed by non-supportive authorities is frequently addressed in contemporary movies and novels. The issue has become epitomized in staple protagonists such as the criminal son of a politician and will be discussed more in detail in Chapter 4.4.2.

#### 4.2.4 Olguín’s Fearless Investigating Journalist Verónica Rosenthal

Another Argentinean female journalist-cum-detective is Sergio Olguín’s Verónica Rosenthal. She has so far been the protagonist of three crime fiction novels published between 2012 and 2016 with numerous parallels to the hard-boiled subgenre. The series’ first novel, *La fragilidad de los cuerpos* alternates between Verónica’s investigation of train accidents and the suicide of conductors and the story of two poor boys who participate in dangerous train competitions organized by a larger criminal organization. These interconnected stories are recounted chronologically by an extradiegetic third person narrator with a variable internal focalization. Thus the narration shifts between the perspective of various protagonists and gives insights into Verónica’s as well as other protagonists’ thoughts. The interruptive style however also builds up tension due to the frequent change of perspective.

Verónica is a young journalist in her 30s who lives in Buenos Aires and works for the society section of the weekly newspaper *Nuestro Tiempo* (Olguín 2012: 20). Like Maria Inés Krimer’s detective, Verónica is also

Jewish, though being Jewish does not play an important role as a religious or cultural identity for her and is mentioned *en passant*. Verónica herself lives alone in the middle class neighborhood Villa Crespo, frequently drinks a lot of alcohol and smokes, likes to go out with her friends and regularly has different lovers. Sexuality is an important topic for Verónica, who writes porn stories online (ib.: 107). Similar to many other detective figures like Piñeiro's Nurit Iscar or Krimer's Ruth Epelbaum, Verónica does not care about her appearance and for example dresses without watching in the mirror. However, she thinks about doing more sport or having plastic surgery from time to time (ib.: 18). This underlines that Verónica has a more critical perspective but is also not entirely free from beauty ideals.

She cares about a lot about the cases she is investigating for her articles. She is always interested in "historias morbosas" and gets personally highly involved in the respective case (ib.: 22). Verónica is well connected as her father Aarón Rosenthal is a well-known and respected lawyer and thus she can use her surname as a door opener that facilitates her access to information and clues where other journalists might fail:

Fiscales y jueces se mostraban generosos con los periodistas [...], no tenían problemas para compartir pruebas, testimonios o lo que fuera. Y cuando algún juez o fiscal se hacía el difícil, Verónica sacaba entonces a relucir su apellido: Rosenthal. (Olguín 2012: 24)

When Verónica is questioned by a judge after intentionally running her car into four contract killers with her car, her father makes sure that the judge believes that it was an accidental move: "El juez parecía más un asistente de su padre que otra cosa" and she does not have to fear any repercussions (ib.: 334).

These connections might also allow her moral standards: Verónica refuses to pay for material and instead for example flatters and smiles at possible informants to get information (ib.: 62; 66). While Verónica works alone in the sense of a lonesome investigator, she nonetheless

receives support from her editor Patricia Beltrán, and from Federico, a young lawyer who works with her father. He is in love with Verónica and an important supporter who contributes largely to the progress of her investigation (ib.: 58): He can provide her with information about a criminal who went underground and arranged police support to catch the criminals in the act (ib.: 214; 274; 308). Verónica's editor Patricia admires her dedication and intuition which reminds her of herself when she was younger:

Verónica quería estar en la calle, investigando, en contacto con la gente, encontrando explicaciones a los problemas y mandando al frente a los responsables. [...] Además tenía olfato. Encontraba agua en las piedras. (Olguín 2012: 98)

Therefore, she is very supportive during Verónica's investigation and very enthusiastic about her articles (ib.: 326). The fact that Verónica spends weeks investigating one case does not seem to pose a problem for her. Patricia also puts her in touch with Rodolfo Corso, a fellow journalist who is also an important source of information for her as he is well informed about the masterhead of a criminal organization called Juan García.

In a meticulous process, Verónica searches newspaper archives for information about train accidents and can thereby filter out various suspicious cases of accidents with young boys along the same railways line (ib.: 140–142). She tries everything to find these boys and while most have disappeared, she eventually identifies a football club to which several victims belonged. She finds two boys called *el Peque* and Dientes, the protagonists of the alternating chapters, and convinces them to team up with her as a “superequipo” to be able to catch the organizers of the track competitions (ib.: 266). For Verónica, journalism is primarily about profound knowledge: “Eso era justamente ser periodista. Tener la capacidad de pasar de la ignorancia al conocimiento detallado” (ib.: 188). However, like in *Betibú* and *Blanco nocturno*, the possibility to obtain information and the possibility to share this knowledge by writing about it in newspaper articles are very dif-

ferent issues as the publication often implies a threat for the detective. Verónica's investigations go well beyond the mere research of an article, as she is strongly dedicated to expose larger structures of exploitation and organized crime. She appears as a very strong and fearless investigating figure, but she increasingly faces dangerous situations: At some point, contract killers are hired to get her out of the way. While she manages to get away by hitting them with her car, two of the contract killers continue to chase her in the second novel of the series, *Las extranjerías* (2014).

In various ways, Verónica is going beyond her limits and faces extreme situations in *La fragilidad de los cuerpos*: She starts an affair with an informant, the married train conductor Lucio. Their relationship not only gets ever more passionate but also violent and both injure each other physically. Verónica recounts for example that she saw in Lucio “una violencia que [...] le resultaba tan perturbadora como atractiva” (Olguín 2012: 75). While the investigation and her relation with Lucio get out of Verónica's hands, she also has sex with a priest, Padre Pedro, and a random man she meets in a bar. The latter thinks she is a prostitute and pay her afterwards (ib.: 250; 332). These escapades reflect her restless and emotional fragile state of mind as she becomes aware of the complexity of the case. This complexity and the accumulation of problems Verónica is confronted with the fast pace and suspense of the narration. Her investigation is not without loss: Lucio dies and other persons get injured. Eventually, she manages to get some people involved in the train competitions arrested and can finally write her articles about the case. Nonetheless, she has to make a deal with García: She agrees not to mention him in her articles which suggests that even a strong and fearless journalist like her has to back down to organized crime. Her articles are thus rather the outcome of a negotiation. Nonetheless, she passes on all her information about García to Rodolfo Corso which insinuates that he might not get away for long.

## 4.2.5 The Role of Journalist and the Media

Besides the journalists and writers we have been discussed in detail for novels where they play a continuous and important role as investigators, the media and their representatives occupy important roles in a variety of further novels. I will thus briefly refer to some examples in this subchapter before drawing conclusions about the heterogeneous roles and use of journalists in the corpus novels. The figures for example give further insights why journalists are particularly prominent and present figures in Indian and Latin American crime fiction alike.

### 4.2.5.1 False Journalists and Parallel Investigators

In Elizabeth Subercaseaux' *La última noche que soñé con Julia* (2012), a journalist is asked to investigate on behalf of a disappeared woman and carries out a parallel investigation in addition to the police. Pastor Orrego, head of an influential family, requests the journalist Ignacio Alberti to look into the sudden disappearance of his son Luciano's new wife, Julia. Since Pastor is worried that her disappearance might connect to another family secret that has been hidden so far, he does not want to get the police involved immediately. He thus contacts Ignacio, a childhood friend of Luciano's, behind his son's back. He offers Ignacio 50.000 US-Dollar – not to find Julia but to prove that there is no connection between both incidents (Subercaseaux 2012: 40). Ignacio agrees to help him but refuses to accept any money for it as he feels that this is against his principles and would limit his freedom to investigate (ib.: 41). Ignacio thus starts to question the family as well as Julia's ex-husband Jonás Silva whom Ignacio knows from university, but he does not really find any leads. Neither does Inspector González, who is later also informed about the disappearance. The plot largely unfolds itself when the public comes to know about the case. At some point, a newspaper article about Julia's disappearance comes out and Ignacio's editor comes to know that Ignacio had first-hand information about the case but refrained from writing about it. Therefore, he dismisses him immediately (ib.: 160; 176). Pastor uses his influences to talk to the newspaper's owner about the director's inappropriate behavior and feels sorry that Ignacio has to face dire consequences for helping him.

In contrast to the detective investigators portrayed in the last chapters, Ignacio does not get involved in the investigation out of his own will nor does he have the ambition to reveal the lawlessness of an elite section of society or deeper structures of organized crime. Instead, he is hired by an old patriarch who thinks that money can buy everything. While trying to do his best, Ignacio is caught between two fronts: He wishes to help his friend while his editor expects him to use his knowledge for an article. The narrative is non-chronological and recounted by a third person narrator with variable internal focalization who has access to the thoughts of various protagonists. Ignacio's investigation is juxtaposed by a multitude of other accounts, including for example Julia's account of her meeting with Luciano and Jonás memories of their marriage falling apart. The involvement of Ignacio therefore is overall a means to give further insights into their relationship. As an old friend, he is entrusted with much more information than the police inspector. While Julia's body is eventually found buried in her own garden, neither Ignacio nor the police are able to come up with any leads to the murderer. Like in Swarup's novel *Six suspects*, the culprit only reveals himself to the reader. In this case, it is Julia's former husband whom nobody considers a suspect. However, the investigation rather focuses on the tensions in relationships in contemporary Chile rather than on the murder investigation.

While many journalists assume the role of an amateur or professional investigator, it is sometimes also the other way round: Professional investigators use the cover of being a journalist to carry out their investigations without stirring up too much attention. Two examples – which were already brought up in Chapter 4.1 – are Ocampo's unnamed detective in *Cobayos criollos* and Bhattacharyya's detective Reema Ray. In both cases, however, the detectives quickly raise suspicion: In the case of Reema Ray, the police consider her a suspect in the murder case of the spice trader after she is repeatedly seen at the crime scene and asks questions which are at odds with her part-time profession as a food writer (Bhattacharyya 2012: 235). Also the unnamed detective is told that she does not act like a detective and often forgets about her fake identity (Ocampo 2015: 102). This sug-

gests that she does not play her role convincingly. It is furthermore interesting that the detective refers to blogs in which random bloggers exchange their theories about the murder as a source of information (ib.: 75). While these blogs – which she considers as “un depósito infinito de agresiones” (ib.: 177) – do not help her much to advance her investigation, it is nonetheless significant that they considered a source of information. Isabel Allende’s crime fiction novel *Ripper. A Novel* (2014) – which is not part of this corpus – goes in a similar direction as it includes a group of teenagers who help to advance the investigation of a serial murder case via an online game.

#### 4.2.5.2 Media Involvement in Crime Investigations

In other novels, the media – print as well as online media – are as the only effective crime prosecutors as the police is unable or unwilling to perform its duties. In Desai’s *Witness the Night*, detective Simran is only able to exert pressure on the police because she has joined forces with Gumrit, a journalist. He threatens to give Durga’s diaries to the media and the police is thus willing to let the suspect Durga go to avoid that (Desai 2010: 278). Recordings and (social) media also play a decisive role in incriminating a politician in Desai’s *The Sea of Innocence* as will be further laid out in Chapter 5.4.3., as well as Hall’s *The Case of the Love Commandos*.

In Anita Nair’s *Chain of Custody*, the police eventually rely on a similar strategy: Inspector Gowda finds his hands tied when an innocent man makes a false confession to protect his powerful boss. Gowda knows that the actual criminal is a politician’s henchman but cannot hold him accountable. Gowda’s team is very disillusioned after this case. Gowda suggests that “[t]here are more ways to skin a cat than one” and some police officers decide to contact a crime reporter of a Kannada language<sup>82</sup> newspaper to share their information about the criminal activities in which the henchman is involved (Nair 2016: 308–309). This is an interesting solution as it actually suggests that the media has

82 Kannada is a Dravidian language that is mainly spoken in the state of Karnataka, of which Bangalore – officially called Bengaluru since 2006, is the state capital.

more possibilities than the police: While the police cannot hold the henchman accountable due to the lack of evidence, the media is not confronted with such obstacles.

While this is an advantage in Nair's novel, the sensationalist character of many newspapers is highlighted in various others. CK Meena's *Dreams for the Dying* provides a case in point here. The narrative includes articles from a local tabloid in Chennai which gives all details about Uma's murder without respecting her privacy or the ongoing investigation. One article highlights for example that

[b]y day she was an ordinary insurance company employee, by night she was a tempting mistress. Uma Shashidharan is from hot-hot Kerala and perhaps the Madras weather was too cool for her so she decided to spice up her life. This Malayali lady who is in her tempestuous thirties has been living in Sunrise Apartments on Subhashini Street with a rascal who teaches in S.T. College. (Meena 2008: 108)

Interestingly, it is the contract killer here who buys various newspapers to see if he has "made it to the front page" (ib.: 107). These articles are thus a kind of reward for him. He also compares the local tabloid to English language newspapers which report about the murder later and leave out names and details. Ironically, it is also a picture in a newspaper that leads to Uma's murder in the end: Uma had an affair with a married man (Bharat) whose wife (Jyothi) spotted a picture of both of them on a party in a newspaper (ib.: 173). She then hires a contract killer to get rid of Uma. She met the contract killer in her TV show: Jyothi is a TV presenter and invited him to her show to compete with a rival channel who managed to get a rape victim on screen. While Jyothi is mainly interested in "getting juicy footage with vast viewership potential" (ib.: 199), she receives harsh criticism for offering a criminal a stage for publicity (ib.: 194). It is particularly the police who are "unhappy about the media hyping the underworld" (ib.: 200). Meena's novel thereby addresses the problem of sensationalist media who cross ethic and legal boundaries to improve their viewership quota.

In other cases, the media also increase pressure on the police: In Mario Valdivia's *Un crimen de barrio alto*, police investigator Óscar Morante and his team are highly dedicated to solve the murder of Clarisa de Landa in Santiago. In spite of their meticulous work, the police struggle to find the culprit and has to face harsh criticism from the media: "La prensa parece detectar el estado de inmovilidad de la policía desata una avalancha de reportajes sobre el crimen de Clarisa de Landa" (Valdivia 2015: 236). The media exploit this situation by constantly reporting about it. They stir up fears and thereby increase the pressure on the police to solve the crime as soon as possible (ib.: 237). The fact that the victim was a member of Santiago's upper class is frequently pointed out to highlight the danger which common citizens are exposed to (ib.: 237). In general, in this novel, it is a love-hate-relationship that characterizes the relation between the police and the media:

En la fuerza se aprende rápidamente lo importante que es contar con amigos periodistas. A través de ellos se consiguen pequeños favores, algo de figuración pública, si se quiere, y a veces movidas que pueden ser importantes para las investigaciones. (Valdivia 2015: 177)

Both sides usually benefit each other and cooperate. However, Morante is personally attacked by the media during the investigation and thus it is not surprising that Morante avoids to give information about the case to the media (ib.: 86). He even thinks about quitting his job as he does not feel ready to face this kind of pressure but rather wants to focus on the investigation (ib.: 88).

Also in Hall's *The Case of the Love Commandos*, the media is rather obstructing the case that detective Vish Puri investigates. He is not familiar with the city of Lucknow in which the investigation is set and has trouble to find a neutral informant. As the narrator points out, "[m]ost Indian hacks wouldn't have known how to spell 'impartiality', let alone define the word. The majority were on the payrolls of politicians and bureaucrats" (Hall 2014: 92). Eventually, Puri gets in touch with a local journalist, whom he considers the most trustworthy person around (ib.: 89). In exchange, Puri provides him with informa-

tion for an article and informs him that his opponent detective has also been hired for the same case. Eventually, articles about both detectives are published in local newspapers and henceforth, their covers are blown and they can no longer investigate secretly (ib.: 105). In other situations, media reports about detectives are also a form of reward for a successful investigation. Vish Puri for example is looking forward to seeing an interview on television which he gave after solving a jewelry heist – only to discover that they just talk about his mother who solved the temple robbery (ib.: 282–283).

In other cases, media reports also provide a source of information for the detectives themselves or serve as mouthpieces to underline the dimensions of the crime investigated. This is particularly the case for María Inés Krimer's Ruth Epelbaum series. While investigating a case, Ruth is also consistently confronted with the same topic in the media: In *Sangre Fashion*, for example, Ruth reads a lot about the fashion business. She consults articles about the bad working conditions under which branded clothes are produced in Bangladesh, but also in Argentinean sweatshops (Krimer 2015: 79). In *Sangre kosher*, it is women trafficking and prostitution that come up repeatedly in newspaper and radio reports (Krimer 2010: 29; 68; 108). Reports about drug trafficking play a role in Krimer's *Siliconas express* and point at Argentina as a transit hub for international drug smuggling (Krimer 2013: 93). These reports and articles underline the urgency of the cases Ruth investigates, but also show that she investigates individual cases that are imbedded in structural violence and organized crime. The plastic surgeon Vidal which Ruth suspects to be involved in drug smuggling almost haunts her as he repeatedly appears in television shows (ib.: 15; 173). His career is hardly affected by Ruth's revelation of his involvement in drug trafficking: The reports about him continue to be shown on television and he can arrange a journey to Switzerland (ib.: 173). In other cases, the criminals have a direct influence on the media: In Anita Nair's *Cut Like Wound*, Anna, the head of a powerful construction company, has the power to censor the media. The narrator recounts an incident when a journalist wrote about his humble background. Before the article came out, Anna bought the entire

print run and had the journalist punished. As the narrator recounts, the journalist met with an accident and was never able to walk again (Nair 2012: 101).

Taken together, these various examples show without doubt that journalists and the media in general are important figures and topics in Indian and Latin American crime fiction novels. The amount of journalist-investigators is striking and continues to rise. As has been shown, they are used for a variety of reasons that often relate to the claim for a realistic investigation in crime fiction novels. As the police is not to be trusted in various novels such as Piñeiro's *Betibú* or Swarup's *Six Suspects*, the journalist appears as a viable alternative. Drawing back to Worthington's observations discussed in Chapter 4.2, the fact that a journalist is already involved in investigative work or research facilitates his or her access to information and also serves as a cover to investigate without raising much suspicion. It is thus not surprising that also professional investigators use the profession as a cover – though they often do not play this role convincingly. The protagonists in the novels discussed also correspond to the general trend for a diversification of investigators to keep up the interest in the genre – of which Olguín's female Jewish journalist is a prime example. The relation between police and journalist or the media vary widely and are not just marked by mistrust: In several novels, the journalists also team up with the police as for example in Subercaseaux' *La última noche que soñé con Julia* or Piglia's *Blanco nocturno*. The diverse roles of the police will be further elaborated on in 4.3. Overall, it seems that journalists often investigate out of their own motivation while police officers are involved in racketeering. Their employment is thus compatible with many crime fiction novelists' social criticism approach.

As I pointed out in this subchapter, the media furthermore have a variety of different functions and their reputation varies as well: Corrupt journalists with bad intentions are a rare exception in these novels, though in some of the cases, they are pressurized by those in power or annoyed by other sensation-seeking journalists. Often, the media take up a role as a fourth estate and are actively engaged in solving crimes.

Media reports as well as more participatory forms of social media are in many novels the only way to pressurize state authorities to act upon crime and injustice. In others, they provide a frame and context for the investigation as the urgency and presence of the specific crime is repeatedly discussed in newspapers and on TV. All these instances point at the mediatization of urban middle class society in the Global South where media are omnipresent and point at the dark sides of globalization practices while they stand in a complex and twisted relationship with state authorities.

#### 4.2.6 Conclusion: Journalists and the Media in Indian and Latin American Crime Fiction

These various examples show without doubt that journalists are important figures and the media a key concern in various Indian and Latin American crime fiction novels. This certainly reflects the role of the media in the Global South today which often function as a fourth estate or upholders of morality and social justice while other authorities fail to fulfill this role or are even actively engaged in crimes. The amount of journalist-investigators in crime fiction novels is on the rise. This partly relates to earlier traditions as in the case of Argentina, but also connects to a global phenomenon, as I have pointed out in the introduction of this subchapter. While ever more journalists are employed as detectives, there has been relatively little sustained research on this phenomenon so far and the examination of the journalist figures and the role of the media in Indian and Latin American crime fiction seeks to add to this field of research.

The analysis of journalists in the corpus novels has shown that they are employed for a variety of reasons. They often relate to the claim for a realistic investigation in crime fiction: As the police is often not considered trustworthy, the journalist appears as a viable alternative in novels like Piñeiro's *Betibú* or Swarup's *Six Suspects*. This is not surprising since a journalist to some extent investigates 'outside the system' and is at the same time familiar with analytical work and research. In accordance with Heather Worthington's observation (2011: 31), the journal-

ists portrayed are already involved in investigative work or research facilitates that provide them access to information and also serve as a cover to investigate without raising much suspicion. Corrupt journalists with bad intentions are a rare exception in these novels and overall, journalists enjoy a good reputation and partly investigate out of their own motivation whereas the police are often involved in racketeering. It is thus not surprising that also professional investigators use this profession as a cover – though they often fail to play the role convincingly, as has been shown in this subchapter (Ocampo, Bhattacharyya). Their investigation methods differ widely and often complement one another in their approach: While some journalists rely widely on traditional methods like contacts or archives, online research is similarly an important tool, which is particularly brought up in Piñeiro's novel. The protagonists in the novels discussed correspond to the general trend for a diversification of investigating figures to keep up the interest in the genre by employing special figures like Olguín's female Jewish journalist Verónica Rosenthal.

Compared to trained investigators, journalists are in a relatively vulnerable position and unprotected from acts of revenge by those they implicate with criminal activities. In some of the cases, they are pressurized by those in power or even experience physical violence (Chandra, Nair). Therefore, they partly have to censor themselves out of fear for repercussions. This topic is openly discussed in Nurit's last column in *Betibú*, where she points out that the truth is sometimes withheld from the reader. That journalists often have to resort to fictionalization in the absence of evidence and information is also brought up and challenges the objectivity of journalism. The journalist's possibility to report objectively and reveal the truth is questioned in this context: Novels point at the difficult situation of journalists in a complex power structure: Even if they can publish an article, it might not necessarily have an effect on the criminal prosecution of those in power. Via their investigations, the journalists can in principle obtain knowledge and power, but in various cases like Piglia's *Blanco nocturno* or Swarup's *Six Suspects*, the journalist's revelations have little effect on the prosecution of the respective crime. The investigative

journalist in Swarup's novel thus takes a drastic step: He sees murder as the only way to punish the criminal politician's son. Furthermore, the journalist-detectives are also dependent on their job and income and therefore need to follow their editors' instructions. Journalists who fail to comply like Brena in Piñeiro's *Betibú* or Ignacio in Subercaseaux' novel, have to face dire consequences. The discrepancy between the journalist's desires or initial motivation and actual media practices in reality is addressed in various novels and journalists generally have to bow to this reality.

The sensationalism of the media and the constant media presence is a problem that comes up in the novels and has implications for the investigation in various cases (Meena; Valdivia; Swarup). In other cases, media reports provide a frame and context for the investigation and the respective crime repeatedly comes up in newspaper reports and on TV. These reports underline the urgency of the problem or provide background information on topics like human trafficking (Krimmer). In various novels, social media appear as a less censored and more participatory way to spread information and to augment the pressure on authorities to act upon crime and injustice. This phenomenon plays a role in Piñeiro's novel or Desai's *Sea of Innocence* and closely relates to an actual trend in the use of social media to enforce crime prosecution.

The relation between police and journalists or the media in general vary widely and are not just marked by mistrust but also by collaboration: In several novels, journalists team up with police investigators as for example in Subercaseaux' *La última noche que soñé con Julia* or Piglia's *Blanco nocturno*. This teaming up remains popular as Jerry Pinto's *Murder in Mahim* (2017) shows, in which the retired journalist Peter supports the police inspector Jende in his investigations. Since the former is not an official member of the police force, he can interrogate witnesses on some pretext and use his contacts and experience as a journalist.

### 4.3 The Emergence of the Police Investigator and the Role of the Police

The widespread mistrust in the police has usually been quoted as a reason for the lack of crime fiction novels – or more precisely police procedurals – in India and Latin America. The situation has changed significantly with the emergence of individual novels and series that depict a police investigator or a team of police inspectors. Various examples of such figures will be scrutinized in this Chapter which include Anita Nair's Inspector Gowda, Vikram Chandra's Sartaj Singh, Salil Desai's Inspector Saralkar and Inspector Motkar and Mario Valdivia's Inspector Óscar Morante. Furthermore, the role of the police in various other works that do not employ an inspector as a main investigator will be briefly addressed. These examples include the police team that supports the retired police officer Lalli in Kalpana Swaminathan's series or the untrustworthy police officers that play a role in Claudia Piñeiro's or Sergio Olguín's novels.

The figure of the police detective is increasingly popular in 21<sup>st</sup> century crime fiction as an adequate figure to capture society's anxieties in the context of phenomena like urbanization or globalization (Worthington 2011: 20). The idea of realism or credibility is an important criterion here as the police investigations add to the realistic features required by the reader (ib.: 72). Worthington contrasts the police investigator with the amateur who is losing ground in her opinion:

The amateur investigator working alone is no longer viable in an age when the police can call on cutting-edge science, information technology, surveillance systems, mass communications and where they have access to global networks of information on crime and criminality. (ib.: 72)

Also Charles Brownson has pointed at the difficulty of the amateur detective to get access to crime scenes and clues (2014: 143). These considerations, however, largely draw back on the situation in Europe and the US rather than in the Global South. The police's omnipresence in fictional works and crime series on television, however, has

an impact worldwide on the imagination of police procedures and methodologies to investigate (ib.: 142). The ‘CSI effect’, elaborated on in Chapter 2.3.4 relates to the phenomenon that “the public expects police investigations and forensic procedures to mirror those observed in fictional or factual broadcasting” (Lee/McGovern 2014: 148). The same is the case for crime fiction novels’ claim to realistically depict police investigations, while characteristics such as “the impossible solve-rates customary in the genre as a whole, the highly truncated timelines [or], the fantasy of a quick resolution” depart from actual police work (Zi-Ling 2015: 8).

The presence of the police investigator in crime fiction has also been subject to change which are often linked to aspects like credibility and realism. The emergence of crime fiction as a “coherent genre” occurred in the 19<sup>th</sup> century along with the emergence of the police (Worthington 2011: 67). The establishment of the Metropolitan Police Detective force in the UK from the 1830s onwards is connects to new forms of investigation and punishment. As studied by Michel Foucault, for example, corporal torture and punishment were replaced with new methods of conviction (scientific reasoning and clues) and confinement (Foucault 1977). Narratives about the police came up shortly after and also had ideological purposes, i.e. to underline the effectiveness of the police and to deter criminals (Worthington 2011: 67). John Scaggs has pointed out that “the modern police work in 19<sup>th</sup> century [was] founded on the faith in knowledge, science and reason” (2005: 18), which also corresponds to the methodological approach of fictional detectives like Sherlock Holmes.

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, the fictional police investigator was replaced by private investigators and moreover, the police were often depicted in a negative light and incapable of solving a crime (Worthington 2011: 20). Heather Worthington sees class differences as one of the reasons for this development: The police did not enjoy a good reputation among the higher class while a private investigator like Sherlock Holmes made a better impression (ib.: 67). At the same time, this imbalance also empathized the detective’s intellectual supe-

rriority: The police's ineffectiveness or internal problems such as police corruption legitimized the activity of an external investigator. As part of the bourgeoisie, he had better access to information than lower class police officers and was able to investigate due to his financial independence (Keitel 1998: 71–72). With the growing professionalization of the police, however, their presence in crime fiction also grew. Early police procedurals were published in the 1920s in the US (ib.: 67). Before its emergence as a subgenre, hard-boiled novels pathed the way by focusing on what an author considered a realistic representation of crime and crime fighting, which is also the guiding principle of the police procedural (ib.: 145). The police procedural eventually takes up the role as the “public eye” that (supposedly) monitors and safeguards society (Scaggs 2005: 8). In contrast to extraordinary detectives like Holmes, the protagonists of police procedurals solve crimes by practical methods and standard procedures while teamwork is also an important aspect of the mode of investigation. Authors traditionally focus on the realistic representation of police activities and include administrative tasks or the investigations of various crimes (Segal 2010: 183–184). Nonetheless, the idea of a realistic representation needs to be critically assessed as the subgenre obviously also relies on literary devices such as condensation or dramatization. Social and political problems in society as well as internal grievances are nonetheless frequently addressed in police procedurals (Worthington 2011: 150). Especially in postcolonial crime fiction, police investigators are often doomed to fail. The point raised in these works is often the inadequacy of foreign (Western) methods of investigation that are not suitable in a different society and knowledge system (Knepper 2007: 1437). In other cases, novels try to give a more differentiated view of the police force, question good-bad oppositions altogether and point at the complex structures in which the police inspectors are investigating.

How the image of the police in crime fiction depends on their reputation in reality has been shown by Shelley Godsland in her study of Spanish crime fiction. She points out that the police were only portrayed positively after Spain's transition to democracy (Godsland 2007: 35). The beginning of a similar development could also be

detected in Chile as various crime fiction novels that focus on a police investigator have been published in recent years along with initiatives such as the annual writing competition of the Chilean Investigations Police (see Chapter 3.2.4). In Argentina, by contrast, police investigators are more difficult to find. Furthermore, it has often been pointed out that the police procedural has been “more resistant to female appropriation” (Scaggs 2005: 102). While fictional female police detectives often address the difficulties they are facing as a woman in the predominantly male police force, private investigators such as Sue Grafton’s detective Kinsey Millhone often rejected a career in the police for the same reason and preferred to work alone (Worthington 2011: 71). However, also the investigators of police procedurals are increasingly diverse in terms of for example their sexual orientation or racial background. The reason for the great popularity of the subgenre is usually not seen in the depiction of standard police procedures, but in the depiction of the respective police detectives. The ‘humanization’ of the investigator(s) is an important aspect here as specific characteristics or the private life of an investigator or the dynamics between two investigators are usually at the center of specific crime fiction series (ib.: 150). Along with that, specialized figures have emerged such as the psychological profiler or the forensic pathologist (Scaggs 2005: 101). As Mariana Valverde has pointed out, the figure of the detective partly becomes redundant as laboratory specialists in series like “CSI: Crime Scene Investigation” suggest that physical evidence is sufficient to reconstruct the events of the crime and to identify the culprit (2010: 321). These investigators certainly do justice to modern investigation methods and are required to address specific crimes, but also contribute to the diversification of the genre as a means to generate reader interest.

#### 4.3.1 Anita Nair’s Inspector Gowda

The depiction of a particular police investigator and the dynamic with colleagues and superiors are also at the center of several Indian crime fiction novels, most notably maybe Anita Nair’s character Inspector Gowda and Vikram Chandra’s Sartaj Singh. Both investigators are

confronted with cases that address problems such as organized crime, terrorism, human trafficking and the discrimination of India's transgender population, but also their private lives and state of mind are portrayed in detail.

Anita Nair has so far published two crime fiction novels, *Cut Like Wound* (2012) and *Chain of Custody* (2016) in which Inspector Borei Gowda investigates in present day Bangalore. The importance of Gowda as the central protagonist of the series stands out in the reviews of Nair's novels which for example describe him as "a character around whom a series is built, [...] the linchpin that holds this book together" (Hrishikesh 2016). The narrator of both novels is an extradiegetic third-person narrator with variable internal focalization who thus alternates between insights into Gowda's perspective and thought and other protagonists' views – which thereby also give an external perception of Gowda.

Gowda is a middle aged police investigator and while he enjoys a good reputation in the police, he appears rather disillusioned and frustrated. It is general knowledge that Gowda had once managed to significantly improve the situation in a specific jurisdiction after that.<sup>83</sup> However, he then arrested a man who was related to a minister and an underworld don and Gowda was transferred to the traffic desk: "From a star officer he had been condemned to a posting where he was little more than a clerk" (ib.: 31). Using Kannada<sup>84</sup> vocabulary, another police officer comments that "[t]he huli was reduced to an ili" (ib.: 34): the tiger became a mouse – which suggests that the possibilities of the police to fight crime are limited by the influences of those in power.

83 "The crime rate had fallen drastically. Known defaulters were kept under surveillance. A murder case had been solved" (Nair 2012: 31).

84 As already mentioned before, Kannada is a Dravidian language that is mainly spoken in the state of Karnataka, of which Bangalore – officially called Bengaluru since 2006, is the state capital. The presence of various languages is repeatedly commented on in the novels. Expressions in Kannada and Urdu are used, but not translated. Languages skills are also connected to education, but do not necessarily allow conclusion about someone's status and wealth. It is for example pointed out that the rich real estate developer from a humble background speaks "only Kannada, Tamil and Dakhani Urdu", while his younger brother to the surprise of the police also speaks English (Nair 2012: 272).

In both novels, Gowda works at Neelgubbi police station and investigates every crime seriously – unlike his superior, the Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Vidyaprasad. The latter reprimands Gowda for giving importance to “b or c cases” and points out that this has a negative impact on his career (ib.: 194). When Gowda starts to look into the murder of a street vendor, the ACP tells him clearly that “[t]here’s no need to waste the department’s time or money on scum. [...] That lowlife is of no consequence, alive or dead” (ib.: 61). Gowda is extremely frustrated that these kind of crimes “stay in the pending file for months, years, and then [are] forgotten” (ib.: 23). When Gowda talks to Vidyaprasad about his theory that a serial killer might be responsible for various dead bodies, the ACP immediately contradicts this theory claiming that there are no serial killers in India (ib.: 118). The ACP himself focuses on his connections to those with money and power and for example accepts a trip abroad paid by a real estate developer (ib.: 120). Gowda, however, takes his revenge by informing the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Sainuddin Mirza about Vidyaprasad’s trip who is thus asked to cancel it and Gowda also leaves a scratch on his new car (ib.: 200; 304).

In spite of his low rank, Gowda is famous for his investigation skills. He for example immediately sees a connection between various murders although he is in the dark about a motive or the murder weapon used (ib.: 178). His colleagues say that Gowda has a “super sakaath sense”, a sixth sense that “makes him think differently” (ib.: 189; 322). His intuition and observation skills are contrasted by reports of a profiler from the UK. When Gowda reads the profiler’s report, realizes that

[in] a strange way, all he had done was arrive at the same conclusion that Gowda had, but he had done so in a cohesive fashion, attributing why and wherefores and making it seem much more plausible. (Nair 2012: 298)

While the Indian police team does apparently not have a profiler, it is interesting that while the profiler’s approach may exhibit an easier traceability and better wording, but in the end they come to the same

conclusion. It is thus not suggested that the Briton's mode of investigation is superior to Gowda's or that there is a competition between different validation systems as in many postcolonial crime fiction novels. Instead, Gowda is able to keep up with his more intuitive mode of reasoning.

His reputation precedes Gowda: The young Sub-Inspector (SI) Santosh for example specifically requests to work with Gowda. Santosh also mentions that they are from the same caste which he sees as an allegiance while Gowda is annoyed by any kind of references to caste (ib.: 26; Nair 2016: 118). Compared to Gowda, young officers like Santosh are much more idealistic and motivated. When Gowda asks him why he joined the police, Santosh for example replies that “[he] wanted to do something meaningful” instead of “[being] stuck in a job doing the same thing day after day” (Nair 2012: 27). The same accounts for Ratna, a female assistant sub-inspector who joins the all-male team in the *Chain of Custody*, as discussed in 4.1.8.

Gowda has lost this kind of motivation and thinks that Santosh “would discover for himself the slimy stench of criminal investigation” (Nair 2012: 25) and in the meanwhile teaches him that real police investigations differ from the procedures he learnt during his training. As an experienced investigator, Gowda knows when not to follow the protocol and for example prefers to question witnesses at home than summoning them to the police station (ib.: 48). He is aware of the bad reputation of the police: “No one likes to enter a police station. Witnesses tend to clam up, sometimes even go hostile” (ib.: 48). While Gowda is initially hard on Santosh, he later has a guilty conscience when Santosh is almost killed in the course of the investigation (ib.: 353). In spite of all his endeavors, Gowda is nonetheless rather selfless and not interested in taking credit for his achievements. When a human trafficker is arrested because of his investigation, Gowda just plays down the issue “Does it matter who gets the credit as long as we manage to apprehend the criminal?” He does not even bother to tell his critical boss about his involvement in the arrest (Nair 2016: 208).

Gowda also notices the rise of crime in accordance with the rapid urbanization of Bangalore. As will be further discussed in Chapter 5.4.3, these developments have changed the nature of crimes that the police is regularly confronted with:

Where once the police were called in to settle a squabble between two neighbours about a wandering cow or solve a petty burglary, large-scale gambling, extortion, drugs and prostitution were the new order of crime that Gowda and his station had to contend with. (Nair 2016: 163)

Gowda resembles more a hard-boiled detective than one dedicated to bureaucratic administration and paperwork. Santosh for example is surprised that Gowda is not moved by seeing a dead body with third-degree burns, while he himself has to vomit (Nair 2012: 35). Furthermore, Gowda has to suffer physically as he is pushed off the street by a car when riding his motorbike and then beaten up by henchmen of the suspicious real estate developer Anna (ib.: 205). Compared to powerful people like Anna, Gowda feels like a loser: “It seemed to him that they knew precisely how to work the system to their advantage. They knew which holes to push and which knots to untie so the system works for their benefit alone” (ib.: 274). As a police officer, he has to fight the system at various fronts at a time and is particularly hampered by internal obstacles such as his boss.

That this bad reputation of the police is not unfounded shows a scene in which an informant is interrogated by two anonymous police officers who use torture and force the suspect to eat a portion of biryani every hour until he breaks and talks. Afterwards, they tell him that he might have eaten “bow bow biryani” – biryani with dog meat (ib.: 282–286). After this experience, the interrogated concludes that between gang leaders and the police the only differences are the uniform and pension schemes (ib.: 277).

In spite of his special skills, it is frequently emphasized that Gowda is not at the height of his glory. When Santosh describes Gowda at the first meeting, he points out that “Borei Gowda must have been a strik-

ing figure. Now it seemed as if the air had gone out of him and his body had crumpled to its current stance of poor muscle tone and wilted ideals” (ib.: 25). Besides the criticism from his boss, who underlines that that “[an] out-of-shape officer gives the service a bad name” (ib.: 195), even his friend Stanley harshly criticizes him:

You are turning into a caricature of a man. A middle-aged drunk officer so no one realizes that he is a middle-aged, useless, son-of-a-bitch drunk. (ib.: 250)

Also Gowda himself notices that he is struggling: He is estranged from his wife, who lives in another city with their son Roshan and only comes to Bangalore from time to time. Also with his son, he is not on good terms and suspects him to take drugs. Gowda is unsure how to communicate with his son which the latter interprets as a rejection (ib.: 86). To fight his loneliness, Gowda drinks and smokes heavily (ib.: 17). Gowda likes to ride his motorbike and is so fond of it that he got a tattoo – a wheel with wings – that he keeps secret from his wife (Nair 2012: 39). In *Cut Like Wound*, his early love Urmila gets back in touch with him and both start an affair which he continues also in the second novel. While he is happy with her, he feels “out of place” at her dinner parties and in the upper middle class surroundings that Urmila frequents (ib.: 123; 205). In total, Gowda feels like a “Lousy cop. Lousy father. Lousy husband. Lousy lover” (ib.: 165). While these crises in his private life take up a significant part of the narrative in both novels, Gowda nonetheless foregrounds the investigative works as the clock is ticking in both cases: In *Cut Like Wound*, he tries to stop a serial murderer from committing more crimes and in *Chain of Custody*, he tries to save the daughter of his maid who has fallen victim to human traffickers. Gowda is also forced to rethink his own stereotypes when he is investigating in the milieu of Indian transgender communities who are usually perceived as a nuisance. Nonetheless, he agrees to open a photo exhibition about the community to increase their acceptance in society (ib.: 130). His son also brings the plights of African immigrants in India to Gowda’s attention (ib.: 115–116; 146). Nonetheless, while Gowda’s state of mind does not really

improve during the two investigations, he is eventually able to look at himself in the mirror and appraises himself as “an honest police officer trying to work within the system” (Nair 2016: 309). Gowda is thus, like many police inspectors depicted in these corpus novels, caught up in a middle position between colleagues and superiors. He has to do justice to both and needs to find his own position between moral but also bureaucratic obligations. While superiors are often portrayed as dishonest and uninterested in really prosecuting a crime, the police officer in this middle position is more torn between different struggles. A problematic private life adds to the problems of the protagonist who is usually working at full capacity with the respective crime case(s) he has to pursue. Due to their position in a complex network of power relations, police inspectors like Gowda, and also the Sartaj, the protagonist of Chandra’s *Sacred Games*, who will be scrutinized in the following subchapter, provide interesting figures who observe and reflect on the challenges of ‘Dark India’ like inequality or corruption (see Chapter 3.1.6).

#### 4.3.2 Chandra’s Inspector Sartaj Singh

Vikram Chandra’s police investigator Sartaj Singh, who was already the protagonist of the short story “Kama” in Chandra’s collection *Love and Longing in Bombay* (1997), is in many ways similar to Nair’s protagonist Gowda. Chandra’s monumental novel provides another interesting example of an Indian police procedural that focuses on an extraordinary investigator. Like Nair’s novels, Chandra parts from a perception of the police as unanimously bad and corrupt. Sartaj is, like Gowda, a medium-rank police officer who finds himself caught in a complex network of supportive fellow police officers and others who put obstacles in his way. Besides, a multitude of other actors from politicians to underworld leaders are linked somehow to the network that requires constant negotiations. A strict good-bad dichotomy that is characteristic of traditional crime fiction novels cannot be applied in such a framework.

Sartaj investigates in the heated political climate of Bombay<sup>85</sup> in the 1990s where the Shiv Sena, a right-wing Hindu extremist group thinly veiled as the “Rakshaks” in Chandra’s works, fosters a regionalist and chauvinist political agenda against minorities (see Varma 2004: 66). Sartaj Singh is Sikh – actually “the only Sikh inspector in the whole city” – and therefore a member of a minority community, which is clearly visible due to his turban and his beard (Chandra 2007: 29). Sartaj is not religious but rather saddened by his inability to believe in god – or the Sikh Vaheguru respectively, who “had always been a distant, fuzzy concept, an idea he would have liked to believe in” (ib.: 616). Claire Chambers describes Sartaj as a “doubly marginalized” outsider for being a Sikh police officer in her analysis of the short story “Kama” (2009: 38). This outsider status can hardly be confirmed in *Sacred Games*: It is not suggested that his background has any effect on his investigation except for the fact that he can easily be identified. However, he is as much known for his appearance as for the special cut of his pants of his profile that was once included in a women’s magazine showing the “best-looking Bachelors” in Bombay (Chandra 2007: 30). Sartaj also finds that his father’s reputation precedes him, who was esteemed among the police as well as among criminals for his honesty (ib.: 85; 162). This heritage as well as his position are a mixed blessing for him. Sartaj himself points out that being “Sikh in a department full of Marathas had been an advantage as well as a burden, a marker of his separateness” (ib.: 410). The police force, however, is not as homogeneous as it may seem: one of his colleagues is a Dalit, another one is an OBC<sup>86</sup> (ib.: 15; 517). This shows that

85 This period coincides with the renaming of Bombay into Mumbai in 1995, the year when the Shiv Sena won the elections in Maharashtra. The renaming is seen as a highly controversial move whose goal was only partly to erase colonial history. Many authors and filmmakers continue using the name Bombay as a political statement. So does Chandra, though the novel is anyway partly set in before the renaming. The term used to refer to the Shiv Sena in the novel, the rakshaks, is also explained in the Glossary of *Sacred Games* as a Hindi or Marathi word that translates as “Protector” (2008: 58).

86 Other Backward Classes (OBC) is a collective term used by the Government of India to classify castes which are socially and educationally disadvantaged while Dalit is a term for scheduled castes, often referred to as the untouchables. Both groups profit from special quota regulations that are supposed to give them access to government jobs and fight their exclusion.

the police are a small-scale example of the city of minorities. Similarly, all the protagonists of the novel came to Bombay from somewhere else. In this sense, Chandra projects Bombay as a city of migrants and challenges the decosmopolitanization of the city – to use Arjun Appadurai's term (2000) – which occurred in simultaneity with its emergence as a global city in the 1990s. The representation of Bombay will be discussed more in detail in Chapter 5.4.3, as not only Sartaj but also his opponent, the gangster boss Ganesh Gaitonde are eminent observers of the transformation happening in Bombay. These considerations challenge the idea of a marginalized minority detective who investigates on behalf of his community using special knowledge and/or giving insights into his community which has been emphasized by for example Christian Ed (2001: 2–3). In a cosmopolitan city like Bombay, the minority status loses its function as a special marker of difference or the minority character could be continued *ad absurdum* as everyone is an outsider, immigrant and/or member of some or the other minority.

The crime investigated in 'Kama' is an open-and-shut murder case, nonetheless, Sartaj has to realize that the prosecution of the culprit would be dangerous since he is a member of the Shiv Sena. Sartaj's investigation in *Sacred Games*, by contrast, is much more complex and involves a multitude of cases, most of them connected in some or the other way to the story of the gangster Gaitonde who commits suicide in the second chapter. Sartaj's investigation thus predominantly focusses on how to advance a criminal investigation in such a complex setting. The chapters alternate between Sartaj and the underworld gangster Gaitonde as well as various subplots and inserts. The chapters narrated from Sartaj's perspective use an external third-person narrator with international focalization on Sartaj. Gaitonde's chapters, by contrast, are narrated by a first-person narrator – Gaitonde after committing suicide – who directly addresses Sartaj and retrospectively talks about his life as a gangster.

Sartaj is a middle-aged middle class police inspector who recently got divorced from his wife Megha with whom he was still together in 'Kama' though she was unhappy about his work (Chambers 2009: 38). He thus corresponds to the archetype of the detective loner who is totally absorbed in his work. He frequently drinks alcohol (ib.: 23; 305), but is otherwise not a very extreme character and has a close relation to his mother who was already mentioned in Chapter 4.1.8. Besides several affairs in the past, Sartaj meets Mary in the course of the investigation and starts a relationship with her (Chandra 2007: 213). Sartaj sees himself as an honest person who feels the weight of his father's reputation on him (ib.: 861; 85). He admits that he never accepted bribes when he was married but "after the divorce he had realized how much Megha's money had protected him from the world" (ib.: 23). Now he accepts favors and points out repeatedly that the official budget of the police does not remotely cover their expenses (ib.: 771). While Sartaj is not immune to bribes, he nonetheless gets upset with a woman who offers him 20,000 rupees for an unofficial investigation (ib.: 420). Furthermore, corruption within the police is repeatedly discussed as officers have to pay huge amounts of money to get a certain position – which is thus a kind of investment with returns in prospect. Sartaj's boss Parulkar collects bribes on an entirely different scale and hides his "unofficial earnings" in a Swiss bank account (ib.: 635). Ironically, his contact person Homi Mehta works for the police as well as for the underworld and sees himself as a neutral money manager (ib.: 83). Sartaj, however, suggests that the police need to be careful whom to ask for bribes since especially important persons might know some politician who can get him suspended (ib.: 506). The Hindi saying "paisa phék, tamasha dekh"<sup>87</sup> (ib.: 11) applies to the police and to criminals alike here. Overall, Sartaj is used to this complex power structure and not overly concerned: "Every man or woman you arrested or even touched was part of some web, and you

87 "Paisa phék, tamasha dekh" can be translated as "Throw money, watch the spectacle" (Chandra 2008: 51) and suggests that money can buy everything and everyone. Sacred Games includes a multitude of words and expressions in Hindi, Marathi and other Indian languages which are, as in this example, not italicized, let alone explained in the novel. Nonetheless, an extensive glossary can be accessed via Chandra's website (Chandra 2008).

couldn't spend your professional life worrying about who knew whom" (ib.: 217). The police, however, have their own connections, too. In *Sacred Games*, Sartaj talks to Iffat-bibi, the aunt of a Muslim gang leader, who provides him with information about the abode of a criminal guru. In exchange, however, she wants Sartaj to bring down his boss by staging a scandal since she is convinced that his boss has changed sides and is now cooperating with the right-wing Hindu government (ib.: 792–793). Iffat-bibi is not at all described as a dangerous person:

She was cunning, funny, and had endless stories to tell about apradhis [criminals] and policemen from the past. She offered him little bits of intelligence, rumors and locations and names, and asked for nothing in return but that Sartaj make it easier, if he could, for any of her company's boys who went through his lock-up to meet their families. (ib.: 444)

Their connection thus seems like a win-win situation, but it shines through that she is a very manipulative woman who gets Sartaj to betray his boss. She constantly teases him with comments like "How long will you run Parulkar's little errands? [...] Your promotion is overdue" (ib.: 635). Sartaj's investigation requires permanent negotiations about information, connections and money. He has to balance how many favors he can accept from a criminal like Iffat-bibi, since she will certainly ask him for something in return or cause him troubles. Parulkar is the best example here: While he was always said to be close to a Muslim gangster, he has to align with the government after the Rakshaks come into power and has various gang members killed (ib.: 412). Iffat-bibi thus creates a scandal with the help of Sartaj which brings Parulkar down – and indeed contributes to Sartaj's promotion. After Parulkar commits suicide, Sartaj has a guilty conscience but to his surprise, nobody shows any bad feelings to him about these events. By contrast, he rather feels "renewed respect" from his colleagues (ib.: 878).

It is not surprising that the police do not have a particularly good reputation and Sartaj's inside view gives a multitude of examples that justify this impression. Sartaj himself observes that "Those tales of police bru-

tality collected over many generations. [...] Police were monsters, set aside from everybody else (ib.: 106). He himself is sometimes ashamed of this reputation, for example, when he interrogates Mary, whose sister has recently been killed by Gaitonde. She asks him if he will hit her and break her bones (ib.: 166). Death squads inside the police that kill gang members are repeatedly mentioned in the novel. These 'encounters killings' of criminals, to use the Indian police jargon, are not only widely reported and glorified in the newspapers, but also a lucrative job for shooters who get big rewards as is repeatedly mentioned in the novel (ib.: 11; 411). Via the connections of the police to different gangs, they obtain information about their rivals and carry out these encounters from time to time. Parulkar is nonetheless convinced that police officers "are good men who must be bad to keep the worst men in control" (ib.: 106). Altogether, arrangements and negotiations lead to a fragile balance between the police and criminals, which can be shaken any time by political changes or other events.

In accordance with the characteristics of the police procedural, Sartaj also talks about the general course of investigations, court hearings he has to attend and the amount of paperwork he is confronted with. He for example writes "redundant reports on small burglaries which would [...] never solved" (ib.: 429). Sartaj does not see himself as a shooter; he admits that he killed two people but "just didn't have the fortitude for it, or the courage" to become shooter and also had never got used to violent death (ib.: 238). However, he admits that he also uses inglorious and unfair methods to investigate crime:

Hunting *apradhis* should've meant car chases, sprints through crowded streets, motions and movement and pounding background music. That's what Sartaj wanted but what hunting actually meant was intimidating a woman and an old man in their own home. This was a tried and tested policing technique, to disrupt family life and business until the informant sang, the criminal caved, the innocent confessed. (ib.: 212)

The metareferential comment on the ‘wrong’ depiction of crime in (foreign) TV series that portray crime fighting in such a way is interesting here and a common technique used by many crime fiction writers and will be commented on further in 5.2.3. Sartaj nonetheless also uses other methods than extorting information from the weakest link in the chain. He gets absorbed in a case to an extent that his ex-wife used to complain that he never stopped thinking about work (ib.: 557). He realizes that “solicitousness and care” are better strategies than intimidation and often trusts his instinct even though he has no evidence (ib.: 138; 557). However, he is also very self-critical about his work and confesses to Mary that he is often just groping in the dark:

very often [...] detection is nothing but luck. Mostly it’s like that. You sit around, and something drops into your lap. Then you pretend that you knew what you were doing all along. (ib.: 623)

This is also the case for the investigation into the circumstances of Gaitonde’s suicide that he is assigned to in *Sacred Games*. Sartaj can only advance slowly and has few leads in his extremely cumbersome investigation. As mentioned in the beginning, information is basically a product of negotiation with sources in a complex network or simply a coincidence. Moreover, as Gaitonde was found in a nuclear safe house, the threat of an atomic bomb overshadows the investigation and makes Sartaj worry:

What use was it to be concerned with the everyday matters of blackmail, thievery, murder when this enormous fear billowed overhead? (ib.: 614)

Nonetheless, Sartaj has no choice but to continue investigating all these “everyday matters” as well as the big cases. It turns out that a guru might be involved in the case and Sartaj finally has a breakthrough in the investigation as he remembers a guru in an automatic wheelchair (ib.: 762). The latter has disappeared, but due to his deal with Iffat-bibi, he obtains information about his abode. While the police are unable to find him, it is interestingly here the underworld lady who has better knowledge about the city. Sartaj thus concludes that “[d]etection

made detectives look clever, but often solutions were gifts from fools” (ib.: 644). The solution of the case actually fades in the background due to a variety of reasons: First of all, due to the multitude of secondary plots and parallel crimes that play a role in the novel, the main investigation loses some of its significance, as will be discussed more in detail in Chapter 4.5.2.

As Gaitonde recounts his rise and fall as a gangster boss, both protagonists exhibit surprising similarities: Like Sartaj, Gaitonde has a strong connection with the city of Bombay and is anxious about the possibility that the city might be destroyed by a bomb. Furthermore, he also assumes the role of a detective: Before his death, Gaitonde also tried to locate the disappeared guru. His methods, however, are much more ruthless. With some boys, he goes to one of his ashrams in Chandigarh and asks to see the guru for a donation (ib.: 809). As they are unable to find him, they kill two persons and continue their search. They realize that all ashrams have the same layout and can thus search more strategically (ib.: 812). They also find the direction of a farm close to the Pakistani border in his personal account (ib.: 821). Again, Gaitonde is unable to find the guru, but uses violence to get access to a secret underground complex where he finds a lot of money and bomb-building devices (ib.: 835). After that, he gets a call from the guru who tells him to stop his search and warns him about the bomb. Gaitonde gets increasingly desperate and hides in his nuclear-safe bunker where he commits suicide shortly after.

Overall, *Sacred Games* challenges the role allocation of good and bad characters that often characterizes crime fiction: The constraints and corruption of the police are portrayed along with noble motives of members of the underworld. Both are in multiple ways connected to the political and economic sphere. At the same time criminals like Gaitonde are humanized and given a voice and space to talk for themselves. In the end, Sartaj and Gaitonde have various things in common: While fighting on different sides of the law, both share the same fears and a feeling of loneliness.

### 4.3.3 Salil Desai's Team Saralkar and Motkar

While Borei Gowda and Sartaj Singh are certainly the most striking and complex police investigators in recent Indian crime fiction, various other authors have also come up with interesting crime fiction novels that feature police investigators. Salil Desai for example has so far published three novels featuring by Inspector Saralkar and his assistant Motkar who head the only crime fiction series (at least in English) in India that is set in Pune. Compared to the rather controversial depiction of the police in *Sacred Games*, Desai's novel *Killing Ashish Karve* does not focus on a criticism of the police system, but rather follows the course of the classic British model as described in Chapter 2.3.1.: Both are unraveled by incorruptible and meticulously working police investigators. Saralkar and Motkar focus completely on solving the murder of Ashish Karve; a parallel investigation of various (smaller) cases or the depiction of administrative tasks that often characterize police procedurals are omitted here. They gather clues and interrogate witnesses after Ashish's dead body was found in a car to establish whether he really committed suicide. Various facts suggest an external influence and a first round of questioning reveals that everybody in a closed in-group of Ashish's family members, friends and colleague lies in some way or the other. Saralkar points out that they "are certainly trying to push something under the carpet, and that's the key to Ashish's death" (Desai, Salil 2014: 129). Their mode of investigation leaves no doubt about a teleological course of events: It is suggested that a thorough investigation will certainly lead to the revelation of the truth. The clues include for example forensic reports which establish that Ashish was sedated before his death or an investigation of the hand-writing of a (fake) suicide note (ib.: 86; 98). A car thief who steals Ashish's car with his dead body inside is included in the narrative and initially questioned (ib.: 134). It is known to the reader that he is not the murderer and also the police consider him a red herring (ib.: 98), but he can nonetheless provide them with further clues about the original abode of the car and thereby assists to the necessary revelation of the truth.

Saralkar and Motkar function well as a team and though Motkar is his subordinate and a kind of 'sidekick,' he cannot really be considered a Watson figure: The narrator is first of all a third-person narrator with shifting internal focalization on both investigators as well as on various protagonists. While power imbalances between both protagonists present an important topic, they are not used to underline Saralkar's superiority in some way but rather point at the hierarchies inside the police. Saralkar for example expects Motkar to work on Sundays to solve the case as soon as possible, but Motkar takes the day off to help his son with his math exercises. Saralkar thus shouts at him "You aren't fit to be police officer! You ought to be a clerk in one of those fancy companies that give paternity leave" (ib.: 190). Besides this reference, the private lives of the investigators do not play a role in the story in contrast to most of the novels that have been discussed so far. Eventually, a second murder occurs and Motkar does come to work, but this act of rebellion has an impact on the dynamics between both (ib.: 224). Motkar also disagrees with some of Saralkar's methods, he sees him as "the kind of policeman who struck terror in the hearts of criminals" (ib.: 135). Rather than praising Motkar for his good work, Saralkar makes fun of him and complains for example that

You are getting unbearably efficient, Motkar. Takes the fun out of being a senior officer if I can't pull you up for incompetence from time to time. (ib.: 87)

Their strengths are brainstorming sessions in which they organize the clues gathered and try to approximate the truth. Saralkar for example thinks from a very early stage that the case is a "staged suicide", while Motkar insists on "a solid body of facts" (ib.: 47) to prove it. They discuss all possible scenarios including those who are "a far-fetched but entirely plausible explanation" (ib.: 70), which strongly resonates the idea that the least possible solution usually turns out to be the correct one in classic crime mysteries. They give priority to "[following] the physical clues" over random theories and suggest that "[a]ll information is used to separate the innocent from the guilty" (ib.: 98; 111). However, they long lack any strong leads to incriminate anyone, which

leads Saralkar to the conclusion that it is “as critical to find out why it had been done as to *who* had done it” (ib.: 230; emphasis in original). After they manage to talk to Ashish’s doctor and find out about a disease he suffered from, they are finally able to get closer to the solution. The solution itself is a three-step process. Saralkar and Motkar first confront Ashish’s wife with their theory that she killed her husband. She then she admits that she did it together with her father. As a third step, incriminating clues such as fingerprints and eyewitness accounts are taken to support the confession (ib.: 254–256).

Most of the investigation is not exactly anchored in Pune or India but could be located anywhere, but the conflict out of which the murder motive develops connects to tensions that are very present in Indian society. Ashish was homosexual, but pressured by his mother to get married and could only secretly have relationships with men (ib.: 252). Nonetheless, he has to confess to his wife after he found out that he has HIV. Thus the idea to kill him emerges out of the wife’s frustration to be trapped in this marriage and her fear that their son might also turn out gay if he spends too much time with his father. Together with her father, she killed Ashish as well as another woman who tried to blackmail her and shows no sign of remorse. While she wanted to protect her son from being stigmatized as a child of a homosexual, Saralkar points out the irony that he will now be the child of a murderer for the rest of his life (ib.: 259).

#### 4.3.4 Lalli’s Police Team in Swaminathan’s Series

In Kalpana Swaminathan’s detective Lalli series, Lalli is supported by a large group of helper figures which includes the three police officers Inspector Shukla, Savio D’Sousa, a profiler and Dr. Qureshi, a forensic expert. They are usually the ones who are asked by Lalli to help as the “Last Resort” to solve difficult cases, therefore, there is no competition between official and unofficial investigators here. It is rather teamwork that facilitates the progress of the investigation. In *The Monochrome Madonna*, Lalli observes that “The case is simple enough [...]. What’s proving difficult is evidence” (Swaminathan 2010: 85).

Thus while detective Lalli is a kind of armchair detective in the sense of Miss Marple and can easily solve a case with her combination and deduction skills, she nonetheless requires evidence gathered by the police via post-mortem examinations or the monitoring of suspects to be able to incriminate the culprit. The police have the means to x-ray a box of ashes or to reveal that cyanide was used to poison a victim (Swaminathan 2012: 51; 95). The team usually meets at Lalli's house – and not at the police station – to discuss a case and round up the culprit in the final scene. Police corruption or violence do not play a role in Swaminathan's novels.

The team members are very different characters who add to the dynamic of the novel as Lalli often remains absent. Lalli has a special connection with Savio, whose father was also a police officer, but shot by drug traders when Savio was just eight years old (ib.: 49). As his mother died shortly after that, Lalli suggests that “[his dog] Dom and I were all the family Savio had” (ib.: 87) and she might have brought him up. He still frequents Lalli's house and is now a profiler with a photographic memory (Swaminathan 2010: 124). He gives Sita (Lalli's niece and narrator) some insights into his work as a profiler which is “about looking at the significance of the evidence” (Swaminathan 2012: 118). In contrast to Lalli who relies on deductive skills, Savio insists that he “must stay clear of any suggestion and rely only on crime scene evidence, the MO, signature and staging” (ib.: 119). The identification of the killer's MO, the *modus operandi*, is of huge impact for the further investigation. The team can connect the murder of a woman to a series of murders that started before the millennium. Savio is described as a credulous person who “command[s] a strange kind of loyalty from the more unfashionable kind of rogue and for example has an open ear for listening to the stories of suspects (ib.: 249; 250). He also refrains from arresting the brother of the victim even though the latter does not have a sound alibi. In *The Monochrome Madonna*, Savio gets into a difficult situation when he makes friends with Vinay, a man who is accused of being a schizophrenic serial killer. Even though no bodies have been found, Vinay increasingly believes the accusations against him and gets more and more depressed. Sita observes that “Vinay's suffering, not his

crime, was Savio's primary concern" (Swaminathan 2010: 210) and is thus relieved when Lalli can convict Vinay's wife Sitarā: She fabricated evidence against Vinay and he is actually innocent. Lalli is overall very fond of Savio and concludes that "[h]e trusts the worst. [...] And has yet to be betrayed" (Swaminathan 2012: 249).

Inspector Shukla is a less specialized police investigator whose relationship with Sita is rather tense as he expresses rather conservative opinions. In *The Monochrome Madonna*, he has a bad opinion about Vinay and his wife because the wife is not using the husband's surname (Swaminathan 2010: 14). He is generally critical of the Non-Indian food and beverages which Lalli commonly serves such as *affogato* coffee or chili chocolate (ib.: 131). Compared to the other protagonists, he seems less intelligent or less educated which reflects in his command of English. Emma Dawson Varughese has observed with regard to the figure of Shukla that the use of Indian English also connects to his moral positions and a dichotomy of traditional and modern values and positions (2013: 106). He has a very different attitude to crime and violence, which he sees as omnipresent in society rather than an exceptional event which could be solved with intellectual skills. In contrast to Savio and Lalli, he is for example not interested in the deeper motives of a crime:

Where is mystery in that? [...] You read yesterday's paper, woman slits throat of infant. Today, boy throws child out of train window. Criminals are criminals, no point asking why. (Swaminathan 2012: 175)

Sita is commonly annoyed about Shukla's questions and comments as he always seems to contradict her. When he sees her at a crime scene, he immediately presumes that she tries to step into Lalli's shoes: "You are Lalli's niece and you think, what my aunt can do, I can also do" (ib.: 14). When she serves him food at some point, he for example immediately asks her why she is not married. Sita reacts with sarcasm to his comments "Give a guy something to eat, and he thinks that should be your mission in life" (Swaminathan 2012: 126). Sita gets on significantly better with Dr. Qureshi, usually referred to as Dr. Q., a pathologist

who thinks highly of Sita: “He has such *hope* in me, which like all hopes, is entirely unfounded on fact” (ib.: 93). She repeatedly points out that he always wears white shirts “in defiance of the gore he dabbles in every day” when he examines corpses (Swaminathan 2010: 35). Even though dead corpses are his daily business, the serial murder case makes him feel “sick to the stomach” (ib.: 260). Lalli and Dr. Q. do not get on too well at times – Sita observes that they “argue fiercely most of the time and enjoy their sparring” (ib.: 93) but he nonetheless consoles Lalli when she is deeply affected by the murder series (ib.: 279).

The three police officers are thus very different characters and specialized investigators which have important functions in the novels: They provide Lalli with access to information and sound evidence she is not able to obtain as an ‘armchair detective’. They use state-of-the-art investigation methods including radiography or postmortem examinations. Furthermore, the presence of the police also facilitates the arrest of the culprit in the end. The fact that not only Sita, but also the police are unable to identify the criminal(s), stresses Lalli’s specific skills in a Sherlock-Holmes-like manner: In spite of all their devices and methodology, the police in Swaminathan’s novels depends on Lalli’s extraordinary skills.

#### 4.3.5 Mario Valdivia’s Comisario Óscar Morante

Police officers have long been absent from Chilean crime fiction. The most famous and long-standing Chilean crime fiction series by Roberto Ampuero and Ramón Díaz Eterovic for example include private investigators as well as Marcela Serrano’s novel, whose private investigator Rosa Alvallay does not relate to the police in any way. Valdivia’s inspector Óscar Morante is an interesting novelty and has so far been the protagonist of three novels. Valdivia uses a third person narrative with variable internal focalization, although the focus is largely on Morante. *Un crimen de barrio alto* introduces Morante as the Comisario jefe of a team of police investigators in Santiago. In spite of this higher rank, Morante’s middle class status is frequently underlined and he is similarly struggling to assert himself vis-à-vis the pressure he receives from

his superior referred to as the “gran jefe director” or the fiscal (Valdivia 2015: 11). In *Un crimen de barrio alto*, Morante and his team investigate the murder of the businesswoman Clarisa de Landa, who was killed in her house. The milieu in which they investigate is thus the Chilean upper class and Morante shows his lack of knowledge and disinterest in the financial world in which the victim worked. At some point, however, he laments his “desinterés total que siempre ha sentido por el mundo de los negocios” (ib.: 44). He admits that:

La economía ha sido siempre un oscuro enigma para él. No entiende nada de lo que hablan los economistas, por más que a veces hace grandes esfuerzos por prestarles atención. La verdad es que no le interesa. (ib.: 84)

He is for example highly irritated when searching the crime scene, the victim’s luxurious house (ib.: 11). It is beyond his understanding how much money is required to furnish such a flat and how this quantity of money can be earned legally (ib.: 12). He cannot imagine what he would do with so much money since he is used to his police officer’s salary and does not see many career alternatives for himself besides private security services (ib.: 88). Morante has come to realize that it is no longer the state who holds the power in Chile, but the economy (ib.: 44) and he is very critical about these developments. Morante is a rather nostalgic figure who thinks that “[a]lgo ha perdido Chile con toda su modernidad y su progreso” (ib.: 98). He notes that he misses solidarity and admits that he is a bit patriotic which for him means a pride to listen to the national anthem, military parades, the Andes and above all local people (ib.: 28). Compared to the ordinary middle class, he blames the upper class for “segregarse en un mundo propio inventado, un mundo tan poco chileno” (Valdivia 2015: 28). In this way of thinking, however, he relies on a clear-cut – and highly generalizing – distinction of Chile’s upper class and middle class. At the same time, Morante himself feels lonely after his wife abandoned him for a new man, but apparently was also a loner before that (ib.: 53). He has a hard time coping with the end of his marriage and thus drinks a lot. He is very fond of reading but unable to continue the book he read before

the break-up (ib.: 53). Towards the end of the investigation, however, Morante feels better and starts to go out with a woman he meets during the investigation (ib.: 245).

His attitude, however, also has an impact on his investigation: As Morante is an outsider from the upper-class circles, he has to take a colleague from the Economic Crimes Division to the victim's funeral to identify important persons (ib.: 43). The murder stirs up fears in Chilean society, including the upper class as the murderer has not been caught (ib.: 49). The middle class expresses its fears in the media:

Si algo así le ocurrió a Clarisa de Landa, uno puede imaginar a qué peligro estamos expuestos los ciudadanos comunes y corrientes como tú y yo. (ib.: 237)

Thus, the victim's upper-class background is a big issue here and has various effects on the investigation. It increases the pressure on Morante: He is insulted by the media, as has already been pointed out in Chapter 4.2.5, while the "gran jefe" expects him to solve the case as soon as possible (ib.: 86). On the other hand, his boss also warns him to be careful when dealing with important persons as this could have consequences for him: "Recuerda que se trata de personas poderosas que van a joderme a mí ante cualquier mala decisión suya" (ib.: 22).

Morante does not only find the pressure from the media inappropriate, but also gets annoyed about discriminative views that locate the criminal in the lower classes. One of his colleagues mentions ironically that "Los delincuentes deben pertenecer a las clases bajas [...]. Es lo mejor para todos." (ib.: 150). It is thus not surprising that the maid's nephew, who already has criminal history and disappeared a few years before, is hunted as the primary suspect. This turns out to be a red herring, and as Morante can prove later, he was also wrongly blamed for another attack (ib.: 196).

In general, Morante is a well-respected investigator highly dedicated to his work. Even between him and his boss, there is a clear understanding of their division of competences: “Morante acepta que el fiscal es el jefe; el fiscal acepta que Morante es el que sabe” (ib.: 50). Morante is completely focused on his work: “El comisario vive para su trabajo y lo único que le interesa en serio es resolver un crimen para traer algo de reparación a sus víctimas” (ib.: 84). This cannot hide the fact that he is somewhat disillusioned: Morante is convinced that the police cannot avoid crimes and that there is no possible justice for murder (ib.: 80).

Nonetheless, his reputation and his independent mode of work go against the grain of his superiors (ib.: 49). Morante has his very own method of investigation, which includes him being totally absorbed in his own thoughts. Morante’s nickname is “lechuza” [owl] since he is sometimes staring at some point when he thinks intensely – or as his colleagues call it, when “[él] caza ratones en su cabeza” (ib.: 10). Morante tries to find out as many details as possible about the victim – especially her personal relations – to get a clear picture and focuses on building a good connection to interrogate. He advises his colleagues to treat the victim’s maid “como si fuera la madre de la víctima” (ib.: 29) and makes the journey to Clarisa’s parents outside Santiago to talk to them. After the case is solved, he wants to meet them personally to tell about the details (ib.: 279–280). While he puts an emphasis on personal contact, Morante complains about the amount of paperwork which he has to do regularly (ib.: 52). Like many Latin American investigators, Morante is not fond of using technology for his investigations even though his team is well equipped (ib.: 12). Morante knows well that there is no fixed methodology or clear scientific procedure that can be applied in police investigations for a guaranteed success:

no hay metodologías completas en la investigación policial. El único camino posible consiste en acumular reglas y protocolos por inducción y experiencia más que por razones teóricas. Descubrir una verdad policíaca no tiene nada en común con poner de manifiesto una verdad científica, a lo Galileo o Newton. (ib.: 157)

The investigation of Clarisa's death is especially draining for Morante and his team: In spite of the meticulous work which includes interviews with all of Clarisa's colleagues in the bank, they do not find a lead. Morante discusses this problem in detail as a normal part of an investigation and sums up that "todo se convierte en un aburridor relato de cosas hechas sin resultados aparentes" (ib.: 126). Also Morante himself gets increasingly depressed (ib.: 197). He fears that

el mundo descubra de una buena vez lo que él ha sabido siempre: que es un investigador incompetente y que la fama de policía serio que lo acompaña es completamente inmerecida. (ib.: 197)

Morante is basically aware that an investigation is an arduous process out of which a new lead can emerge at any time (ib.: 126). Due to these interviews, the murder is bit by bit overshadowed by a scandal in the bank: Some employees joined forces and embezzled large amounts of funds. While it is clear that this scandal might be connected to the murder; Morante is unable to produce incriminating evidence against anyone. Eventually, he sets up a trap and is able to identify the murderer. While Morante regains his self-confidence by solving the case, he avoids any kind of praise: "[él] no sabe recibir ni halagos ni gratitud. Se apresura a despedirse antes de que no sepa qué decir" (ib.: 281).

In the Chilean context, Morante is quite a striking figure as police procedurals do not have a long tradition. Valdivia's novel connects in many ways to the characteristics of the police procedural by depicting the tedious process of criminal investigation and a police investigator who has to fight on various fronts at the same time: He is struggling to do justice to his team, his boss and the media while his separation from his wife affects him personally.

### 4.3.6 The Police in Indian and Latin American Crime Fiction

Before adding some concluding comments to sum up the results of this section, I will briefly refer to various novels in which the police inspectors are not the main investigators, but nonetheless play a significant role.

In Piñeiro's novel *Betibú* it is always the same police officer, Comisario Venturini, who appears at every crime scene – even if crimes did not occur in his jurisdiction. Venturini himself calls Brena after the murder of Chazaretta, provides him with first-hand information and expects champagne from him in return (Piñeiro 2011: 37). Venturini does not make an effort to confirm whether Chazaretta and later also his friend Collazo really committed suicide. Nurit and Brena can easily identify facts that contradict the suicide theory (ib.: 173; 277). Whether Venturini is in some way involved in the murders cannot be clarified, but when Brena confronts him, he responds evasively:

Mirá, Brena, a veces tenemos que aceptar nuestras limitaciones a veces no podemos llegar hasta donde quisiéramos, pero eso no invalida todo lo demás que hacemos. [...] A veces podemos por el camino que corresponde, y a veces tenemos que tomar otros caminos [...]. (ib.: 328)

This comment suggests that Venturini might also receive orders from a higher level and is instructed not to investigate the murders properly.

In Sergio Olguín's *La fragilidad de los cuerpos*, the police have an equally suspicious role: Rafael, an employee of the football club in which boys are recruited to participate in the train competitions, goes to the local police station after he become suspicious of the trainer Rivero. The police officer thanks him for not looking away, but also warns him it might be dangerous for him to file a complaint and suggests to do it anonymously (Olguín 2012: 233–234). While Rafael thinks that he did the right thing, it remains doubtful whether the police actually

react upon his complaint. It becomes clear, however, that there is a connection between the police and the criminal organization as Rafael is beaten up shortly after that by four guys who try to kill him (ib.: 237).

Also in Swarup's *Six Suspects*, the police do not have a much better standing: Widespread protests against police violence erupt after the tribal Eketi is killed in police custody. While the police were convinced that he is a Naxalite<sup>88</sup> from Jharkhand and killed Vicky Rai, journalist Arun Advani makes Eketi's true story public in a column. He also blames the police for their inhumane methods: "What he didn't tell the police, despite three days of continuous torture, he told me in three hours, simply because I treated him as a fellow human being" (Swarup 2008: 531). He thus accuses the Police Commissioner of Delhi, K.D. Sahay of Eketi's death and demands his deposition as he already "has a history of sadistic behaviour, which has resulted in several custodial deaths over the years" (ib.: 535). Due to the tensed situation, the Commissioner Sahay actually is arrested and others suspended, but it remains questionable whether this will change the justice gap between the rich and influential and the normal citizens.

In Piglia's *Blanco nocturno*, tensions exist between Comisario Croce and the main prosecutor Cueto rather than between the authorities and citizens. Croce is a legend who has been the village's *Comisario* for decades and is admired and feared for his intuition and crime-solving skills (Piglia 2010: 26–27). The Public Prosecutor's Office, however, tries to control the "comisario demasiado rebelde" and sends him a new assistant, Saldías (ib.: 20). It becomes clear that Croce has little power against the Prosecutor Cueto, who, as has already been discussed in 4.2.1., is involved in a variety of legal and illegal businesses and is also the lawyer of the Belladonna family. He wants to solve the murder of Tony Durán as a crime of passion and suggests torture as a suitable interrogation method to convict the Japanese night guard Yoshio (ib.: 81). When Croce starts a fight with Cueto and carries out his own investigation, he quickly falls victim to a conspiracy: Saldías

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88 The term is in explained in footnote 36.

turns against him and alleges that Croce took money from the crime scene. Croce is thus moved into retirement and replaced with Saldías (ib.: 165–166). Cueto does not face a real opposition in the village any more after that and can stage his farce trial against Yoshio. The journalist Renzi nonetheless insinuates that Croce – who continues to investigate together with Renzi during his voluntary stay at the madhouse<sup>89</sup> – still occupies an important position as he is the only one who questions Cueto’s power and influence over the village. He reasons that “[m]ientras Croce siga en pie, Cueto nunca va a estar tranquilo” (ib.: 284).

These brief observations about the representation of the police in Piñero’s, Olguín’s, Swarup’s and Piglia’s novels give evidence of state authorities which are themselves involved in all kind of criminal activities and therefore not considered trustworthy. While their involvement can often not be proven and is also not the scope of the respective investigation, the criminal police officers are hardly ever prosecuted.

#### 4.3.7 Conclusion: Police Investigators in India and Latin America – Better Than Their Reputation?

While the last examples relate to the general long-standing expectation that it is not possible to write police procedurals in the Global South due to the corrupt character of the police, many of the novels discussed in this subchapter give a more complex account of the police in India, Argentina and Chile. The image of the corrupt and untrustworthy police has been challenged in recent novels by Valdivia, Subercaseaux, Meena, Salil Desai, Nair or Chandra. The authors portray very dedicated police officers which have to adapt to the complex environment in which they investigate to be able to advance a case. The majority of these novels challenge a clear role assignment of good and bad characters and thereby question one of the basic oppositions of the pseudonorm of classic British crime fiction (Glesener 2009: 16).

<sup>89</sup> The term ‘madhouse’ is used here in accordance with the term used in the translation of *Blanco nocturno* by Sergio Waisman instead of a more neutral term like psychiatric ward.

This can be seen as a strategy to subscribe to the criterion of realism and to create police investigators that are more credible in the respective context. A humanization of the police inspector can be observed in many novels as the fears and conflicts with which he is confronted in his professional and private life are depicted by a first-person narrator or a third-person narrator with (variable) internal focalization. The investigators usually occupy a medium-level position and have to deal with colleagues and subordinates as well as with superiors and thereby depict the impact of the hierarchical structure of the police on the investigative work. An engaged detective like Nair's inspector Gowda often finds himself unable to pursue a promising lead because his boss discourages him from doing so. Furthermore, everyday administrative tasks and team dynamics are frequently discussed in these novels. Corruption does play a role in various novels, but is partly explored more profoundly and explained by a lack of funds etc. that the police needs to compensate (Chandra). Nonetheless, it is usually insinuated that different scales of corruption exist: While Inspector Sartaj in Chandra's *Sacred Games* might accept small bribes, his boss hoards huge amounts of money in a Swiss account. Besides, also novels that depict meticulous and very dedicated police investigators are among recently published novels. In Salil Desai's *Killing Ashish Karve*, generic conventions associated with classic crime fiction like the complete solution of an individual crime or a fixed group of suspects are followed. Along with the emergence of female investigators and journalists as detectives, this rise of police investigators is one of the most striking characteristics of recent Indian, Argentinean and especially Chilean crime fiction novels.

#### 4.4 The Criminal in Indian and Latin American Crime Fiction

Detective investigators are in most cases the guiding and interpreting figures of the narrative and have thus been discussed in detail in the last subchapters. This subchapter will more briefly refer to their antagonists, the criminals. Like the detective, also the figure of the criminal

is not timeless, but has been subject to transformation over time and in the course of the genre's global adaptation (see for example Evans 2009: 8). Alternations thereby also reflect and challenge changing notions of crime; they usually take the model of classic British mystery fiction as a point of reference and create criminals which differ from this archetype.

In classic British crime fiction, the criminal is usually seen as a figure who disturbs an established order by committing a crime – or according to Ernest Mandel, “[t]he criminal breaks the monotony and everyday security of bourgeois life” (1984: 11). The culprit consequently needs to be singled out to reestablish a status quo. The detective is thereby able to maintain the social order by identifying who has to face the punishment for the crime he committed (Scaggs 2005: 11). The criminal is not supposed to be a marginalized person, but rather considered “one of us” in a closed group of suspects (Brownson 2014: 13). The commandments by Ronald A. Knox and S.S. van Dine published in the 1930s (discussed in Chapter 2.3.1) go in the same direction: They determine for example that the criminal cannot be a servant or a ‘chinaman’. A criminalization of foreigners and an affirmation of the superiority of the British is nonetheless confirmed in various crime fiction novels (Glesener 2009: 17). The culprit is an unlikely criminal who furthermore tries his best not to leave any traces behind, which suggests that the ideal crime is a deindividualized one which could have been committed by anyone. This ambition fails as the detective is always able to find clues that finally point at the culprit. This is usually a rather unlikely solution that the detective proves to be correct and thereby underlines the extraordinary and exceptional character of crime and violence which can be eradicated.

Later subgenres distance themselves from the British archetype by employing different kinds of criminals and by portraying crime as an intrinsic part of society. The US hard-boiled is an important case in point as writers like Raymond Chandler “gave murder back to the kind

of people that commit it for reasons” as the author himself claims in his essay “Simple Art of Murder” (1984: 16). US-American hard-boiled novels portray a world in which according to Chandler

gangsters can rule nations and almost rule cities, in which hotels and apartment houses and celebrated restaurants are owned by men who made their money out of brothels, [...] a world where a judge with a cellar full of bootleg liquor can send a man to jail for having a pint in his pocket, where the mayor of your town may have condoned murder as an instrument of moneymaking, where no man can walk down a dark street in safety because law and order are things we talk about but refrain from practicing [...]. (ib.: 19)

Vis-à-vis the exceptional status of crime, hard-boiled writers portray a society in which crime is a normality and in which those in power are involved in large-scale organized criminal activities, but unlike the common man, they are never prosecuted. The criminal in these stories are thus often more complex and respected members of society with connections to the underworld. These novels do not suggest that the crime is connected to an individual who can be singled out. Nonetheless, the hard-boiled plot line in many ways resembles the classic detective story in the sense that a crime occurs, is investigated and finally solved by exposing the criminal (see for example Cawelti 1976: 142). The criminal and the detective continue to be antagonistic figures who sometimes confront each other in a fight that involves physical violence (ib.: 143). Even if the detective wins this fight and solves the crime, this does not suggest that an order has been restored. Instead, it remains clear that a “web of conspiracy” exists between those in power and the underworld (ib.: 148–149).

Other subgenres like the thriller follow in these footsteps and often increase the number of criminals with which the detective is confronted. However, there is usually a master criminal as the main wire-puller with particularly evil characteristics and thus the detective’s main opponent (Nusser 2009: 58). These works similarly depict a society in which crime cannot be pinned down on an individual but

it is rather society in general that is corrupt and criminal. The investigation is thus a starting point for a portrayal of this society in accordance with the use of popular fiction as social criticism (see Chapter 2.3.4). While the criminals did not pose a threat for the detective personally in classic crime fiction, the detective later on often has to fear for his personal integrity; he finds himself in difficult and violent situations in the course of the investigation which often includes fights, chases and escapes (ib.: 52).

The popularity of the serial killer also goes in the same direction and underlines the urgency of the investigation to prevent further murders, but also reflects the evolvement of the figure of the criminal. The criminal is usually a mad killer, but nonetheless one deviant individual, as Stephen Knight has pointed out:

The serial killer authors link sadomasochistic details with mass anxiety but will narrow the gruesome anger down to one deranged individual, a threat as easily removed at the end of the narratives as it was sensationally developed at the start. (Knight 2010: 212)

Instead of traditional motives like greed or jealousy, these figures often exhibit different motivations as social cause and effect are replaced with pure evil (Gregoriou 2012: 57). Early works are for example Thomas Harries novels *Red Dragon* (1981) or *The Silence of the Lambs* (1988) as well as the movie adaptation of the latter.

A diversification can be also seen in terms of the criminals employed: Similar to the engagement of the female detective, also female criminals have emerged who similarly challenge the everlasting role of women as victims. As Shelley Godsland has pointed out, female criminals often carry out a “generalized symbolic revenge” against men to settle scores for earlier injustices (2007: 113). These alterations already point at a greater attention to the criminal beyond the mere role as the perpetrator. Some authors have also resorted to a shift of perspective and narrate the crime from the perspective of the criminal or oscillate between the detective’s and the criminal’s points of view.

In this subchapter, I will look into the role and function of the criminal in Indian and Latin American crime fiction novels to identify commonalities with the evolution of the criminal elaborated above and particularities in the respective context. I will pay particular attention to two recurrent figures in Indian crime fiction: the figure of the evil guru or spiritual advisor and the criminal politician and his offspring. I will also address the role of politicians in Latin American crime fiction to exhibit one of the differences to the Indian corpus and to post-dictatorial crime fiction novels from Argentina and Chile. The crimes committed and motivations of criminal agents largely divide into two groups: While various novels depict criminal activities in the political and economic sphere as well as the underworld, others depict crimes committed in the private sphere such as domestic crimes, but often connected to large societal pressures that give reason to a crime.

#### 4.4.1 Fraudulent Gurus and Spiritual Advisors in Indian Crime Fiction

Swamis, astrologers and spiritual advisors who use modern means of communication are prominent in Indian post-millennial literature as has been observed by Emma Dawson Varughese (2013: 50). This is also the case for Indian crime fiction and underlines that these figures are of particular relevance for recent Indian literature produced in India for Indian readers and do not just serve as an exotic figure that foreign readers associate with India. Kavita Bhanot has suggested the guru is a cliché that has frequently been used in Indian literary fiction by authors like Kiran Desai, Salman Rushdie or V.S. Naipaul. What is presented in fiction, but also in movies, is “an abstract, mystical, comical, ahistorical, skeptical picture of the guru figure” (Bhanot 2011: 3). In Bhanot’s opinion, the fictional representation of the guru has significantly shaped the public image of real-life gurus.

Kirin Narayan elaborates in her study of folk narratives in Hindu religious teaching the concept of a Guru and a Sadhu, which in part overlap. The latter is a renunciant while a Guru can be married, to point out just one of the distinguishing features (Narayan 2011: 82). According

to Kirin Narayan, a guru can in principle be a teacher of any sort, but is usually associated with a spiritual teacher, who is “expected, in popular opinion, to maintain the detached perspective of an ascetic” (ib.: 82). He enjoys a prestigious role in Hindu society (Jacobsen 2015: 228) and some gurus enjoy a great popularity as persons of great esoteric mystical knowledge which are usually seen as possessionless and celibate and can give hope to his followers that “their lives can change, that suffering has meaning, that spiritual illuminations can actually be achieved” (ib.: 84–85). Knut A. Jacobsen et al. have underlined that anybody can become a guru as long as he<sup>90</sup> convinces others to follow him. They also point at new private institutes that have attracted middle class members to study astrology while traditional families have started to turn to other occupations (Jacobsen 2015: 219; 228). Followers may be ascetic disciples who for example live in his ashram as well as lay followers who are more interested in “seeking blessings for worldly gratification” (Narayan 2011: 82; 84). Narayan also points out that these advisors have lost none of their attraction for India’s contemporary urban middle class in dire need of orientation and a community (ib.: 86). The anonymity of urban life and the loss of traditional relationships as well as the state of Hinduism as a non-homogeneous religion without a leader or founder who could be followed are given as some of the reasons for the constant popularity of spiritual leaders (ib.: 228). In this context, Narayan particularly refers to foreign followers as several gurus enjoy a great reputation outside India. She notes that

the enduring trope of Indian spirituality versus Western materialism can blind foreign devotees to the commercial aspects of ashrams and the human foibles of their teachers. (ib.: 86)

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90 The male possessive pronoun is used as most ascetics are men. However, the growing number of female gurus which are usually associated with and named after mother figures has been highlighted by Kirin Narayan (2011: 66) and Knut A. Jacobsen et al. (2015: 228).

Thus while the need of spiritual guidance is highlighted as a “permanent feature of human culture”, gullibility and a lack of monitoring contribute to the abuse of this role – especially since spiritual leaders are often dependent on donations (Jacobsen 2015: 234). Kirin Narayan acutely observes that “spirituality becomes a commodity that can be bought and sold” (Narayan 2011: 157). Scandals that involve controversial gurus circulate widely in the media and allegations often include fraud, personal enrichment, sexual abuse and partly also murder like the case of Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh (see e.g. Kumar (2017) or Rediff.com (2014)). Also in Indian crime fiction novels, gurus and similar figures frequently play a role. Therefore, I will now take a look at gurus and similar figures in novels by Vikram Chandra, Kalpana Swaminathan, Anita Nair and Vikas Swarup to discuss the significance of their frequent appearance.

#### 4.4.1.1 The Guru in a Wheelchair in Chandra’s *Sacred Games*

The most prominent example is a guru as a criminal wirepuller in Vikram Chandra’s *Sacred Games*. He is involved in all kinds of criminal activities and forms a link between the story narrated by the gangster boss Gaitonde about his life and Inspector Sartaj’s story about the investigation that takes place after the Gaitonde’s suicide.

Gaitonde recounts that the guru swami Shridhar Shukla became an important advisor for him in the course of his career as a gangster boss. He got in touch with Guruji at a certain point and maintains regular secret telephone calls with him (Chandra 2007: 500). The guru initially predicts that Gaitonde will be released from prison and from that moment, Gaitonde consults him about all kinds of professional as well as personal matters including his affairs (ib.: 501). The guru also helps him to understand the deeper meaning of events: When Gaitonde produces a movie and it fails, the Guru advises him to accept his failure instead of looking for a reason for it (ib.: 698). The guru himself has a large group of followers and is well connected. Gaitonde mentions that he is

an international swami, he had lunches with presidents and prime ministers, and told fortunes for ministers, and had film stars by the dozen at his dashans<sup>91</sup>. [...] He had perfect northern Brahmin Hindi, and fast English. Very impressive man. Very connected. (ib.: 500)

His fame is even more striking given the fact that his lower body is paralyzed after suffering from an accident as a young adult (ib.: 609). However, he is very mobile since he has an electronic wheelchair. After his accident, he had visions, started to meditate and then became a swami. This career has also led to great wealth; one of Gaitonde's gang member comments in this context that they might be in the wrong game if there is so much money involved in ashrams (ib.: 808; 813).

The connection between Gaitonde and the Guruji is a win-win-situation for both: While Gaitonde believes that nothing can happen to him as long as he is in touch with the guru (ib.: 570), Guruji uses him to smuggle arms and bomb-making materials into India (ib.: 727). Gaitonde connects this activity to the Ayodhya dispute<sup>92</sup> after which Hindus as well as Muslims have started to arm themselves (ib.: 610). While Guruji does not officially preach against Muslims, he privately mentions that they are "the cause of societal trouble in whatever country they lived in" (ib.: 610) and repeatedly talks about an upcoming Kaliyug (ib.: 431; 763). Kaliyug is a term from Hindu cosmology and refers to the "age of vice" or "age of darkness" as the last of four ages which ends with the grand destruction as humanity has morally degenerated. Guruji conveys to Gaitonde that this fight is

91 According to Chandra's Glossary, the term refers to a sighting of something, to be able to see someone or something face-to-face. In a religious context, darshan signifies a "seeing" that is touched by the divine. Pilgrims will travel thousands of miles for a darshan of a goddess in a temple, or of a guru. It is in the seeing of the guru, and in being seen by the guru that the blessing is conveyed (Chandra 2008: 17).

92 The dispute about the Babri Masjid in the Northern Indian city Ayodhya which as Hindu nationalists claim stands on the ground of an older Hindu shrine turned violent in 1992. The destruction of the Masjid led to communal violence all over India. Riots between Hindus and Muslims broke out for example in Bombay, where the police often did not intervene or actively participated in violence against Muslims backed by the Shiv Sena (Gregory/Pred 2013: 161). The riots were followed by the Bombay Bombings in 1993 as an act of retaliation by Muslim gangs.

inevitable as destruction is required for progress (ib.: 837). When he mentions that he is building a bomb to set off in Mumbai, Gaitonde gets scared and starts to have a nuclear safe bunker build (ib.: 837). After that, Guruji disappears completely, due to which Gaitonde grows increasingly anxious and desperate. In this situation Gaitonde himself assumes the role of a detective and starts a search for Guruji all over India but is unable to find him. When Gaitonde later commits suicide, Sartaj in a way takes over his search for the guru even though it takes him a big effort to find out about the connection between Gaitonde and his spiritual advisor. By that time, the guru had not been seen for a year and his organization had fallen into disarray (ib.: 770). Sartaj is surprised to find out that Gaitonde has a guru and points at the variety of gurus that exist:

There were gurus at every corner, and in every locality. There were Mohammedan gurus, and Vedic Gurus, and gurus who had been born in Hawaii to Japanese parents, and gurus who denied the existence of God. (ib.: 614)

Considering himself rather non-religious, Sartaj is even more astonished to hear that various of his colleagues also have a guru they follow (ib.: 616). One of his colleagues mentions that “[no] man can get through life without a guide” (ib.: 615). Besides being a guide, the example Gaitonde and Guruji points at the enormous power of such a ‘life guide’ as even the gangster boss uncritically followed his advice and told him about all his dilemmas. Over time, he becomes so dependent on the guru’s advice that his disappearance also coincides with the beginning of Gaitonde’s downfall. Furthermore, it becomes clear that he was involved in all kind of criminal activities such as counterfeiting of money or illegal arms and nuclear fuel trade, which are largely only hinted at and not investigated properly in the course of the plot. Furthermore, pamphlets of a fake extremist Islamist organization are found in Guruji’s properties which he could have used to incite religious violence (ib.: 774). Whether the guru actually had planned a bomb attack on Mumbai is not solved. The Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) takes over after Sartaj informs them about the guru’s

abode and he is only informed that everybody is safe after the operation (ib.: 875). Details about the arrest and whether the guru posed a real threat at not revealed.

#### 4.4.1.2 Politics, Crime and Spiritual Advice: Swami Haridas in Swarup's *Six Suspects*

A guru figure can also be found in Vikas Swarup's *Six Suspects* though he does not occupy a very important role compared to Chandra's Guruji. Quite similarly, Swami Haridas is an internationally renowned spiritual leader who has various ashrams all over India and goes on "world tours" to meet his disciples including Richard Gere (Swarup 2008: 85; 359). The Swami Haridas appears in two of the six stories that examine the relation of each suspect who is accused of having killed Vicky Rai. The Swami is one of the persons through whose hands passes the *shivling*, an important stone which Eketi, the tribal from the Andaman Islands, searches all over India. While this stone is supposedly bestowed with great powers, it brings bad luck to anyone who handles it. The Swami loses it during a bomb explosion at the religious fair Magh Mela in Allahabad and then pulls out all the stops to get it back (ib.: 299).

Swami Haridas main role in the narrative is nonetheless that of the spiritual advisor of Vicky's father, the Home Minister Jagannath Rai. The latter regularly consults the swami for advice and future predictions. Rather than spirituality, Jaganath Rai is interested in "seeking blessings for worldly gratification" as Kirin Narayan called it (2011: 84) – illegal operations and problems that are related to crimes committed by him. This includes for example the trial of a murder that he has committed (Swarup 2008: 83). Irrespective of the criminal nature of Rai's problem, the Swami calms him down by consulting the stars:

According to your horoscope, all this is the result of Saturn sitting in the fifth house. The bad period will last for another four months. After that all your troubles will disappear. (ib.: 84)

The guru himself is also involved in all kind of criminal activities and requires favors from Jagannath Rai. He for example buys land with a slum on it and asks Jagannath to clear it (ib.: 85). Later, he goes abroad with Jagannath's help after his ashram has been raided: The swami is accused of using human and animal bones in his herbal remedies and of sexually molesting female devotees (ib.: 285), but sees himself as a victim of a conspiracy against him. The swami tells Jagannath exactly what he wants to hear to get his own advantage out of this connection; he even clears his doubts about killing a close relative (ib.: 267).

#### 4.4.1.3 Rassiwala – A Deadly Entrepreneur in Swaminathan's *I Never Knew It Was You*

In Swaminathan's *I Never Knew It Was You*, a spiritual or religious adviser – called a jyotish<sup>93</sup> here – plays a role. The jyotish is not only involved in illegal activities but even the wirepuller of an unsolved series of at least six murders that date back to 1986. Lalli can partly solve the series by identifying Aaftab, a successful architect as the murderer of two recent cases. The instructions as well as the murder weapon were given to him by the jyotish whose capture is beyond Lalli's capabilities in the novel. The jyotish remains a “voice on the phone” who provides easy solutions to desperate persons who are struggling with difficult family members and he asks for small favors in return (Swaminathan 2012: 259). He uses – or makes others use – a pink nylon cord to strangle the victim as a kind of “signature” method which Savio identifies as “his brand of punishment” (ib.: 252). Lalli calls this wirepuller ‘rassiwalla’ – using the Hindi term for a person who makes and trades ropes – and initially thinks that he wages a personal war against her. She states that “every time I broke my rule and took up against organized crime, I've met a pink cord” (ib.: 87). At some point, even she herself was attacked with a pink nylon cord<sup>94</sup>

93 A jyotish roughly corresponds to an astrologer; Jacobsen et al. elaborate on the term which translates as “[k]nower of the (celestial) lights” (2015: 217).

94 It stands out that nylon cords and ropes are frequently used as murder weapons in Indian crime fiction. Often glass-coated strings produced for kites are used and for example cause a “cut-like wound” on the victim's neck in Anita Nair's eponymous novel. In addition to Swaminathan's novel, also the victim in CK Meena's *Dreams for the Dying* is strangled with rope.

(ib.:99). When she is confronted with the rassi method after more than two decades, Sita is surprised to see Lalli cry out of rage (ib.: 75). In the course of investigation, Lalli realizes that it is “a multiverse case” in which different unconnected people might be killed in the same way upon instruction from the rassiwalla (ib.: 252).

The jyotish is furthermore involved in an enterprise called Immortals that promises to turn the ashes of deceased into a diamond which is called a Sada Suhagan – a term that can be translated from Hindi as a kind of blessing for a woman to be ‘always married’. For this highly dubious investment to “immortalize your love” as the brochure promises, a high fee needs to be paid ahead of the death (ib.: 220). Lalli appears to be wearing one of these stones and many women admire her for it (ib.: 21). Instead of a sign of grief and loss, the stone is a desired fashion item. The popularity of the stone is not surprising and underlines an observation Lalli makes at the beginning of the investigation with regard to charm-stones in general:

People will buy anything for a safe tomorrow, anything to keep them from noticing today. That’s why religion is such a relief, too. [...] Call it god, call it your stars—takes full responsibility. All you need to do is believe. (ib.: 43)

Lalli’s choice of words is interesting here and points at a commodification of religion or spirituality. Purchasing a stone replaces other immaterial investments in a bright future or religious acts such as prayers. The Sada Suhagan can in this sense be seen as the ultimate level commodification of a society with a bitter aftertaste: When Lalli becomes aware of the popularity of the stone and the involvement of the jyotish, she wonders if it might be a big scam, or even worse, “[run] on murder” (ib.: 224).

The gem fraud operates on a personal level and through personal recommendation by agents who recruit new clients from their surroundings. As Lalli reveals, Anisa, one of the victims, was such an agent and killed for trying to make own deals with these stones on the side.

Furthermore, the mother of a homosexual man who died from HIV is waiting for her Sada Suhagan after his death and disappointed to receive only his ashes (ib.: 221). Another link exists between Aaftab and the jyotish as he sets these stones in gold filigree (ib.: 272).

Both of these bizarre businesses complement each other and in Lalli's opinion reveal a lot about the state of (Indian) society. She points out that the home is the "true zone of operation" of the rassiwalla/jyotish (ib.: 253): He promises relief for persons who are in a difficult situation with a burdening family member as Lalli points out:

He speaks the unspoken. He knows you don't have it in you to smother your parent or strangle your daughter, but you do wish it would happen. So he makes it happen. And then you're his for life. (ib.: 254)

In the case of Aaftab, a priest initially served as an intermediary who established a connection between Aaftab and the jyotish who offered him to solve his problem with a disturbing ex-girlfriend in the 1980s. Rather than on capturing him, the debates consequently focus more on the social conditions that make it possible for the jyotish to gain such an influence over someone. Lalli elaborates that these crimes are connected to the possibility of embarrassment:

Embarrassment is an unlikely motive anywhere else, but in India, it is the main motive for domestic crime. Call it what you want: embarrassment, shame, the dread of being found out, the dread of losing face – all of it stems from a lack of introspection. (ib.: 175)

To protect their good name, families that appear in the novel are prepared to walk over the dead body of their own children. Crime is resituated as a problem within families here, which, as the novel shows, has not changed between the 1980s and today. Lalli and her team also point out how these misconceived ideas of family integrity in combination with the above-mentioned lack of introspection and societal pressures cause great despair and make "[any] Indian household in trouble a prime target for fraudsters of all sorts – swamis, fakirs, jyotish,

and [...] witches” (ib.: 255). They furthermore note a lack of outrage from society as certain deeds are “never perceived as crime” and family members and other people in their surrounding are fully convinced that they did the best for the ‘deviant’ family member (ib.: 176). This plays into the hands of the jyotish who cannot only guide desperate persons in their actions but also relieves them from their responsibility and guilt. The same happens to Aaftab who blindly follows the jyotish’s instructions (“He goes wherever his jyotish sends him, does whatever he suggests” [ib.: 238]) and kills at least two persons with a nylon rope before he is convicted by Lalli in the final round up of the investigation. The end suggests that the hunt for the rassiwala will continue (ib.: 279), within the action of *I Never Knew It Was You* he gets away and can continue his criminal activities.

#### 4.4.1.4 The Goddess of Wrath in Nair’s *Cut Like Wound*

In Anita Nair’s *Cut Like Wound*, it is not a religious advisor but a goddess herself who is giving instructions to kill. Inspector Gowda suspects at an early stage of the plot that the serial killer has a connection to real estate developer Anna, referred to as “the Corporator”, and his younger brother Chikka. They are both originally from a poor background and witnessed how their mother suffered from their violent father (Nair 2012: 139). She venerated the deity Angala Parameshwari, the goddess of wrath, who needs to be paid tributes and is usually appeased with blood (ib.: 139). Anna recounts that the goddess took possession of his mother every Friday. She then fell into in a kind of trance and did not only howl and scream but also cover herself with blood (ib.: 140–141). His mother explains to him at some point that

Ma Kali Amma lives in each one of us. When it is time for her to emerge, she will. And then she will demand you worship her in the way she wants you to. [...] And she will then bestow on you all you wish for. She will make her weapon yours. Anger. That is her weapon. For those of us who have nothing, anger is our only blessing. (ib.: 141)

Anger thus turns into her mother's weapon, and after her death, into Anna's. The goddess took possession of Anna during a secret ceremony held every Friday which requires him to dress up as a woman in the presence of a group of eunuchs (ib.: 142). His brother Chikka views the ceremony with great skepticism, until the goddess also starts talking to him. She tells him to dress up as a woman which she names Bhuvana and instructs him to go outside on Friday to carry out missions for her (ib.: 4). These missions include the murder of various men who think Bhuvana is a woman – and easily available since she is out on the street in the night. In the novel, the scenes of Bhuvana's preparations, her trips and her murders are described extensively from her perspective and alternate with Inspector Gowda's investigation of a series of murders carried out with a string coated with glass dust (ib.: 75). Until the end, however, it is not really clear who is behind the murders. When Chikka can finally be convicted by Gowda and his team, Gowda confronts Anna with the fact that the goddess also came to him (ib.: 350). He claims that the goddess makes him commit these murders as a general act of revenge for a sexual abuse from a company owner he experienced as a teenager:

They are everywhere. Jaded men. Eager boys. I find them and they find me. [...] The goddess said all I have to do is erase that memory. So I kill them... Because, like you said that night, Anna, it's not my fault. They made me do it! And so they have to be punished for it. (ib.: 350).

The involvement of such a supernatural wirepuller who orders Chikka to kill men is interestingly not at all commented on by Gowda or any other protagonist. As Gowda's colleague Santosh is injured by Chikka, the final scene of the book rather focuses on his reanimation.

#### 4.4.1.5 Conclusion: The Guru as a Staple Criminal in Indian Crime Fiction

These novels provide a good impression of the involvement of gurus, swamis and goddesses in criminal activities in contemporary Indian crime fiction. These figures are unanimously presented as negative and fake. While followers blindly trust them, spiritual leaders often follow

their own agenda and are involved in various criminal activities. Nonetheless, because of their status, their immense power and their followers, these figures are notoriously hard to come by: Sartaj Singh has to make a pact with an underworld lady to find the guru in *Sacred Games* and even detective Lalli cannot put a stop to the jyotish's activities in *I Never Knew I Was You*. Partly, these figures remain rather secondary characters as in *Six Suspects*, but appear to be staple figures among the plethora of shady characters that Swarup's novel includes. The involvement of a murderous goddess in Nair's novel deviates a bit from the figure of a spiritual leader, but similarly points in the same direction of a blind following of religious orientation figures.

The list of crime fiction novels studied here is not exhaustive: Other works which include a guru figure are for example *Goa Undercover* (2016), the third novel of Madhumita Bhattacharyya's Reema Ray series, and Tarquin Hall's second Vish Puri novel, *The Case of the Man Who Died Laughing* (2011). In Bhattacharyya's novel, a British guru living in Goa plays a role as a spiritual advisor who is also involved in money laundering and has various links with the underworld. In Hall's novel, Maharaj Swami is similarly blamed for sexual abuse, murder and fraud but can disappear before he is arrested because his followers still blindly protect him. Detective Vish Puri and his secretary discuss how the swami has an easy game due to the gullibility of his followers who are ready to believe anything he says or does (Hall 2010: 298). This kind of blind trust in religion is a topic frequently criticized in Indian media as well as in recent movies like Rajkumar Hirani's 2014 satires *PK*. Due to the power and opacity of the practices of these spiritual leaders, they make up a prime group as suspicious characters in Indian crime fiction even though the figures are often rather elusive. This might partly be an exotic feature of crime fiction set in India; but I would argue that these figures are also inspired by extraliterary scandals involving e.g. gurus mentioned at the beginning of this subchapter. I would claim that these works criticize the impact that leaders can gain as their role is often not critically reflected in extraliterary discourses and everyday life.

## 4.4.2 Criminal Superstructures and Underworlds

As has already been suggested before, strong links exist between those with power and organized crime in many novels. In Chapter 4.3, it has already been pointed out that the police are in various novels collaborating with those who are on the other side of the law like for example underworld bosses. In this subchapter, criminal activities of businessmen, doctors and politicians as well as criminal organizations that function like businesses, will be analyzed.

### 4.4.2.1 Criminal Enterprises

In Valdivia's *Un crimen de barrio alto*, Clarisa de Landa's murder is meant to cover up a large scandal at the bank where she worked. Clarisa found out about an embezzlement of funds by three of the bank's top managers. She had observed that the members of the bank's loan committee cooperated for their own benefit and thus she posed a threat for them. As the tedious investigation reconstructs, the managers gave huge credits to unknown companies in which the managers themselves were involved and thereby caused the bank a loss of more than 120 million US dollars as some credits were not paid back (Valdivia 2015: 247). While the bank's lawyer Juan Carlos Urmeneta can be convicted, any involvement of the other two managers cannot be proven as both have an alibi and are eager to put the entire blame on the lawyer (ib.: 277). These unscrupulous bankers are not afraid to go over dead bodies to make sure their white-collar crime is not revealed. Ironically, the murder is initially blamed on Carlos Sandoval, the son of de Landa's maid who has a criminal history and is wanted for another burglary. It turns out that Carlos is innocent in both cases and that he has managed a successful transition from his "profesión de delincuente" to a low-paid carpenter (ib.: 252). Morante gets extremely annoyed about police officers who try to solve a case at any cost and thereby mainly focus on the usual suspects. This also reveals a double moral of society when it comes to criminal investigations: While a manhunt for Sandoval starts immediately, the investigation of the bank managers is a much more sensitive issue, as Morante's boss reminds him, since these powerful people can easily make a police officer's life difficult (ib.: 22).

Besides bankers, also doctors do not come up to the ethics of their profession: In Desai's *The Origins of Love*, Dr. Ganguly, a doctor at a surrogacy clinic, is involved in all kinds of illegal activities and stops at nothing to keep up his business and maximize profits: He runs his own surrogacy clinic on the side and illegally carries out embryonic stem cell research. Simran has reason to believe that he got the parents of an HIV-positive baby killed by staging an accident and did away with their surrogacy mother to avoid a scandal. Simran also thinks that he tried to get rid of Simran herself to stop her from investigating the origin of the baby.

In Krimer's *Siliconas express*, the criminal is the plastic surgeon Vidal who operates breast implants filled with drugs and runs a drug trafficking business on the side. In Ocampo's *Cobayos criollos* even the psychologists are very dubious characters – though they in principle belong to a profession to which persons turn to in despair. The detective interrogates psychologists who have affairs with patients, continue therapies for ten years and prescribe their clients expensive antidepressants from a US Big Pharma company which aims at inventing new medical conditions that can generate huge profits (Ocampo 2015: 170). Furthermore, the psychologist Dr. Reynolds runs a mental hospital for children called Espacios, which hands out new antidepressants as well as placebos to carry out secret drug trials and on top of that charges parents for medicine which they get for free from the US Pharma company (ib.: 235). The detective also finds out that the clinic is in some way linked to Scientology and concludes thus that “Espacios era el espacio de quienes eran doblemente cobayos” as they were not only guinea pigs for a foreign pharma company but also for a foreign religious organization (ib.: 235). She contends that Kathy might have been killed because she found out about these activities and opposed them. While the motive is not completely clarified as the detective limits her efforts to revealing Dr. Reynold as the murderer, it is likely that the murder was committed to avoid a scandal in the clinic.

#### 4.4.2.2 Organized Crime and Criminal Enterprises

While companies and clinics are involved in large-scale illegal activities, in other cases, criminals and criminal organizations assume economic principles. A potent figure is here for example the figure of the contract killer. As Ernst Mandel has pointed out, “[w]ith the concept of the ‘contract’, murder proclaims loud and clear its common ground with general commercial practice, motivated by the pursuit of profit” (Mandel 1984: 104). According to Andrew Spicer, the contract killer was actually already present in US-American crime fiction in the 1920s, but has been replaced by the figure of the gangster from the 1930s onwards. In the last decades, the figure of the contract killer or *sicario* became frequent in Colombian or Mexican literature as a figure that epitomizes the total decay of human morals and the value of life as a consequence of the normalization of violence in societies. With reference to Fernando Vallejo’s *La virgen de los sicarios* (1994), Miguel Cabañas points out for example that “the assassins [...] are responding to the market demand for services and to the escapism of consumer culture today (2014: 11). The contract killer can thus be seen as “a symbol of the perverse logic of capitalist enterprise, of a consummate but destructive professionalism dedicated to the art of killing” (Spicer 2011: 170–171): He commits murders only for the sake of monetary gains and adds another dimension to the idea of the perfect crime. The detective usually establishes a linear connection between the victim and the culprit via the clues left behind and interpreted. But the fact that there is a contractee who gives the order for the murder and an unconnected contractor to carry it out complicates the reconstruction of the crime and the revelation of the criminal.

In Meena’s *Dreams for the Dying*, the murder of Uma is carried out by a professional contract killer. At various instances in the novel, the narrative shifts to his perspective and he can talk about his rather questionable ‘career’. As already pointed out in 4.2.5, the contract killer is eager to find out whether the murder has made it to the front page of the newspapers. Besides, the man called Soda Ganesh praises his ‘services’ in a television show. He boasts:

Tell me who your enemy is and I'll beat up, slash, rape, kill, throw acid on the face, anything you want me to do to him or her. Pay me my fees and I'll give hundred per cent guarantee. (Meena 2008: 199)

Soda Ganesh does not bother about the moral implications and suffering he causes, but describes his criminal career like any other profession: He refers to terms like a “hundred per cent guarantee[d]” customer satisfaction, deadlines and underlines the need of practice to achieve perfection (ib.: 126; 127). He describes being a contract killer as an advanced step on a career path: In a discussion with a young criminal, Soda Ganesh recounts that he started with reselling tampered soda bottles and then “moved up to blackmail and extortion, with the occasional foray into rioting” before becoming a contract killer (ib.: 125). Nonetheless, he emphasizes that “[m]oney is secondary” as it is more important that “you must take pride in your work [...]” (ib.: 126). Due to his indifference to the crimes he commits, the pride stems from the perfect execution of the crime; thus special skills are required to obtain information about the victim and to carry out the murder without being traced or recognized. The humble background of the contract killer as “a slum-dwelling stripling fresh out of goon school” who dreams of becoming rich is also pointed at (ib.: 123). The figure of the contract killer highly complicates the prosecution of a crime as the link between the killer and the client is usually hard to trace. In CK Meena’s novel, the solution just a coincidence because the killer’s fingerprints had been registered in a police database at some point of time (ib.: 221).

In Olguín’s *La fragilidad de los cuerpos*, the criminal Juan García runs a large conglomerate of legal and illegal businesses in spite of having lived underground in Buenos Aires for years. Before that, he was involved in women trafficking and various other crimes in Misiones in the North of Argentina but always got away (Olguín 2012: 227). A fellow journalist remembers that betting on the young boys that participate in train competitions occurred there at the time when García still operated in Misiones (ib.: 150). García has very loyal employ-

ees, including Rivero, who has been working for him for 20 years and recruited boys for the train competitions in Buenos Aires. As the narrator points out,

En un mundo sin corrupción, Rivero hubiera sido un perfecto policía. Le gustaba hacer cumplir con la ley. Salvo que él se movía con las leyes de García. Y entre los mandatos de su jefe, no faltaba la sangre, el engaño, el secuestro y la muerte. (ib.: 227)

Also the train competitions are a lucrative business for him, since he claims that hundreds of followers watch it on the internet and bet on the boys (ib.: 320), who are lured to participate for a ridiculous amount of money. García is also engaged in more official businesses and has an office in a modern tower guarded by security men where he works for a company called “Unmittelbare Zukunft” which apparently imports agricultural machinery from Germany, but is actually a money laundering business (ib.: 303). During a lunch with Verónica, García behaves like a gentleman dressed in an expensive suit who shows good manners and only indirectly threatens her (ib.: 281). Nonetheless, he has his security staff who check Verónica before meeting him and he uses a back exit to disappear without being followed.

Shortly after that, four contract killers appear which beat up a key witness beforehand also try to enter Verónica’s house. The connection between García and these men remains unexplained and they are not even aware who hired them. As the narrator points out

Ninguno de los cuatro conocía a Juan García. Ni siquiera sabían que trabajaban para él. Ellos pertenecían al equipo de Doctor 0. Eran profesionales y jamás preguntaban por qué tenían que hacer este o aquel encargo. Cumplían. (ib.: 295)

Like the contract killer in *Dreams for the Dying*, the four men anonymously follow orders and carry out murders. Their lack of personal involvement is underlined by the fact that they are only distinguished by number and not by name because “sus nombres no merecen ser

recordados”: 1,2,3 y 4 eran delincuentes de poca monta, que se dedicaban exclusivamente a hacer daño: lastimar, amedrentar, matar. No mucho más. Los robos solo eran una actividad complementaria, jamás principal. (ib.: 291)

The reduction of these criminals to numbers underlines a deindividuation of crime which strives towards the perfect murder whose agents cannot be identified because no connection between the criminals, the contractor and victim can be proven. All are professionals and take their job very seriously. In *La fragilidad de los cuerpos*, they kill the Chinese man who helped the key witness Rafael to escape (ib.: 292). After Verónica willingly drives her car into these four men, the two survivors return in Olguín's second Verónica Rosenthal novel, *Las extranjeras* (2014), to finish their task to kill Verónica. Like CK Meena or Claudia Piñeiro, Olguín depicts a highly unsettling scenario of contract killers or henchman for whom murder is a service that can be booked and paid liked any other.

Another interesting example is the criminal enterprise of the gangster boss Gaitonde in Chandra's *Sacred Games*. Gaitonde gives a detailed account of how he came to Bombay as a poor boy and managed to establish a huge criminal syndicate, which are literally called 'companies' in India. According to Lee Horsley, the gangster is one of the figures in crime fiction who functions "as the embodiment of capitalistic self-interest and ambition" as well as a player "who follows the rules to any given game" (Horsley 2009: 199). Both is true for Gaitonde: As elaborated in Chapter 4.4.2, he sees life as a *leela*, a game played by the gods in scared texts and he largely follows the logic of a capitalist enterprise: Gaitonde's company runs a myriad of criminal operations on a global level from racketeering to smuggling arms and other goods to contract killing. The money made, however, is reinvested in legal businesses:

My company's annual turnover at that time was three hundred crores, and tracking that money and funneling it from here to there, and investing it and expanding it, this in itself was a job and a half. Of course we

still made money the old-fashioned way, from our taxes on businessmen and movie producers, from commissions earned from good middle class householders who needed their retirement flat emptied of sticky tenants, from moving substances and materials across borders, from bookies and touts. But we had legitimate investments thrown across Bombay and into India, we had funds and stocks and real estate and startup companies. (Chandra 2007: 570)

Like an international businessman, Gaitonde has “cells” around the world who take care of his respective businesses in Europe or Singapore and he values his accountant and his IT specialist highly (ib.: 570–572). While he eventually positions himself as a Hindu gangster, his stands in rivalry with the Muslim gangster Suleiman Isa. Even the government relies on his support and in exchange for information about his rival, Gaitonde is allowed to live on a yacht in international waters where he does not have to face threat from his rival Isa. Ironically, Gaitonde’s syndicate as well as his rival and the police all rely on the same person to transfer their money to Swiss bank accounts, who “as a money manager, was neutral in the gang wars” (ib.: 83). Due to the heightening tensions between Muslims and Hindus after the Bombay riots and bombings in the early 1990s, individual politicians and government functionaries start to cooperate with Gaitonde: He helps them to manipulate elections, smuggles weapons to fight Muslims into the country or has political rivals killed in complex operation outside the country (ib.: 408; 571). Gaitonde negotiates the terms of business with a state official called Mr. Kumar and realizes that their relationship is a win-win situation:

He needed me to extract threads of information from Kathmandu, and Karachi, and Dubai, and sometimes make certain people disappear, and I needed him to put pressure on policemen in Delhi and Mumbai, and supply me with information in turn, and help occasionally with logistics and resources. (ib.: 677)

Gaitonde has no problem to attract new gang members – or loyal employees – who are generally boys from low-income families who want to make easy money. Gaitonde points out at some point that in spite of their experiences with inequality, each of them turned into a “diehard capitalist” once they get used to the money they can earn with criminal activities and that they refuse the idea that they could share it with others stricken by poverty (ib.: 680). The motive of money and the lack thereof runs like a red thread through the novel and is referred to as a main motivation for those who are supposed to be on the side of the law, the police, as well as criminals on the other side.

#### 4.4.2.3 Criminal Politicians and Their Offspring in Indian Crime Fiction

The involvement of political leaders – called *netas* [leaders] in Hindi – and their families in criminal activities is an all-time concern of Indian media and often leads to public outrage vis-à-vis the lack of prosecution. Corrupt politicians and especially their sons are furthermore prominent characters in recent Indian (crime fiction) novels and movies. To name a few recent examples, the movies include the Bengali movie *Shahab Bibi Golaam* (2016, directed by Pratim D. Gupta) or the Hindi court drama *Pink* (2016, directed by Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury). The latter depicts the struggles three women are facing when trying to convict the nephew of an influential politician who tried to rape one of them. It was particularly the Jessica Lal murder case that inspired a variety of novels and movies such as Siddharth Shanghvi’s *The Lost Flamingoes of Bombay* (2010) or the movie *No One Killed Jessica* (2011, directed by Raj Kumar Gupta). Like Swarup’s *Six Suspects*, these works discuss the persistent anarchy of influential Indian upper class members who cannot be prosecuted for their crimes and thereby cause huge troubles for middle class members affected by these crimes – especially young women. Similar to Indian media, crime fiction novels react very closely to this concern and depict the broader system of police corruption and nepotism that contributes to the power imbalances and partly offer an alternative fictional revenge that is denied in reality.

In Swarup's *Six Suspects*, the careless son of a politician, Vicky Rai, in principle has the role of the murder victim. However, as the investigation reveals, he well deserved his death and is portrayed as a person who does certainly not deserve any sympathy. Interestingly, Vicky himself is constantly seen through the perspective of other persons in his surrounding and only is allowed to talk for himself in a few telephone calls with his dad. The narrator sums up various crimes committed by Vicky, including rape, illegal hunting, murder or beating up his own sister (Swarup 2008: 13–15; 216). At the same time, he is already the owner of the Rai Group of Industries at the age of 25 and thus very influential. Vicky shows no sign of guilt and mocks the victims of his crimes: He for example organizes a party after being acquitted for the murder of Ruby Gill. Trials are commonly arranged beforehand, therefore Vicky does not fear to be actually charged for his crimes (ib.: 17). He furthermore sees it as his father's responsibility to use his influences and money to sort out crimes he has committed ("That's what dads are for" [ib.: 96]). His father Jagannath, is not a whit better than his son and involved in a multitude of crimes. He only thinks about stopping his son when he sees his political career affected by his son's behavior (ib.: 247; 263). Vis-à-vis the impossibility to hold Vicky accountable for his crimes, the investigative journalist-cum-narrator sees vigilantism as the only way to restore justice. He decides to kill Vicky and justifies that "[t]here are occasions when murder is not only justified, it is necessary. [...] In killing Vicky Rai I simply did my duty, upheld my *dharma*<sup>95</sup>" (ib.: 550).

As TV journalist Barkha Das observes in the novel, the public perception is that "India's rich and famous have been able to manipulate the law and get away with murder" while "[f]or the common man, it seems, justice is just a dream" (ib.: 446). In spite of the common dichotomy of the powerful upper class vs. the suffering 'common man' that is emphasized in (English language) media in India, it has often been pointed out that this imagined collective community is actually limited to the

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95 Dharma is a religious concept that is difficult to translate, but in this context refers to a religious duty, law or virtue.

middle class. The victims on whose behalf English language media intervene are usually from a middle class background while lower class victims are largely ignored (see Tripathi 2010).

In Hall's *The Case of the Love Commandos*, detective Vish Puri comes across a political scandal in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Puri can trace a link between two main politicians of the state who are involved in various murders. One of them is Baba Dhobi, current Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, who is the son of a laundry man and is thus a Dalit<sup>96</sup> politician who attracts Dalit voters by defaming other groups of society (Hall 2014: 42). While Baba Dhobi strategically uses his background, he is as corrupt and greedy as his established upper-caste opponents. Rather than improving the situation of the Dalits, he is mainly interested in building monuments of himself (ib.: 43). For the upcoming elections, his opponent is Dr. Pal Bandey, a former physician and leader of the upper-caste Brahmin population (ib.: 93). Vish Puri is very skeptical about politicians and observes that

[t]oday's politicians were crude men and women guilty of everything from smuggling to rape and murder. Their route to power was not competence or judiciousness but exploiting caste vote banks. (ib.: 42)

Puri can reveal a link between the two politicians and Kamlesh, a Dalit woman who has recently been killed. He finds out that the three of them used to work at the same hotel, though Kamlesh was fired after Baba Dhobi raped and impregnated her (ib.: 278). Puri is convinced that Baba Dhobi is involved in the murder but when he and Kamlesh's son Ram go to confront him, they are threatened by Baba Dhobi. Dr. Pandey is also present and reveals that they will join forces for the next election (ib.: 254) – which suggests that gaining power is much more important than their caste-based vote banks. Vish Puri and Ram can be freed with the help of Puri's team and reveal that they secretly filmed

96 Hall's novel is largely the only one that highlights caste differences. Dalit is a term for scheduled castes, formerly often called untouchable or castles persons. The more common dichotomy, however, that plays a role in Indian crime fiction novels is usually divisions based on class or partly religious differences.

their visit at Baba Dhobi's house and therefore have their confessions on video (ib.: 259). To be able to hold them accountable for their murder and political fraud, Puri decides to first give the video to the media first and then to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) (ib.: 259). He points out that the video needs to be released first so that "[p]ublic outrage will force them to act" (ib.: 260).

The impact of outrage in (social) media to enforce investigations on the influential political class is also highlighted in Kishwar Desai's *The Sea of Innocence* (2014). Simran finds out that at least two important persons are in some way involved in the disappearance of the 16-year-old British citizen Liza in Goa: Curtis D'Silva, the son of the Goan Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) Victor D'Silva, and the minister Vinay Gupta. Both are involved in a variety of businesses and own hotels, beach bars (shacks) and an offshore casino boat (Desai 2014: 118; 221; 223). She finds out that everyone in Goa is connected and due to this closed system, she has trouble to get access to information:

the shack owners and the locals they hired – the *panchayat* [village council in Hindi] head, the police, the politicians, and even the media – were all closely associated with each other. (ib.: 185)

Even Vishnu, who was falsely accused of raping Liza, is afraid of talking to Simran about the case since he is caught up in the same power structures. Therefore, Simran cannot gather any incriminating evidence and rather has to fear for her own safety. As some point, she is for example drugged and almost pushed down the cliffs at the coast (ib.: 124). Nonetheless, she continues to receive videos from an anonymous number on her phone, one of which show Liza sitting on Gupta's lap and realizes that he is the "master puppeteer" – a missing link between all different agents (Desai 2014: 236).

Simran nonetheless notes that Gupta does not have to fear any consequences:

This man, who had the power to run the government, now demonstrated enough hubris to molest a young girl, knowing he would get away with it [...]. (ib.: 237)

She slowly realized that she had not been hired by Amarjit, a befriended police officer, to find Liza but because some influential persons got cold feet after videos showing Liza being molested were sent to various receivers in politics and the police: “this together led to panic in Gupta’s ranks” (ib.: 330). Simran’s task is therefore more to avoid a bigger scandal that would question Gupta’s role as well as the inaction of the police. Simran slowly finds out more details about Liza’s disappearance which involved her being raped by Gupta as well as by his two assistants Raman and Joseph to cover up Gupta’s involvement. Liza at some point posed a threat for Gupta, they had to get away with her. Her dead body was wrongly identified and then brought to the UK filled with drugs by Curtis D’Silva (ib.: 338). Gupta and D’Silva are both involved in drug smuggling, which is organized by another man who uses young foreign girls as drug mules (ib.: 316). Due to Gupta’s position, it is impossible for Simran to incriminate him directly and she has to use an alternative strategy to get some kind of justice, as will be further discussed in Chapter 5.1.3.

Anita Desai’s second Inspector Gowda novel *Chain of Custody* evolves around a similar topic and deals with human trafficking chains connected to Papanna, a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA). The criminal activities are organized by a corporator or land broker called Sharav Pujary who coordinates the long chain of agents involved. MLA Papanna enjoys a good reputation among his constituency, but shows his true face towards Pujary who is for example asked to organize minor girls for him via his contacts (Desai 2014: 147; 178). Pujary also arranges minor boys as household helps and a young student to placate a lawyer is not ready to sign a contract. Pujary is thus involved in all kinds of crimes and admits that

At first, crime had been his way to survive and make life better for [his wife] Gita. Then it became a profession. And now the rush of it kept him going. (ib.: 177–178)

Pujary has reached a state where he cannot change his profession anymore and is pressurized by the MLA to arrange business deals for him. Pujary himself passes on the pressure to a chain of subordinate agents who for example provide women and children that can be trafficked. Desai's novel thus presents another example of a crime fiction novel that portrays India's political sphere as criminal and focused on personal advantages. As the narrative oscillates between different perspectives and narrators, different persons like Pujary or his handyman Krishna get a chance to speak and reveal a complex chain of custody that creates the demand and facilitates the acts of trafficking. Inspector Gowda and his team are only able to understand small parts of this structure. And while they can save several children and young girls, the prosecution of backers and wirepullers poses a much bigger problem and cannot be solved in the framework of the novel.

#### 4.4.2.4 Political Dimensions of Contemporary Latin American Crime Fiction

Latin American counterparts to the figure of the criminal politician or his offspring are hard to find as politicians hardly figure prominently in any of the corpus novels. In this sense, recent novels make a break with previous works: In contrast to for example the *neopolicial* formula that dominated Argentina's and Chile's postdictatorial crime fiction novels, recent works do not adhere to this form and particularly abandon its political stance (see de Rosso 2014). The political sphere does for example not play a role in Piñeiro's, Krimer's, Ocampo's or Serrano's novels or in Subercaseaux' *La última noche que soñé con Julia*. In various other novels, the depiction differs from earlier works. Compared to the examples in Indian crime fiction that have just been discussed, the Latin American corpus novels hardly ever have politicians at the center of an investigation nor do they focus on depicting a particular political climate.

Among the exceptions is Subercaseaux's *Asesinato en La Moneda*, which is largely set in the Chilean's Presidential Palace. The novel has a political dimension but rather depicts the functioning of the democratic system than politicians who use it for their own benefit. The investigator of the murder of Mariana Alcantára, the subsecretary of the Interior Minister, points at an older case, a series of rapes in Cachagua committed by the "psicópata de Cachagua" 15 years ago (Subercaseaux 2007: 30). Mariana was involved in bringing Lalo Corrales, a man from a family of drug traffickers, behind bars for the rapes, even though it was never completely proven that he was indeed the *psicópata de Cachagua* (ib.: 32). The investigation reveals that Mariana and also the Chilean President Manuel Vazquéz tried everything to avoid a reopening of the case (ib.: 119; 133). While Mariana was worried about her career, the President's interest remains unclear at first. The Interior Minister Bernalles comes to know that Mariana tried to put pressure on the High Court and it turns out that the President's mentally challenged brother is the real *psicópata de Cachagua*. After Manuel Vazquéz caught his brother with blood on his hands, he admitted him to a private clinic. The brother has been the only patient ever since (ib.: 150) – so the President knew that Lalo Corrales was wrongly convicted, but remained silent to protect his political career. While this situation could amount to a political crisis – especially with a view to Chile's history – this is not the case here. As the third-person narrator observes,

[p]or unos momentos fue como si la historia se hubiese devuelto a ese martes 11 de septiembre de 1973. Pero no se trataba de un golpe contra las democracias, sino justamente de lo contrario, era un autogolpe que daba la democracia para fortalecer sus propias estructuras [...]. (ib.: 153–154)

As the scandal becomes public, the President orderly resigns and apologizes (ib.: 165). When he is about to be arrested, however, he shoots himself (ib.: 167). Inspector Bernalles points out that the truth would probably not have affected his career in the long run:

Los pueblos son mucho más inteligentes que lo que sus gobernantes suelen creer, y como están tan acostumbrados a que los políticos les mientan siempre, cuando aparece uno que dice la verdad lo elevan a la categoría de héroe. (ib.: 166)

Therefore, while the President is implicated in the second crime that plays a role in *Asesinato en La Moneda*, his behavior differs significantly from Indian politicians portrayed in the respective crime fiction novels. This novel rather portrays an established democracy with functioning institutions where even the President is not exempted from police prosecutions – which largely differs from for example the Chilean *neo-policial* which often sets out to depict the dissatisfaction and criminal activities of the state and its representatives.

The scandal of the fatal train competitions of minor boys investigated by Verónica Rosenthal in Olguín's *La fragilidad de los cuerpos*, also has a connection to a federal ministry: The criminal activities of Juan García connect to the Argentinean Department for Housing and Environment. As Verónica finds out, the families of boys who died in train competitions are offered social housing schemes by employees of the department (Olguín 2012: 249). Verónica confronts Roberto Palma, who and used to be García's judge in a former trial and works for the Housing Department (ib.: 250). He claims that he wants to give people from the *villas* of Buenos Aires a better life. However, Verónica points out that the government is mainly interested in rebuilding these areas to make profit. While the illegal activities of the Ministry are a big scandal, it is merely a sidetrack of Verónica's investigation that is not examined more in detail. However, it shows how well connected García is: He has all kinds of henchmen as well as people in the political center of power who support his criminal network.

Piglia's *Blanco nocturno* is set in the early 1970s, a period of political tensions before the return of Perón, which reflects in the novel, via topics like currency fluctuations and the closure of factories. The political center of power in Buenos Aires, however, is far away from the village and the Belladonna family, whose ancestors founded the village,

still have an impact on its development. The head of the family, however, notes how neoliberalism weakens their power: “Somos dueños de este lugar desde que se fundó pero ahora se quieren quedar con todo y especulan con los terrenos vecinos [...]” (Piglia 2010: 210). As Juan Caballero has pointed out, “the absent core around which the novel circles is the unknowable and unrepresentable macroeconomic processes by which national politics are made obsolete by transnational capital flows” (2013: 122). Accordingly, it is not a political class which is in power, but another unnamed opaque power that threatens to confiscate a car factory. While the murder victim Tony Durán apparently brought a suitcase of US-Dollars to save the factory, the origin and whereabouts of the money remains unknown. In the absence of any political representative, it could be said that Cueto, the Prosecutor and family lawyer of the Belladona family, increasingly gains influence in the village: He is behind a hedge fund that wants to turn the factory into a shopping mall, controls the police and even sets up farce trials with a predetermined outcome. The political and economic context, however, remains rather vague in the actual plot of the novel and is at best insinuated. Details are mainly given in a variety of footnotes which are discussed more in detail in 5.2.3.

These examples show that not only businesses but also the criminals in Indian and Latin American crime fiction novels follow the logic of neoliberalism: Both focus on a maximization of profits and do not shy away from murder and crimes. In such a scenario, even murder becomes a business opportunity as the appearance of contract killers in various novels suggests. Furthermore, as the multitude of examples summarized in this Chapter illustrate, businessmen, politicians and doctors engage in a multitude of criminal activities and not refrain from murder to achieve their goals or to avoid that others find out about their involvement in illegal businesses. Particularly in India, politicians and functionaries frequently appear and are unanimously portrayed as negative and evil. In comparison, politicians are relatively absent in the Argentinean and Chilean novels. As shown in the case of Subercaseaux’ *Asesinato en la Moneda*, they are portrayed as much

more human and ambiguous characters than their Indian counterparts. Here, it is particularly the figure of the spoiled son of the politician who has become a common trope in recent Indian fiction and movies.

#### 4.4.3 Society Murders and Family Crimes

Crime fiction, especially female crime fiction, has often been used to explore tensions in the private and domestic domains. Indian and Latin American crime fiction is no exception here, as has already been insinuated in this chapter: Subercaseaux' *La última noche que soñé con Julia* for example deals with the break-down of the marriage of Julia García and her husband, which is discussed in detail during the investigation of Julia's murder. While Julia's ex-husband is shaken for being abandoned, it becomes clear that he had a very particular lifestyle that was not compatible with his wife's desires. While dishonesty or unfaithfulness characterize literally all of the protagonists' relationships, Julia is portrayed as the only one who enjoyed a harmonious relationship with her new husband Luciano. An asymmetric and loveless relationship is also described in Subercaseaux' other novel *Asesinato en La Moneda*, in which the victim Mariana is revealed to have had an affair with a doctor.<sup>97</sup> Also in Serrano's *Nuestra Señora de la Soledad*, it turns out that the husband of the disappeared writer Carmen used to betray her with young girls at his weekend house and left her in an unhappy relationship. Also Swaminathan's *The Monochrome Madonna* portrays a highly asymmetric relationship between Sitara and her husband Vinay. While he projects her as his Madonna (Swaminathan 2010: 155), Sitara claims that he is a serial killer and lays out clues to make the police and Vinay himself believe in his double-life. However, it turns out that it was Sitara who led a double life and not only worked for an escort service, but also killed a person – just to see how far she could go.

<sup>97</sup> Shattered relationships and affairs are the scope of various crime fiction novels. In Miguel del Campo Zaldívar's *Sin redención* (2014), for example, a man who finds out that his wife has an affair. As she appears dead in a hotel room shortly after, he starts to investigate not only her death but also their relationship retrospectively.

Particularly in India, conflicts between parents and children regarding the latter's choice of life partners often give reason to conflict and are examined in various novels. In Bhattacharyya's *The Masala Murder*, detective Reema Ray's second case concerns the investigation of the kidnapping of Aloka, the wife of Reema's former boy-friend. Reema suspects Aloka's father behind the kidnapping as he was unhappy with his daughter's marriage. She asks a police officer:

Don't honour killings happen all the time in our country? Isn't that proof enough that parents are sometimes capable of causing the greatest possible harm to their children when they act against the family's wishes? (ib.: 75)

Eventually, Reema reveals that the kidnapping was staged by the couple themselves to extort money from the wife's father. The father, a rich and influential industrialist, tried everything to destroy the marriage (Bhattacharyya 2012: 79). Since both of them had lost their jobs because of the father's interventions and lived in poverty, they considered the kidnapping the only solution to get money to start a new life since Aloka was pregnant (ib.: 249). As the father refuses to pay a ransom and Reema manages to identify their abode, the plan does not work out and both are eventually arrested.

Also Hall's *The Case of the Love Commandos*, sets out with a similar story: One of detective Vish Puri's employees volunteers for the NGO The Love Commandos which helps couples who are threatened by their families. In this case, Tulsi, the daughter of the important landowner Vishnu Mishra is rescued from her family who imprisoned her after they found out that she had started a relationship with Ram, a Dalit boy (Hall 2014: 3). However, while the team manages to free Tulsi from her family<sup>98</sup>, they then find out that Ram has been taken

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<sup>98</sup> Ankush Saikia's novel *Dead Meat* sets out with a very similar scene in which detective Arjun Arora has been hired by a rich real estate developer to find his daughter who eloped with a lower-caste employee (2015: 10–16). He lets the boy run off because the family arrives to avoid that they will beat him up.

away from a safe house where he was waiting. At this point, the actual investigation begins which is supported by Vish Puri. Puri is initially skeptical since he believes that marriage concerns both families:

when it came to marriage, the approval of elders was sacrosanct in his book. It was not just about a girl marrying a boy; on the day of her shaadi [wedding], a bride became part of her husband's family. If she hailed from another community or a totally different caste with a conflicting set of values and habits, what then? (ib.: 27)

Nonetheless, Puri supports the investigation and finds his views on marriage questioned by his friend Dr. Ghosh who suggests that young people should take their own decisions: “The family model is too stifling. You young people are not taught to think for themselves. That’s why we’ve got this paralysis” (ib.: 211).

The misunderstanding of family integrity in Swaminathan’s *I Never Knew It Was You* has already been pointed at earlier in this Chapter with a view to the power of rasiwala (4.4.1). They resituate crime within families who think they have the right to discipline deviant children even when they are adults. The crimes against family members revealed here by Lalli and her team include the imprisonment of a rebellious daughter, the rejection of a homosexual HIV positive son as well as a daughter who married someone from a different religion. While these parents might not actually have killed their children, they basically pronounced them dead and are in Shukla’s opinion the real murderers:

Maybe someone did strangle the girl with nylon rope, but that someone was not the murderer. The old man and his screaming wife – they are the murderers. And where is the law that can make them answer? [...]. In our country, murder is khandani peshha [family business], caste and creed no bar. (Swaminathan 2012: 126)

Moreover, the team is shocked by the complete lack of guilt on behalf of the family and the complicity of society in the crimes. To protect the family's good name in society, parents commit crimes against their children and on top pretend that it was done with the best intentions (ib.: 196). Even Lalli is appalled by "such absolute rejection, such endless cruelty among people who live together" and shocked how society in general silences these crimes:

I think this is sort of crime is unique to our society. Embarrassment is an unlikely motive anywhere else, but in India, it is the main motive for domestic crime. Call it what you want: embarrassment, shame, the dread of being found out, the dread of losing face – all of it stems from a lack of introspection. (ib.: 175)

Confronted with this wall of silence and complicity, Lalli and the police have little chance to prevent or solve a crime. While the solution of a crime is usually especially important for the surviving relatives, in this case, the option is rather to sweep everything under the carpet. The pressure that families face to avoid that someone finds out about a deviant family member generally plays into the hands of the criminal rasiwala who offers easy solutions and the possibility to hand over the responsibility. This makes the rasiwala case "a gruesome domestic cosy of the very Indian kind" in Lalli's opinion that is grounded in wider conflicts in Indian society (ib.: 255).

Particular tensions in Indian society are also hinted at in Salil Desai's *Killing Ashish Karve*, though not reflected on more in detail in the novel. The victim Ashish was killed by his wife and his father-in-law because he was homosexual and the wife was afraid that this might have a bad effect on their son. The root of the problem is that Ashish had to hide his sexual orientation from his family and finally succumbed to his parents' pressure to get married (ib.: 252). While pleasing his mother, this left Ashish and his wife trapped in an unhappy relationship, and as inspector Saralkar points out, "[e]ventually, he paid for this homosexuality with his life" (ib.: 259). These examples show one of the major differences in the depiction of relationships in

Indian and Latin American crime fiction. Chilean novels put a strong emphasis on problematic and unhappy relationships which come to the fore in the context of a criminal investigation. In India, it is usually the suppression and violence within families which are grounded in larger societal norms that are key concerns in the respective novels. In both regions, however, the relationships portrayed are limited to a middle class space.

#### 4.4.4 Conclusion: The Diversification of the Criminal

The detective's antagonist, the criminal, has overall been subject to diversification, as the examples in this subchapter have revealed. The figures largely part from the idea of the deviating individual who can be singled out to restore an interrupted order. Instead, a blurring of the world of crime and the political and economic sphere can be observed and complicate the work of the detective to identify a specific criminal and to hold him accountable. Partly, the complex web or the links between society – especially the so-called pillars of society – and the underworld render the identification of an individual culprit obsolete: The henchman might be caught but the heavyweights and bosses involved in crimes like human trafficking and other forms of organized crime commonly get away. The figure of the *gyotish* (the spiritual advisor) or the *rassiwalla* in Swaminathan's *I Never Knew It Was You* or the master criminal Juan García in Olguín's *La fragilidad de los cuerpos* are just two of many examples of elusive criminals that have been depicted in this chapter. Even if the criminal can be identified, the revelation of complex criminal networks leaves an unpleasant aftertaste in many cases. The fact that doctors like Dr. Ganguly in Desai's *The Origins of Love* take advantage of legal grey zones to make financial profit with surrogacy and embryonic stem cell research or the revelations about illegal drug testing of US Pharma companies in Argentina in Ocampo's *Cobayos criollos* are rather unsettling cases – irrespective of whether the crime investigated is solved. Chandra's *Sacred Games* explores how a criminal organization resembles a capitalist enterprise and similarly produces loyal employees who see crime as a way to comfortably make a living. The novel furthermore humanizes the figure of the criminal

as the gangster Gaitonde is given ample space to recount his own life story. It is rather his spiritual advisor Guru-ji who appears as a manipulative and relentless criminal. *Sacred Games* is thereby only one of many novels which portray gurus and spiritual advisors who profit from the gullibility of their followers and can thereby easily engage in all kind of criminal activities. Similarly, the criminal activities of politicians and their offspring are common figures in Indian crime fiction and often inspired by actual cases in which an influential person cannot be prosecuted in reality because of their power and connections. In the Latin American corpus novels, corrupt politicians or police officers at best play marginal roles. They may have a skeleton on the closet like the figure of the Chilean President in Subercaseaux' *Asesinato en La Moneda* who hushed up his brother's involvement in various rapes, but do not match in any way their Indian counterparts who are actively engaged in various crimes and take it for granted that will never be prosecuted.

A second group of crime fiction novels depict crimes that occur in the private sphere and often connect to the pressure of societal expectations. Salil Desai's *Killing Ashish Karve* who is killed by his family for being homosexual is a prime example here as well as the repulsion of children who do not adhere to their parents' expectations of relationships and sexuality in Swaminathan's or Hall's novels. These cases reveal that the motive of the crime is strongly connected to societal pressures and criticize a lack of public outrage about crimes that are perceived as private issues. These notions once again complicate the solution of the crime: Whether the actual culprit is caught often renders insignificant vis-à-vis the larger explorations of the structural suppression of women depicted in Desai's *Witness the Night* to give just one example. Particularly in the case of the family massacre for which the 13-year-old Durga is blamed, the role of the victim and the role of the criminal are challenged and can hardly be allocated in a traditional sense.

The private spheres depicted commonly deal with the tensions inherent in India's and Latin America's middle class or depict the differences between middle and upper class. The criminals partly have a lower class background as is insinuated for the case of the contract

killer in Meena's *Dreams for the Dying* or the criminals only referred to by number in Olguín's *La fragilidad de los cuerpos*. The murders investigated, however, do usually not occur in an Indian slum or an Argentinean *villa*, but instead in middle or upper class settings.

Furthermore, the criminalization of the 'other' by large shares of society is depicted in various cases: In Swarup's *Six Suspects*, it is the tribal from the Andaman Islands who is initially presented as the murderer. In Supercaseaux' *Asesinato en La Moneda*, the murderer is the Chinese cook Lin and in Piglia's *Blanco nocturno*, it is the Japanese night guard Yoshio who is framed for the murder of Tony Durán. However, these 'outsiders' may be depicted as scapegoats, but their difficulties are not at the center of any of the investigations.

In a second group of novels which depict crimes that occur in the private sphere, murderers are partly family members – though the wire-puller or the tensions out of which the desire for a murder emerges connect to a larger context as for example societal norms and expectations lead to a specific crime. However, the various examples have also pointed out that the criminal cannot always be easily identified – either because no crime has been committed, as in the case of Serrano's novel, or because of the involvement of henchman whose backers or bosses cannot be identified by the detective. Also connections between companies, politics and the underworld often impede that the criminal can be identified and convicted. In terms of the criminals used, a stronger connection to the specific local context can be observed as for example the frequent appearance of spiritual advisors or politicians who see themselves above the law in the Indian context has shown. This observation accounts for a glocalization of the crimes and criminals, who – even more than the detective – are bound to specific local conditions.

## 4.5 Marginalized Detectives and the Multiplication of Plots and Perspectives

While the detective figure is usually the main protagonist around whom the plot evolves and who has the power of interpretation over the crime investigated, a diversification can be noted in this respect. A shift of attention from the detective to the criminal for example can be observed in many thrillers; police procedurals often deal with various crimes at the same time. This challenges the monologist character of the genre according to which the detective eventually silences other voices and establishes the truth (Reddy 1998: 6). This phenomenon can also be observed in various Indian and Latin American crime fiction novels. In this subchapter, novels are examined in which the investigating detective remains a marginal figure. As a transition to Chapter 5, another phenomenon addressed here is the multiplication of plots, crimes or perspectives. This multiplication can be seen as strategies used by authors to modify generic features and connect to the marginalization of the detective: While the detective's interpretation of a crime was previously in the limelight, it is now increasingly replaced by a multiplication of perspectives and plots.

### 4.5.1 The Marginalization of Crimes and Investigators

#### 4.5.1.1 Subercaseaux' Police Investigators: Not at the Center of the Investigation

In both of Subercaseaux' novels, police investigators are employed: Besides the journalist Ignacio who is hired in *La última noche que soñé con Julia* (2012) to look into Julia's disappearance as discussed in 4.2.5, Inspector Heriberto González takes up the investigation at a later stage and both join forces. However, the narrative hardly focuses on González' perspective. Instead, the family scandal unfolds without any intervention from González' side. He has to admit that he does not have any leads and repeatedly points at the singularity of the case:

Es un caso sumamente raro, sale de la norma, si es que se puede hablar de norma, pero, generalmente, cuando desaparece una persona tan abruptamente pronto se encuentra el cadáver, y si no el cadáver al menos un motivo, una pista, una huella. Hemos agotado todos los recursos, hemos hecho lo que normalmente se hace en estos casos [...] Y nada. (Subercaseaux 2012: 199)

González thus continues to interrogate persons in Julia's surrounding, but points out that "ninguno parecía capaz de cometer un crimen o de haber puesto siquiera un dedo encima de Julia García para hacerla desaparecer" (ib.: 198). This includes her ex-husband Jonás which he would usually consider a prime suspect. After talking to him, the inspector wrongly decides to exclude Jonás from his list of suspects (ib.: 197). When González and also the journalist Ignacio are about to give up, they can finally progress in the investigation. González interrogates the gardener which leads to the discovery of Julia's dead body in her own garden (ib.: 231). However, even after the body was found, nobody can be incriminated with the murder. What is particularly striking about Subercaseaux' novel is the constant change of perspectives which gives various protagonists an opportunity to reflect on recent or more distant events that led to Julia's disappearance. Jonás for example is given a voice in ample parts of the novel in which he recounts his vision of his marriage and the separation. In other parts, the deceased Julia summarizes the same events from her point of view. The narrative also includes a leap in time that recounts an older crime: the rape of Julia's mother. While the focalization is constantly changing, it is interesting that the final scene in which the dead body is found and the subsequent arrest of the wrong suspect is narrated from Jonás' point of view – who is actually the murderer. Jonás concludes that "[q]uedé fuera de toda sospecha por la sencilla razón de que ante los ojos del mundo (y del inspector) no estaba en esa fiesta" (ib.: 231). It is thus the culprit who has the final authority over the narrative while the police inspector and the journalist investigator continue to be in the dark. Thus, while two cooperating investigators are employed in *La última noche que*

*soñé con Julia*, both remain rather secondary figures who are unable to identify the murderer and whose investigation is constantly juxtaposed by memories from other protagonists.

Subercaseaux' novel *Asesinato en La Moneda* (2007) partly uses the same strategies: The narrative also shifts between the perspectives of a multitude of protagonists due to which the investigating figures are not at the center of narrative. In *Asesinato en La Moneda*, the investigators consist of a couple, Julieta and Inspector Cabrales, who only play a role in the second half of the novel – after the dead body of the subsecretary of the Interior Ministry has been found in the Presidential Palace. Both investigators were also friends of the victim and at her house on the night of the murder. It is not clear whether Julieta is an official investigator, but she has been working together with Cabrales for a while (ib.: 84) and is the main person who questions persons in Mariana's surrounding on behalf of the police. There are few details provided about the investigators, but it is clear that they are a couple (Subercaseaux 2007: 53). In the investigation, Julieta soon realizes that everyone has something to hide (ib.: 129). She particularly focuses on various staff members at La Moneda. Initially, she has trouble to narrow down the list of suspects as various of them were in the Presidential Palace shortly before Mariana was shot (ib.: 107). Eventually, however, her activities are quite straightforward and expedient as she is able to identify Lin, the Chinese cook of La Moneda, as the killer. The day of the murder, however, is not only reconstructed by Julieta, but also by various other protagonists including for example Mariana and her husband Nicolas. Therefore, the importance of the murder investigation is relativized by the tensions between the spouses, Mariana's affair with a colleague as work, an attempted extortion and the scandal around the *psicópata de Cachagua* rape case and President's involvement.

Subercaseaux' works provide two examples of crime fiction novels in which detective figures investigate, but are certainly not the prime figures around whom the narrative evolves. Vis-à-vis the multiperspectiveness that is grounded in the narrative perspective of third-person narrators with variable internal focalization, their voice is merely one of

many which are juxtaposed by others. The narrative thus gives a more comprehensive picture of not only the investigation of the respective crime but also the larger context. Subercaseaux' novels therefore rather give insights into the betrayal and breakdown of relationships in contemporary Chile. The employment of a third-person narrator with variable internal focalization is a common phenomenon in Indian and Latin American crime fiction, as I have pointed out throughout Chapters 4.2 and 4.3. This focalization is predestined for multiplication of voices and perspectives that relativize the point of view and power of the detective. Furthermore, this device also helps to build up tension and suspense as the focus changes from one protagonist to another. While classic crime fiction advocates a fair play for the detective and reader in the sense that both are supposed to have access to the same sources, it is the reader here who has an advantage in various novels: He has access to information provided by various protagonists which do not share their information with the detective.

#### 4.5.1.2 The Exploration of Uma's Multiple Identities in CK Meena's *Dreams for the Dying*

CK Meena's *Dreams for the Dying* shows various similarities to Subercaseaux' novels as the investigation of the murder of Uma fades into the background vis-à-vis her personal life (see Chapter 4.1.8). While the police officer S.I. Mageshwaran is a dedicated police inspector who is eventually able to catch the murderer, this is a mere coincidence and not of major importance. The highly fragmented narrative moves back- and forward and recounts various stages of Uma's life from her childhood to her marriage and the meetings of two further men from Uma's perspective. The narrator recounts for example that "Uma wanted to be reborn in this life [...]. Try on various identities like a dissatisfied shopper at a clothing store" and wanted to bring out "the women inside a woman" (Meena 2008: 226–227). Various sections therefore focus on the thoughts and convictions about which Uma had never talked to anyone. Via the different relationships, she for example learnt more about her own body and her own sexuality:

With Shashi, she did not know she had a body. With VK, she became aware that she had one. But she had kept her mind to herself with both men. To Bharat her body and mind spoke with equal lack of hesitation. (ib.: 229)

Besides Uma, another female figure called Parvathyamma appears in the novel. She is an old woman who does not know Uma but has feverish dreams in which she sees scenes from her youth and from Uma's life. She for example remembers a meeting with a man on the train when she was young and relives different fragments of the scene (ib.: 23; 147). The old woman frequently sees herself in Uma's place in her dreams (for example ib.: 187). At some point Parvathyamma realizes that her dreams are visions of real events: "For the first time Parvathyamma realized that the people she saw could be real ones and not phantasms, that the events she 'dreamt' were simultaneously taking place in actuality" (ib.: 143). These dreams make Parvathyamma look back on her own life and she laments that "hers was such an ordinary life" as a mother and housewife (ib.: 41). Also her daughter Sharada, the only person which whom Parvathyamma interacts outside of her dreams, has faced difficult situations due to patriarchal society: She had to endure a marriage with an alcoholic husband for ten years and faced the shame for being a divorced woman afterwards (ib.: 47). When Uma is murdered, Parvathyamma also feels a hand around her neck and recognizes the murderer, while she herself also dies (ib.: 218). Thus the very different lives of two Keralite women from different generations and their deaths are juxtaposed in the novel and challenges women face to lead a self-determined and satisfied life are thus the pressuring issue of the novel. It is not surprising that all male figures become ever more silent and notice that they have failed to understand Uma (see Chapter 4.1.8). According to Vijaya Venkataranam, *Dreams for the Dying* exposes "how women are rarely able to live their lives the way they want, and hence, take recourse to scheming and plotting in order to give meaning to their existence" (2015: 90).

### 4.5.2 A Multiplication of Plots

Subercaseaux' and Meena's novels have already insinuated that the criminal investigation by the detective has ceased to present the only organizing principle of the plot and new spaces have emerged to address other topics and concerns that in some way connect to the investigation. Partly, this results in a multiplication of plots, which can be best exemplified by Swarup's and Chandra's novels.

The stories of the six suspects in Swarup's eponymous novel, their connection to Vicky Rai and their motive to kill him are successively explored in three parts of the novel entitled "Suspects", "Motives" and "Evidence" (Chapter 2–19). The suspects are highly heterogeneous and include the Bollywood actress Shabnam Saxena, a US-citizen called Larry Page who is constantly mistaken for the founder of Google, the petty criminal Munnar Mobile, the tribal Eketi, Vicky's father Jagannath Rai and Mohan Kumar, a retired politician who thinks he is a reincarnation of Gandhi (see Summary in Chapter 7.1). Therefore, the novel consists of six largely independent plots framed by the narrative of the murder and its investigation. While a relation to Vicky Rai is the main connection between the six individuals, the stories are furthermore connected by random parallels. The US-American Larry Page for example initially comes to India because he falls for a scam: While looking online for a bride in India, he chats with someone who sends him pictures of Shabnam Saxena, a famous Bollywood actress (ib.: 269ff.). His intents to get close to her initially fail, but eventually she agrees to go with him to the US after the murder as part of a witness protection program (ib.: 511).

The six plots touch on basically every hotspot of contemporary India: terrorism in Kashmir, the suppression of tribal groups on the Andaman Islands, violent Naxalite<sup>99</sup> rebels in Jharkhand, exploitation and molestation of women, illegal hunting of protected animals in Rajasthan or the Bhopal disaster. The list is so extensive that it is not surpris-

<sup>99</sup> The term is explained in footnote 36.

ing that Rositta Joseph Valiyamattam has referred to Swarup's novel as a "Kaleidoscopic portrait of twenty-first century India" (2016: 184). More skeptical voices like Hirsh Sawhney (2008) have criticized the "superficial, encyclopaedic reading" of the myriad of problems which are mentioned *en passant* but cannot be discussed in detail in the novel.

This accumulation of events is only surpassed by the various plots in Chandra's *Sacred Games*. Beside the investigation of Sartaj's suicide in a nuclear-safe house in Mumbai which alternates with Gaitonde's own account of his life, a multitude of other criminal investigations and various additional chapters called insets add further plots to the complex and extensive novel. Besides searching for clues about Gaitonde's suicide, Sartaj is similarly confronted with various other unconnected crime cases: He unofficially investigates on behalf of a woman who is blackmailed for having an affair and eventually discovers that her lover is the blackmailer (Chandra 2007: 761). In other cases, he investigates a murder in a Bangladeshi neighborhood (ib.: 912) or he teaches two boys a lesson who molest girls in a poor neighborhood (ib.: 211). These additional cases show the multitude of crimes occurring in Mumbai with which Sartaj is confronted on a daily basis and which also correspond to the characteristics of the police procedural. However, these cases are comparatively small and considered everyday events compared to the eminent threat of a nuclear bomb that overshadows the other investigations.

The insets furthermore establish a connection between political and religious tensions of Mumbai in the 1990s and the violence of the Partition as well as the ongoing deprivation in rural India. The inset "A House in a Distant City" goes back to the childhood of Sartaj's mother Prabhjot which had to flee during the partition from current-day Pakistan. The Chapter recounts how Prabhjot experiences the tensions that are building up their parents decide to flee to India. During their flight, their car is attacked and one of her sisters is taken away (ib.: 199). The family was never able to find out what happened to her. While the mother never talks about these traumatizing events to her son, this experience reflects in her negative attitude towards Muslims.

Another inset, “The Great Game”, deals with K.D. Jadav, a former member of the Indian intelligence agency Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on his deathbed. Jadav is unable to control his memories and mixes up various stations of his life which include most of India’s conflicts and wars since independence. He remembers various postings in Naxalbari, Kerala, Bangladesh, London, Delhi, Bombay, among others, and conflicts in which he has been present like insurgencies in the North-East, the Sino-Indian war in 1962 and the Indo-Pakistani war of 1971 (ib.: 312; 317; 322). This highly fragmented retrospective suggests that Jadav – and postcolonial India – has at some point constantly experienced situations of conflict. Jadav was also Gaitonde’s contact in Delhi; both exchanged information and mutually benefited from each other, which is why Anjali tries to get more information from Jadav after Gaitonde’s suicide.

A series of five smaller insets adds further stories to the plot, such as for example the difficult life of Aadil Ansari, son of a poor family from Rajpur who has to undergo an enormous struggle to get an education and eventually joins the Naxals<sup>100</sup> to fight feudalism (ib.: 899). Disillusioned with their methods, he becomes a criminal on the move and commits a robbery which is later investigated by Sartaj (ib.: 914). Another important storyline deals with Major Shahid Khan, a conservative Muslim and member of the Pakistani intelligence agency posted in London and later in the US, who tries to destabilize India from outside. However, as a final scene that focuses on his family reveals to the reader, his dying mother is actually Prabhjot’s long-lost sister Navneet who had to pretend to be Muslim all her life. This awareness is only opened up to the reader and not to the protagonists. In the inset, Khan’s daughter Sharmeen hears her grandmother talking in a different language and in which the grandmother mentions her sister Prabhjot’s nickname. Sharmeen then forgets about this incident after her grandmother dies. This revelation, however, challenges the foundation of the animosity between both countries as it turns out that the

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100 The term is explained in footnote 36.

officer of the Pakistani intelligence agency is actually a son of a Sikh woman. Furthermore, this inset provides a solution – at least to the reader – for a case whose investigation has been abandoned long before.

Swarup and Chandra have amplified the crime fiction novel by including the stories of various suspects or subplots and insets in their novels. These strategies depict larger networks and elaborate on asymmetric connections between individual protagonists and cases but establish a connection between the individual crime and other events and conflicts in postcolonial India. As two authors who have made a name outside India with their previous novels, Swarup and Chandra are often confronted with debates about the exoticization of India for a foreign audience (see Chapter 3.1.5). The complexity of their crime fiction novels can also be read in a way that they take up the common trope of India as a subcontinent that is too complex to capture and can only be depicted in plurality. These efforts are frequently linked to a search of the ‘big Indian novel’ that international publishers are apparently looking for. Writer Suneta Gupta refers to this search in an interview:

The fundamental expectation has been that a big Indian novel could be found that would somehow express the essence of India and deliver it to a Western audience. [...] Trying to ‘understand’ India has become a global preoccupation. (Suneta Gupta, quoted in Lee-Potter 2017: 155)

The term ‘big Indian novel’ fits for Swarup’s and Chandra’s novels in terms of the extension of the narrative and the inclusions of a multitude of topics. This is, however, only one possible reading of their novels. On a different note, both novels can also be read as a maximum deviation of the generic formula of crime fiction: While both novels can still be considered part of the crime fiction genre for adhering to certain characteristics (the focus on one dominant investigation, the presence of an investigator), they have come a long way from the pseudonorm of the classic British crime fiction novel.

This final subchapter of Chapter 4 provides a transition to the analysis of generic conventions and other characteristics of the corpus novels in Chapter 5. A joint conclusion for both analytical chapters has been

included in the final Chapter of the thesis (see Chapter 6.1). Thereby, observations from Chapter 4 and 5 can be connected and observations based the development of the genre and current trends in Indian and Latin American literature in general can be added.

## 5 The Modification of Generic Conventions and Other Characteristics

The analysis of the detective figures and criminals in the last Chapter has already brought to the fore various characteristics of and differences between Indian and Latin American crime fiction novels. In this chapter, I will look at various other strategies applied by writers to appropriate the genre and particularly alter plot elements. The multiplication of plots is one strategy that has already been elaborated in Chapter 4.5. In the following subchapters, four other strategies will be discussed including the problematization of aspects like closure and solution (5.1) and the use of intertextual and metafictional references in the corpus novels (5.2). In Chapter 5.3, I will briefly look into a set of topics like consumerism and technology as aspects that shine through in a variety of novels and are closely related to the effects of globalization in India and Latin America. The relation between crime fiction and space, or more specifically the depiction of urban spaces will be analyzed in the final Chapter 5.4. In the conclusion in Chapter 6, I will bring the results of both analytical chapters together and show how the various strategies discussed here relate to the overarching questions of this thesis: How does the global circulation effect and alter the genre and its conventions? Are new subgenres or patterns introduced in crime fiction novels from the Global South? In which way do local conditions and realities manifest thematically as well as in the narratives structures?

### 5.1 Declining Crime Solution Rates: Playing with Closure and Solution

Crime fiction in its various subgenres uses highly conventionalized plot structures that include an act of crime, an investigation and a final solution of the crime. This movement from a puzzle to its resolution is one of the most prominent as well as criticized features of the genre: The “impossible solve-rates customary in the genre as a

whole” as well as the speed of the resolution are perceived as unrealistic (Zi-Ling 2015:8). In classic British crime fiction, the entire plot is geared towards the end and all other elements of the plot are subordinated to it. According to Todorov’s theory of the two-fold narrative, the solution is the point when the past – the story of the crime – has been completely reconstructed (1966: 44). The solution represents a return to a status quo that has previously been interrupted by the crime and suggests a circular movement to the moment before the crime was committed or basically an erasure, according to Susan E. Sweeney (1990: 5). It is thus certainly the end that retrospectively gives meaning to the story. The readers’ expectations are also shaped by an expectation of a complete solution and happy end which entails a specific reading mode (Segal 2010: 161). While fears or forbidden fantasies might be addressed via the crime and its detection, the solution is supposed to have a reassuring as well as satisfying effect on the reader. Drawing back on the idea of the reader as a competitor of the detective, the solution also presents the moment at which he/she can compare his/her own assumptions to the detective’s solution (Cawelti 1976: 89). Due to the use of a Watson-figure, the reader can often only follow the action but does not have access to the detective’s thoughts and conclusions. The revelation of the solution then traditionally gives a new perspective and/or incriminates the least likely suspects (ib.: 89).

Due to the important role of the solution, it is not surprising that this element has frequently been challenged by crime fiction writers. The reasons for this may vary, but Indian and Latin American crime fiction provides a multitude of examples of works which do not necessarily lead to closure and a resolution of the crime. Using these examples, I will study how and with which purpose this element has been modified by various writers from both regions. Drawing back on Eyal Segal’s comprehensive article on closure in crime fiction (2010), I will briefly look into the genre’s evolution in terms of closure and solution as a foil for the analysis of these aspects in the corpus novels. The longer history of the modification of the solution in Latin American crime fiction and global tendencies to challenge the restoration of order will also be addressed. This subchapter therefore not only looks into the

characteristics of crime fiction in India and Latin America, but also seeks to address the impact of these modifications of the conventions for the genre in general.

H. Porter Abbott distinguishes end and closure in narrative texts and points out that closure in principle occurs when one's expectations are fulfilled and all questions answered (2008: 58). This is a rather complex issue in narratives:

[t]he term 'closure' can refer to more than the resolution of a story's central conflict. It has to do with a broad range of expectations and uncertainties that arise during the course of a narrative and that part of use, at least, hopes to resolve, or close. (2008: 57)

As closure is something readers look for in narratives, writers have the power to fulfil but also to frustrate this desire. Therefore, it is often a lack of closure that characterizes the narrative. This lack creates suspense or surprise, while a narrative necessarily ends at some point (ib.: 57; 62). Eyal Segal also elaborates that while the end of a story may merely refer to the unavoidable "textual termination point", closure signifies a specific effect of stable conclusiveness or finality which requires certain strategies (Segal 2010: 155). In classic British crime fiction, the solution coincides with the end of the narrative and refers to the revelation of the culprit via an interpretation of the clues gathered during the investigation. This explanation is usually resumed in a specific format as a kind of lecture given by the detective in the presence of all suspects which leads to the subsequent confession of the accused (ib.: 170). The apprehension and the trial of the culprit, by contrast, usually occur after the end of the novel and are not portrayed. Closure therefore stands in a close relation to the entire text and means a full disclosure of all information required to fill the gaps in the narrative which Segal regards as crucial for crime fiction (ib.: 156). In accordance with the exigencies of the genre, it is unlikely that this event occurs long before the end of the novel as this would nullify the suspense created via gaps in the narrative (ib.: 162). Narrative openness, by contrast, means that significant gaps are not closed by the

end of the narrative. Segal suggests not to see openness and closure as binary terms but advocates a perception of these terms as a “finely gradated and multidimensional continuum” (ib.: 162). He points out that closure might also be achieved when the solution is revealed only to the reader even though the investigation fails and the crime remains unsolved for the detective (ib.: 167).

While the investigation suggests a myriad of possible solutions, the solution of the crime by the detective means the establishment of a single truth and thereby reflects that “there is always a manifestation of power” – not only behind every crime, but also behind every solution (Lockhardt 2004: xii): It is the detective’s solution that is unambiguously the correct one (Cawelti 1976: 89). The ending and ceremonial revelation of the criminal in classic British crime fiction partly loses importance with the emergence of other subgenres and their specific narrative strategies. The subgenre of the police procedural for example is often narrated from the point of view of the detective, which makes it easier for readers to follow his/her reasoning. Furthermore, the solution is usually reached via routine procedures rather than by the detective’s genius, which has specific consequences for the outcome of the investigation (ib.: 182–183). Also in hard-boiled novels, the focus is usually on the relations between protagonists rather than on the solution itself (ib.: 188). Along with the diversification of the genre, central elements that have been modified by authors are issues regarding ending, closure and solution. Strategies vary for example between not providing any solution to suggesting too many (Segal 2010: 190). It is particularly the non-solution of the investigation and the non-identification of the criminal which is a typical feature of the genre (ib.: 189). The juxtaposition of multiple viable solutions creates doubts about the veracity of all of them. The failure of the detective in these novels is thereby usually related to the specific context in which they investigate (ib.: 205).

The avoidance of closure and the use of more ambiguous endings are frequently used strategies with which writers adapt the genre for their own agenda. Simple and straightforward solutions and the singling out

of an individual criminal are commonly not seen as realistic by writers and readers alike. Often, it is society in general that is presented as criminal rather than individual actors – as has already been pointed out for the corpus novels in Chapter 4.4. Nonetheless, the modification of the end and closure are effective because of the readers' familiarity with the highly conventionalized plot structure of the British model. *Vis-à-vis* this model, the modification is perceived as an act of deviance. Therefore, even though closure and solution in crime fiction have frequently been questioned, it continues to be perceived as a break with the generic conventions. By altering this crucial element authors question the possibility and state of justice, laws and ethics or complicate the notions of truth. A return to a status quo is often nor desired nor is a complete restoration of public safety possible, as I elaborated for the case of many female crime fiction writers in Chapter 4.1.

This observation has often been made for postcolonial crime fiction where the lack of closure is seen as “[going] beyond binary constructions and hegemonic schemes which dominate postcolonial discourses” (Alexander 2006: 158). This also accounts for the wider corpus of crime fiction from the Global South that does not necessarily follow a postcolonial agenda. Often, those in power can influence investigations and cannot really be prosecuted. Sam Naidu has also pointed out that readers are confronted with “visions of social disorder as a result of beleaguered histories, urban dystopia, and endemic corruption” rather than with a solution to a crime or problem (Naidu 2016: 5). The focus is thus not on the revelation of the criminal – who is sometimes known from the beginning – but on the roots of specific problems and complex social relations (Rosell 2001: 95). Examples of unsolved or only partially solved cases are manifold in analyses of Latin American and Indian crime fiction novels: As for the Indian context, the murder in Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1995) remains unsolved (see Lauder 2009: 47) and also in Vikram Chandra's story “Kama”, Sartaj is unable to hold the murderer accountable (see Chapter 4.3.2). The line “Sartaj knew that nothing was finished” in the stories' last paragraph (Chandra 2007 161) strongly collides with Eyal Segal's observation about the stable conclusiveness or finality that usually charac-

terizes closure in crime fiction (2010: 155). Also in Latin America, the non-solution of the crime is characteristic for earlier crime fiction novels as Amelia Simpson already pointed out in 1990:

The modification of one basic convention of detective fiction is the key to a number of Latin American works. Instead of proceeding from the riddle to its cipher, the sequence is purposefully interrupted by the suspension of the solution. This narrative strategy is adopted in order to project a view of society unlike that expressed in conventional detective-fiction models. (Simpson 1990: 139)

Writers often replace the comforting solution with a disturbing one: They portray “a system in which violence is naturalized”; the result is thus a new kind of circular character of crime fiction novels: The investigation continues incessantly but goes nowhere (Simpson 1990: 145; 155). This partly matches the subgenre of the anti-detective or meta-physical detective novel (see Chapter 2.3.1). However, the Latin American authors Simpson studied like Picardo Piglia or Juan Pablo Feinmann focus more on specific social issues than on philosophical and aesthetic concerns (Simpson 1990: 156). In Piglia’s short story “La loca y el relato del crimen” (1975), the real solution of a crime discovered by Emilio Renzi is suppressed because it does not match the official solution.

The modification of the solution is frequently used to question the possibility of truth and justice. In a context where the revelation and punishment of a culprit turn out to be impossible, this strategy also points at the consequences of structural violence (Adriaensen/Grinberg Pla 2012: 12). As Rosa Pellicer (n.d.) also underlines, the solution of the crime often has nothing to do with the detective’s skills and knowledge. Cases are solved by accident in some cases, while a solution is completely omitted in others.

### 5.1.1 *Blanco Nocturno*: A Prime Example of Piglia's Paranoid Fiction

Piglia's 2010 novel *Blanco nocturno* bears close resemblance to his 1975 short story "La loca y el relato del crimen" in the sense that once an official solution has been established by those in power, it is impossible for the detective investigators to challenge this version. Again, it is the journalist Emilio Renzi who investigates, partly on the behest of Inspector Croce, who is the actual main investigator in the novel while Renzi appears more like a Watson figure. As I have already discussed in Chapter 4.2.1, Croce is convinced that the Chinese night guard Yoshio is being framed for a murder which he did not commit. Various witnesses claim that they saw Yoshio leaving the crime scene and coincide in their testimonies to an extent that this unanimity raises Croce's suspicion (Piglia 2010: 72). No other suspect is even taken into consideration and Yoshio is quickly arrested. In Croce's opinion, he is a scapegoat who knows too many secrets of the villagers (ib.: 77). The fiscal Cueto tells Renzi that they only lack the confession for a crime of passion that Yoshio has apparently committed because he was in love with Tony Durán (ib.: 111). While the open-and-shut-case seems to be convenient for all, the mistrust towards Croce grows when he does not let matters rest there: He has an arrest warrant for another suspect published in a newspaper. Croce actually solves the case easily and reveals that a jockey called *el chino* was hired as a contract killer and killed Tony to earn money to buy a horse. *El chino* commits suicide, which makes Renzi think that Croce blames himself for his death (ib.: 152–154). While the entire village is surprised that Croce found the murderer, this does not change anything about Yoshio's situation: He remains in prison and even his assigned lawyer recommends him to confess the crime and to serve his sentence (ib.: 172). Cueto uses his influence to have Croce replaced with his assistant (ib.: 165). In this desolate situation, Croce himself resigns and turns himself in to a madhouse.

Even after revealing the murderer, Croce realizes that he does not understand the case completely. He concludes that the murder must be part of a larger conspiracy which in some way connects to the Belladonna family and might merely be a distraction from a different issue (ib.: 178). He calls this a diversionary tactic (“[m]otivación desviada”): “Puede ser que mataron a Tony sin razón, para impedir que se investigara la razón real. Una maniobra de distracción” (ib.: 266). This realization points at another level that needs to be investigated. As the case investigated is only a smokescreen for something else, the investigation raises more questions than it answers.

Rumors have it that the victim Durán brought a suitcase of money to save Luca’s company (ib.: 197), which is not in the interest of those who want to take over the company and turn the area into a shopping center (ib.: 167). Renzi finds out that the prosecutor Croce is the head of a fake financial consortium that bought the company’s debts (ib.: 265). None of these revelations have any impact on the farce trial which takes place at the end of the story. Renzi comments that Luca “estaba perdido antes de empezar” as the judge and most people have set their opinion beforehand (ib.: 275). The trial effectually connects two totally unconnected issues: Luca is forced to blame Yoshio for the murder if he wants to keep the company – though he is one of the few persons who believes in Croce’s solution (ib.: 251). Only then Luca realizes that if he says the truth, he will lose the company and if he accepts, an innocent man will go to jail (ib.: 278). Both protagonists lose in the end: While Yoshio remains behind bars, Luca commits suicide shortly after the trial. The motif of Durán’s murder remains in the dark and loses importance in a setting where everything is pre-arranged (ib.: 286). The person who establishes what is the truth in the village is apparently Cueto. Thus, *Blanco nocturno* gives a vision of truth as a product of power and negotiations that does not necessarily relate to an objective reality which can be accessed via the right combination of clues. This reflection about the subjectivity of knowledge also shines through in Croce’s ideas as he reflects about the impact of different perspectives:

Comprender [...] no es descubrir hechos, ni extraer inferencias lógicas, ni menos todavía construir teorías, el sólo adoptar el punto de vista adecuado para percibir la realidad. (ib.: 143)

He illustrates his theory with an optical illusion that can be seen as a duck or a rabbit depending on the observer's perspective (ib.: 142). Nonetheless, Croce applies the methodology of a detective; he gathers clues, searches the crime scene and interrogates witnesses. But while his investigation is successful, he is doomed to fail as his revelations do not have any effect on the criminal prosecution. While Croce's and Renzi's investigation cannot have an impact on the officially established truth, Renzi nonetheless emphasizes the importance of his work as he is the only person who challenges Cueto's intrigues ("Mientras Croce siga en pie, Cueto nunca va a estar tranquilo" [ib.: 284]). Renzi refers to the concept of "ficción paranoica" (ib.:284), a term which Piglia has already coined in the 1990s to describe a genre that significantly differs from the premises of the classic crime fiction novel. In *Blanco nocturno*, Renzi elaborates that

La historia sigue, puede seguir, hay varas conjeturas posibles, queda abierta, sólo se interrumpe. La investigación no tiene fin, no puede terminar. [...] Todos son sospechosos, todos se sienten perseguidos. El criminal ya no es un individual aislado, sino una gavilla que tiene el poder absoluto. Nadie comprende lo que está pasando; las pistas y los testimonios son contradictorios y mantienen las sospechas en el aire, como si cambiaran con cada interpretación. (ib.: 284–285)

This quote resumes the events and atmosphere in a *mise-en-abyme*-like manner: Nothing is certain and comprehensive; all truths depend on the respective point of view. Renzi also observed beforehand that everyone in the village seems suspicious in some or the other way (ib.: 117). At the same time, nobody is free from being threatened or pursued in some way or the other: The villagers are likely to use Yoshio as a scapegoat because he knows too many secrets about everyone. Cueto is unable to get rid of Croce completely and the latter continues to question Cueto's version of truth. Instead of a clear solution,

any investigation in paranoid fiction necessarily leads to what Piglia terms a “delirio interpretativo” (Piglia 2011: 232): The cause of the crime cannot be deciphered, thus the investigation continues endlessly and leads nowhere. Piglia himself has elaborated on his concept in an interview:

Los crímenes no son individuales, las motivaciones están desplazadas, hay redes, corporaciones, conspiraciones, y el detective privado poco puede hacer frente a esa situación. (Piglia in: Caballero 2013: 127)

While *Blanco nocturno* is considered the novel in Piglia’s oeuvre that is most closely related to crime fiction, it clearly subscribes to Piglia’s concept of paranoid fiction and turns into an epistemological form of inquiry, as will be further elaborated in Chapter 5.2.3 with regards to the use of metafictional reflections.

### 5.1.2 Piñero’s *Betibú*: The Pyramid of Murder

Piglia certainly had a strong impact on various other writers but the complexity of reflections about the possibility of truth and solution in the framework of a crime fiction novel has not been met by any other Argentinean crime fiction writer. In Claudia Piñero’s novel *Betibú*, her connection to Piglia is made explicit in one of her epigraphs in which she cites Renzi’s above-quoted observation about the never-ending investigation in his genre paranoid fiction (Piglia 2010: 284–285). Similar to the situation of Renzi and Croce, the prosecution of a serial murder in *Betibú* turns out to be an impossible endeavor for the investigating trio Nurit, Brena and *el pibe*. Due to the complex structures and closed system of criminal agents, all efforts to incriminate a murderer end in vain and the novel is rather open-ended and highly unsettling. Piñero, as well as Piglia thereby invert the traditional reassuring and order-restoring end of traditional crime fiction novels.

Nurit suspects Roberto Gandolfini, a dubious business developer to be the wirepuller of the series of murders staged as accidents that involve his brother’s college friends. His motif is supposedly a late revenge of

an unpunished rape decades ago which was committed by precisely the men who recently died in these accidents. In a key scene of the novel, Nurit goes to confront Gandolfini, who neither admits nor denies any of her allegations. He admits that the victims all deserved their deaths and that he is alleviated about them (Piñeiro 2011: 318). Instead, he asks for evidence since “en este mundo nada es si no puede probarse” (ib.: 314). He points out that she does not have any incriminating evidence against him nor any sources she could quote: “No creo que pueda usarlo, señora, no hay fuente confiable que pueda citar” (ib.: 317). Instead, he spins her thoughts out and points out – always speaking hypothetically – that as the head of a killing company he would have a lot of power. He starts to threaten Nurit and it turns out that he actually knows a lot about her. He reveals what would be conveniently staged deaths for herself and her friends<sup>101</sup>. Scared by his allusions, Nurit finally leaves his office.

Before that, however, Gandolfini holds a monologue about the role of the murderer within the complex structure of a contract killing:

[...] un investigador, usted, por ejemplo, cree que descubrió al asesino, pero ¿quién es el asesino? ¿El que desea la muerte de otro [...] el que organiza esa ejecución, el que la planea, el que la encubre, el que cobra por el trabajo? ¿Quién de ellos es más responsable? ¿Cómo es la pirámide del asesinato hoy? ¿Quién es en este siglo XXI el verdadero asesino, señora Iscar? [...] ¿Sabe qué respondería yo? Que el asesino es el que queda vivo al final de todo, ese al que nadie pudo matar. [...] Pero él que queda vivo al final, ése es otra cosa, ése sí que tiene poder de verdad. (ib.: 316)

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101 Gandolfini mentions that “Si usted, Betibú, muriera en el country donde está ahora, lo más aconsejable es que fuera por escape de monóxido de carbono.” He also mentions the respective “muertes aconsejadas” for Brena, her friend Paula and Nurit’s two sons – which is the moment when Nurit leaves his office (Piñeiro 2011: 318).

For him, the murderer is the one who remains alive in the end and has the power to determine what is the truth (ib.: 316) – which closely resembles Piglia's *Blanco nocturno*, in which it is similarly Prosecutor Cueto who establishes the official solution of the murder independently from the police investigation.

While everything points as Gandolfini, he cannot be incriminated officially. Gandolfini's idea of the "pirámide del asesinato" is an interesting concept which suggests the presence of various hierarchical levels. While Nurit considers him to be at the top of this pyramid, Gandolfini himself insinuates that this might not be the case: "Todos reportamos a alguien, ¿o no?" (ib.: 315). Also Venturini, the suspicious police officer who appears at various crime scenes outside his jurisdiction and quickly passes off the deaths as suicides, mentions to Brena that he might get orders from a higher level: "Mirá, Brena, a veces tenemos que aceptar nuestras limitaciones, a veces no podemos llegar hasta donde quisiéramos, pero eso no invalida todo lo demás que hacemos" (ib.: 328). The final Chapter of the novel suggests that Gandolfini was probably not the wirepuller at the top: A television program reports that Gandolfini has been shot in his office and once again the police inspector Venturini appears at the crime scene (ib.: 339). This would mean that the murder series might have been instructed by someone on a higher level of the pyramid that Nurit and the journalists are not even aware of. The criminal in *Betibú* is no longer an isolated individual who can be traced and punished, but a member of a complex and impenetrable network. Like Piglia's concept of paranoid fiction, everyone involved is also constantly facing the threat that he might be the next victim and not the one who survives at the end (ib.: 316). Within the framework of the novel, the investigators are only able to reveal the existence of a higher level; however, it is too dangerous for them to investigate further. The question whether the truth can be revealed and justice achieved is rendered obsolete in this context. This kind of metafictional reflection about the meaning of a crime and the roles of its protagonists, the construction of truth as well as the purpose and functions of journalism are central themes throughout the book, as will be discussed further in Chapter 5.2.1.

Nurit and *el pibe* are deeply disillusioned about the course of the investigation. When *el pibe* realizes that after all their efforts, they are unable to write about their findings, he gets very frustrated:

¿Esto es ser periodista? ¿Buscar la verdad, asumir que se la encontró aunque no se la pueda probar del todo, y tener que callarte porque si no, ponés en riesgo tu vida o la de otros? (Piñeiro 2011: 324)

Brena, in contrast, is already used to the fact that journalists often have to be satisfied with having discovered the truth even though they might not be able to write about it and points out that it is not their job to administer justice (ib.: 323). For *el pibe*, however, this is a key experience as he decides to quit his job and to start a web portal for alternative news (ib.: 334).

Nurit, however, finds another way to get some kind of justice. Unable to hold Gandolfini accountable for the murders and unhappy about not being able to tell the truth in her column, she decides to resort to fiction. In her last column, she announces her return to fiction where she can use all the information she gathered as fictional elements of her novel. She points out that

[yo] no soy periodista, soy escritora, puedo contar sin citar fuentes, puedo dar por hecho algo que sólo está en mi imaginación. Es sólo cuestión de llamar a lo que escribo 'novela' en lugar de 'crónica', un detalle casi menor [...]. (ib.: 317)

The novel she starts to write as part of her last column for the newspaper returns to the beginning of the novel *Betibú*. She then creates a circular narrative structure that strongly resonates the never-ending investigation and interpretative delirium of Piglia's paranoid fiction. Nurit states that

puedo empezar una novela cualquiera, la próxima, con una mujer que viene a hacer las tareas domésticas a la casa de alguien como Pedro Chazaretta, por ejemplo [...]. Puedo fingir una investigación, descubrir lazos que nadie

vio con otras muertes, determinar culpables materiales e ideólogos, decir por qué se mató a quien se haya matado. Inventar una y otra vez. Hasta decir, por ejemplo, que las responsabilidades últimas hay que buscarlas en un alto empresario, en un rascacielos, una torre imponente de Retiro, o de Puerto Madero, o en Manhattan. (ib.: 331–332)

She points out that unlike in the real investigation, she has the power over the entire narrative because it is “una realidad que yo inventé. Una novela es una ficción” (ib.: 331–332). However, her publisher does not agree with her point of view and refuses to publish the column. Thanks to *el pibe*, the column is nonetheless shared on social media and reaches its intended audience – a solution which, as the following novel will also underline, is a frequent alternative to achieve some kind of justice or truth in Indian and Latin American crime fiction.

### 5.1.3 Desai’s Simran Singh Novels: Partially Solved, at Best

Kishwar Desai’s three novels are very much in tune with Piñeiro’s novel *Betibú* in the sense that a partial solution or the spread of evidence on social media is the most investigator Simran Singh can hope for in the three cases she investigates. Her cases usually turn out to be merely the tip of the iceberg of a much wider network of criminal activities. Confronted with the organized crime or institutionalized criminality, Simran had to apply alternative strategies to make sure that some form of justice is done.

In *Witness the Night*, Simran’s own investigation of the imprisoned Durga is juxtaposed with diary entries written by Durga herself. Simran, in contrast to the reader, only has access to the diary entries at a much later stage of the investigation. Neither the diary nor Simran’s investigation reveal the identity of the murderer. Simran notices that nobody is interested in revealing the truth but that several people including the police inspector Ramnath Singh profit from using Durga as a scapegoat. He is for example interested in buying the family’s house. Also Harpeet, a former tutor who impregnated Durga’s sister,

is on Simran's list of suspects but cannot be incriminated. In a kind of final showdown, Simran makes a deal with Ramnath and Harpeet in the presence of a director of a mental hospital in which Durga has been locked up. Together with the journalist Gumrit, she threatens to give Durga's diary to the media and to charge Harpeet for raping Durga (Desai 2010: 278–279). He also warns the director of the scandal that the news would provoke for the hospital. Simran thus demands them to release Durga and to drop the case due to the lack of evidence (ib.: 278). As all charges against Durga are dropped, Simran takes Durga with her to Delhi (ib.: 279) – a solution which Simran calls “the negotiations of a normal Indian life” (ib.: 281). It remains questionable whether this case is solved with this act of negotiation, but at least Durga is saved. Simran decides for herself that she will not ask Durga about the night of the murder. Instead, she considers it a kind of closure not to confront her with the event anymore (ib.: 288).

In Simran's investigation of an HIV-positive surrogacy baby in *Origins of Love*, she is unable to hold Dr. Ganguly accountable for the deaths of the baby's parents and a variety of other illegal activities. In a confrontation with the owner of the hospital where the baby was born, Dr. Ganguly pulls off an “Oscar-worthy performance” and provides an explanation for each accusation against him (Desai 2013: 455). While there is hardly any incriminating evidence against him, he threatens to take down the hospital if they take action against him (ib.: 459). He suggests that the surrogate mother could have contracted the HIV infection at the hospital and not because of his mistake (ib.: 459). The clinic owner can thus only let him go as a police investigation would mean bad publicity for the clinic. Once again, Simran is outraged that Dr. Ganguly gets off scot-free: “Why were people such complete bastards. He deserved to be hanged and quartered – and he was a *doctor?*” (ib.: 460). She has an idea how to punish him nonetheless: Since the clinic recently helped the female Health Minister to create an offspring with a surrogate mother, Simran suggests to call her and to tell her about the whole incident. While a criminal prosecution is once again out of question, the Health Minister easily has the power to have Ganguly's license revoked and to raid his private clinic without the

clinic's owner being implicated (ib.: 461). It is once again an alternative solution based on contacts and favors that makes it possible for Simran to achieve some kind of justice even though it is unlikely that Dr. Ganguly will have to face the consequences of all his criminal activities.

The difficulties Simran faces in *The Sea of Innocence* to prosecute Vinay Gupta, an important politician, and Curtis D'Silva, the son of a local politician, for their involvement in drug trafficking and the death of Liza Kay have already elaborated on in Chapter 4.4.2: Simran actually realizes that she has not been hired to identify the murderer but to find out who has been sending incriminating videos and emails from Liza's account to various senders. While Simran cannot directly accuse Gupta and D'Silva as they have all possibilities to stop an investigation against them, she comes with an alternative strategy to incriminate Gupta: Simran and her companion Dennis make sure a video of Vinay Gupta and Liza is shared on social media. The evidence turns into a self-runner:

[...] the video of Vinay Gupta in which he had a very young-looking Liza on his lap went viral, especially in Chandigarh and the rest of his constituency. Within hours it was trending on Twitter and had a whole Facebook page dedicated to it, where people wrote and condemned it in no uncertain terms, saying it was absolutely sickening to see a senior minister behaving in such an appalling fashion. (Desai 2014: 353)

Without any involvement from Simran's side, Vinay Gupta is prosecuted for child abuse and has his passport impounded, which also means the end of this political career (ib.: 353). Nonetheless, neither he nor D'Silva have to must face consequences for Liza's as well as another employee's deaths. This once again leaves Simran deeply saddened about the state of justice in India: "Perhaps one day this country would finally get better policing and a better justice system" (ib.: 355).

All in all, the balance of Simran's three cases is rather negative: While she is always able to get behind the larger picture that connects to the actual case she is asked to investigate, a straight-forward solution of the case and official prosecution of the criminal is not possible in any of the three cases. The complex network of agents involved in the crime – including politicians, doctors or the police – requires alternative strategies to get some kind of justice. Simran, who is rather fearless despite the dangerous situations she is facing, nonetheless always finds an alternative way to avoid that the criminals get away. The use of her negotiation skills or social media are efficient measures that serve their purpose for Simran and are also strategies used by other Indian and Latin American authors.

#### 5.1.4 Wrong Confessions and Crimes Left Unsolved in Nair's, Serrano's and Krimer's Novels

In Nair's second Inspector Gowda novel, Gowda and his team are unable to solve a crime and incriminate the culprit because an innocent man voluntarily confesses a crime he has not committed.<sup>102</sup> While Gowda is aware that Pujary, a man who takes care of dirty deals of a politician, is somehow involved in the case, it is his handyman Krishna who admits that he killed a lawyer. Talking to Gowda, Krishna compares 'his' murder to other murders and concludes that he will not receive death penalty:

This is India. When that man who raped and killed a girl in Kerala, what's his name, Govindaswamy, and that Delhi girl's rapists are still alive, why do you think I'll be hanged? And I confessed on my own and surrendered.  
(Nair 2016: 303)

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<sup>102</sup> In Jerry Pinto's *Murder in Mahim* (2017), the investigators are confronted with a similar situation: An old man falsely confesses two murders. He is convinced that he does a favor to the actual culprit as he believes that he is HIV positive and has nothing to lose. However, once it turns out that this information is wrong, the man revokes his earlier confession.

Even though Gowda realizes that Krishna is not the murderer, his hands are tied; he knows that he will be unable to find and incriminate the actual perpetrator. Gowda directly asks him what really happened though he is aware that this will not change the course of events (“Nothing is going to change. You will go to the gallows or rot in jail” [ib.: 202]). Gowda confronts Krishna with his theory that Pujari’s wife is the murderer. He confirms that and reveals that he thinks this confession will give him power over Pujari in future: “The thekedar [Pujari] will never say no to me again. [...] I have pictures of what happened on my phone and it’s someplace safe. I am the one who can make or break him” (ib.: 306). The wrong confession is therefore almost an investment into a better future for Krishna, who has so far done all kind of odd jobs for Pujari. Especially Gowda’s colleague Santosh is disillusioned about the outcome of their investigation:

The boy goes to jail for a crime he didn’t commit? And that bastard walks free. The lives he had destroyed don’t seem to matter. What are we doing calling ourselves police? We are useless, sir, we are bloody useless. (ib.: 208)

While Gowda and his team are unable to prosecute Pujari’s wife for the murder or Pujari for his involvement in other crimes, the novel’s epilogue suggests that the investigation might not be over completely. Gowda mentions that “[t]here are more ways to skin a cat than one” and the police consults a local newspaper to share their knowledge about Pujari’s intrigues (ib.: 308). The case once again points at the complex power relations which protect those who are under the wings of politicians like Pujari. He profits from working for a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), and cannot easily be accused of crimes he committed.

Another particularly interesting example of an unsolved crime fiction novel is Serrano’s *Nuestra Señora de la Soledad*: Detective Rosa Alvallay finds the missing crime fiction writer Carmen Ávila in Oaxaca, Mexico, where she lives under a new identity, but consciously decides not to solve the crime. Rosa then opts for female solidarity and decides not to give away Carmen’s abode. She strongly identifies with Carmen who

dares to leave everything behind as she was unhappy with her marriage and her life in Chile. Rosa thus concludes that if she had dared to start a new life, she would not want anyone to destroy her plans (“yo no quisiera que algún día otra mujer me delatara si en mí se llegara a aventurar la esperanza” [Serrano 1999: 246]). For the detective herself, this is an inconvenient decision as there is much at stake for her. She violates what Shalisa M. Collins has called the “hallmark of her profession, the disclosure of truth” and forgoes the success that the solution of such an important case would have brought her (2012: 79). Nonetheless, she is aware that she has to report to Carmen’s husband about her investigation. Thus, ironically, after having consulted Carmen’s crime fiction novels to gather clues for her actual search for Carmen, Rosa now decides resorting to fiction and wants to invent her own story to close the case. This shows a parallel to Piñeiro’s *Betibú*: When the actual truth cannot be revealed for a specific reason, fiction appears as a viable solution. In the novel’s epilogue, she comments that she has seven hours on the plane “para inventar yo esta vez una novela negra” (Serrano 1999: 255). So once again, truth is a relative term here that is heavily influenced by a detective who makes use of his or her power to establish and spread the truth.

In Krimer’s Ruth Epelbaum series, the culprits hardly ever need to face the consequences for the crimes they committed. This runs like a red thread through the series. In Krimer’s first novel *Sangre kosher* (2010), Ruth finds out that she has been hired to find the disappeared daughter of a man who himself is a member of a prostitution ring (Krimer 2010: 176). However, he dies before Ruth can understand the whole dimension and complexity of the case. She accepts the fact that she will not get all her questions answered: “Todas las preguntas no tenían repuestas. Ninguna respuesta es también una respuesta. *Kain entfer, iz oij an entfer*” (ib.: 180). In the second novel of the series, *Siliconas express*, Ruth reveals that the plastic surgeon Vidal and various other persons are involved in smuggling drugs in breast implants. However, it is initially rather Ruth who suffers: When Vidal catches her sniffing around in his office, he carries out a liposuction without anesthesia and brings her in a life-threatening situation. He only stops when his

receptionist returns unexpectedly (ib.: 168). His clinic is closed, but for a rather mundane reason and not for drug trafficking: the police finds human waste from a liposuction discarded in the normal waste bin (Krimer 2013: 169). Vidal himself has no qualms to leave the country for a workshop in Switzerland. Ruth is convinced that he had managed to get rid of all incriminating evidence in the meantime and thus suggests that he will probably not have to face any more severe consequences for his criminal activities than the closure of his clinic (ib.: 168; 173).

In *Sangre fashion*, it is Ruth's maid Gladys who manages to solve the murder of a model: She secretly checks the mobile phone of the model's twin sister Tamara and finds out via the GPS localization that she was at the crime scene, a fashion show, when her sister got murdered (Krimer 2015: 138). Since both are identical twins with the same DNA, Tamara's involvement in the murder cannot be proven. Her motif is a long-standing rivalry between the twin sisters. Ruth is not completely convinced that Tamara is the murderer but refrains from pursuing the investigation any further:

No hay pruebas que incriminen a Tamara. Toda búsqueda de justicia, todo intento de reparar errores es considerado como la restauración de un orden ideal, de un pasado perfecto. Sólo que acá no hay nada más que investigar, todo está hecho. [...] es bueno sentir que hay casos que es mejor dejar sin resolver. (ib.: 139)

In this quote, Ruth directly challenges the ideal that closure in classic crime fiction requires the identification of the criminal and the restoration of a status quo. In the same novel, Ruth uncovers another scandal in the fashion industry which relates to the owner of an important textile company who employed Bolivian workers in sweatshops in Buenos Aires. The owner will also not be charged: In spite of the testimonies of various workers, he is able to get off scot-free as the workshop was registered under somebody else's name (ib.: 146). However, Ruth's last resort is the media: In the final scene, she decides to give all the

information she has about the sweatshops to a befriended journalist who has been writing about the dark side of the fashion industry for a long time (ib.: 148).

### 5.1.5 Negotiating Truth in Olguín's *La fragilidad de los cuerpos*

Similarly, for Olguín's journalist-detective Verónica Rosenthal, her investigation does not conclude in the revelation of the truth about the mafiaboss García's illegal businesses but rather in the negotiation of the official – and publishable – truth. When García finds out that Verónica makes inquiries about him and his businesses, he arranges a lunch in a restaurant to discourage her from investigating further. He explains her his understanding of different ways of achieving justice: One is via the court, which is usually a cumbersome process with unclear outcomes as judges are easy to influence. The second way is carried out by journalists who “deciden qué es bueno y qué es malo y condenan desde sus publicaciones o medios con total impunidad” (Olguín 2012: 282). He suggests that journalists just invent their own reality and do not have to face the consequences. He thus suggests a middle way: a negotiation which is in his opinion the best solution for both parties:

Hay una tercera forma de hacer justicia que es la de actuar discrecionalmente para que las otras dos formas, o sea los tribunales y los periodistas, puedan hacer su trabajo. [...] Para eso te invité, para negociar. (ib.: 282–283)

He offers her comprehensive material about irregular activities and the embezzlement of funds in the Argentinean Ministry for Housing and Environment under the lead of Roberto Palma in exchange for dropping her investigation about him (ib.: 283). When she rejects this offer, he threatens her: “lamento que no hayas comprendido lo importante que hubiera sido que aceptarás lo que te proponía” (ib.: 284). Verónica experiences soon that these are not empty threats as various contract killers turn up at her home.

After Verónica's failed attempt to catch the organizers of the train competition in the act, however, Verónica visits García in his office to negotiate with him. She shows him material about various fake businesses which she obtained from a fellow journalist and this time, it is Verónica who sets the terms: She demands information about Roberto Palma; Rivero, the organizer of the train competitions and the others who participate. In exchange, she will not mention him and his illegal businesses in her article (ib.: 320). The dimensions of the competitions are however bigger than she expected and García points out that hundreds of followers watch them online. Eventually, he agrees to give her material about various persons as well as video clips (ib.: 320–321). While Rivero is caught by the police, Verónica is eventually able to publish her articles but leaves out García. The novel thus underlines the difficulty to combat organized crime due to García's immense power and connections: As he is prepared to use pressure as well as violence, it takes a lot of courage to investigate against him. Eventually, Verónica is unable to report the whole truth and the final result is a product of negotiation – which closely resembles Desai's *Witness the Night*. Even though the detective interprets clues correctly, he or she might not be able to make results public due to various constraints. The resolution is thus a question of power negotiations in which the detective can use his or her knowledge to get a better position in the negotiation. Nonetheless, a small hope remains that García might not be able to get away completely: While Verónica keeps her promise not to connect García to the train competitions, she hands over all her material about García to a journalist she knew who has been following his activities for years.

The complex network and power of organized crime also impedes a complete solution in Swaminathan's *I Never Knew It Was You*. As I have already discussed in Chapter 4.4.1, Lalli is unable to catch the criminal, a *jyotish* who advises desperate family members to kill and runs a gem fraud company as a side-business which claims to convert human ashes into diamonds. This *jyotish* is difficult to catch: Lalli differentiates here between the murderer – the *jyotish* – and the killer who executes instructions of the former. While Lalli is able to reveal the killer, she fails to get hold of the murderer and points out that “each

time I've got the killer only to discover he was a murderer's stooge" (Swaminathan 2012: 87). Therefore, *I Never Knew It Was You* remains rather open-ended; the restoration of order and justice is very questionable as the actual wirepuller has not been caught and will continue with his activities.

Besides these various examples of unsolved or only partially solved novels, there are also examples of cases in which the reader is the only one who comes to know who is the murderer while the detective figures remain in the dark. One example is Subercaseaux' novel *La última noche que soñé con Julia*. While the novel ends with the discovery of Julia's dead body, the solution of the murder is provided by her ex-husband Jonás: He admits to the reader that he secretly came to Julia's party and pushed her during a fight. Due to this push, Julia falls down a slope in the garden and Jonás buries her dead body in her own garden. He has nothing to fear since both detectives excluded him from their list of suspects at an early stage of the investigation. While he is about to go to the police to make a confession in the last chapter, he nonetheless changes his mind and returns home. His last statement is that "[1]a vida continuaría y yo atrapado en ella" (Subercaseaux 2012: 238). Thus, the murder remains unsolved on the level of the detection and only the reader has access to the right solution.

In Swarup's *Six Suspects*, it is similarly the reader to whom the narrator of the final Chapter confesses that he killed Vicky Rai. This is a surprising move as the novel extensively discusses the background and motives of the six suspects that were arrested at the crime scene. The real murderer is not among them: As I have already elaborated in Chapter 4.2.4, the murderer is an investigative journalist whose identity remains unclear. He does not appear on the police's list of suspects since he was not in any way connected to Vicky and does not have a motive in the eyes of the public. He presents himself as the "consciousness of Indian middle class" who is annoyed with the impunity of the rich and influential who get away with any kind of crime. He blames society in general for being "complicit in the act through our conspir-

acy of silence and our tolerance of injustice” (Swarup 2009: 535) and saw vigilantism as the only way to punish Vicky after the state has failed.

### 5.1.6 Successfully Solved or Accidentally Closed Cases

As this myriad of examples have shown, end and closure are among the most common elements altered by Indian and Latin American authors. However, it must also be noted that these cases are juxtaposed by a long list of works whose endings are largely in accordance with the exigencies of classic crime fiction. In these cases, a complete solution provided by the detective creates the effect of closure as the criminal has been singled out and the meaning of the narrative has been established. This is particularly true in the case of Salil Desai’s *Killing Ashish Karve*. The murder of Ashish Karve can be completely solved and explained by the police inspectors Morante and Saralkar. They are able to reveal in a final confrontation that the victim Ashish’s wife and her father killed him because he was homosexual. Likewise, Nair’s first Inspector Gowda novel *Cut Like Wound* culminates in a conviction of the murderer, during which Gowda’s colleague Santosh is almost killed. In Bhattacharyya’s *Masala Murder*, the young detective Reema Ray gains self-assurance via the solution of two criminal cases, as I have already discussed in Chapter 4.1.2. Besides *I Never Knew It Was You*, detective Lalli can easily solve any other case with which she is confronted in Swaminathan’s series: In *The Monochrome Madonna*, for example, Lalli knows from a very early stage that Sitara is trying to blame her husband for a murder she committed herself and calls it a case of “Pure Crime. Crime for crime’s sake” (Swaminathan 2010: 203). Lalli is able to see through Sitara’s act of staging and reveals to her in the final denouement that she “knew long before [...] that the body in your living room was *not* the real crime. It was merely an opening gambit” (ib.: 242). Due to Lalli’s skills, she can easily convict Sitara and have her arrested while the larger implications of Sitara’s incrimination of her husband are not discussed.

Tarquin Hall's novel *The Case of the Love Commandos* also fits in this category: Though social criticism is a major topic in his series, this agenda does not have an impact on the ending and closure of the investigations: Detective Vish Puri saves a young Dalit chased by his girlfriend's rich family and he also uncovers a political conspiracy. The plot is furthermore framed by another case which Puri is initially unable to solve. In the first chapter, he mentions an unsolved robbery in the house of a rich Jain family in Delhi. After meeting a Vaasthu<sup>103</sup> practitioner at the house of the politician, he gets the idea that the Jain family might have hired a Vaasthu practitioner as well to rearrange their house. This leads him to the solution of the robbery: As all birth and anniversary dates were required for the practitioner's calculations, it was an easy game for him to find the code of the family's safe.

Chilean crime fiction also provides various examples: In Subercaseaux' *Asesinato en La Moneda* and Valdivia's *Un crimen de barrio alto*, the murderer can finally be convicted and arrested after a cumbersome process of investigation. In Ocampo's *Cobayos criollos*, the detective seems to struggle to advance her investigation, but then eventually provides the decisive clue – which actually only consists of one line and recommends the police to investigate a carpet. With this hint, the police can identify the murderer. By that time, however, the detective has already finished her job and moved on to the next case and does not follow up on the case:

En realidad me olvidé bastante rápido de todo este asunto. Ni siquiera le presté mucha atención a las posteriores noticias que se contradecían continuamente. Otro cadáver me esperaba a mi regreso. (Ocampo 2015: 238)

In this sense, Ocampo's novel resembles CK Meena's *Dreams for the Dying*: Here, the investigation of the crime is secondary to the revelation of the victim's various identities and the police does not make much progress. That a case can be finally closed and a murderer can be convicted is a mere coincidence: The police inspector S.I. Magesh-

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103 Vaasthu is a Hindu architecture system, like an Indian version of Feng Shui.

waran – who repeatedly complains about the lack of interstate cooperation among India’s police – can finally catch the contract killer because the fingerprints collected at the crime scene in Chennai had been recorded by the police in Bangalore years ago as the killer had been accused of inciting a mob in the past (Meena 2008: 221). From this point on, it is easy for the police to implicate Jyoti, the wife of Uma’s lover Bharat, who hired the contract killer and the police arrest her (ib.: 222).

In Chandra’s *Sacred Games*, the narrative structure and the multitude of different cases complicate the question which is the crime that is investigated and solved. Sartaj underlines that “Detection made detectives look clever, but often solution were gifts from fools” (Chandra 2007: 644). The search for a guru who might be planning a nuclear attack on Mumbai could be considered Sartaj’s major challenge, but loses its importance in the course of the novel. Sartaj gains knowledge about the Guru’s abode not because of his investigation skills but because he brings down his superior Parulkar. This is part of a deal with the underworld lady Iffat-bibi who then provides him with information about the guru. Sartaj is also not involved in the capture of the guru which is carried out by Anjali and a special force. Sartaj is informed afterwards that everyone is safe (ib.: 876). Thus, whether the threat of a nuclear bomb was actually justified and the motives of the guru are not known to Sartaj or the reader. The case leads to Sartaj’s promotion, but this does not suggest that any kind of order is reestablished because the danger of a nuclear bomb has been averted. It is significant that the novel’s last scene is the start of a new day in office for Sartaj which suggests the endlessness of the crimes that need to be investigated (Chandra 2007: 947).

### 5.1.7 Conclusion: Modifying Solutions and Closure

As the analysis has underlined, solution and closure are factors frequently modified and challenged in Indian and Latin American crime fiction novels. Building on the works of scholars like Segal (2010), the question what closure and solution mean in crime fiction can only be

answered clearly with regard to the archetype of the classic British crime fiction novel. In current works, however, the question whether a case is solved or a case is closed by the end of the novel is often not so easy to answer. The determination and identification of the criminal has been complicated by writers (as discussed in Chapter 4.4), and similarly, the solution of the crime has frequently been challenged. The multiplication of plots or the marginalization of the criminal investigation in novels are two strategies used by authors due to which the question of solution and closure become inessential (as in Chandra's and Subercaseaux' novels) or are merely revealed by coincidence rather than through the detective's skills and performance (Krimer; Meena).

In many novels, the crime either remains unsolved or the detective is made unable to share his/her knowledge for various reasons. In general, it is power imbalances between the criminal and the detective that impede the solution of a crime as this would mean a threat for the investigator. Many of the corpus novels subscribe to this logic: Instead of a clear solution of a case, the detective is forced to use alternative ways to get justice by for example contracting own sources or by taking advantage of the media and social networks to increase the pressure (Desai's *Sea of Innocence*, Nair's *Chain of Custody*). In other cases, the 'truth' is a product of negotiation rather than a revelation of the actual events, as has come to the fore in Olgún's or Piñeiro's novels or Desai's *Witness the Night*. Partly, the solution fails due to the scale of the crime and criminal networks involved which may surpass the capacities of individual investigators (Piglia; Piñeiro). Serrano's novel, by contrast is willingly left unsolved in complicity with the disappeared women's desire. Taken together, these examples complicate the issue of closure as they frustrate the reader's expectations of the genre. Solution and closure are replaced with partial or open endings. The detective thereby loses his power as the authority who establishes truth and meaning. Partly, the solution is only revealed to the reader, which further challenges the detective's role and authority (Swarup; Subercaseaux). Other writers, by contrast, adhere to the generic conventions and offer a solution of the crime and closure by drawing back

on plot elements of the classic British novel such as the revelation of the criminal's identity in a final roundup as is the case for Salil Desai's novel or Swaminathan's *The Monochrome Madonna*.

## 5.2 Intertextual and Metafictional References

Intertextuality<sup>104</sup> is a precondition for the definition of genres in general as the possibility to classify a group of texts as a genre depends on recognizable features, similarities and signals in these texts (Nünning 2004: 110). The affiliation of a text with a specific genre thus puts it in connection with a group of texts as well as canonic individual ones which recall Gérard Genette's concept of the palimpsest<sup>105</sup>: While an author might write a new story, these prior texts are not completely erased and continue to shine through. The intertextual connections between texts of a genre create a complex non-linear network between individual works which then in turn can have an impact on literary production in various ways (Wieser 2012: 32–33).

Crime fiction is a prime example here as it is more than other genres associated with a specific plot structure, a set of protagonists and partly also with common settings. This has already been elaborated at various points in the thesis for example with regard to detective figures or the modification of ending and closure. These modifications occur diachronically since genres are subject to continuous historical change and synchronically create for example suspense and surprise. These generic features are often considered exigencies of the genre. They continue to shape the horizon of expectations of readers, writers

<sup>104</sup> I refer to a descriptive approach to intertextuality here as specific and intended allusions used by an author as references to other texts and genres. An open understanding of intertextuality as an ontological term in the sense of Kristeva is not expedient in this context (see for example Nünning 2004: 111).

<sup>105</sup> Similarly, the plot structure of classic crime fiction has been described as a palimpsest. To go back to Todorov's dual narrative structure, the underlying story of the crime that is an absent narrative as the beginning of the story of the detection is made visible by the detective's act of reading and interpreting clues in the course of the investigation. Thereby, the story of the crime gradually reappears "as if it had been written in invisible ink" (Kımyongür/Widelsworth 2014: 2).

and reviewers despite the fact most features are rather pseudonorms that have basically been challenged more often than applied (Wieser 2012: 35). As for crime fiction, it is in most cases still the traditional British mystery story by writers like Poe, Conan Doyle or Christie that still serve as a point of reference for production as well as criticism of the genre as a whole. Furthermore, it is particularly the striking presence of crime fiction series on TV that for example perpetuate plot structures by using a comparable format in every episode (ib.: 35). While these perceived norms do not describe current corpora of crime fiction stories adequately, they nonetheless continue to present a norm against which current authors are measured or judged; against which they often position themselves and frequently refer to in overt intertextual references. Lee Horsley has described this perceived norm as an oversimplification:

This process of defining a new text in relation to the existing codes and conventions generally involves some oversimplification [...]. Writers who commit themselves to rethinking the genre tend to construct themselves in opposition to a somewhat narrowly conceived prior tradition. (Horsley 2005: 6)

References to this (pseudo)norm include both individual canonic works like Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories as well as *Systemreferenzen*, references to the genre in general, to draw back on Manfred Pfister's differentiation (1985). While the density and intensity of references may vary, due to striking elements in the text structure, a connection to the genre is easily identifiable in both cases. Doris Wieser thereby points out that the more established a genre is, the less intertextual markers are required to classify a text as part of a genre (2012: 33). Furthermore, references to a system of texts such as a genre might be understood by many readers while references to individual texts can only be identified by a smaller group (ib.: 34). Literary references in the texts basically include repetitions, various intertextual and intermedial adaptations. The visual image of the pipe-smoking detective in crime fiction for example has been mediated via television series, but definitely has an impact on detectives in literature

(Scaggs 2005: 3). The different types of references have been studied in a systematic manner by Gérard Genette, who differentiates five types of transtextual relations that give evidence of the palimpsest character of a text. The explicitness of these relations decreases in the course of his differentiation. The first form includes explicit quotes, allusions or plagiarism which are relatively easy to identify (Genette 1997: 1). The second and third form, paratextuality and metatextuality which refer to the “less explicit and more distant relationship that binds the text” (ib.: 2–4). These include titles, covers and epigraphs or the relation between the text and commentaries by scholars, which are usually rather explicit and allow the identification of source texts. As Doris Wieser has pointed out, these references have a significant impact on reception of a text and thus function as a kind of sluice between the text and its respective socio-historical context (2012: 41). Particularly the classification of a text to a specific genre often occurs in para- or metatexts and thus have an impact on marketing and reading practices. The fourth type, hypertextuality, describes the transformation process of a text that is based on a preexisting text, called hypotext by Genette, which is not necessarily cited and applies for example to parodies (Genette 1997: 5). The fifth and most abstract type, architextuality refers to implicit references and is partly equated to Pfister’s term *Systemreferenz* (1985). As Genette points out, an architextual relation “is unarticulated it may be because of a refusal to underscore the obvious, or, conversely, an intent to reject or elude any kind of classification. [...] the novel does not identify itself explicitly as a novel, nor the poem as a poem” (Genette 1997: 4). As for the genre of crime fiction, various – if not all – types of transtextual references contribute to the popularity, presence and status of the genre. Paratextual references in Indian and Latin American crime fiction have already been addressed in Chapter 3 and may indicate the varying stages of its institutionalization as a local genre. Further examples of intertextual references in the corpus novels will be discussed in this chapter.

In addition to intertextual references, crime fiction novels often exhibit a high level of metafictional elements which rather comment on the process of narration than on the content of a novel and address these

aspects in a self-reflexive manner (Nünning 2008: 2). According to John Scaggs, crime fiction is “a genre that is characterised by the way that it self-consciously advertises its own plot elements and narrative structures” (2005: 2). Vis-à-vis the claim for realism in crime fiction, self-reflexive statements and features are frequently used devices by authors who for example expose the fictionality and constructedness of the text and disavow the reality effects created elsewhere in the narrative.

The search for a hidden meaning that characterizes the palimpsestic reading of the absent story of the crime as such already has metafictional implications which have been extensively exploited by Borges and other authors whose works are often studied as metaphysical detective stories or anti-detective stories (see for example Merivale/Sweeney 1999 or Tani 1984). Instead of neat solutions, these stories often subvert generic elements and thereby raise philosophical questions about “narrative, interpretation, subjectivity, the nature of reality, and the limits of knowledge” (Merivale/Sweeney 1999: 1). This results in endless investigations which can be compared to a maze without an exit (ib.: 11). Once again, it is the strong prevalence of formal elements connected to the genre that allow for a self-reflexive modification. These metafictional references can include overt and covert references; the former are explicitly uttered by a protagonist or narrator (mode of telling) and contain for example untruths or contradictions; the latter are most implicit elements (mode of showing) (Neumann/Nünning 2014: 206–207). Frequent elements are for example the use of *mise-en-abymes*, the combination of different voices or the use of references in a cliché-like manner such as imitation of the particular syntax of specific writers or self-referential comments like “it was starting to sound like a Graham Greene novel”, to quote an example from Taibo II’s novel *An Easy Thing* (2005: 75; quoted in Lewis 2009: 143). These examples resonate Birgit Neumann and Ansgar Nünning’s observation about the most significant developments in genre fiction:

Überblickt man etwa die bedeutende Rolle, die sowohl Formen literarischer Selbstreflexivität als auch die Vermischung von Gattungskonventionen in der Geschichte des Dramas oder des Romans gespielt haben, so spricht in der Tat einiges dafür, Hybridisierung und Metaisierung als 'Motor' der Gattungsentwicklung einzustufen. (2014: 18)

To which extent intertextual and metafictional references contribute to the emergence of crime fiction in India and Latin America will be the scope of this subchapter. Meta-reflections about the genre and references to British crime fiction or hard-boiled novels already have a longer tradition in Argentina as the adaptation of the genre by Borges and Bioy Casares has shown (see Chapter 3.2.3). The subchapter is divided into three parts: The first part looks at the use of references to individual authors and the generic system drawing back on Pfister's division (1985), while allusions to the process of writing and parallels between writing and investigating are discussed in the second part. The third part addresses the use of metafictional elements in the corpus novels.

### 5.2.1 References to Individual Works and the Generic System

In India, where crime fiction in English is generally seen as a novelty, it is usually associated with British classics than with the long tradition of works in Indian languages as I have already outlined in Chapter 3.1.6. As Indian crime fiction (in English) is a relatively new genre in India, references to other Indian crime fiction writers or works are rare. The only references that directly refer to other Indian crime fiction writers and their works can be found in Tarquin Hall's and Zac O'Yeah's works. In O'Yeah's *Hari. A Hero for Hire*, a protagonist reads an early Indian crime fiction novel in English – Ashok Banker's 1993 novel *The Iron Bra* (2016: 327). In Hall's novel *The Case of the Love Commandos*, detective Puri's uncle Jagdish is described as "an avid reader of Hindi crime fiction" and likes to read Surender Mohan Pathak's novels, particularly his best-selling title *The 65 Lakh Heist* (Hall 2014: 239). In accordance with the characteristics associated with Hindi crime fiction, Jagdish buys pulp fiction novels for sixty rupees at the train station

and reads them secretly as his wife does not approve of this form of entertainment (ib.: 239). With the knowledge he gained from Pathak's stories, Jagdish feels well equipped to pursue two criminals. Vish Puri himself frequently refers to and quotes Chanakya<sup>106</sup>, an adviser and strategist who lived in the fourth century before Christ. Puri considers him "his guide and guru" as he "founded the art of espionage and investigation" and makes ample use of his wisdom (Hall 2011: 26). So besides fictional predecessors, famous real-life investigators are sometimes mentioned. An analogy to the various adaptations of and borrowings from crimes which have quickened significant media interest in the subcontinent can be seen here (as discussed in 3.1.6).

Swarup uses a quote from Chandra's *Sacred Games* as an epigraph for his section "Solution" in *Six Suspects* which states that "If you want to live in the city you have to think ahead three turns, and look behind a lie to see the truth and then behind that truth to see the lie" (2009: 515). Overall, however, the list of references to local figures and works is rather short. References to foreign novels and TV series are more common: Taking another example from Hall's novel, a doctor who conducts postmortem examinations claims that he used TV series as a self-study: "I've learned a lot from watching American crime shows as well. *House* is wonderful, but I think *Quincy* remains my firm favorite" (ib.: 69). Similarly, Madhumita Bhattacharyya's detective Reema Ray names Sherlock Holmes and Hercule Poirot as (fictional) role models (Bhattacharyya 2012: 27). What fascinated her was particularly the detectives' ability to solve every problem and to restore an interrupted order – while she was confronted with the insuperable difficulties during facing her parents' divorce as a teenager. Reema initially reads crime fiction to expand her knowledge before turning to more professional courses such as criminology, criminal psychology and forensic science (ib.: 27). In Swaminathan's *I Never*

106 Sometimes also called Kautilya, Chanakya was an advisor and philosopher and played an important role in the establishment of the Maurya Empire in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. He is supposed to have written the Arthashastra and other books (Subramanian 2006: 151). Besides a multitude of books that draw on his theories in philosophy, economics and political strategy, Chanakya is a figure which appears in recent Hindu mythological thrillers like Ashwin Sanghi's bestseller *Chanakya's Chant* (2010).

*Knew I Was You*, Shukla rants about amateur detectives and complains that “with all this CSI and Inspector Fantosh, everybody is jasoos<sup>107</sup>” (2010: 14). When a woman compares Lalli to Miss Marple, Sita has to think whether the comparison with “a little old lady who snooped around” is an insult or a compliment (ib.: 53). At some point, she doubts Lalli’s “Maple factor” as Lalli seems not particularly concerned about the respective investigation (ib.: 136). Lalli eventually proves the opposite and leaves no doubt that she has the “Maple factor”. In CK Meena’s *Dreams for the Dying*, police inspector S.I. Mageshwaran reveals that he is obsessed with James Bond and “CSI” and fascinated by the working protocol depicted in fictional investigations (Meena 2008: 28). He thus decides to follow the same methodology:

In the movies, detectives burned the midnight oil, poring over books and statements and evidence until something clicked. Magesh decided to do the same. Like in ‘CSI’, he might suddenly find a piece of the jigsaw puzzle. It could be anywhere. (Meena 2008: 108–109)

In Nair’s novel *Cut like Wound*, Gowda initially makes fun of his new subordinate Santosh, who in his eyes behaves like “he was bloody Sherlock Holmes and Inspector Madukar Zende<sup>108</sup> rolled into one” (Nair 2012: 26). Subscribing to the idea that fictional criminal investigations determine how the population sees police work (see Chapter 4.2), Gowda’s son Roshan is a fan of “CSI” while Gowda is more skeptical about the TV series. He wonders if the Indian police is even aware of the methods applied in the series, but also claims that the crime solution rates in India are higher than in the West (ib.: 211). Roshan is convinced that the series realistically depicts criminal investigations, especially with regard to forensic methods used. He tells his father that even criminals use the series to gain knowledge about crimes (ib.: 210). In a self-referential manner, this problem is also addressed in a television series in the novel:

107 Jasoos is the Hindi/Urdu term for a spy or detective, crime fiction is usually called *jasoosi*.

108 Madhukar Zende is a police inspector who became famous for arresting the serial killer Charles Sobhraj in 1986.

[As] if to vouch for Roshan's statute of faith, a CSI info bit came on: Did you know that *Crime Scene Investigation* has been marked as a problem for real-life crimes? It was dubbed as the 'CSI Effect' or 'CSI syndrome' for raising the expectations from forensic science. (ib.: 211)

The huge discrepancy between police investigations in India and the sophisticated practices depicted in foreign series is addressed in various Indian crime fiction novels. In Chandra's *Sacred Games*, Sartaj Singh for example compares the methodology of his police team to that depicted in (foreign) TV series:

Hunting apradhis should've meant car chases, sprints through crowded streets, motions and movement and pounding background music. That's what Sartaj wanted but what hunting actually meant was intimidating a woman and an old man in their own home. This was a tried and tested policing technique, to disrupt family life and business until the informant sang, the criminal caved, the innocent confessed. (Chandra 2007: 212)

Furthermore, Umesh, one of Chandra's many side-protagonists, complains about the poor quality of Indian detective movies and underlines that he likes "[o]nly Hollywood movies. Our Indian ones are so badly made". Sartaj partly agrees to him, but also indicates that "the Indian ones get things right also" (Chandra 2007: 442). Vis-à-vis the complexity of *Sacred Games*, however, the novel remains quite void of references to other novels and series.

The references to foreign detectives and works, from classic British figures to contemporary TV series certainly points at an omnipresence of and familiarity with this corpus. The fascination does not even spare the investigating figures, who partly reveal themselves as fans of the genre or use foreign fictional works and characters as a source of inspiration. Furthermore, references to foreign series and characters often put Indian investigators and their methods in a bad light on the level of the plot which reflects a form of social criticism. In other cases, these references underline the unrealistic nature of the heroes in British and US-American novels and series and give a more balanced

view of Indian investigators. References to an Indian canon of works have so far been scarce and it is quite striking in this context that the few allusions summarized above are mainly used by non-Indian writers.

Besides the explicit references to crime fiction series and protagonists, references to the system or genre in general are common in various novels. In Swaminathan's detective Lalli stories the genre is discredited at various occasions even though Lalli shows various similarities with the classic armchair detective: Inspector Shukla for example points out in *The Monochrome Madonna* that "life is not a detective story. There is no innocent bystander in life. It is the first rule of police procedure: no bystander is innocent" (Swaminathan 2010: 15). In Nair's series, Inspector Gowda compares his own appearance to that of investigators on screen: "In the movies, policemen his age looked distinguished if they were good cops. Or, were fat and feckless if they were the bad ones. [...] The truth was he looked neither. He just looked fucked" (Nair 2012: 37). Gowda, however, is in the middle of a personal crisis, like many other Indian investigators, he eludes a clear assignment and goes beyond a good/bad dichotomy as has been pointed out in 4.3.2. His appearance does not match the expectation of a good police officer whose characteristics reflect in physical traits. References to police officers in movies often aim at discrediting the genre – or more specifically, the classic British form – as non-realistic. At the same time, these references underline the continuity of the pseudonorm as a point of reference for current literary production.

In Latin America, references to predecessors from Europe and the US persist even though references to local predecessors are more common. This is especially true in the case of Argentina, due to the earlier establishment of a local tradition whose writers were already subject to intertextual references in works like Juan Sasturain's *Manual de perdedores* in the 1980s (see Chapter 3.2.3). Also in the case of Chile, various examples stand out: In Roberto Ampuero's series, Inspector Brulé learns from George Simoneon's novels while Ramón Díaz Eterovic' detective owns a cat called Simoneon.

An interesting example can be found in Serrano's novel: Rosa finds out that the crime fiction writer Carmen increasingly disliked her character Pamela Hawthorne and in fact "se sentía totalmente maniatada por su protagonista" (Serrano 1999: 71). Despite this, she was apparently unable to finish the series after twelve years. As a fellow writer Martin Robledo Sanchez elaborates:

no es tan fácil si has pasado doce años de tu vida escondiéndote tras un personaje, compartiéndote todo con él. Carmen no sabía cómo librarse de Pamela... (ib.: 72)

This shows a strong connection between the author and her fictional detective but also highlights the prerequisite for popular fiction writers to follow the demands of the market. Robledo Sanchez resorts to the experiences of another crime fiction writer to describe why Carmen had difficulties to discontinue the series. He refers to the resurrection of Sherlock Holmes after his death at the Reichenbach Fall in Conan Doyle's "The Final Problem" (1893), with which he intended to end the series. However, due to the appeal of fans, Conan Doyle later continued the series. This event poses a problem for Carmen, as he stresses: "No creo que Carmen estuviese dispuesta a sufrir la humillación de tener que resucitarla" (Serrano 1999: 72).

Another interesting reference can be found in Maria Valdivia's *Un crimen de barrio alto*, where the familiarity of the police with US-American series provides the decisive lead to reveal the murderer: A colleague of Comisario Morante brings up the idea that the murderer could have rented a self-storage unit to hide the expensive paintings which were stolen from the house of the victim. He remarks that "lo hemos visto mil veces en las películas gringas: casilleros anónimos que por una cantidad de dinero te hacen dueño de su única llave" (Valdivia 2015: 263). Once again, the familiarity with the US-American formula is emphasized and might have inspired not only the police team but also the culprit who can be caught in the act by Morante on the premises of a self-storage space.

While a Watsonite narrator is not continuously used in any of the corpus novels, the function of a Watson-figure is subject to reflection in various works. Krimer's detective Ruth Epelbaum is aware that "[1]os detectives de los libros siempre tienen con quien pensar, discutir sus teorías y yo no soy una excepción a la regla" (Krimer 2015: 18). In her case, it is her maid Gladys who occupies this function and provides significant input for her investigation. Gladys is not the narrator, however, this raises the question whether it is not Gladys who is thinking for Ruth. A Watson-figure also plays a role in Piglia's *Blanco nocturno*. Renzi identifies various parallels between Comisario Croce and the intellectually superior detective genius of classic crime fiction:

podía confiar en su razonamiento ya que todo también lo había pensado con él. En eso se parecía a todos los que son demasiado inteligentes – Auguste Dupin, Sherlock Holmes – y necesitan un ayudante para pensar con él y no caer en el delirio. (Piglia 2010: 141)

Initially, Croce has his assistant Saldías whom "a veces, en broma, lo llamaba directamente Watson" and Renzi realizes that Croce is in crisis without him because his ideas get lost (ib.: 20; 184). Renzi underscores his familiarity with the mechanisms of the genre and emphasizes for example the importance of the victim as "la clave de toda investigación criminal" (ib.: 116). However, Croce reminds Renzi that crime fiction follows a specific agenda and is not necessarily a realistic model to be followed for an actual investigation:

Vos leés demasiadas novelas policiales, pibe, si supieras cómo son verdaderamente las cosas... No es cierto que se pueda restablecer el orden, no es cierto que el crimen siempre se resuelve... [...] Las novelas policiales resuelven con elegancia o con brutalidad los crímenes para que los lectores se queden tranquilos. (ib.: 284)

Thus, while the premises of classic crime fiction are continuously picked up and challenged, Piglia provides with *Blanco nocturno* an example of his concept of paranoid fiction which I have already elaborated on in terms of the alternation of the ending in the previous Chapter 5.1.1.

Specific references to foreign but also local writers are frequent features in the Argentinean and Chilean novels discussed here. In *Siliconas express*, María Inés Krimer's detective Ruth Epelbaum for example looks at the bookshelf of the suspicious plastic surgeon Vidal, who is apparently a big fan of the genre, even though he himself stands on the wrong side of the law (Krimer 2013: 43). Vidal has a large section of *Policiales* novels by for example "Poe, Chesterton, Wilkie Collins, Chandler, Hammett, Thompson, Goodis, Mosely, P.D. James, Patricia Highsmith, Lorenzo Silva, Fred Vargas" – exclusively foreign representatives of the genre (Krimer 2013: 43). Ruth herself considers Walter Mosely "el mejor escritor de policiales que leí en mi vida" and makes references to Chandler or Marlowe (Krimer 2015: 3). When she refers to her own struggles as a detective, Ruth uses fictional foreign counter examples:

Acá los detectives tenían mala prensa. O eran servicios o eran canas. Para nosotros eran tan raro Marlowe como Hercule Poirot o Miss Marple. (Krimer 2010: 33)

It is noteworthy that these fictional characters are used as prime examples to convey that detectives are loathed in Argentina. This quote suggests that detectives like Miss Marple are considered credible figures in a European context. However, as discussed in Chapter 2.3.3, the evolution of the genre is driven by the constant questioning of the detectives and critique of other features as unrealistic. Thus Marlowe, Poirot and Miss Marple are not only unrealistic characters in an Argentinean context, but have always been highly controversial protagonists.

In Subercaseaux' *La última noche que soñé con Julia*, Julia's new husband Luciano reveals during their first meeting that he is a big fan of crime fiction and has a big collection which includes "Indridason, Fossum, Paretsky, P.D. James, Randkin, Rendell, Nesbo, Mandel" among others (2012: 94). For him, it was obvious that crime fiction is a popular genre as he identifies crime as one of the pressing contemporary concerns: "De qué otra cosa que no sean crímenes y locura iba a escribirse en estos tiempos" (ib.: 94) – even though crime fiction

novels by the Scandinavian authors owned by Luciano do not relate to extratextual physical threats, but rather to sales and marketing strategies (see Chapter 2.3.4). Detective-journalist Ignacio mentions that the Icelandic writer Arnaldur Indridason has a consoling effect on him as “las desventuras del inspector Erlendur tenían la virtud de hacerlo sentir afortunado” (ib.: 34). This self-referential comment alludes to a common phenomenon for fictional detectives who are confronted with multiple concurrent problems in their private and professional life. The same could be said by the readers about Ignacio who is similarly confronted with various misfortunes in *La última noche que soñé con Julia*. The struggling protagonist Ignacio takes up the role of an intratextual reader of crime fiction novels and reflects on his life while he reads.

A bookshelf is also essential for detective Rosa Alvallay in Serrano’s *Nuestra Señora de la Soledad*. Glimpsing through the book collection of the disappeared writer Carmen Ávila, Rosa sees

veinte libros de Patricia Highsmith, unos diez de P.D. James, todo Chandler, todo Hammet [...] Ross Macdonald, Chester Himes, Sue Grafton y algunos que no retuve. A medida que avanzaba en las secuencias meticulosamente ordenadas, éstas se actualizaban en el tiempo al incluir nombres como los de Vázquez Montalbán o Luis Sepúlveda, de quien entendió era amiga, los compromisos con Chile y la novela negra fueron un poderoso lazo de unión entre ambos. Supongo que ella ha querido marcar una diferencia al no ostentar ni un solo título de Agatha Christie o de Simoneon. (Serrano 1999: 39–40)

Vis-à-vis the huge amount of US-American writers in Ávila’s collection, it is significant that Luis Sepúlveda is the only Chilean or Latin American writer mentioned here. This emphasizes that she was not particularly well connected in Chile’s literary world – in spite of her strategic advantage as a writer who was famous in the US before moving to Chile: As a fellow writer points out, Carmen has received attention in Chile due to the fact that she was already famous before moving there:

No le costó nada hacerse un espacio en nuestro mundo literario. Si hubiese escrito su primera novela desde Chile y en español, otra habría sido la historia, pendejo tercer mundo. (ib.: 47)

This writer thus alludes to the asymmetric power relations that have an impact on the publishing market and the problems faced by Chilean writers who have trouble establishing themselves as a writer both in Chile and abroad. Carmen, on the other hand, automatically raised interest in Chile as an already successful foreign writer who spent most of her life in Mexico and the US.

These disparities are also of significance in Piñeiro's *Betibú*, where the former crime fiction writer Nurit Iscar was a local bestselling writer in Argentina before she resorted to ghostwriting. The novel contains a multitude of references to Argentinean writers and journalists. As Brena intends to educate *El pibe*, the new head of the *Policiales* section about legendary figures in crime investigation, he extensively refers to for example José de Zer, Enrique Sdresh or Gustavo Gerán González and thereby also discusses some spectacular crimes in 20<sup>th</sup> century Argentina (Piñeiro 2011: 113; 133; 152). Brena also recommends Osvaldo Aguirre's *Los indeseables* (2008), a crime fiction novel in which Gustavo Gerán González appears as the protagonist (Piñeiro 2011: 114). Brena reveals that he learnt from Sdrech to write articles like stories by keeping special details or twists until the end (ib.: 153). His personal model used to be Rodolfo Walsh, but he increasingly wonders whether a figure like Walsh would still fit in contemporary Argentina (ib.: 154). This is combined with a reflection about the changes in journalism which Nurit also takes up in the final report, where she states

Hoy dejo de escribir en este diario no porque esto no me importe, sino exactamente por lo contrario. Rodolfo Walsh reconoce que a partir de 1968 empezó a desvalorizar la literatura 'porque ya no era posible seguir escribiendo obras altamente refinadas que únicamente podía consumir la 'intelligentzia burguesa', cuando el país empezaba a sacudirse por todas partes. [...]. Una vez más el periodismo era aquí el arma adecuada.' ¿Sigue

siendo hoy el periodismo, este periodismo, el arma adecuada? No lo sé, ni tengo derecho a responder esa pregunta porque no soy periodista. Yo soy escritora. Invento historias. (ib.: 331)

Nurit thus chooses the opposite path that Walsh<sup>109</sup> advocated: While he opted for *periodismo comprometido*, committed journalism, Nurit realizes that she cannot tell the truth in contemporary journalism and announces her return to fiction in order to have greater liberty. Furthermore, Piñero establishes a connection to Piglia's *Blanco nocturno* by using the quote about paranoid fiction as an epigraph of *Betibú*.

These examples from Argentinean and Chilean writers show once again their presence of and familiarity with foreign writers. These points of references include not only US-American hard-boiled but also recent Scandinavian global bestsellers. In addition, various examples have shown that local writers are similarly taken into consideration as a corpus of local works. The characteristics of classic British crime fiction are often discredited and replaced with other models. While various Indian series such as Swaminathan's Lalli series or Salil Desai's works are modelled relatively closely on the British archetype in terms of formal elements and plot structure, these adaptations are relatively absent in the Latin American corpus. An exception to the rule here might be the ludic crime fiction novels which relate to Borges' adaptation of the genre by authors like Guillermo Martínez or Pablo de Santis as discussed in Chapter 4.3.6.

Overall, this section has shown that beyond the general architextual relation to the generic system in which crime fiction novels inscribe themselves by using generic elements and plot structures that are well-known and easily identified on a global level, Indian and Latin American authors also thematize the generic affiliation of the works. They use allusions to individual writers as well as the generic system, which at once situate the genre in the larger field of crime fiction and point

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109 Walsh's quote in Piñero's novel is from a publication of Walsh's personal notes which was edited by Daniel Link (1996).

at models like the US-American hard-boiled but are at the same time also meant to distinguish a respective novel from the perceived generic exigencies.

### 5.2.2 Reflections about Writing and Investigating: Related Processes?

The omnipresence of references to individual foreign writers has already been pointed out. In a broader context, however, a connection between investigating and writing is a recurrent topic in most novels and certainly deserves a closer look. The striking presence of writers has already been pointed out in 5.2 and included characters in various roles such as narrators (Swaminathan's Lalli series), investigators (Piñeiro's *Betibú*) or victims (Serrano's *Nuestra Señora de la Soledad*).

The writing process and the novels of their fictional writers are discussed to varying degrees: As for Swaminathan's narrator Sita, for example, it is only known that she is an author, but generally struggling. At the beginning of the fourth novel of the series it is mentioned that she has published a book titled *The Triangular Hour* (2012: 9), but no further details about the content or reception of the book are provided.

For Serrano's novel, it has already been pointed out that crime fiction novels of the disappeared writer Carmen serve as an important source of clues. Furthermore, they make Rosa reflect to which extent fictional works can give insights into their authors' lives. Many basic facts such as the setting but also the prefaces of Carmen's novels refer to events in Carmen's life and help Rosa to advance her investigation as discussed in Chapter 4.1.8. Rosa thus wonders about Carmen's connection to her character:

El personaje de C.L. Ávila es una investigadora y se dedica al crimen. ¿Tiene algo que ver con ella? La respuesta más obvia sería: aparentemente nada. Sin embargo, es su alter ego, es la voz que ella no tiene por sí misma. ¿Dónde está el límite entre Miss Hawthorne y C.L. Ávila, dónde se alza el muro de contención que sujeta a la una de la otra? (Serrano 1999: 93)

Rosa answers these questions herself and realizes that Carmen leaves many traces of herself in her novels: Eventually, one of the novels' epigraphs points to Mexico as a possible abode (ib.: 97). Rosa finds her suspicion confirmed when she comes across the novel *La loba* by a Mexican writer which depicts a woman that resembles Carmen (ib.: 150). After finding Carmen, she concludes that "si el caso hubiese afectado a pintores o músicos, jamás lo habría resuelto. ¡Cuántas huellas deja tras de sí un escritor! Como las migas de pan de Hansel y Gretel" (ib.: 251). Rosa thereby suggests that the personal impact of a writer on his or her text is much more accessible compared to other artistic creations.

Nurit Iscar unveils the writing process from a different angle in Piñeiro's novel *Betibú*. During the investigation, she repeatedly thinks how she would write about a respective scene or detail in a crime fiction novel ("Si esta fuera una novela de Nurit Iscar, sacarí esa ventana." [ib.: 310]). These thoughts refer to the investigation as well as her date with Brena at the end of the novel. When she goes home with him, she reflects how she would describe this in a novel and in the novel's movie adaptation (Piñeiro 2011: 342). These reflections also serve as metafictional and illusion-breaking devices as they point out to the reader that he is reading a novel which itself is the result of similar processes of reflections by the author Piñeiro herself who constructed the novel. *Betibú* furthermore includes self-referential questions about Nurit's status as a best-selling crime fiction writer. She is asked questions in an interview like "¿Te molesta ser un *best seller*?" (ib.: 61) which the author Piñeiro is frequently confronted with. Nurit resumes many standard responses and mentions that writers like Cortázar, Piglia, Murakami and Bolaño also wrote literary fiction bestsellers. She questions the concept of the bestseller as a marked-related term that does not have an impact on her writing (ib.: 61).

CK Meena's *Dreams for the Dying* also comments on popular literature and readership for English and Malayalam writings. The sex magazine *Hrudamyam* which Uma reads during train rides to keep fellow passenger away from her has a significant presence in the novel (see Chapter 4.1.8). For Uma, the magazine is somewhere in between

romantic fiction and pornography, but “not a blue magazine, no pictures, only barely suggestive illustrations” (Meena 2008: 33). The history of this magazine is also resumed: It is a “steamier version of the *pynkili* magazine, a genre that was born in the late Eighties and was wildly popular among the lower middle class” (ib.: 33). The novel comments on reading habits in India and the status of Malayalam and English language magazines: While even romantic fiction magazines are considered “forbidden in decent households, not to give wrong ideas to girls”, *Hrudamyam* is definitely seen as an unsuitable reading for women (ib.: 35). It is thus not surprising that nobody approaches Uma on a train when she reads the magazine. Also a magazine vendor at the train station who thinks that he can estimate well what his clients read, fails in Uma’s case: He predicts that Uma is “[n]ot a *Savvy* reader, can’t afford *Elle*, too young for *Femina* [...] so she must want the *Mangalam*” (ib.: 1) and is totally surprised that she picks something completely different.

The frequent use of diaries written by a victim in crime fiction novels is quite striking: A diary plays an important role in Desai’s *Witness the Night* or Swaminathan’s *The Monochrome Madonna* as well as CK Meena’s *Dreams for the Dying*. While the diary is in theory meant to provide clues and leads, it often fails to do so in these novels: Desai’s detective Simran only gets access to the victim’s diary at a late stage of the investigation and it does not contain any kind of information about the murderer. However, the diary provides a larger context about misogynic practices that the victim Durga has observed and experienced throughout her life and is an instrument that the detective can use in the end to put pressure on the police (see Chapter 4.1.3). In Swaminathan’s novel, detective Lalli concludes that the diary written by the victim Sitara has been written just for her and wrongly implicates her husband in a serial murder. Lalli thus refuses to read it (see Chapter 4.1.2). In *Dreams for the Dying*, the police officer Magesh struggles to deduce any clues from that diary and realizes later that to “[assume] that she wrote the whole truth and nothing but the truth and that was his first mistake” (Meena 2008: 223). He also struggles to deduce any clues from Tamil short stories written by Uma’s boy-

friend VK, a writer and literary scholar (ib.: 181–182). This suggests that, unlike the case of Serrano's *Nuestra Señora de la Soledad*, where the detective gathers clues from the writer's novels, texts written by the murderer or by suspects do not necessarily serve as a useful source of information to advance an investigation.

In Chandra's *Sacred Games*, it is the process of storytelling that is commented upon. After the death of the gangster boss Gaitonde, police inspector Sartaj is approached by many people who inquire about Gaitonde's extravagant lifestyle. Since Sartaj has nothing much to report, he embellishes his accounts with "pictures taken from television and films" to which inquirers can relate to even though he merely resorts to fictional references (Chandra 2007: 210). This situation evokes Murra Lee's and Alice McGovern's observation that the public expects police work to mirror fictional accounts they are familiar with (2014: 148). In Sartaj's case, he appears credible when he includes fictional elements in his account. Sartaj also reflects on the stories about operations that circulate within the police and comments on his colleague Katekar's storytelling skills: "That was the end of the story. Like all the other police stories Katekar liked to tell, this one stopped suddenly and remained enigmatic, refusing to give up a moral or even a purpose" (Chandra 2007: 299). In a sense, this comment refers to many of the subplots/stories inside *Sacred Games* which similarly stop abruptly and cannot be reduced to a clear moral. Sartaj himself is weary of simple stories and after Katekar dies in an operation, Sartaj imagines how his colleagues talk about the incident:

It was a simple story, the way Kamble and others would tell it: three aapadhis cornered, we should've fired first, encountered the bastards, but this was Singh's operation, Katekar got too close and didn't shoot, so he died. Case closed. (ib.: 305)

Sartaj however, feels "unable to rest with that story" and instead reflects on the accumulation of coincidences that caused the three criminals to be at that particular place at the moment when he and Katekar were waiting for them (ib.: 305). It is precisely these kind of long histories

in the form of the biographies of the three criminals that are elaborated on in the subplots of *Sacred Games* and provide the reader with an explanation for the questions raised by Sartaj.

Partly, the observations focus more on the details of narration than on the content narrated. When RAW intelligence officer Anjali listens to an account about radical Islamist organizations in India by a young analyst, she notices for example that “he was excited by detail, pleased by conjunctions. He had a habit of assuming too much, of wanting his stories to work so much that he let his imagination produce texture and depth” (ib.: 360). Anjali points out that the job of an analyst consists of “reading and reading and finding fragmented stories” (ib.: 361). While some of these fragmented stories might lead to an investigation, Anjali reduces the story to the bare facts and concludes that his story will not suffice to request an investigation. The particularities of storytelling are discussed most prominently with regard to the dying intelligence agency officer Jadav who has lost the control over his memory. His doctor thus explains how the brain functions: “from the data from outside, and from the material of memory, the brain makes up a story, and that story is what we think is reality” (ib.: 334). In Jadav’s case, the brain fills blanks with memories from his past and he remembers a multitude of places in which he was posted during his life. This phenomenon is called Charles Bonnet syndrome, and thus Jadav experiences that “the past is no longer separated from the present by a distinct and comfortable boundary” and instead “everything is equally present, all things are connected” (ib.: 314). This subplot briefly points at a completely different dimension of the reflection about the constructed character of truth: It brings up the neurological process through which memories are organized and stored and have a significant impact on one’s perception of reality.<sup>110</sup>

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110 This problematic is also briefly addressed in Ocampo’s *Cobayos criollos*, where one of the psychiatrists questioned points out that memories are altered in the course of a reproduction of a situation in the past: “Cuanto más se habla de algo que ocurrió en el pasado o de alguien que se conoció más cambian las versiones. La memoria está llena de falsos recuerdos y me reta casi por no haberme dado cuenta de algo tan obvio” (Ocampo 2015: 88).

Taken together, the diverse topics related to writing and literature that are brought up in Indian and Latin American crime fiction novels is striking and resonate for example debates of popular versus literary fiction or imbalances in the international circulation of writers. Moreover, the question to which fictional and even apparently 'factual' texts like diaries entries can function as clues comes up in a variety of novels. Interestingly, it is precisely the diaries that often frustrate the expectation to give access to the solution of the case and are rather used for a different purpose and may provide a larger context of the case investigated. In a similar manner, newspaper reports that situate the individual crime in a larger framework are used in for example for Krimer's novels (see Chapter 4.2.5). Taken together, the various strategies used by the writer-protagonists point at the constructedness and fictionality of a narration and thereby raise questions about truth and reality. This is also the case with reflections about narrating a story in for example Chandra's *Sacred Games*. These reflections also have a spillover effect on the investigation in these novels, which can be once again seen as an act of reading a fragmented story which ideally is supposed to lead to the reconstruction of one narrative. The construction of this narrative is often frustrated as cases are not solved and closed, as has already been discussed in Chapter 5.1. But the narratives are additionally complicated in various Indian and Latin American novels by the exploration of the processes of writing and reading which highlight the subjectivity of any narration and interpretation process – which, as is briefly discussed in *Sacred Games*, is already primarily conditioned by the function of the brain. These reflections also act as a bridge to the third part of this subchapter which looks at metafictional reflections in the corpus novels that have a similar effect as the examples of writing and reading discussed here. They scrutinize the genre's early premise of the complete solution of a crime but also embark in more philosophical debates of the possibility of truth and knowledge in general.

### 5.2.3 Metafictional Reflections in Indian and Latin American Crime Fiction

The metaization of genres which has been identified by Brigit Neumann and Ansgar Nünning as one of the main tendencies of the evolution and alteration of genres (2014: 18) can also be found in various Indian and Latin American crime fiction novels. Examples include both overt and covert metafictional reflections which partly overlap with the intertextual references already discussed in 5.2.1 and 5.2.2. such as the constant references to and distancing from foreign novels and television series. However, more general reflections which may point at a general meta-level problematization of the possibility of truth *per se* can also be found in novels by Piglia, Piñeiro, Valdivia, Swaminathan or Chandra.

#### 5.2.3.1 The Significance of Solving the Murder in Piñeiro's and Valdivia's Novels

As has already been insinuated in Chapter 5.1, various strategies such as the avoidance of closure reframe the crime fiction novel as a more general reflection about the (im)possibility of truth and justice. This is the case in Piñeiro's and Piglia's novels: Nurit's investigation in *Betibú* is only able to reveal the existence of a "pirámide del asesinato" whose head remains unknown (Piñeiro 2011: 316). The novel culminates in a metafictional reflection about the meaning of crime and its agents, the construction of truth as well as the purpose and functions of journalism. The criminal in *Betibú* is no longer an isolated individual who can be traced and punished, but a member of a complex and impenetrable network. Against this backdrop, Nurit reflects for example the urge to explain murders:

¿Por qué siempre necesitamos encontrarle una explicación a la muerte? Aunque no exijimos las mismas repuestas cuando se trata de muerte natural y de muerte violenta [...] en la muerte natural uno tropieza enseguida con la imposibilidad de encontrar un último sentido. (ib.: 270)

She points out that in many cases, a wrong conclusion is often preferred to the uncertainty of not having any explanation. She observes the strong difference that is made between natural and violent murders as only for the latter can an explanation be found. While in theory nobody can be implicated for a crime without the existence of incriminating evidence, Nurit reflects how many suspects are nonetheless found guilty in the public eye (ib.: 52).

The significance of the revelation of a culprit is also important in Valdivia's *Un crimen de barrio alto*, albeit less central than in Piñeiro's novel: As the murder investigation does not produce any results, Morante and his assistant Adriana reflect on the importance of solving a crime. Morante considers it important for the parents to know who killed their daughter as a minimum level of justice (Valdivia 2015: 257). Adriana's compares gaining knowledge to defying the past:

En vez de permitirle pasar dejando todo atrás, haciendo desaparecer lo ocurrido, saber mantiene el presente de alguna manera. ¿No es una forma de anular el pasar dejando atrás el tiempo? ¿Una forma de anularlo, evitándolo?" (ib.: 258)

In some respects, Adriana's conception resonates the idea of a reestablishment of a previously interrupted order which is facilitated by the knowledge of the criminal's identity and motive. The confrontation or punishment of the criminal is considered secondary here. Morante also raises this question whether "dejar de saber, olvidar" could be the opposite of the revenge of time (ib.: 258). His own obsession with solving the crime, nonetheless, raises questions to whether forgetting is a feasible reaction towards an unsolved crime and thereby connects to the urge to give meaning to an unnatural death that is insinuated in Piñeiro's novel. These reflections connect to the mystery of death *per se*: While a natural death is neither explicable nor avoidable, it is at least the unnatural murder that has a meaning that can be revealed and explained. While crime fiction – especially classic British crime fiction – has often been seen as an escape from the meaninglessness of death. *Betibú* as well as other novels inscribe themselves in a tradition

that questions this overdetermination of death in crime fiction which is always conveyed with a special meaning that can be deduced by the investigator (see for example Cawelti 1976: 162).

#### 5.2.3.2 Metafictional Elements in *Blanco Nocturno*

Many of these concerns are also at the center of Piglia's *Blanco nocturno*; various aspects have already been discussed in the previous subchapter. The concept of paranoid fiction in which everyone seems pursued and at the same time suspicious of a crime has already been discussed in Chapter 5.1.1 and, as *Blanco nocturno* demonstrates, commonly leads to an 'interpretative delirium' rather than a solution. Furthermore, the unclear and fragmented narrative situation that evokes the impression of an accumulation of unconfirmed rumors through the perspective of various protagonists leads to the feeling of disorientation and the lack of an organizing authority who (re)establishes truth and order.

This uncertainty and lack of authority is juxtaposed by the employment of the 42 footnotes in *Blanco nocturno* which imply a scientific approach and an in-depth research with a focus on verifiable facts. This technique can also be considered an intertextual reference and has been applied by other Argentinean authors such as Borges, Manuel Puig and Piglia himself in previous works (McCracken 2016: 50). The footnotes include monologues by Renzi or Croce as well as general information about the protagonists, definitions and explanations that especially mark the economic and political context of the novel. Juan Caballero concluded that

Piglia's playfully pedagogical footnotes [...] are experiments in the expanded scope of the contemporary novel, and attempts to bring Piglia's literary lineage into a neoliberal present in which national boundaries have been liquidated by economic processes as-yet foreign to the novel. (Caballero 2013: 128–129)

While the main text does not provide much information about Argentina's economic situation which is nonetheless crucial to understand the bankruptcy of Luca's company and the necessity for a person like

Durán to bring black money hidden in a US-bank account to the village. Vis-à-vis the uncertainty of the plot, the information provided can be seen as cornerstones that contribute to a better understanding of the plot. These footnotes hint at another “mystery which, for reasons of scale, cannot be meaningfully narrativized by the crime genre” (Caballero 2013: 126), which could be the neoliberal economic system itself. As Caballero suggested above, the larger context of neoliberal economic transformation is a topic that is mainly discussed in the footnote, but actually shines through at various points in the novel such as the threat to transform the disused factory into a shopping mall. While footnotes are usually supposed to provide additional information and can be seen as a supplement to the main text, in *Blanco nocturno*, the footnotes actually fulfill an important function. As metanarrative comments, they can be considered an illusion-breaking device that reveals the fictional character and constructedness of the narrative.

In the absence of a meaningful investigation, Croce and Renzi mainly engage in theoretical reflections. Croce for example discusses the difference between assassinating and killing (“asesinar” vs. “matar a alguien”) or the impossibility to resolve a case completely in real life vis-à-vis in crime fiction novels (Piglia 2010: 140, 284). In a key scene, Croce draws an image to explain to Renzi the conditionality of truth. It is an optical illusion which can be seen as a duck or a rabbit depending on one’s perception or point of view. Croce points out that

[t]odo es según lo que sabemos antes de ver. [...] Vemos las cosas según como las interpretamos. Lo llamamos previsión: saber de antemano, estar prevenidos. [...] Hay que tener una base y luego hay que inferir y dedicar. Entonces –concluyó— uno ve lo que sabe y no puede ver si no sabe... Descubrir es ver de otro modo lo que nadie ha percibido. Ése es el asunto. (ib.: 142–43)

Croce thus suggests that one’s perception is strongly shaped by one’s previous knowledge and perspective. As the example of the image shows, there is no objective reality that can be recognized, instead the image is perceived differently depending on the viewer’s former

experiences. A change of perspective leads to an awareness of these limitations. According to Croce, “la experiencia se da en el momento de cambiar del pato al conejo y viceversa. Llamo a este método ver-como y su objetivo es cambiar el aspecto bajo el que se ven ciertas cosas” (ib.: 142). For the investigation, this method reveals the necessity to adopt another way of seeing to be able to grasp that no secure knowledge and easy truth can be revealed. As Patrick Dove has pointed out, “[t]he idea of seeing things ‘as they really are,’ according to a certain investigative ideal, is itself already a misnomer, a false problem [...]” (2012: 31). What is required instead, to draw on Croce’s elaborations again, is the possibility to see that everything is related and it is therefore not expedient to look at an isolated fact or event (ib.: 265).

Most Indian crime fiction novels have, so far, rarely adopted the genre for a metareflection about specific concerns. Therefore, it is particularly interesting that Swaminathan uses a similar optical illusion as Piglia in the detective Lalli novel *The Monochrome Madonna*. Lalli uses an image that can be seen as two persons talking or a chalice (Swaminathan 2010: 196). Lalli’s drawing also illustrates how the ability to reflect on one’s own point of view is crucial for the interpretation of a crime. She tries to bring her team on the right track as everyone focuses on one path of an investigation: In the case of Sitara, the wife who claims that her husband is a serial killer, the police team mainly focuses on finding incriminating evidence against the husband. Due to the lack of evidence, the team is unsure how to proceed and Lalli suggests here that they might have interpreted the case wrongly from the beginning and need to see it from a different point of view. As a genius detective, Lalli has understood right from the beginning that Sitara herself is the murderer and tries to pin the murder on her husband.

### 5.2.3.3 The *Leela* in *Sacred Games*

As for Vikram Chandra’s *Sacred Games*, the complex and fragmented novel itself can be read as a metafictional comment that challenges generic features in many ways, as has already been examined at various points in Chapters 4 and 5. Three important aspects are the fragmentation and multiplication of the plot(s), the marginalization of

the solution and the lack of closure, and the questioning of a binary division of good and bad role allocations. Overall, the complex network outlined in *Sacred Games* raises questions regarding the agency of an individual vis-à-vis the complex power structures with which he or she is confronted. The idea of a *leela*, the sacred game to which the novel's title alludes, is a central metaphor here. A *leela* is a game played by the gods in sacred texts and is repeatedly used to describe the complex power structures and interconnections which reduce the power of individual protagonists to that of pawns whose agency is debilitated by other players. Gaitonde himself repeatedly refers to the *leela* after initiating his spiritual talks with Guruji: When Sartaj threatens to destroy Gaitonde's bungalow with bulldozers, he remains calm and tells him that "[i]t is only a game, it is leela" (ib.: 42). Sartaj continues the metaphors and claims that he will beat him – which can only relate to a small part of the larger game. As Gaitonde points out "[t]o win is to lose everything, and the game always wins" (ib.: 44). However, various subplots of *Sacred Games* illustrate that triumphs are in the best case partial and temporal and always followed by a downfall. The metaphor of the *leela* is therefore a mise-en-abyme that depicts the network of power relations in a condensed form. Even Gaitonde's career follows this path and he states that "[w]e dance along the lines of this leela. Birth, life, death, all has a shape, even if we can't see it" and he claims that all events have already been written by the gods (ib.: 559). He realized in the course of his career that he is part of a huge game whose dimensions exceed the capacities of a single human being: "I felt that I was participating in a very large game, a game so big that despite my recent growth I was dwarfed in it" (ib.: 455). The game metaphor is used for wars and conflicts of all scales in *Sacred Games* and includes animosities between rival gangs as well as wars between neighboring countries: When Gaitonde is in prison, he considers the constant negotiations with the police officer Parulkar a game. The latter uses family visits as a leverage to obtain information from Gaitonde and both parties negotiate to obtain a win-win situation (ib.: 455). The former intelligence officer Jadav looks back on his life as a participant

in a huge game in an inset that is entitled “The Great Game”. He recalls that all positions in the game (or battle) field are relative and even good characters need to do bad deeds:

To play this game well, you had to handle bad men, you had to have them do bad things which were finally good things. [...] On the field, all actions were only provisionally moral, and the game was eternal. So was Ganesh Gaitonde a bad man? Was Nehru a bad man? (ib.: 308–309)

Jadav also emphasizes the endless character of the game later on and admits that he played it well, but is aware that he is only a small pawn: “The game lasts, the game is eternal, the game cannot be stopped, the game gives birth to itself” (ib.: 329). While the *leela* is presented as an eternal and maybe circular game, the gods have the power to destroy the world following the different ages of Hindu cosmology and can thereby start the game anew. It is repeatedly brought up that the current age is *Kaliyug*, the ‘Age of Darkness’ which will end in great destruction (see Chapter 4.4.1). This is illustrated with a mandala that fascinates the police officer Sartaj. He observes a group of Tibetan monks creating an elaborate *rangoli*, a pattern usually made from colored sand (ib.: 233). The mandala consists of various circles that depict the world as a whole: “It was inhabited now by a host of creatures, large and small, and a swirl of divine beings enveloped the entirety of this new world” (ib.: 239). Despite the immense effort to create the mandala, the monks destroy it once it is finished. Sartaj considers it “cruel to create this entire whirling world, and then destroy it abruptly” (ib.: 233). This does not only apply to the mandala but refers to the threat of possible destruction of a whirling city like Bombay. As the multitude of protagonists unanimously show, Bombay continues to attract all kinds of different people from all over India who continue to be attracted by the city’s reputation. As Sartaj realizes in the course of the investigation, even the threat of a nuclear bomb would not make these people leave:

We are here, and we will stay here. Perhaps Kulkarni [his colleague] was wrong about the people of Bombay, perhaps they would stay in their city even if they knew that a great fire was coming. [...] And so they would stay. (ib.: 785)

Sacred Games illustrates an extremely complex network of constantly changing power relations that can never be dominated by any player in the game and therefore seems steered by a higher power. Due to the adaptability of the players to changing power relations, however, it can also not be controlled or destroyed. Thus all agents, from the gangster boss Gaitonde to the police inspector Sartaj show a certain flexibility to gain agency on the game board. This similarly rules out the possibility of an investigator to meet the expectations raised in traditional crime fiction novels to establish the truth or to restore a previously interrupted order.

#### 5.2.4 Conclusion: Links to and Reflections on the Genre

This Chapter built up on the observations of the indeterminacy of the criminal and the complication of solution and closure that have already been discussed in Chapters 4.5 and 5.1. In addition, Intertextual and metafictional references are devices used in many of the corpus novels and serve as illusion-breaking devices that underline the constructedness of the narrative.

Overall, this section has shown that Indian and Latin American authors go beyond the general architextual relations to the generic system in which crime fiction novels inscribe themselves with generic elements and plot structures that are globally well-known and easily identified. The authors also thematize the generic affiliation of their works using allusions to individual writers as well as to the generic system. This at once situates the genre in the larger field of crime fiction and points at models like the US-American hard-boiled and are at the same time used to distinguish a respective novel from the perceived generic exigencies.

The fact that intertextual references first and foremost draw back on classic British crime fiction novels or US-American TV series as well as contemporary global bestsellers underlines the writers' familiarity with the globally circulating canon. The references to individual works as well as to the generic system underline the model character of such works which continue to present a pseudonorm which local writers adapt or challenge. While some writers pay tribute to these predecessors, others also use references to position themselves against archetypical works. This happens indirectly as well as directly e.g. via comments made by protagonists. They point out that a certain case differs from how it is usually presented in a movie or a crime fiction novel and thereby highlight the complexity and the ambiguity of a case. In other instances, local investigation methods do not meet the standards presented in foreign series. In any way, these references also show that the global canon continues to have an impact on local production in the Global South. The hypertexts of these works continue to be largely foreign works while other local writers are only exceptionally referred to. Argentinean writers are an exception here and in accordance with the longer tradition of the genre, they refer more frequently to Argentinean predecessors, while this is not the case in India or Chile where references to local writers are rather absent.

While intertextual and metafictional references partly overlap, larger metafictional reflections can also mainly be found in Argentinean works while the Indian canon focuses more on social criticism of current problems than on meta-level reflections. Besides Chandra's *Sacred Games*, it is mainly Argentinean writers who use the genre for more epistemological reflections about the possibility of truth and justice, the need for an explanation of unnatural deaths or the idea of the murderer as in Piglia's and Piñero's novels. These reflections challenge the premises of the genre as they lead to an awareness of the limitations of an objective truth that could be revealed. Thereby, they not only expose the fictionality of the narrative but also the constructedness of concepts like reality or justice.

Writing and narrating is a third topic that is central in many novels of the corpus and once again point at the fictional character of investigations. Topics like the book market and that status of crime fiction as a popular genre are also brought up. Besides, a reflection about the writing process and the suitability of texts like novels or diaries as clues are present in various novels which similarly self-reflectively address topics like the production of meaning or the commodification and mediatization of a society in which fictional representations of the police or gangsters are often considered more real than the actual ones.

### 5.3 Technology, Consumerism and the Commodification of the Human Body

Besides the modification of the solution and closure or intertextual and metafictional references, crime fiction has often been used as a social commentary to critique and examine capitalist society. Two important topics that run like a red thread through many crime fiction novels are the use of technological devices and consumerist practices in general. As sophisticated technology is very present in globally circulating crime fiction novels and TV series, it is interesting to analyze the role of and attitudes towards technology in the corpus novels: What kind of devices are for example used in criminal investigations? In Chapter 4.2, the impact of the media and social networks on the representation and prosecution of crimes has already been discussed: As the detectives often find their access to the official justice system closed, they resort to using media and social networks to be able to increase pressure on the system. This suggests a great impact of technology as will be elaborated in this chapter. Besides the use of technology, issues related to commodification and commercialization which will be addressed in this Chapter and connects to the rise of the middle class in the Global South as discussed in Chapter 2.1.2.

The integration of regions of the Global South into the glocal capitalist market in the course of neoliberal political and economic agenda in the last decades has increased consumption and a greater variety

of consumption products, particularly for the middle classes. As Zygmund Bauman has pointed out, deregulation and privatization generally caused a transformation “from a society of producers to a society of consumers” (2007: 8) which emerges due to a rise of service sector white-collar jobs. On a global level, consumption has a growing impact on identity formation processes for example via the purchase of specific branded consumer products. In a society where identity negotiations are increasingly based on and expressed through consumption. According to this logic, the poor are perceived as failed consumers since they do not have the money to acquire certain goods and brands (ib.: 124). A rise of criminality is, in this context, seen as an inevitable by-product of consumer society which Bauman sees as an (illegal) intend to participate:

Those who cannot act on the desires so induced are treated daily to the dazzling spectacle of those who can. Lavish consumption, they are told, is the sign of success, a highway leading straight to public applause and fame. They also learn that possessing and consuming certain objects and practicing certain lifestyles are the necessary condition for happiness [...]. (ib.: 130)

The conflicts resulting from a growing importance of consumption are reflected in popular fiction. It is particularly crime fiction which explores the interrelations between consumerism and criminality in the course of criminal investigations that dominate the plot. Furthermore, crime fiction itself is also often seen as a commodity due to its familiar content and standardized serial format. Novels are commonly produced cheaply for fast consumption and count on a large readership while profit margins remain low (see for example Nusser 2009: 116; Rzepka 2005: 21). Processes of concentration in the publishing industry and the global expansion of multinational publishing houses have thereby contributed to a rise of popular fiction as a product for global consumption, as has been discussed in Chapter 2.2.3. The ubiquity underlines the status of crime fiction as a genre of mass-consumption. It is often underlined that the consumerist character of crime fiction is reflected in the mode of writing: The use of future-oriented sus-

pense mechanisms in thrillers, for example, aims to increase the reading speed and encourages a faster consumption (Nusser 2009: 56). Similarly, series which rely on specific detective figures or on particular settings can be seen as a means to ensure a kind of brand loyalty. While the reader of popular genres is often seen as a passive consumer, the competition between reader and detective in the revelation of the criminal and production of meaning suggests an active engagement of the reader (Scaggs 2005: 38). To attract the reader's attention, publishers use various design and sales strategies to promote their titles like clearly identifiable covers and titles that exhibit its generic affiliation and thereby overall contribute to a commercialization of crime fiction. Within this large corpus of works, individual best-selling authors or their series often acquire a brand-like status as has been pointed out for the case of James Patterson in Chapter 3.1.6: Patterson publishes similar novels set in distinct locales all over the world with the support of local co-authors and can thereby maximize his output and profit. As I have already pointed out in Chapter 3.1.4 and 3.2.4, these practices partly differ in India and Latin America, but are increasingly present and have an impact on reviewing practices or book cover designs. Furthermore, archetypal figures like Sherlock Holmes or Agatha Christie have acquired a brand-like status of their own: The detective figures are often better known than their authors and continue to reappear in a myriad of rewritings and movie adaptations.

Compared to the relative absence of violence in these archetypal novels, critique has been expressed for the focus on physical violence in recent crime fiction novels with a global reach such as the depiction of gruesome violence in Stieg Larsson's *Millennium Trilogy* as a commodification of violence. Lee Horsley regards this practice as a spectacle produced for a consumer-audience:

There are obvious implications for fiction that centres on violence, which has increasingly represented the act of violence as the creation of spectacle in a world in which everyone consumes and produces images and spectacles. (Horsley 2009: 200)

The idea of a spectacle of violence, however, contradicts crime fiction writers' claim to depict local realities. As explored in Chapter 2.3.4, the production is marked by the divergent tensions: On the one hand, authors intend to create innovative and suspenseful investigations and use serial killings or spectacular violence as a means to capture the reader's attention. On the other hand, crime fiction novels are often judged in accordance to their function as a mirror of real-existing threats and their depiction of everyday practices of investigators. A commodification can thus be observed at both ends: in the commodification of violence and the portrayal of the everyday: As Anke Biendarra has pointed out for German popular fiction, authors depict a consumer society via "[t]he fetishization of lifestyle themes and the consumption of both German and wider international brands and commodities" in for example the everyday work life (2012: 87). According to Biendarra, the focus on the "authentic everyday" and consumerism are "a sign of an increasingly glocalised literature" (ib.: 15). In Indian and Latin American literature, this focus on the everyday and consumerism of a middle class society mean a significant distinction from the earlier claims of an exoticization of cultural elements in Latin American or Indian English literature as a global commodity for foreign consumption. Sandra Ponzanesi has underlined this for the Indian case:

India has emerged as a coming-of-age capitalist society, and therefore not only as a producer of oriental fetishes and exotic cultural practices ranging from sage swamis to Bollywood films to alternative healing methods, but as consumers. The key ingredient here is the emergence of a new middle class, urbanized and cosmopolitan in orientation [...]. (2014: 79)

Vis-à-vis this focus on a consumer society, it is not surprising that Emma Dawson Varughese has identified decision-making processes as a dominant topic in which the (female) protagonists of Indian popular fiction are caught up (2013: 43). This has also been observed by Pooja Sinha:

These self-definitions are played out within the urban setting of these books, framed by a landscape of social mobility, where economic liberalisation has made available the goods and images that can be appropriated for particular ideas of participating in, and belonging to, the middle class. (Sinha 2013: 7–8)

These novels depict a middle class society in transition in which the freedom of consumption and choices with regard to brands and entertainment is contradicted by a lack of freedom in terms of other personal choices. Particularly in India, consumer freedom remains often disconnected from a freedom of choice in terms of occupation, marriage or sexuality which remain restricted by societal and familial constraints.

Brands and consumerism are also topics that play a role in the crime fiction novels. It is often the detective who appears as a critical observer of capitalist consumer society (Nünning 2008: 4). The detective is usually not rich and a rather modest consumer, but similarly confronted with a growing amount of products and options from which he or she has to choose. This matches Zygmund Bauman's observation that "[i]n the society of consumers, no one can become a subject without first turning into a commodity" (2007: 12). Besides their commodity-like status on the publishing market where series are often named after the protagonist, particularly the Private Investigator, is a commodity who can be hired for all kinds of investigations. Furthermore, the detective is also constantly confronted with a multitude of choices or functions as an urban flâneur who depicts changes in the consumerist city, as I will elaborate on in Chapter 5.4. It is particularly the serial killer who epitomizes an excess of commodification in crime fiction as he consumes human beings, partly even chosen at random and arranges the murders as a kind of spectacle. He follows a specific *modus operandi* and thereby leaves behind a 'signature', a kind of branding which connects the individual murders. This is for example discussed in Swaminathan's *I Never Knew It Was You*, where a pink nylon rope is always used as a murder weapon and a kind of signature – even

though the murders are carried out by different persons (Swaminathan 2012: 252). This technique can therefore be considered the murderer's standard punishment or brand.

The methods with which crimes are committed, but also prosecuted are subject to change over time. Since its emergence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the genre is closely associated with scientific methods and state-of-art devices are applied in criminal investigations. I have already pointed out in Chapter 3.1.2, crime fiction novels consumed at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in India were already seen as 'windows into modernity' which made use of the latest technological devices like cameras. Sherlock Holmes' interpretations are for example "set in a framework of Victorian materialist mentality" according to John Scaggs (2005: 41). The use of forensic methods in series like the US-American "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation" similarly reflects the ongoing use of scientific methods to solve crimes. At the same time, communication technology has also significantly changed and sped up investigations which reflects in the speed of action of a fictional investigation (Brownson 2014: 135). New technological devices have led to the emergence of new crimes like cyber criminality. As these crimes are potentially borderless, they pose new challenges for investigators and require new types of (fictional) investigators. These crimes overall reflect a shift from the value of money and goods to the "capital of information" (Kenley 2014: 32). The internet and hackers are topics that figure prominently in globally available crime fiction novels like Stieg Larsson's Millennium series through the figure of the brilliant computer hacker Lisbeth Salander. Besides posing a threat, the internet and even hackers are also an important source of information for investigators and therefore figure prominently in many crime fiction novels. Due to the complex role of technology in crime fiction, its presence and significance in the corpus novels is discussed in the following subchapter and will be complemented by an analysis of the role of consumerism in Indian and Latin American crime fiction.

### 5.3.1 Technology – A Mixed Blessing for Investigators

Besides the large presence of print media as well as television, internet research figures prominently as a source of information in many crime fiction novels. Only few investigators like Valdivia's Comisario Morante or Nair's Inspector Gowda express their lack of knowledge and skepticism about technology. Morante for example is skeptical whether all the technological devices used at a crime scene will actually help to gather evidence (Valdivia 2015: 12). Gowda is aware that he should learn how to use a laptop to be able to keep up with criminals:

The society that he had to deal with was racing ahead at a speed that defied time, and if he didn't keep up, its crime and criminals would out-run him even before he began to comprehend what was happening. (Nair 2016: 287)

Many detectives depend on the internet for investigations: Google, YouTube and social networks are used to find information in Bhattacharyya's, Desai's, Piñeiro's and Olguín's novels, to mention a few examples. Olguín's detective Verónica Rosenthal can access "los archivos completos de al menos tres diarios nacionales (*Clarín, La Nación, Página/12*) con más de diez años de antigüedad" (Olguín 2012: 139) and therefore, she can gather information significantly faster than with offline archives. In Ocampo's *Cobayos criollos*, the unnamed detective consults online blogs whose participants share their views about the murder she investigates. She also finds it odd that Kathy's assistant is not on Facebook which she considers "una herramienta importante de trabajo" (Ocampo 2015: 137).

In Desai's series, Simran Singh feels restricted in her investigation in *Witness the Night* when the internet connection in her guesthouse is cut off (2010: 238). Also in *The Sea of Innocence*, the internet plays an important role: The death of Liza Kay starts to haunt those involved a year after her disappearance as incriminating videos are sent from Liza's email address and make it seem like she has returned. This kind of fraud scares those responsible and is the actual reason why Simran

has been asked to look into the case: As Simran finds out later, she has not been hired to find the disappeared Liza, but to find out who sent the emails to take revenge.

The police inspector Magesh in Meena's *Dreams for the Dying* also emphasizes the advantages of computerization:

What a difference the computer had made to crime investigation! They had just started operating a Rs. 2 crore computer that stored all the fingerprints of all the convicts and rowdy-sheeters collected from every police station in the state (2008: 164)

Magesh however criticizes the lack of interstate cooperation in data exchange and it is precisely when he asks a colleague from a neighboring state to compare the fingerprints gathered at the crime scene with their database that the case can be finally solved as the contract killer had been charged for inciting a mob years ago (ib.: 221). The police in Swaminathan's *I Never Knew It Was You* not only uses x-ray machines and sophisticated post-mortem procedures to identify a specific poison, but they also have access to the movements and bank statements of the victim Anisa (Swaminathan 2012: 237). Furthermore, a SIM card has a crucial function in the novel: The murderer looks for the missing SIM card which could implicate him in the murder and kills the guard of the morgue to get access to the victim's clothes in which he thinks the SIM card must be hidden (ib.: 181).

Amateur detectives and private investigators are at a loss here since they officially do not have access to these kinds of databases. It is particularly the lack of access to crucial information that is one of the reasons why it is described as increasingly difficult to employ amateur investigators (Worthington 2011: 31). As a means of compensation, many detectives establish contacts with police officers or hackers who can provide them with information. Bhattacharyya's detective Reema Ray for example counts on her uncle, who is the Deputy Commissioner of the Police in Calcutta. Hall's detective Vish Puri however cooperates with a "young electronics and computer whiz" called Flush

who provides him with access to credit card or mobile phone (Hall 2014: 105). Even the firewall of the Intelligence Bureau is not a problem for Flush who can get access to the suspects' criminal records. On the other hand, Vish Puri himself falls victim to surveillance and finds two bugs in his hotel room which have been planted by a rival detective (ib.: 115). Intercepting phone calls seems to be a common technique to bring down rivals in Swarup's *Sacred Games*: The Chief Minister intercepts the phone of the Home Minister Jagannath Rai and has the tapes sent to investigative journalist Advani, while the murderer recounts that he has intercepted the mobile phone of his son Vicky for two years and listened to the planning of a multitude of crimes (Swarup 2008: 551–552).

The use of these (illegally obtained) records is carried to the extreme in Ankush Saikia's novel *Dead Meat* (2015) in which detective Arjun Arora makes ample use of a hacker friend who provides him with a large amount of bank statements and phone records. This kind of access to personal data that can be accessed by anyone with the respective computer skills relate to Foucault's concept of the Panopticon (1977): A single person – generally the hacker – has quasi unlimited access to information about anyone. While the number of Indian novels in which this kind of records are accessed in investigations is striking, it is not a big phenomenon in Latin American crime fiction novels. Rather, the opposite is the case: Subercaseaux' *La última noche que soñé con Julia* seems a bit outdated because even though somebody calls the journalist Ignacio from the victim's mobile phone, the police do not try locate the phone nor can they access the records in any way and instead remain in the dark about the murderer. Only in Krimer's *Sangre fashion*, Gladys, the maid of detective Ruth Epelbaum, manages to solve a crime by using GPS tracking. She checks the phone of the twin sister of the model who was murdered during a catwalk and later has her husband use a GPS tracking system to determine where she was at the time of the crime (Krimer 2015: 138).

The internet also leads to new categories and dimensions of crime: One of Vish Puri's former cases included a recipe of a celebrity chef that was stolen from a hacked computer (Hall 2014: 11). In Olguín's *La fragilidad de los cuerpos*, Verónica only realizes in the end the large circle of persons who watch the train competitions of young boys online. While Verónica had not thought of such dimensions, the criminal boss García tells her that hundreds are following the competition online and is surprised "que una chica tan joven no piense que se puedan usar las nuevas tecnologías" (Olguín 2012: 320).

Hence it is often a video which provides crucial evidence: Verónica Rosenthal for example receives video recordings of the train competitions from García (ib.: 321), Simran Singh can bring down a politician with videos of him and the underage Liza Kay in Desai's *The Sea of Innocence*. Also, Vish Puri uses a pinhole camera to convict the criminal politicians in *The Case of the Love Commandos* and gives it to a news channel even before the recording goes to the police to create pressure on the police to investigate (2014: 259–260).

The investigative work of the detective in Ocampo's *Cobayos criollos*, by contrast, consists almost exclusively of watching camera recordings. The night before the pharma representative Kathy was killed she organized a big event at a hotel that was filmed by multiple cameras and microphones on the tables which were installed by Kathy herself to supervise the event (Ocampo 2015: 51). She compares the information gathered from witnesses with the recordings in tedious sessions and looks for inconsistencies. Also in the clinic Espacios, the detective realizes that every room has a camera (ib.: 123). Once again, the amount of cameras here brings to mind Foucault's Panopticon (1977). However, in this case, the advantage of the constant video supervision is not clarified.

As a whole, these instances underline the great presence of electronic devices in Indian and Latin American crime fiction novels: Technology is not only a source of information during the investigation but is also one of the most efficient means to convict a criminal. While

postcolonial crime fiction often points at a discrepancy between Western and in some way indigenous modes of investigation and conviction (see for example Knepper 2007: 1437), these observations also underline that no such difference is of impact for the novels discussed here. While investigations might not amount to a complete solution of a crime, at least in terms of the technology used for investigations, there is a clear tendency towards the growing use and presence of technological devices.

### 5.3.2 Consumerism and (Counterfeit) Brands

The omnipresence of electronic devices already points at the impact of consumerism on society. This is also underlined by the presence of brands and usually juxtaposed by the detective who is a critical observer of the commodification of his/her surroundings. Three main topics come to the fore that are discussed in a variety of the corpus novels: food, fashion and the commodification of the human body.

While the detectives live in a surrounding characterized by the greater availability of consumer products, they are rather modest consumers. The middle class origin of investigating figures has already been sufficiently explored in Chapter 5. Desai's Simran Singh for example inherited a significant amount of money from her father but wants to save it (Desai 2010: 157). Bhattacharyya's detective Reema Ray recounts how she used to save money to be able to hold up her detective agency. She recounts that "[w]hen other girls went out shopping, I hoarded like a packrat and wore the same clothes for as long as I could" (Bhattacharyya 2012: 5). Nonetheless, the novel includes a multitude of references to brands, from Indian designer brands like Sabyasachi to European ones. As a food writer, however, she has a weakness for expensive restaurants; especially authentic Chinese food. Dishes are described in detail in accordance with her job as a food writer; Reema for example praises a tart for the "tender yet crisp puff pastry crust yielded to creamy, delicately sweet custard filling, with a brown-tinged top providing a burnt sugar bite" (ib.: 46). She also declares coffee her "lifeline", enjoys bubble tea and keeps a stock of lasagna and cookie

dough in her freezer (ib.: 120; 5). While Reema enjoys baking, this is rather a hobby than a household activity and underlines that she is not a homemaker. This also reflects in Swaminathan's novels. Lalli and Sita do not only enjoy bread and marmalade, but also surprise their colleagues with affogato coffee or chili chocolate (Swaminathan 2012: 131). While none of these products are (North) Indian products, they suggest the availability of different choices from which the detective-consumer can choose in modern-day India. Swaminathan's first detective Lalli novel *The Page 3 Murders* (2006) has an even stronger focus on food since it evolves around chef Tarok who prepares special menus for each guest invited to a villa in Mumbai but he is murdered during the event. Tarquin Hall, by contrast, includes a multitude of references to Indian dishes in his novels such as kebabs, biryani, daal, kulfi, golgappas, barfi, rajma chawal, kachaloo (Hall 2014: 81; 124). The names are not only explained in an extensive glossary in the novel, but Hall also includes "Mouthwatering dishes from the Vish Puri Family Kitchen", i.e. recipes and descriptions of mutton biryani, pakoras or halva. While these features are also included in the Indian edition of his novel, they suggest that Hall (also) addresses an international audience and draws back on topics like the importance of food and spices that are characteristic for Indian fiction written for an international audience (cf. for example Martín Lucas 2014).

While food is often used as a marker of local identity in crime fiction (Michelis 2010), it does not play a major role in any of the Latin American crime fiction novels discussed. It is rather different lifestyles, consumerism and brands that are discussed and provide examples of how brand names increasingly replace other products (Coleman/Sajed 2013: 145). Olguín's *La fragilidad de los cuerpos* for example partly depicts the different lifestyles between the middle class detective Verónica and the poor boys who take part in the train competitions. Verónica lives in a flat in Villa Crespo which is full of books, "un plasma, un equipo de DVD y una notebook" and consumes branded products like café Bonafide Fluminense, Cafiaspirinia Forte or Jim Bean (Olguín 2012: 18; 117). She generally enjoys a good life in Buenos Aires where she frequents bars or "un pequeño restaurant naturista"

(ib.: 19). *El Peque* and Dientes, two boys from a poor neighborhood, have a completely different lifestyle: They dream of buying football shoes but even after winning 100 Pesos<sup>111</sup> in a train competition, they cannot afford them. Instead, they go to a hypermarket and spend almost all the money on snacks they are usually not able to buy. The list of products is described in detail and includes “dos cajas de Oreo bañadas en chocolate, un blíster de seis alfajores de dulce de leche, dos paquetes de bizcochitos, dos caramelos grandes Lengüetazo” and soft-drinks (ib.: 128), most of which they consume immediately. When they later buy a Coke with the remaining money, *el Peque* even drinks half a liter at once instead of enjoying it (ib.: 183). This kind of reward seems highly bizarre vis-à-vis the risk to his life that *el Peque* took to earn the money. Since they usually do not have any money, all they can think about is instantly spending it on largely branded consumption products as a kind of instant gratification when they finally have some. This behavior resonates Bauman’s observation about consumption quoted above: while the poor boys are usually ‘failed consumers’, they are longing to participate. Their desires are very limited since all they all they want is to be able to “comprarse cuando quisieran una Coca, o un alfajor, o chicles, o un pancho. Ni zapatillas de marca, ni celulares, ni una bicicleta” (ib.: 48). This shows that the poor conditions in which the boys live also shapes their desires as their only long for consumption items that would be considered everyday items in a middle class environment. The lack of money furthermore makes them very receptive to dangerous endeavors and criminals like García who exploits the destitute situation of their families.

In Swarup’s *Sis Suspect*, Munnar, a poor slum dweller and mobile thief, shows a similar behavior when he accidentally finds a large amount of money. He immediately spends it on consumption products and brands: He for example gets new clothes and buys everything “[his] heart has always desired but [his] wallet couldn’t afford”: “a shirt from Marks&Spencer, a leather jacket from Benetton, jeans from Levi [sic!], sunglasses from Guess, perfume from Lacoste and shoes from Nike”

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111 Converted into US-Dollar, the amount was worth about 23 USD in 2012.

(ib.: 184). This highlights a strong desire for brands by those who cannot afford them because of the values and power associated with the possession of specific brands. With his new clothes, Munnar has no problem to get access to spaces previously closed to him like posh restaurants or night clubs. From this experience he concludes that “as long as [he] had the briefcase full of money [he] had power (ib.: 229).

The contradiction between the consumption of foreign brands in the Global South and the exploitative conditions under which many of these products are actually produced in the same region for local and global consumption is also addressed. In *Sangre fashion* (2015), Krimer’s detective Ruth Epelbaum looks into the highly problematic fashion industry, which includes not only fashion shows and flagship shops but also sweatshops in Buenos Aires where Bolivian migrant workers are held in slave-like conditions. Watching a fashion show on TV, Ruth thinks about the imbalances in the global production system:

Me pregunto quiénes cosen esos vestidos, cuánto cobran por prenda. Y pienso que el Tercer Mundo existe para comodidad del Primero: los lugares de origen de las marcas son los lugares donde las marcas no existen. Las zapatillas Nike se fabrican en Vietnam; las ropitas de las Barbies en los talleres de Sumatra; los capuchinos de Starbucks en los cafetales de Guatemala. (Krimer 2015: 110)

However, she also points at the presence of brands in Buenos Aires and uses international flagship stores like Zara, Farmacity and Burger King as a means of orientation. She describes her neighbourhood by referring to shops around like “Lacoste. Cacharel. Mango. Prüne” (ib.: 56; 82). Persons are also described according to the clothes and brands they are wearing. Ruth for example remembers someone as “la mujer de zapatos violetas y un bolso Louis Vuitton” (ib.: 9). She also visits the Fería La Salada, a huge fair for counterfeit branded products – equally set up by Bolivian migrant workers – and is overwhelmed by the endless products and brands like “Soho. Checky. Awada. Puma. Topper. Fila. Le Coq Sportif. Top Design. Kosiuko. Topper. Locar. Montagne. Avia. Scombro. Hill. Duffour. Chocolate. Ona Saez. Manía.

By Me” (ib.: 100). Ironically, counterfeit and real branded products can hardly be differentiated: “Las truchas no se diferencian de las originales” (ib.: 98).

Swaminathan’s novels also include a multitude of references to high-end consumer products and brands like Victoria’s Secret, Body Shop, Estee Lauder or Chanel (Swaminathan 2012: 110; 2010: 73). While neither Lalli nor Sita are avid consumers of these brands, the references suggest that they live in an environment where foreign brands play a role and relate to a specific value and lifestyle (see for example Coleman/Sajed 2013: 145). Sita also brings up the issue of counterfeit products – which are ironically produced in the same place as real branded products: She e.g. searches the victim’s Salvatore Ferragamo bag and wonders if it is “from Dharavi, where all imitation originals begin, or from Milano where all Dharavi ends up” (Swaminathan 2012: 61). The value associated with certain brands is led *ad absurdum* here by the fact that counterfeit branded products are literally produced in the same place – Dharavi, which is known as Mumbai’s largest slum.

The references to the large presence of counterfeit branded products in India and Argentina in Swaminathan’s and Krimer’s novels underline a normalization of the criminal act to copy intellectual property. The rise of counterfeit products from branded cloths to electronic devices is in itself an irony of the outsourcing of production to the Global South which also provides the knowledge and technology that facilitates the production of counterfeit products (see for example Gerth 2010: 137–138). The purchase is partly seen as an active rebellion against neo-liberal consumerism and the monopoly of specific brands but also “a strategic response to the general cultural struggle of acceptance and recognition” (Rojek 2015: 200). As branded products are only affordable for a small share of the population, counterfeit products offer the possibility to exploit the symbolic capital of a brand. Whether this means a loss for the actual company or reinforces power hierarchies is disputed (ib.: 201). Counterfeit products similarly strengthen the visibility of the brand and do not necessarily mean an alternative to the original product in terms of quality and other features.

Nair's Inspector Gowda is also confronted with the greater availability of choices which overwhelms him: With his lover Urmila, he participates in dinner parties a posh neighborhood (Nair 2012: 123). Gowda realizes though that "no one from [his] world was likely to go" to similar places and feels out of place (ib.: 205–206). However, he suddenly finds a multitude of choices to eat out in his neighborhood in the outskirts of Bangalore in food joints like "Panda Express. Subway. Kabab Plaza. Koel's Pizzeria" (ib.: 130). Also his subordinate Santosh feels insecure when he enters a coffee shop because he is not treated with the respect that shopkeepers usually show towards police officers and he does not understand the codes of behavior. Besides the high prices and the music, it is also the necessity to constantly choose everything from flavors to toppings that annoys him: "Once more choice. What was it about urban life that demanded you make a choice every minute, every day?" (Nair 2012: 104). This closely resonates Zygmund Bauman's observation "*making a choice* is obligatory" in consumerist society and comes along with the burdening responsibility of having to decide between an ever greater choice of options (2007: 85; emphasis in original).

Different options in terms of lifestyles also lead to conflicts in various Latin American crime fiction novels. This is especially the case in Subercaseaux' *La última noche que soñé con Julia*, in which Jonás and Julia's marriage drifts apart because of different attitudes towards success and consumption. Jonás is an old revolutionary who looks back with nostalgia to the government of Allende in the 1970s and looks down on those who are profiting from the neoliberalist system in Chile and their obsession to process economically – or as he summarizes: "salir adelante, es decir, 'hacerse rico', *to make it*, como dicen los gringos" (Subercaseaux 2012: 55). He is thus opposed to any kind of modernization, makes fun of his wife's desire for a more comfortable life or a new kitchen and prohibits the family to go shopping in a hypermarket or to buy Barbie dolls for their daughter (ib.: 7; 87).

Jonás is devastated when Julia moves with her new husband to a suburb and starts to send their daughter to a private school. He is worried about the bad effect of a consumerist lifestyle on children and notes that “lo único que sé es que los niños se quedan con lo que brilla, sobre todo en este mundo lleno de celulares, Nintendo, Wii, cámaras digitales, computadoras de bolsillo” (ib.: 154). Thus, it is not surprising that he “no tiene cabida en un mundo donde el espacio público está al servicio de la oferta y la demanda, donde los barrios van desapareciendo y la ciudad solo considera a los ciudadanos como consumidores” (ib.: 54). Similarly, the journalist-investigator Ignacio expresses a certain consumption fatigue and realizes that he has followed the wrong ideal: “[e]sa obsesión por hacerse rico” (ib.: 123). As a consequence, he not only has four credit cards, but also a huge debt for buying a large house which now feels like a trap for him (ib.: 123). At the other end of the spectrum is the missing writer Carmen Ávila in Serrano’s *Nuestra Señora de la Soledad* who left all her possessions to start a new life. However, as I have already pointed out in Chapter 4.1.7 it is precisely because of her money that she can afford to start from the scratch.

### 5.3.3 The Commodification of the Human Body

The commercialization of society in the Global South does not spare at the commodification of the human body. Examples can be found in a variety of the corpus novels in which the human body becomes an object of economic value and economic transactions that can be exploited, exchanged or traded.

In Ocampo’s *Cobayos criollos*, the underlying issues explored in the case of the murder investigation is precisely the outsourced drug testing of US Big Pharma companies and the medicalization of society. This medicalization is advanced by the invention of new medical conditions that require treatment and thus drug tests. The victim Kathy Gateway is a prime representative of this business as her job was to “promover el uso de nuevas drogas, sobre todo psicotrópicas, en encuentros con psiquiatras y médicos clínicos de distintas partes del mundo” (Ocampo 2015: 16). She had the antidepressant Zexed tested

in Argentina before the drug's approval and focused on psychiatrists whose clients are wealthy enough to afford the drug. Analogous to the 'failed consumers', poor patient are considered "individuos sin utilidad para *Big Pharma*" (Ocampo 2015: 35). Kathy's assistant recounts that they used to work with Indian guinea pigs but since hospitals got used to the money that can be earned with drug testing, Kathy decided to do tests in Argentina (ib.: 39). The detective finds out that Kathy also worked on new drugs to 'cure' laziness or sexual desire disorders in women (ib.: 78; 168). She tried the drug herself and started an affair with one of the psychiatrists for medical purposes. Her motives are far from altruistic, but rather determined by greed for profit: She wants to "fomentar 'condiciones' que generan millones de dólares" (ib.: 170). The economic implications of the Big Pharma industry are revealed as the detective points out that problems during medical tests are often solved with money to avoid a delayed admission of the respective drug (ib.: 67). When it turns out that Zexed might not be approved due to various side effects, this has a dramatic effect on the Pharma company's stocks (ib.: 93). The fact that one of the doctors who took part in testing the drug has invested in the company's stocks reveals the vested interest of multiple agents who are interested in financial profit rather than in the patients' well-being. Patients find themselves exploited by the idea that life can be improved with a specific drug. In the case of Zexed, side effects make users suffer from impairments such as fatigue or loss of memory (ib.: 27). The exploitation of the patients is magnified in the clinic Espacios: As the detective reveals, patients are sold drugs which the clinic actually receives free of charge from a Pharma company and she suspects that some patients are given placebos and can therefore be considered "doblemente cobayos" (ib.: 203; 235). Ironically, it turns out that Kathy was killed by an overdose of her own drugs given to her by the murderers and thereby reminds everyone involved that legal drugs are not only a multi-million business but can also kill (ib.: 18).

Another crime fiction novel goes in the same direction and tackles the exploitation of human bodies in the Global South for medical purposes: In Zac O'Yeah's second Hari Majestic novel *Hari. A Hero for Hire* (2016), the issue of organ trafficking in India is discussed. The

novels of the series are comic and sarcastic commentaries on modern-day Bangalore explored by his unlikely detective Hari, “a reformed tout and small-time conman” of lower class background (O’Yeah 2016: Bookcover). Detective Hari is personally affected by organ trafficking when he goes to the newly opened “Globalized Style Super Speciality Hospital” with a broken leg. As Hari has no money, he agrees to the doctor’s offer for a free treatment as part of the hospital’s “Charitable Slum-dweller Scheme” only to find out later that one of his kidneys and 70 percent of his liver were removed without his approval (O’Yeah 2016: 139). Even though Hari is threatened by the doctors, he can flee from the hospital and reveal its connections to a new clinic where international patients can receive transplants from allegedly voluntary donors. Thanks to his tip-off, the police raid the hospital and shut it down. The problem of organ trafficking with or without the donor’s consent is a serious issue in India as the regular revelations of kidney rackets involving Indian and international recipients show – which are probably a mere tip of the iceberg (see for example Ghosh 2016). These cases suggest that it is possible to “buy and outsource scarce resources (body parts) where the supply is abundant (Nahavandi 2016: 4). The market, however, is not only steered by an unmet demand, but also by poverty and inequality. O’Yeah’s novel thus reflects that “[s]ocial injustices are part of commodification” as it is unanimously the poor who are suppliers of organs for recipients from the Global North or rich people in the Global South (ib.: 6).

Desai’s *The Origins of Love* has a similar focus and sheds light on the exploitation of poor women who rent out their wombs for money. The polemic surrogacy business is at the heart of the novel and explored via Simran Singh’s search for relatives of an HIV-positive baby born by a surrogate mother whose genetic parents died in a car accident.

She sheds light on India as a “destination for outsourcing wombs” (Desai 2013: 32), where surrogacy was a booming industry before it was banned for foreign couples by the Indian government in 2016. The ambiguities and complications of the polemic surrogacy business are explored in Desai’s novels: Partly, it is seen as a unique possibility

for couples to have a genetically related child. Different regulations or partly the lack thereof have led to the emergence of a globalized baby production industry in countries of the Global South in which the egg donor, surrogate mother and the parents might originate from completely different countries (Nahavandi 2016: 42). This means that “a Global South’s women’s body part has become commercialized to give birth for usually wealthy couples or individuals [...] but to a lesser degree also to wealthy people from their diaspora or region” (ib.: 118). Desai’s detective Simran works as a social worker at a clinic in Delhi, though she is also rather skeptical about the baby business and its implications. The problems Simran observes are for example the lack of age control of the surrogate mothers or insufficient breaks between pregnancies as well as the lack of education of these women in general. The emotional problems of surrogate mothers who get attached to the child and the lack of support to deal with these problem are also addressed. Simran mentions that “[c]ountries like Germany, Spain, Israel, France and Belgium had already issued notifications that IVF clinics in India should not entertain surrogacy for citizens of their country” (Desai 2013: 20–21).

When Simran finds out that “surplus” embryos brought into India are deviated to an embryonic stem cell research clinic, she is very divided about this research that makes use of grey zones of the law. Dr. Ganguly, the ruthless doctor who tries to maximize his profits by setting up his own clinic and does not stop at murder to keep up the business is a polemic figure as has been discussed in Chapter 4.4.2: He exploits the poor as surrogate mothers or test-patients for stem cell treatments. While the pros and cons of these practices are discussed with a view to childless parents as well as poor women who would never be able to earn a comparable amount of money in any other way, the lack of control and the power of doctors and clinics leave a bitter aftertaste.

It is noteworthy that *The Origins of Love* and O’Yeah’s novel are two exceptions in the corpus of recent Indian crime fiction novels as they deal with issues which concern particularly the poor in the Global South. Firouzeh Nahavandi who has done wide research on the reality

of the trade of body parts, has pointed out that “[i]n a world where nearly everything is traded, body parts, similar to any other goods, have entered the global market in a process now generally referred to as ‘commodification of human body parts’” (Nahavandi 2016: 1). He calls this kind of trade a “new type of appropriation of resources from the poor [...] to accommodate mostly the wealthier citizens and wealthier countries of this world” (ib.: 1). As in the case of organ trafficking or drug trials, it is once again these power imbalances that leave the poor particularly vulnerable to exploitation by greedy doctors even if they engage in a trade that may seem like a win-win situation in the beginning.

A final example of the exploitation of the human body is Swaminathan’s *I Never Knew It Was You*, in which even dead bodies are turned into a commodity. The transformation of human ashes into diamond is the business model of a dubious company called Immortals. The gem produced is called “Sada Suhagan”, a term that can be translated from Hindi more or less as a blessing for a woman to be ‘always married’. After a down payment before the death of that person – called “Event” in the company jargon – the company’s agents take care of the funeral and all further arrangements (Swaminathan 2012: 220). Nonetheless, while the ashes will be transformed into a jewelry item which is supposed to “Immortalize Your Love” as the company brochure promises, the gem is actually a much sought-after fashion item. Lalli appears to be wearing one of these stones and is much admired for it by various women meets – even though it is never revealed whether she actually wears a Sada Suhagan. Instead of a sign of grief and loss, this practice represents the ultimate level of commodification of a society. The business turns death into a site of investment and Lalli wonders if it might be a big scam, or even worse, if it runs on murder (ib.: 224): With a view to the excitement about the necklace, it seems likely that some women might speed up the death over their loved one to receive it earlier. Lalli is surprised to see how many people are aware of the Sada Suhagan and apparently approve of this macabre business.

#### 5.3.4 Conclusion: Technology and Consumerism

As this subchapter has shown, technology and consumerism are important topics in Indian and Latin American crime fiction and run like a red thread through the corpus of novels. These novels themselves can be considered commodified products of a changing local book market. An interesting aspect is thereby that India and Latin America as part of the Global South are no longer only portrayed as producers of consumer goods or providers of raw materials for the Global North. The Global South is a site of production and consumption alike whose consumers have an interest in foreign as well as local brands. This partly leads to a coexistence of exploitation as well as consumption that the investigations bring to light: Sweatshops, human trafficking and drug trafficking occur next to spaces of consumption. The plastic surgeon uses breast implants to smuggle drugs (Krimer's *Siliconas express*); politicians are involved in human trafficking to please business partners (Nair's *Chain of Custody*) and an Argentinean fashion company exploits Bolivian migrants in sweatshops in local neighborhoods of Buenos Aires (Krimer's *Sangre fashion*).

Technology and consumption products are familiar and widely available for middle or upper class citizens as for example Krimer's or Swaminathan's novels show. While the poor are usually seen as 'failed consumers' (Bauman), Olguín's and Swarup's novels show that lower class citizens are acutely aware of the meaning and values attached to branded products – and they immediately turn into consumers once they come by money. Money is thereby presented as a medium of access to specific spaces such as nightclubs as well as a means of participation. It reflects power relations structured by money and one's ability to consume in the capitalist system while other markers of identity (such as caste in India) are less dominant. Conflicts thereby arise between different attitudes towards consumption which reflect in political orientations as in Subercaseaux' *La última noche que soñé con Julia*.

The detective figures have a complex role here: They usually take a stance on the use of technology as a means of investigation. Indian detectives e.g. often draw on another person who can grant them (illegal) access to telephone records or bank statements, while this kind of hacking activities do not play a role in Latin American crime fiction. Camera recordings are frequently used for convictions as videos, especially if shared on social media can cause an outrage, which is presented as an effective means to ensure the prosecution of a criminal. Using the internet for investigations does play a role in a variety of Indian as well as Latin American novels, but 'offline' investigations in the form of questioning suspects and gathering clues continue to be the major means of investigation. Partly, crime fiction novels engage in a criticism about the lack of technological devices used e.g. by the police.

The detective is furthermore also portrayed as a consumer who engages in beauty treatments (Krimmer) or frequents exclusive restaurants (Bhattacharyya). Overall, the detectives are nonetheless rather modest consumers and a point of reflection about these processes: The rise of consumerism leads to social changes with different consequences, but also mean a greater variety of choices as a benefit. However, they also criticize the greed and lack of ethical concerns as negative consequences: Even human bodies are increasingly perceived as tradable – or rather exploitable commodities since it is usually lower class citizens who would trade a kidney or rent out their womb in exchange for money without being protected from risks involved in these operations. Consumerism and commodification have therefore far-reaching implications for society which are scrutinized by the detectives as part of the use of crime fiction as a vehicle for social criticism. These processes also reflect in the transformation of urban space in the neoliberal city studied in the following subchapter.

## 5.4 Space and Crime Fiction

In this final part of the two analytical chapters, I examine the setting in the corpus novels with particular focus on the depiction of urban spaces like Mumbai or Buenos Aires as well as on special structural

spaces or spatial relations that have traditionally been significant for the genre. The analysis is preceded by a two-fold introduction in which first I discusses some general observations about urban development in the Global South and the Global City discourse. The second part of the introduction will summarize the relation between space and crime fiction in the evolution of the genre. It adds some reflections on urban development by drawing back on Michel de Certeau's figure of the walker in opposition to the urban planner. De Certeau's dichotomy helps to understand the relation between the detective as a flâneur or walker and the power dynamics in urban spaces. Consequently, the main questions to focus on in this subchapter are: How do Indian and Latin American writers depict (urban) settings in their novels? How do detectives perceive the city they are investigating and which places are frequently referred to or might have been left out? The focus is, however, not on the accuracy of the depiction, but rather on the implications of the representations of specific places and connect to the question of how (gendered) power imbalances and spatial divisions are addressed: In which kind of spaces are the crime fiction novels set? Does the setting have a particular function for the plot/investigation? With a view to the increasingly borderless dimensions of crime, what is the scale of space portrayed in these works? Do global dynamics have an impact here?

#### 5.4.1 The City and Crime Fiction: A Particular Sense of Place?

##### 5.4.1.1 Urban Development in the Global South

Before discussing the relationship between crime fiction and space, the transformation of urban spaces as a result of globalization processes will briefly be summarized here to address some characteristics and contexts that are of importance with regard to cities in the Global South. These observations address important topics that are also reflected in Indian and Latin American crime fiction novels. Urban regions are often referred to as 'global cities', 'world cities', 'megacities' or 'megalopolises' (Detmers et al. 2011: 483) which suggests that urban regions follow a similar pattern of urbanization and modern-

ization closely connected to the trajectory of New York or London as prototypes of the global city. However, as cities located in the Global South are gaining economic and political impact, the validity of Western models of urbanization are increasingly questioned and new models for developments have emerged that take for example Shanghai as a model. Urban regions like Kuala Lumpur, Peking, Mumbai, Mexico City, São Paulo or Buenos Aires have acquired a crucial position for the national and global economy.

While these metropolises grow in size and importance, this expansion comes at a price: Problems like strong inequality, corruption, violence, pollution or organized crime prevail (Goldman 2011: 249). As a destination of national as well as international migrants, the cities are marked by the presence of different religions, ethnicities, classes and languages (Blom Hansen/Verkaaik 2009: 10). The mere dimensions of these cities make it impossible to grasp the totality of urban space or to perceive these cities as one unity. While different metropolises have undergone distinct trajectories and remain very heterogeneous, many share the impact of colonialism: The former colonial cities were key sites of the spatialization of the colonizers' power projects and for example already acquired an important position as port and trade centers in colonial times (Page 2003: 85). The legacy of the colonial period continues to affect many cities of the Global South and reflects in their infrastructure, power structures, architecture or a population segregation (Sassen 2002: 241). However, a postcolonial focus on asymmetric power relations often misses the emergence of the new metropolises as economic and cultural hubs (Detmer et al. 2011: 484; Ong 2011: 8). The rise of cities like Shanghai or Singapore challenge any binary models that divide the world into the former colonizers and colonized regions. Especially within Asia, urban planners now orient themselves towards these new metropolises and call for a 'Shanghaization' in urban development (Ong 2011: 14). Meanwhile, US-cities are still the models of urban development in Latin American metropolises.

The global city of the South has emerged in close relation to the era of neoliberalism and accelerated globalization which brought about new challenges but also opportunities. While Argentina is usually seen as a primary example of the failure of neoliberalism (Teubal 2004), in India, liberalization has led to a high-tech boom and continuously high economic growth rates (Davis 2006: 170). While growth is concentrated in urban spaces, development has also fostered “disparities in distribution of wealth leading to growth of a neo-capital class, uneven pace of urbanization [and] selective industrialization” (Sarkar 2010: 396).

A crucial difference among cities in the Global South is the growth or respectively the decline of the middle class: In India, due to the economic development, a new middle class is growing and has “taken up the cause of spatial order in Indian cities” (Roy 2011: 266), while the last two decades in Argentina are marked by the decline of the formerly strong middle class (Waldmann 2010). Neoliberal visions particularly materialise in the cityscapes: As Aihwa Ong observes, the “[emerging] nations exercise their new power by assembling glass and steel towers to project particular visions of the world” (2011: 1). Investments follow similar strategies as foreign direct investments favor high-class projects like gated communities, waterfronts, office parks, highways and roads, shopping centers or tourist attractions. This also deepens social fragmentation and to quote Ong again, “such ‘world-city aspirations’ have required the violent exclusion, even criminalization, of the poor” (ib.: 22) which are basically denied a place in the global city: Slum clearings and land grabbing are frequent in areas where land prices are rising. The vision of a world-class city does not correspond to the real needs and living conditions of a huge part of urban society of the South that live in slums. Mike Davis points out that

Instead of cities of light soaring toward heaven, much of the twenty-first-century urban world squats in squalor, surrounded by population, excrement, and decay. (Davis 2006: 19)

This leads to a growth of informal slums and as informal economy that is in multiple ways connected to the formal economy as unskilled workers are often employed in the construction and the service sector which make up a large share of the urban workforce (Brillembourg/Klumpner 2010: 125). Exclusionary city visions oversee the vital role of this sector for the cities' economies. The presence of a huge number of slums is usually seen as one of the main characteristics which distinguishes the urbanization pattern in the Global South from the North and has led to a fragmented "city of layers" (Prakash 2010: 340). The coexistence of different classes, however, vary: Fragmentation is reflected in Buenos Aires' cityscape through the emergence of gated communities and an increasing spatial segregation of different social classes (Coy/Pöhler 2001: 355), while Mumbai is more marked by a coexistence of various social classes as skyscrapers with luxury apartments may be built next to slum areas and lead to a close proximity between poverty and wealth (Nissel 2004: 58).

Urban citizens in the Global South are confronted with a similar set of challenges including corruption, police corruption, pollution as well as spectacular incidents crime and violence. The fear of crime significantly shapes the relation between urban society and urban space and for example fosters the use of private security or gated communities). Organized crime is a huge problem in most cities of the South: Uneven development makes people very receptive to criminal organizations involved in all kind of activities like "smuggling, extortion, real estate, human trafficking, drugs, gang wars and of late terrorism" (Sarkar 2010: 396). Various cities have been the target of terrorist attacks, such as the 2008 Mumbai attacks.

Taken together, despite their heterogeneity, the global cities of the South have several common characteristics such as the experience of colonization, the economic course pursued in the last decades or the challenges of uncontrolled growth, inequality and criminality that these cities are confronted with. Yet, the specific local conditions need to be taken into consideration as each city is associated with different local challenges that shape urban development and urban

society. Additionally, a changing political climate and the fear of terrorism accounts for differences. The ‘burden’ each city is carrying has implications that go beyond political or economic factors which are commonly the center of attention of studies on global cities. It thus significantly shapes how urban society perceives and uses urban space and reflects in what Thomas Blom Hansen and Oskar Verkaaik call the specific ‘urban charisma’ of a city, which is also a central concern of crime fiction novels (2009: 5).

#### 5.4.1.2 The Affinity between Crime Fiction and (Urban) Space

Crime fiction has always exhibited a particular relation to spaces and settings. While it is often considered that the plot can be set basically anywhere, it is evidently “always located *somewhere*” (Pepper/Schmidt 2016: 238; emphasis in original), This ‘somewhere’ is ever more in the focus of readers’ attention and the scope of scholarly works. Series are often associated with specific cities: Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes is connected to London and Ian Rankin’s Inspector John Rebus to Edinburgh. A few cities like Oxford have even attracted a multitude of authors (Wigbers 2006: 15). In vast majority of the novels, the setting is usually clearly identifiable and locatable (urban) space. Only few novels use a fantastic or unnamed setting. Crimes are bound to specific times and spaces and thereby change in accordance with the varying definitions and perception of what is criminal. As has already been mentioned in Chapter 3.1.2 and 3.2.2, the genre was initially so closely associated with the settings of the classic British crime fiction novels that for example Latin American or Bengali authors wrote novels drawing on British pseudonyms and settings. The same has longer been the case for Spanish crime fiction writers, who chose these “exotic locales and populated their narratives with foreign characters” in the UK to come up to their readers’ expectations, as Stewart King has pointed out (2014: 10). This phase of imitation led to a delayed development of own traditions, which in cases like Chile only really emerged from the 1980s onwards. Here once again, the diversification of settings shows that the blank spots on the world map of crime fiction – an actual project taken up by Eva Erdmann (2009) – are

diminishing. As I have so far shown in this thesis, also India or Latin America whose reality long seemed incompatible with the exigencies of the genre are increasingly perceived as suitable settings.

Crime fiction novels has since its beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century shown a particular relation to structural spaces such as the crime scene like a locked room or an isolated country house. While the dead body does not usually receive much attention in the classic British crime fiction novel, it is the crime scene that comes to the fore. Writers often followed the maxim to use uncommon places where the dead body seemed particularly ‘out of place’ and caused a puzzling mystery. This is especially the case in the locked-room mystery: The murder occurs in a closed space which the murderer at first sight would not have entered or left (Nusser 2009: 47). Besides, it is precisely the presence at or absence from the crime scene that is crucial for the plot: If the detective can prove a person’s presence at the crime scene, he or she becomes a suspect while the idea of an alibi proves that the suspect has been somewhere else and exculpates him or her. In other cases, it is the chase of the criminal through different spaces that characterizes the thriller (Wigbers 2006: 244). The (semi)rural setting in a small town or village in which most of these classic works are set basically creates an idyllic setting – often referred to as ‘the great good place’ – where a corpse causes a stir and interrupts the order (Auden 1988: 19). The bourgeois origin of the genre also reflects in a focus on the respective setting which represents bourgeois or aristocratic prosperity (Nusser 2009: 49). However, these settings can also be seen as already anachronistic as they were used in periods of rapid urbanization in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As Jochen Vogt has pointed out, these novels reflect a “Bedürfnis nach lokaler Orientierung oder gar nach Sicherheit in überschaubaren topografischen, sozialen oder kulturellen Räumen“ (Vogt 2010: 28). This also means that complex issues like social injustice and other problems are not addressed and larger uncertainties remain excluded from the plot because of their limited setting (see for example Cawelti 1976: 97). Similarly, it is also an enclosed space with a limited number of inhabitants or suspects. This is carried to an extreme in novels like Agatha Christie’s *And Then There Were None* (1939) or *Murder*

*in the Calais Coach* (1934) which are set in closed spaces like an island or a train respectively. However, most settings remain sketchy as the scope of the novel is on the plot. This is one of the reasons why classic crime fiction as often come in for criticism as apolitical, conservative and escapist.

These allegations have for example been expressed by authors of US-American hard-boiled who relocated crime fiction from isolated rural spaces to the urban metropolises like Los Angeles which acquire a special role in the narrative. The modification of the setting also has significant implications for the figure of the detective as well as for the respective investigation methods required. As has been pointed out already in Chapter 4.1, hard-boiled novels require different characteristics in terms of the detective – which reflects how place and identity shape each other: The subgenre which claims to depict the environment much more realistically than its British counterpart requires a detective who is not afraid to walk down the ‘mean streets’ as Chandler states in his famous essay “The Simple Art of Murder” (1950). The urban spaces portrayed are ambiguous and dangerous. The glamorous appearance of the city is deceptive and often revealed to be fake marble or instable facades that hide the decay behind them (Scaggs 2005: 71–72). Reflecting the state of society, the metropolises are largely dark, polluted and corrupt places. While the cities are portrayed to be “ruled by a secret alliance between the rich and respectable and the criminal underworld”, this also sheds light on the state of society as increasingly fragmented and shaped by corruption (Cawelti 1976: 156). With the police is involved in criminal activities in many cases, it is usually the private investigator here who functions as a guarantor of social order.

Urban spaces have been at the scope of crime fiction novels ever since and make up “almost a secondary character in the books” (Keitel 1998: 89). Jean Anderson et al. even consider crime fiction as the urban genre par excellence which provides a frame to reflect on contemporary society (2012: 26). The rapidly advancing urbanization and density of the city, the modification of urban spaces and spaces of crime

are often depicted in detail to create a specific atmosphere (Nusser 2009: 67). Current crime fiction novels focus on specific neighborhoods and milieus and provide detailed description of the surrounding (Erdmann 2009: 13). As Philip Howell has pointed out, the “geographical description plays a central role in the epistemological claims of most detective novels, as one of the most powerful construction of verisimilitude” (Howell 1998: 359). It is often argued that authors exhibit a ‘good sense of place’ and local knowledge which they use to realistically depict a specific place, or, as Philip Howell has put it, as “a matter of accurately representing the shared experiential conditions of the city’s inhabitants” (1998: 372).

Nonetheless, the spaces depicted are constructs which use topographic descriptions as an illusion of reality to create at once a familiarity and distantiating for the known place. While crime fiction novels largely draw on clearly identifiable local features, it needs to be kept in mind that it is not a balanced portrait of a specific neighborhood that is in the limelight, but the focus is rather on the negative manifestations of the surrounding and its society (Giudice 1979: 235). The modification of urban space in accordance with the expansion of global capitalism also leaves its traces in crime fiction novels, which ever more depict non-places like airports, train stations or hotels in the sense of Marc Augé (1995). The impact of consumerism and technology on the cityscape are omnipresent and reflect for example in brands (Nusser 2009: 67).

Nowadays, the setting of crime fiction novels is often presented as a brand-like distinguishing feature between the multitude of series on the market. Novels are advertised as ‘Tartan Noir’ for crime fiction novels set in Scotland or ‘Nordic Noir’ for Scandinavian equivalents, while the name of authors are often secondary unless they are a big name already. This tendency also suggests that the possibilities to vary the plot structure and characteristic elements of the genre are seen as limited and it is often the setting that comes to the fore. Eva Erdmann has stated in this respect that

[i]t almost seems as if the inventories of criminal motives a case histories have been exhausted, so that crime fiction's primary distinguishing characteristics has become the *locus criminalis*. (Erdmann 2009: 12)

In a search for “colourful settings”, authors glean on an “outward internationality” and often use new ‘exotic’ settings like the US-American writer Donna Leon whose Commissario Guido Brunetti series is set in Venice but written in English and addresses an international audience. The series has not been translated into Italian and does not really engage with the actual city (Wörtche 2008: 117). In other cases, specific locales are used to represent local identities like Catalan crime fiction or the wave of *Heimatkrimis* in Germany. It is this kind of internationality that give crime fiction the reputation of being comparable to travel literature which gives insides into specific locales in an entertaining and didactic manner (Anderson et al. 2012: 23). While Eva Erdmann suggests that the “interculturality of current crime fiction is based on the need of the inhabitants of a global village for similarly global, ethnographic and anthropological general knowledge” (2009: 25), I am rather skeptical if the genre can really deliver this kind of knowledge. Particularly minority detectives are often associated with specific spaces in which the plot necessarily needs to be located.

The transgression of national boundaries is partly seen as a key for the investigation as the detectives cross various countries in the course of an investigation (Pearson/Singer 2009: 7). Kerstin Bergman (2014) has described a Europeanization in Swedish crime fiction as authors like Arne Dahl use settings across Europe and depict transnational criminality. The genre thereby contributes to make the ‘global underbelly’ or the downsides of globalization processes visible in a multitude of locales and reveals international criminal connections – whether they are in a nearby neighborhood or far away. The reader is therefore offered “a wide-ranging forum in which to confront safely some of the tensions of globalized living” (Anderson et al. 2012: 5–6). While these tensions may be amply discussed, David Schmid has pointed out that the novels fall short of offering any kind of solution or changes to the underlying problems:

The problem created by this tendency of crime fiction to provide accurate diagnoses of both the problems of contemporary societies and the extent to which those problems are imbricated complexly with representations of space, but to be much less forthcoming about solutions that are anything except individual, are thrown into even sharper focus when the genre deal with units of space larger than the city, up to and including the globe. (Schmid 2012: 19)

Besides the downsides of globalization processes, topics that come to the fore in the spatial analyses conducted in crime fiction novels include gendered spatial practices, the implications of fear and power relations on urban spaces. It is particularly female detectives who address the distinct experiences of women in the city as compared to male counterparts. The detectives often challenge the private-public dichotomy according to which women are restricted to the private sphere while men can freely move in the public sphere. Female investigators who transgress this binary vision and investigate in the public sphere reclaim space and cater for new role models, as has already been discussed in Chapter 5.1. They highlight dangerous aspects but also the liberating possibilities of the city featuring a “combination of awareness and resistance” in relation to space (Schmid 2012: 16). The mobility of female investigations on the one hand shows how fear is socially produced and does not necessarily relate to actual threats. On the other hand, they reveal that the private sphere is often a much more dangerous place for women as they might be subjected to domestic violence (Ganser 2009: 70–71).

Generally, the city is often perceived as a space of crime and associated with a multitude of fears. These fears relate to the unknowability of the city, which is “simply too big and too complex for everyone to become familiar with all of it” (Evans 2009: 44). The depiction of urban spaces can be regarded as attempts to make the city legible and comprehensible (Howell 1998: 359). It is especially the anonymity of the city that raises fears and leads to a perception of urban space as dangerous and threatening: The city is often presented and imagined as a site of violence where inhabitants have to worry for their physical

integrity due to robberies, gang wars or repression (Silva 2007: 78). In this respect, crime fiction novels are congruent with urban imaginaries: Both depict a rise of criminality in the course of neoliberal economic policies such as the dismantling of the welfare state or waves of privatization. The fear of victimization has become the key concern of urban society (Kessler 2010: 71). While the urban poor are disproportionately affected by violence, the fear of victimization is equally high among other parts of urban society (Briceño-León/Zubillaga 2002: 31; San Pedro 2005: 24). Fear does not necessarily correspond to an actual threat, but its mere perception shapes the relationship between society and urban space and leads to a bigger demand of private security. That particularly public spaces are perceived as dangerous contributes to their regulation and erasure and lead to a retreat to the private sphere as well as to the emergence of “new public-private arrangements” like gated communities with own authorities for those who can afford it (Coleman/Sajed 2013: 205).

Besides fear, issues of power and control are also examined as crime fiction novels explore how power relations are spatialized in urban settings (Schmid 2012: 19). These spatial relations are usually examined by the detective who functions as a kind of urban flâneur and can be compared to Michel de Certeau's figure of the walker. De Certeau's reflections focus on the difference between an individual's and an urban planner's or voyeur's practices of making sense of urban life (2011: 107): While urban planners try to shape the material city according to their ideals of a global city, these processes are contested by the individuals who use the urban space. The planner has a voyeuristic overview over urban spaces, but the walker is the one who moves in the city and thereby challenges official visions and interpretations (ib.: 117). Applied to the crime fiction novel, this means that

[d]etectives y periodistas, en busca de la resolución de los casos, realizan recorridos urbanos, como parte de cierto proceso de disección visual de la ciudad. Esta actividad se liga a una interpretación que es propia de la función del detective, en ese sentido una nueva flaneríe. (Santos López 2009: 79)

The detective's interpretation of a murder may differ from the 'official' solution established by the authorities and thereby challenges official meaning-making practices as has already been insinuated for the competition between the police and the detective in Piñeiro's *Betibú* or Swarup's *Six Suspects*. Furthermore, the detective also constructs the city via a network of movements during his/her investigation and thereby creates the field in which the plot takes place. This activity can also be seen as an individual signifying practice through which the protagonist locates him/herself in urban space. The detective focusses on specific aspects like the city's underworld, poverty or criminality that are often ignored. He also frequently leaves aside other characteristics like the city's financial power or its touristic sites. This selection process may run counter to official meanings established by the walker's antagonist, the planner, who would prefer to envision an image of the city to follow the ideal of a global city (de Certeau 2011: 125). The detective depicts change in the cityscape during his investigation, but simultaneously often also conducts practices that challenge official meaning making processes or power relations. He or she can therefore be considered an "urban specialist", a term described by Thomas Blom Hansen and Oskar Verkaaik as "special forms of knowledge, networks, connectedness, courage and daring that enable some individuals [...] to assume leadership, or to claim hidden and dangerous abilities and powers" in a specific urban space (2009: 9). Even in times of globalization and increasing homogenization of the material cityscape, cities are able to keep distinct identities, or what Hansen and Verkaaik call a specific 'urban charisma' (2009: 5), constituted by the influence of collective imaginaries on urban space. Blom Hansen and Verkaaik actually name figures like "politicians, gangsters, business tycoons and the everyday hustlers" urban specialists which are infused with a specific "urban charisma" (ib.: 13). Therefore, the detective's opponent, the criminal, can also be seen as an urban specialist who has been marked by the space which he inhabits and has adapted to it. The criminal often applies this knowledge and is for example able to hide due to the complex space of the city. Commonly, however, the detective turns out to be the real urban specialist who is nonetheless able to find him. Both figures reveal, however, that "[o]utside the offices of urban

planners and strategists [...] there is never just one but many competing and often antagonistic understandings of the city (Blom Hansen/Verkaaik: 2009: 11). In Walter Benjamin's reflection on the detective – Poirot's detective Dupan in this case – as a flâneur, he has pointed at the problem of the invisibility of the criminal in urban masses and the illegibility of urban spaces *per se* (Benjamin 2003 [1939]). Cole Swenson has similarly presumed that

[u]rban spaces are marked by abundance, diversity, and the movement in such unpredictable occurrences that that the overall effect is one of chaos, mutability and incomprehensibility [...] A cultural construct that can interact with [the] code [of the city] is needed to intervene between the situation and the subject to render this kind of chaos and disorientation comprehensible. The detective novel is one such construct [...] [the detective] is mapping. He walks the city, and this walk becomes either literally and figuratively, chase." (Swenson 1993; quoted in Close 2008: 21)

The exploration of these concepts will be helpful for the analysis in the remainder of this subchapter to explore the spatial activities of detectives and the depiction of (urban) spaces in the corpus novels.

## 5.4.2 Latin America

### 5.4.2.1 Buenos Aires

The vast majority of Argentinean novels are set in and around its capital Buenos Aires. There are few exceptions to the rule: Orlando Van Bredam's *Teoría del desamparo* (2007) for example is set in a village in the country's northeast, Olguín's second Verónica Rosenthal novel brings the detective to Tucumán and Argentina's second-largest city Córdoba has a crime scene of its own as well. According to Amir Valle, Latin American *neopoliciales* depict "una ciudad sumergida, marginal no por elección sino por consecuencia, por fatalismo" (Valle 2007: 95). While this is congruent with the depiction of Buenos Aires in *neopolicial* novels, recent authors use different strategies to evoke the metropolis in their novels. Sylvia Sáitta has observed that Argentinean authors have responded to the crisis and its transformations of urban spaces

with a retreat to the local neighborhood, the *barrio*, or they invent alternative spaces as an opposition to the disintegration of social space and the social fabric (Saítta 2010: 445). Ezequiel de Rosso has also observed that investigations are increasingly set in private spaces (de Rosso 2014: 11)

The city of Buenos Aires is the setting of all Argentinean crime fiction novels taken into consideration here besides Piglia's *Blanco nocturno*, which is set in an unnamed village in the province of Buenos Aires, about 350 km from the capital where the train to the South passes without stopping (Piglia 2010: 35). Therefore, the village is an isolated and rather closed space with typical elements of a village such as "la plaza central, la iglesia y la municipalidad, la calle peatonal con las tiendas y las casas de música y los bazares" as any other village (ib.: 185). Distant from the political and media capital, the village functions as an independent microcosm reigned by the family who founded the village and the Prosecutor-cum-Investor Cueto. While the closed space calls for a limited group of suspects, the solution of the crime is arranged by Cueto who decides about the future of the village's only factory, which he wants to turn into a shopping mall.

Piñeiro's *Betibú* is clearly located in and around Buenos Aires – even though a connection of the murder series to the US is suggested. The plot divides between a gated community outside the city and a skyscraper in the heart of the city. For her non-fiction column, Nurit stays in a house inside the gated community La Maravillosa where the murder of Pedro Chazaretta occurred. Like Piñeiro's novel *Las viudas de los jueves* (2005), *Betibú* scrutinizes the life in these communities called *countries* in Argentina that have become popular since the turn of the millennium. According to Zygmund Bauman, gated communities can be considered "interdictory spaces" that are exclusive to a specific elite group and excludes anyone who does not have a special permit (Bauman 2007: 77–78). Carolina Rocha has pointed out that the emergence of the *countries* challenge "the traditional socio-spatial divisions in Argentina's capital, as the new 'countries' encroached on neighborhoods and areas that had previously housed working class

immigrants and domestic migrants” (Rocha 2011: 124). Interdictory spaces of the rich suddenly came into existence in direct proximity to lower class spaces, which literally means an exclusion of poverty: These neighbors were thus perceived as a threat and were kept outside by walls and entry controls. The legal status of these exclusionary spaces is often questionable as even the police are not allowed to enter the community without a search warrant (Piñeiro 2011: 80).

La Maravillosa has its own security force which exerts complex entrance controls. These mechanisms of in- and exclusion which include identity checks and body searches are described in detail various times: The service staff – usually women of lower class origin – have to endure this procedure on a daily basis. The controls remind Nurit of the controls during the dictatorship (Piñeiro 2011: 14–15; 101; 122; 236). The setting thus in principle closely resembles the idyllic small town or village of classic British crime fiction as a relatively closed system. The death of Chazaretta inside the *country* disturbs the integrity of the community. If Chazaretta was murdered, this would mean that either the access controls have failed or that there is a murderer among them. Therefore, it is not surprising that many inhabitants hold on to the suicide theory (ib.: 122). The management’s only reaction to the murder is to add further security measures as an act of distraction. Brena acutely states that

con cada nuevo asalto a un barrio privado agregan algún requisito de control que no va a servir en absoluto para evitar el próximo suceso, pero que nadie se atreve a cuestionar. (ib.: 237)

The murder and its consequences reveal the state of the *country* as a fantasy construct that aims at excluding poverty and criminality with rather fragile walls and security measures. While the mystery about the murder is not revealed, the original state of order also cannot be restored in La Maravillosa.

Nurit observes the state of the community in the *country* in the course of her stay. In one of her reports, she describes the neighborhood as a safe haven without any traffic noise or pollution, but with “árboles,

oliendo el perfume de las flores y del pasto recién cortado” and “gente [que] todavía deja las llaves puestas en los autos y las casas abiertas” (ib.: 108). Nurit, however, is rather disturbed by the nature around and laments the lack of public transport, shops, bars or theaters (ib.: 283; 120). Inside the community, she observes inhabitants which use every means of transport and ways of walking:

La mayoría de a gente con la que se cruza, trota. Algunos caminan. Dos mujeres jóvenes pasan junto a Nurit Iscar en *rollers*. Varios en bicicleta. [...]. Carros de golf a batería, ciclomotores, *skates*, *reef sticks*, motos. El parque automotor no compuesto por automóviles es de lo más diverso en La Maravillosa [...]. (ib.: 132)

This diversity points at the abundance of consumer goods in the *country* which distracts from the absence of any kind of surprises or uncertainties (ib.: 120). Nurit increasingly feels like an intruder in the *country*, not only does she receive hostile comments from the *socios*, the inhabitants, but also feels threatened and hunted at some point. The distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’ seems insuperable. Even accompanied by Brena and *el pibe*, Nurit wonders why everybody is aware that they are “extranjeros, intrusos, *aliens*” (ib.: 163). She can thus be considered a flâneur who virtually discovers and makes sense of the *country* during her walks, but it is evident that her knowledge of the local codes is limited and therefore she stands out as an outsider. Thus, she is very happy to return to the city after giving up the investigation and going back to her much less exclusive middle class flat “en el Barrio Norte más pobre, o más venido a menos” (ib.: 19). The highway that leads out of the city to the *country* is also described in detail. Once Nurit leaves the Panamericana highway, she observes that the buildings along the highway have changed. Cheap hotels have been replaced with temples of consumerism like “[s]hoppings, cines, restaurantes, fábricas, bancos, empresas de distinto tipo, clínicas”. As the infrastructure cannot keep up with the speed of new constructions and some parts of the roads are not paved yet (ib.: 99).

Another space that is associated with the neoliberal city and power relation is the tower in which Gandolfini's office is located. His office is in "una torre en Catalinas, sobre Leandro N. Alem, una de las varias que se levantan al costado del hotel Sheraton" (ib.: 304). As Glen Close has pointed out, the depiction of a skyscraper where a businessman is located and his ability to look down on the city is a trope used in various Latin American crime fiction novels (Close 2008: 121). The tower can be considered another 'interdictory space' with access controls: Nurit needs to provide her name and ID to obtain a visitor's card to be able to enter. Once again, the security system is not an absolute mode of exclusion: Nurit gets in by pretending to have an appointment and – as clearly depicted in the final scene – someone is able to kill Gandolfini in his office in spite of all the security measures (Piñeiro 2011: 305; 339). Nurit has mixed feelings about the view from Gandolfini's office. He enjoys a view over the city and the river which reflects his position of power as the boss of a company that allegedly kills people. In his position, he only has an overview, but also a safe distance from potential victims.

Skyscrapers also function as a representation of power in Krimer's *Sangre fashion*. Detective Ruth Epelbaum's investigation first of all brings her to a "torre de metal y vidrio en pleno corazón de Palermo" in which a Model agency is located (Krimer 2015: 27). The building is certainly an outcome of gentrification processes in Buenos Aires and has replaced an individual house. Ruth feels very uncomfortable in the minimalistic hypermodern space and is relieved to leave it. Ruth's only lead brings her to another skyscraper in the upper-class neighborhood Recoleta owned by the rich textile industrialist Lapidus. Once again, the tower gives an overview of the surrounding from which Ruth can even see the Uruguayan coast (ib.: 105). While these spaces represent the power and wealth of the fashion industry, they are juxtaposed by the condition of the sweatshop in which the products are actually produced under inhuman conditions. Ruth goes to a recently abandoned building, "una construcción grande [que] tiene una cortina metálica oxidada y las ventanas selladas con alambre tejido" without any light insight. While the Bolivian slave workers recently left, Ruth sees the

poor conditions under which they had to work (ib.: 127). She also recalls an incident where six sweatshop workers died during a fire in a house where they were “encerrados de la mañana a la noche con salarios de hambre” (ib. 24).

Besides, Ruth is an actual flâneur who depicts Buenos Aires as a consumerist city in the course of her walks through different neighborhoods. She herself frequents fashion shows, beauty shops, hairdressers and in *Siliconas express* even the chamber of plastic surgeon (Krimer 2013: 9; 31; 125; 162; 167). In the center of Buenos Aires, she constantly refers to extratextual places as the following quotes underline:

Me visto y salgo. Camino hasta Santa Fe y espero el subte. Pacheco de Melo. Azcuénaga. Pueyrredón. Libertador. Me bajo en Alem, cruzo y enfilo hacia Puerto Madero. (Krimer 2013: 93)

Camino por Bartolomé Mitre y vuelvo a la peatonal. Paso la galería Boston. La Güemes. [...] Tengo la sensación de que me siguen me escondo entre la multitud que pulula en la calle. Entro en Zara. (Krimer 2015: 55)

These references suggest a familiarity with the surrounding as everyone familiar with the city can reconstruct her walk or the trajectory of the specific bus she takes. She regularly makes references to the plights of public transport as too crowded and full of unpleasant human odors (for example Krimer 2013: 96). As I have already discussed in Chapter 5.3.2, she frequently refers to shops and brands like Zara, Farmacity or Burger King for her orientation instead of landmarks and sights (Krimer 2015: 56). Some observations point at an eagerness to buy and consume like the situation in the Farmacity where “[t]odas las cajas están ocupadas” and “[c]ada vez que se abren las puertas sale una mujer con una bolsa” (Krimer 2013: 36). However, in between Ruth also suggests that the situation is not very bright: Ruth e.g. goes to buy US-Dollars on the black market and insinuates that it is an everyday activity (Krimer 2015: 55). In other instances, she observes that many shops have a sign “Vidrieras en liquidación” and are about to shut down and meets street vendors, begging women and protestors

(Krimer 2010: 175). The fancy shops with branded consumer goods are juxtaposed with the fair *Fería La Salada*, in where counterfeit brands are sold in huge quantities by Bolivian migrants. Due to the fair's popularity, it is said to be a goldmine. Ruth comes to know that "un puesto de dos por dos vale 100.000 dólares" which is even higher than the prices per square meter in Buenos Aires' emblematic Puerto Madero (Krimer 2015: 49). That this market is mainly run by Bolivian immigrants who sell counterfeits of global brands in Buenos Aires while the production of branded clothes in Buenos Aires is simultaneously based on an exploitation of Bolivian immigrants in sweatshops shows the complexity of the international entanglements of the fashion industry which is totally focused of consumption and profit.

During her investigation in *Siliconas express*, Ruth also leaves the city to travel to posh areas in the outskirts of Buenos Aires. In both cases, she takes a train northbound "dispuesta a disfrutar del mundo de los ricos" (Krimer 2013: 81), but returns immediately after she finds the dead body of the man who hired her. She also participates at a private party organized by the dubious surgeon in a gated community. Quite similar to the *country* in which Nurit stays in Piñeiro's novel, Ruth describes the area in detail: "Calles con ligustrinas altas. Casillas de seguridad. Olor a gente fina, a marcas" (Krimer 2013: 42). The Buenos Aires Ruth portrays consists unanimously of spaces of consumption which include a multitude of shops in the city center as well as the beauty industry or the living spaces of the city's wealthy and influential population. Even more informal spaces like the *Fería* can turn into microcosms of consumption with huge profits while those disadvantaged by these developments like the poor or illegal immigrants play a secondary role.

Sergio Olguín's novel *La fragilidad de los cuerpos* sets a larger focus on the parallel existence of wealth and poverty in Buenos Aires. The alternating chapters give insights into the living conditions of the two boys from a poor neighborhood. Verónica herself lives alone in an apartment in Villa Crespo which she received as a gift from her father (Olguín 2012: 92). She generally moves around the center though few references are given: It is mentioned that she enjoys the nightlife of

Buenos Aires with her friends but also visits a bar alone for a drink and ensures that it is a bar only frequented by old people to make sure that nobody disturbs her (Olguín 2012: 27). She knows the area of Tribunales very well as her father's legal practice is close by, thus she knows "cada bar de la zona, cada parada de colectivo, cada librería comercial, cada puesto de la feria de libros de la Plaza Lavalle, cada árbol de la plaza" (ib.: 30). Vis-à-vis this familiarity with the city, Verónica has to admit her lack of knowledge about suburbs like Avellaneda: "Su conocimiento de esa localidad se limitaba a las chachas de Independiente y Racing, la estación de tren, la calle que llevaba a los estadios, la calle Alsina y la avenida" (ib.: 36). Non-places are of some importance in the novel as Verónica's affair with the married train driver Luciano brings her to various nondescript bars and motels – *albergues transitorios* (ib.: 111).

Places in the city are hardly described in details, but the poor neighborhood she visits in the course of her investigation receives more attention: Verónica finds out that most boys who died in train accidents were from the same area in Southern Buenos Aires, the "Comuna 8, la más pobre de Buenos Aires" (ib.: 152). Verónica is initially unsure how to investigate because she has never been there:

Sabía que existía, que allí había un parque de diversiones abandonado [...]. Lo cierto era que no prestaba demasiada atención a los lugares por los que pasaba. De hecho, se le confundía toda esa zona de la ciudad: Mataderos con Lugano, Soldati con Pompeya, Ciudad Oculta con la Villa 1-14-21. (ib.: 187)

She asks Luciano to accompany her on her first trip to the area but realizes that the families of the boys who were killed in the train competitions moved away. Her second trip takes her to Ciudad Oculta, known as a dangerous *villa*, a slum-like area and contacts a priest from the neighborhood to accompany her. She mainly needs him as a guide due to the lack of street names and the chaotic system of num-

ber which “solo los vecinos del lugar podrían reconocer en su lógica interna” (ib.: 189). Once she is there, however, she does not feel scared to enter the area:

Al menos esa parte de la villa estaba lejos de ser un lugar que despertara temor. Verónica veía pasar gente madres con chicos, adolescentes con guardapolvos, como en cualquier barrio de Buenos Aires. Es cierto que las casas eran más precarias, pero nada parecía indicar que ella necesitara hacer ese viaje hasta la parroquia en compañía del cura. Si hubiera ido sola, podría haber llegado sin problema. (ib.: 192)

While she did not have a clear idea of the poor neighborhoods before, she becomes aware of the difference and the developments inside the slum. While some parts just consist of “monoblocks”, other parts have been upgraded; the houses are “más abigarradas en esa parte, como si las hubieran metido a presión y se hubieran aplastado una al lado de la otra” (ib.: 194). The threat of eviction of the *villas* for its inhabitants also comes up. Verónica points out that the city of Buenos Aires wants to vacate areas that are worth a lot of money to build offices and expensive houses and promotes it as an improvement of the living conditions for the slum inhabitants in the media (ib.: 251). Eventually, Verónica does not show fear to go to poorer neighborhoods of the city. She even takes a taxi to Villa Soldati at night and walks around alone in search for someone. She is aware that the neighborhood “podía calificarse de peligroso para una chica o para cualquier pequeñoburgués obsesionado por la inseguridad” but does not show any concern (ib.: 330). Besides this outsider view, the two boys *El Peque* and Dientes give more insights into their life in poverty. Both live with their single mothers and siblings in an *inquilinato*<sup>112</sup>, a collective housing shared by poor inhabitants. *El Peque's* family for example has two rooms with an improvised kitchen in one of them and a shared bathroom with other inhabitants (ib.: 47). The football club is a welcomed diversion for the boys who do not have much entertainment, even though the

112 The Argentinean *inquilinos* refer to communal houses, originally built for poor Italian immigrants at the beginning of the 20th century. The houses consist of one room apartments with a shared communal kitchen and bathroom (Podalsky 2004: 105).

club is in a bad condition with “la fachada descascarada, [...], una cancha baby de fútbol, la entrada a una oficina, las vestuarios y no mucho más” (ib.: 81). It is not surprising that many families of the boys who died in the train competitions accepted the subsidized house offered to them by the Department for Housing and Environment rather than persisting on a prosecution of the fatalities.

The poor conditions in which the boys live are contrasted by the spaces in which those involved in larger activities of organized crime and corruption dwell and fraternize. Palma, who is in charge of the housing fraud at the Ministry has an “enorme despacho, desde donde se podía observar la Plaza de Mayo y la Casa Rosada de fondo” (ib. 252). García’s secret office is in an office tower in Palermo which belong to the international company Unmittelbare Zukunft (ib.: 303). When Verónica goes to confront him there, she describes the building as “una construcción de líneas modernas” with “hombres de seguridad con aspectos de ser el eslabón perdido entre el hombre y el mono” instead of receptionists (ib.: 319). This suggests that García can apparently live very well off the money he generates from the train competitions and other criminal activities.

Ocampo’s novel *Cobayos criollos* is also set in Buenos Aires, but the setting is predominantly limited to the hotel in which the detective watches the camera recordings of the event that was organized by the victim. In addition, she goes to Palermo Soho to visit the clinic Espacios and walks around Recoleta, which is one of the few instances when she comments on her surrounding:

Pasa de ser un lugar turístico por excelencia, a un barrio envejecido y melancólico donde entre penumbras se deslizan gatos errantes acostumbrados a dormir sobre la piedra fría de los mausoleos. (Ocampo 2015: 137)

In another instance, she sits in a public square at night and pretends to be at peace while pointing out that she is “en una ciudad donde muchos se sienten vulnerables, presas de enemigos agazapados” (ib.: 172). The comment may also allude to her parents’ experiences during the dicta-

torship rather than to common day delinquency and the perception of public spaces as vulnerable for women. Despite her Argentinean origin, the detective does not show much interest to engage with the city and is happy to return to New York as soon as possible. She concludes that “estar sola en Buenos Aires es estar más sola que en cualquier otra parte de mundo” (ib.: 83).

#### 5.4.2.2 Santiago

Even more than in the case of Argentinean crime fiction, the settings of Chilean’s crime fiction novels are limited to its capital Santiago. In this respect, Danilo Santos López has pointed at the “la obsesión por las grandes ciudades” of the *neopolicial* and the rise of non-places depicted (2009: 85; 87). The only notable exception is Roberto Ampuero’s Inspector Brulé series which is praised for its global character (see Chapter 3.2.3). The novels of Ramón Díaz Eterovic, by contrast, have continuously portrayed the changing cityscape of Santiago during neoliberalism and the rise of fear of criminality (ib.: 72). Along with him, various other recent writers have explored the genre as a critique of urban development center which is often steered by the “bourgeoisie” as a driving force and other profiteers of these transformations. Inequality and the impact of neoliberalism on the cityscape and society are common concerns of recent Chilean crime fiction novels. Besides a depiction of the political and economic sphere, private spaces also play a role in many novels (as discussed in Chapter 4.4.3). Furthermore, everyday nuisances such as the weather or the traffic are frequently commented on.

The plots of Subercaseaux’ *Asesinato en La Moneda* largely takes place in the Chilean Presidential Palace La Moneda where various ministers work. La Moneda is a building with a strong symbolic and historic importance because of its role during the 1973 Pinochet coup. However, any historic references are eschewed in Subercaseaux’ novel and the building is mainly important as a crime scene and because of various conspiracies and affairs that take place inside. While such a building would in principle appear as a closed environment with a fixed group of suspects, it seems to be relatively easy to get access to

the building as various people can reach Mariana's office. Besides the offices, the situation in the kitchen of the Presidential Palace is also discussed. This depiction of La Moneda as an everyday workplace and now site of a murder differs significantly from earlier Chilean novels. According to Danilo Santos López, La Moneda was usually "un lugar (o territorio simbólico) con memoria histórica y productor constante de sentido" (2009: 86). This perception has already been challenged by Roberto Brodsky in his 2004 novel *El arte de callar*, in which the journalist Bobe enters La Moneda for the first time. The protagonist perceives it as a disconcerting experience ("raro, casi exótico") and laments that the building has turned into a "castillo de juguete" stripped off its historic significance (Brodsky 2004: 84; 87). Subercaseaux' novel uses La Moneda as an interesting crime scene in a building of current political importance where a murder triggers a larger political scandal.

In addition, Chile's economic progress and the prevailing inequality are discussed with a view to urban development in Subercaseaux' novel: Mariana's husband picks up her sister from the airport and points out that "Chile había cosas que lo hacían parecer un país desarrollado" while the taxi drivers still "recibían a los turistas con un carta de tercermundista" (Subercaseaux 2007: 38). Economic growth has led to an improvement of the infrastructure in the capital, as he explains: "había una verdadera explosión de puentes, rutas subterráneas y esa Costanera Norte que dejaba al aeropuerto a veinte minutos del corazón de Providencia" (ib.: 39). Nonetheless, poverty has not been eradicated, it is not only visible in lower class neighborhoods but also right in the center of the city: In front of the Central Post Office, for example where all kind of painters and street food vendors "daban cuenta del subempleo" (ib.: 140) and. When detective Julieta Barros looks for the house of the Chinese chef of La Moneda, he warns her that it is a dangerous area. Observing a child without shoes, she concludes that it definitely is "un barrio pobre y sucio" (ib.: 184) which stand in stark contrast to the environment frequented by the other protagonists.

In Subercaseaux' other novel *La última noche que soñé con Julia*, the historic division between the political right and the left associated with the idea of Chile as a socialist society also plays a role in debates about housing and urban development. Jonás, the ex-husband abandoned by Julia, is very attached to the house which his grandfather built in the neighborhood Ñuñoa; he even states that “[su] identidad estaba íntimamente ligada a Ñuñoa” (Subercaseaux 2012: 54). The area is heavily affected by gentrification processes as ever more modern apartment complexes are built in the former residential area with individual houses. In addition, Jonás friend declares that he was offered an equivalent of 250,000 Euro for selling his house to a construction company (ib.: 772). Jonás is very proud that his street is still

una de las pocas del barrio donde no habían destruido casas para levantar torres de cemento, y desde [su] ventana parecía una extraña sobreviviente de un mundo que se fue. (Subercaseaux 2012: 53)

Nonetheless, Jonás stubbornly holds on to the house and wards off any suggestions for change. As a matter of principle, he is against any changes and refuses to buy a new kitchen which he perceives as a bourgeoisie (ib.: 54). Julia, by contrast, complains that he is a “rehén de un país que no ya no existe” (ib.: 103). She is dissatisfied with the old house where light cannot enter due to the small windows and suggests to buy land in Pirque where she could have the vegetable garden she had always wanted (ib.: 53). When she leaves Jonás, it is once again the house that she brings up as a point of discussion:

¿Creías que iba a vivir para siempre entre estas paredes oscuras, en esta cocina con los cajones de los años cuarenta que se atascan cuando los abres [...]? ¡Ni la más remota comodidad! (ib. 103)

The struggle over the house is symptomatic for their relationship as both have very different desires in terms of lifestyle and goals that are difficult to reconcile. Julia's new husband, by contrast, can offer her the home she always dreamt of: He buys a house in El Arrayán, an uptown neighborhood in the outskirts of Santiago close to the Andes, where

“se respiraba otro aire, no había ruidos [y] la naturaleza invasora no tenía más límites que el estero” (ib.: 142). In contrast to her old home, the new house is an old wood house full of light with a huge garden area on a steep ground. While Jonás expects a luxurious home, he has to admit that it is quite an average house when he secretly goes there to find out where Julia and his daughter live. He is surprised about the “casa común y corriente, bastante grande, pero nada especial.” (ib.: 183). The relatively isolated location of the house where Julia disappeared during her party accounts for a rather closed space and limited group of suspects in a country-house like location. The case is complicated by the absence of a dead body or any other traces about Julia’s whereabouts. These uncertainties divert the investigation to an exploration of other issues and scandals that come to the fore.

Valdivia’s *Un crimen de barrio alto* puts a larger focus on the depiction of everyday topics in Santiago like the traffic or the smog and scrutinizes upper-class spaces via the investigation of Comisario Morante and his team. The title’s reference to the ‘barrio alto’, a term that refers to wealthy neighborhoods like Las Condes, Providencia or Vitacura, already determines the location of the crime. The plot sets out with an investigation of the crime scene, Clarisa de Landa’s house, which Morante describes as “enorme, moderna y lujosa” as he looks at the various rooms, the impeccable garden, the heated pool, the sport room and the sauna (Valdivia 2015: 11). Compared to the large SUVs on the road, Morante feels as if his police car has suddenly shrunk: “El automóvil del policía es un ejemplar normal de tamaño mediano que resulta jibarizado por los grandes vehículos que dominan la escena. Se siente observado desde arriba” (ib.: 97). The novel suggests a división between “la clase alta santiaguina” which tries to distance itself from the rest of society by living “en un mundo propio inventado, un mundo tan poco chileno” (ib.: 28). Thus, a strict us/them dichotomy is suggested from the point of view of the middle class and it is only the case of a murder that forces the middle class police to mix with the upper class. Besides the higher location of these neighborhoods and the large cars, a spatial division is also once again enforced by offices in skyscrapers. The meeting room of the Banco Comercial Popular where

the victim used to work is on the 22nd floor of a business tower. The view impresses Morante who observes how the city and the river have been effected by urban development:

la ciudad es un archipiélago de centenares de edificios modernos de veinte pisos o más, forrados en aluminio anodizado, cerámicas importadas y paneles especiales de vidrios contra resplandor. [...] El río Mapocho va fajado y humillado por autopistas rápidas, de superficie, subterráneas y elevadas. Su cauce es un canal aséptico completamente domado. (ib.: 108)

Besides a location of power, the spatial division also reflects a sanctuary where the rich hide from other social classes (ib.: 27). The office's furniture is accordingly expensive; Morante points out the "muebles de estilo clásico, se notan las buenas maderas, varias alfombras finas, pinturas de naturaleza en marcos antiguos [y] un hermoso escritorio muy ordenado" (ib.: 141). However, these islands of wealth are deceptive as the revelation of a rampant white-collar crime inside the bank suggests. Furthermore, the skyline from the bank tower to the east gives the impression that "la ciudad se perfila contra las nubes" and "luce como una ciudad moderna" (ib.: 27). Nonetheless, the bird's eye view also reveals the poorer areas of the city which look like "una mazamorra sucia de viviendas enanas, de color café grisáceo [que] se extiende hasta el infinito por el poniente y el sur" or "una infinitud informa, baja y sucia, que se extiende al otro lado del horizonte [...] de los millones que vegetan en los submundos (ib.: 27; 108). These are also the areas where crime is usually located, which is why the media is particularly shaken by the murder in a posh neighborhood which suggests that criminality is now even invading the supposedly safe upper-class environments and thus there are no more 'safe heavens' in the city. A prosecutor points out that "[l]a ciudad está muy violenta" (ib.: 170). The poor neighbourhoods in Chile give evidence of the depressing "recuerdo permanente de que el milagro chileno no da para tanto" (ib.: 27) as widespread inequality prevails.

Morante nonetheless also sees the positive aspects of Santiago; he is fascinated by “la gente que atiende en las ferias, los restaurantes populares, las estaciones de servicio de provincias” and particularly by the Andean mountains that surround the city (ib.: 28). He frequently comments on the *cordillera*; whether it is visible or hidden behind smog or snow-covered (ib.: 109; 166). It is particularly the smog that annoys him. Often it is not clear whether “Santiago está nublado o cubierto de hollín de automóviles y residuos de fundaciones” (ib.: 270). The weather, pollution and traffic are topics running like a red thread through Chilean crime fiction: Morante mentions for example that it is “un día de fines de otoño, nublado y frío, con el aire oscuro de humedad y esmog, como son los otoños santiaguinos” (ib.: 26). The narrator in *La última noche que soñé con Julia*, by contrast, appreciates how a change in the weather creates a completely different atmosphere: “La lluvia del día anterior se había llevado el polvo y Santiago lucía como una ciudad amable, limpia y verde, donde nunca pasa nada” (Subercaseaux 2012: 179). The detectives regularly complain about the traffic, which is called “horrendo”; “enmaranado y enervante” and “incesante” (Serrano 1999: 14; 92; Valdivia 2015: 99). Leaving the city is always perceived as a relief with regard to the air quality as well as to the traffic – and in Serrano’s novel also with regard to women’s liberty.

Serrano’s detective Rosa Alvallay initiates her search for the missing writer Carmen Ávila in Santiago. Like Carmen, the detective lived outside Chile until some years ago. Carmen disappeared in the US and could be anywhere, but Rosa starts by questioning Carmen’s family members in Santiago. Her trajectory includes many references to real-existing well-known places like the Drugstore Boulevard in Providencia, bars like Fuente Alemana and the café Las Lanzas in Ñuñoa or the Tavelli, which can be seen as a strategy to evoke a realistic surrounding that Chilean readers are familiar with.

Rosa and Carmen are both not particularly happy in Santiago as the investigation reveals: Rosa complains about her office, her house, the traffic and, as I already explored in Chapter 4.1.7, sees her life in general as mediocre and uneventful. At some point, she states that

“[e]l concepto de ser feliz ya no es una categoría vital para los chilenos, arrancamos esas dos palabras del vocabulario nacional” (ib.: 176). Also Carmen mentions that she “ya no odiaba ni amaba a Chile, que sólo le aburría” (ib.: 111). Rosa visits Carmen’s husband who also lives in El barrio alto – an upper class area of Santiago – in a large house with garden (Serrano 1999: 19). She realizes that Carmen actually owns only one room in the entire house, her office, which does not really fit in with the style of the house (ib.: 30). Rosa, however, immediately feels comfortable between “los cojines hindúes y las alfombras baratas” and “[u]n enorme árbol de la vida mexicano color arcilla es la decoración central de la habitación” (ib.: 25). These references to India and Mexico continue to play a role during the narrative as Carmen’s possible abodes. Both countries are for example places Carmen knows very well: As a teenager, Carmen spent time with her parents in India and she lived in Mexico as a young woman. She also had a son there, but moved back to the US at some point (ib.: 103; 122). Carmen’s parents disappeared in India, which she thus considers “un lugar para perderse” (ib.: 104). She also remembers an inscription from an Indian temple which said “If paradise exists on earth, it is here, it is here, it is here” (ib.: 103). Carmen’s husband recounts that she was obsessed with the idea of a paradise on earth and was looking for it. She also uses different places in which she has lived as settings in her crime fiction series (ib.: 93).

When Rosa follows her intuition and looks for Carmen in Mexico, she is at the same time uplifted and nostalgic: While her ex-husband warns her about the insecurity in Mexico and gives her all kind of advice, she is not willing to be confronted with the reality:

casi no le escucho porque en el fondo no quiero creerle. No estoy dispuesta a que me cambien la fisonomía de este lugar que, como el café o el tabaco, produce en la sangre verdadera adicción. (ib.: 135–136)

By following the writer Santiago Blanco, Carmen reaches the Mexican city Oaxaca and indeed finds Carmen who lives in the blue house she always dreamt of under a false identity. While Rosa does not really

interact with her, she notices that she is happy. Rosa too is fascinated by the city; she admires the valley in which the city is located and describes it in detail as “rodeada por selvas húmedas y secas, por bosques tropicales y también espinosos, por montañas y mar” (ib.: 189). Compared to the scarce references to places in Santiago which are generally limited to names of roads or neighborhoods, bars or restaurants, her focus in Oaxaca is more on the atmosphere and cityscape which she experiences as she walks through the city. She also starts to lament the lack of attention paid to the street in everyday life: “la calle juega un lugar tan poco preponderante en las vidas comunes de la gente, donde se trabaja y se vuelve al hogar, sin cafés ociosos ni siestas reparadoras” (ib.: 176). While using taxis and public transport in Santiago, Rosa turns into a flâneur in Oaxaca. She is particularly enthusiastic about the female patron saint of the city – Our Lady of Solitude – to which she prays in the Basilica (ib.: 228). Thereby, she thinks that the frequently visited statue of the patron saint “ya ha atestiguado la concentración de los misterios eternos de las mujeres, de su carne y sangre, de sus anhelos y desamparos” over the years (ib.: 228). Overall, she points out various times that the city seems unreal and magical to her (ib.: 178; 193). It is in this “paradise” and confronted with the daring move of Carmen to start a new life that Rosa reflects on her own life (ib.: 230) – suggesting that the protagonists and the settings influence each other mutually.

### 5.4.3 India

#### 5.4.3.1 Mumbai

Indian crime fiction overall exhibits a greater variety in terms of the (urban) spaces portrayed which is partly due to the dimensions of the subcontinent and its multiple metropolises. The Indian corpus novels are set in Mumbai, Pune, Goa, Bangalore, Delhi, Kolkata and the town Jullunder in the Punjab but also exhibit connections to other places in and outside India.

The city of Mumbai is a widely used setting in Indian crime fiction as well as in Indian literature in English in general: Bombay and later Mumbai has long been the center of attention of novels and non-fiction

works. Besides the corpus novels, for example, Piyush Jha's series is set in Mumbai as well as Jerry Pinto's recent *Murder in Mahim* (2017). True crime books by writers like Hussain Zaidi also commonly focus on Mumbai as a city of crime. Novels as well as non-fiction works commonly try to capture the heterogeneity and diversity of the city and often focus on the metropolises' marginalized and hidden sites and its cosmopolitan character<sup>113</sup>. As Gyan Prakash has pointed out, "Bombay's rapidly changing visual landscape fostered a form of urban writing that described the city in terms of images" (2010: 53). The decosmopolitanization of the city remains a continuous concern of writers (ib.: 280). The liberal city depicted in novels is therefore a construct of the authors' imagination, "counter-discourses against any kind of dogmatism and fundamentalism" that has affected the city since the 1990s (ib.: 279). This strategy of counter-writing is a leading principle in fiction on Mumbai. The persistence of using the name Bombay, in many novels for example, is an act of resistance to the political changes in Mumbai. The recent experiences of terrorism may well account for the transformation of the urban gangster figure into a terrorist in contemporary movies on Mumbai (Rao 2009: 5). While terrorism has been the scope of various non-fiction books, it is not a common concern in contemporary crime fiction novels set in Mumbai besides Chandra's *Sacred Games* (2007).

In the case of Indian cinema, Megha Anwer emphasized the "growing spatial-cultural 'amnesia' towards the poor" in Indian movies as the urban spaces depicted are either completely void of slums or merely include them as spaces of violence and terror. Instead, the focus is on the "bourgeois city with its sanitized spaces of consumption" (Anwer 2014: 97). This raises the question whether a similar phenomenon can be observed in contemporary Indian popular fiction in English. As "the emergence of an 'India Shining' with high-tech enclaves and office parks" (Davis 2006: 168) is increasingly criticized as a one-sided focus

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113 The renaming of Bombay into Mumbai took place during the rule of the Shiv Sena in 1995. It is often assessed as a populist act than a "matter of reclaiming the city from its colonial heritage" and broke with the cosmopolitan ideal of the city (Prakash 2010: 203).

on “Dark India” and writers often tackle topics like social inequality, exploitation and corruption in everyday life in novels like Aravind Adiga’s *The White Tiger* (2008).

Chandra’s *Sacred Games* is predominantly set in Mumbai during the 1990s and addresses the complexities of the city. It is particularly the changing political climate and the rise of the Shiv Sena – called the “Rakshaks” by Chandra – which stirs up hatred against Muslims and immigrants that overshadows the events in the novel. Chandra portrays Mumbai as a city of minorities where almost everyone was once a migrant and came to ‘the city of gold’ to try his/her luck. This reflects in Sartaj’s team which includes members from different religions and castes as shown in Chapter 4.3.2. Also the local neighborhoods frequented in the investigations are very heterogeneous: Sartaj for example visits an area called Bengali Bura in Navnagar various times. The area was originally inhabited by poor migrants from South India, but is now increasingly populated by Bengali/Bangladeshi immigrants, as the name Bengali Bura already suggests. The poor neighborhood consists of “endless mud-brown and white roofs” (Chandra 2007: 221). Nonetheless, a lot of food, clothing items and plastic is produced in the area and Sartaj considers it “the engine that pumped the city into life” (ib.: 221). While the South Indians were once outsiders and looked down upon by local chauvinists, Sartaj points out that “[n]ow they were old Mumbaikars” and complain about the influx of new migrants (ib.: 220).

At some other instance, Sartaj goes to a *basti*, a slum-like settlement whose “[f]ive hundred cramped little homes, brick and wood and plastic and tin [made] small spaces for many bodies” (ib.: 645). These slums are not only spaces of absolute poverty and destitution, but are also important places of economic activity and progress – yet on a small-scale. The inhabitants of the *basti* have moved on from “temporary arrangements made out of discarded cardboard boxes” and now have “pumped water, and bricked-up gutters, and electricity in most of the *kholis*” [one-room flats in Hindi] (ib.: 645). Space is a problem, as Sartaj acutely observes: “In this city, the rich had some

room, the middle class had less, and the poor had none” (ib.: 79). Sartaj observes how differently the rich live when he questions a famous actress in her apartment is in a tower called Havenhill, “an enormous pastel-ink block, looming thirty-odd stores above the surrounding bungalows” with “Italian-marble lobby”, “brushed-steel lifts” and “up-to-date technology” (ib.: 542). Chandra’s novel thus reflects the dichotomy between the poor in low-story buildings in narrow roads and a very limited view of the city and the rich who enjoy a landscape view from skyscrapers.

The city is subject to a constant process of transformation and diversification. Due to these developments, older houses turn into a rarity: An old cottage in Bandra is for example commented on as an “unexpected treasure” (ib.: 166). New expressways are constructed and even small mountain resorts outside Mumbai no longer maintain their ‘cozy’ character as they are increasingly “filled up with new construction” to generate more profit and to fulfill the demand for entertainment and consumption (ib.: 552) as was already discussed in Chapter 5.3. Economic transformations have certainly led to the presence of choices, as Sartaj concluded from his observations at ice-cream stands and coffee shops (ib.: 87). These developments certainly increase traffic, pollution and noise as is frequently mentioned throughout the novel: Gaitonde e.g. unwillingly reveals during a phone call that he is in Mumbai because of the background noise of a cricket match and construction workers shouting in Telugu (ib.: 805).

The population density is presented both as a nuisance and as an advantage: While it is not possible to be alone, one can find “companionship with a thousand strangers”. (ib.: 368). In the apparently anonymous crowd, innumerable connections exist which eventually “[binds] each person to everyone else” as *Sacred Games* illustrates at large (ib.: 777). Overall, all protagonists share a love-hate relationship with the city: Gaitonde for example compares the city to a whore: After having been out of Mumbai for a year, Gaitonde recounts that he “craved the spit-

tle-strewn streets of that great whore of a city” (ib.: 566). Sartaj realizes that people might not leave the city in spite of the threat of a nuclear bomb:

We are here and we will stay here. Perhaps Kulkarni was wrong about the people of Bombay, perhaps they would stay in their city even if they knew that a great fire was coming. [...] People came here from gaon and vilayat<sup>114</sup>, and they found a place to sit, they lay down on a dirty patch of land, which shifted and settled to take them in, and then they lived. And so they would stay. (ib.: 785)

Gaitonde’s friend Yoyo confirms this theory as she refuses to leave the city when Gaitonde tells her about the nuclear bomb (ib.: 759). At the very end, Sartaj remembers a colleague saying that “[o]nce the air of this place touches you [...] you are useless for anywhere else” (ib.: 946).

These quotes show that the city is an important character in *Sacred Games* with whom all protagonists engage in some way or the other. The insets, side plots and especially the global operations of the gangster boss Gaitonde or the fake guru Guruji create a setting that goes way beyond the city’s margins, but nonetheless Mumbai remains the main setting. In accordance with Suketu Mehta’s non-fiction book *Maximum City*, Chandra also presents Mumbai as a ‘city of excess’, which refers to “excesses of power and ambition, of profiteering and exploitation, of aspirations for justices and equality in the face of terrible injustice and inequality” present in urban life (Mehta 2004: 327). These excesses cannot be completely grasped by any protagonists as they surmount the human capacity to perceive and process impressions. This overburdening urban experience is also explored in *Sacred Games*.

Besides *Sacred Games*, also Swaminathan’s novels are set in Mumbai but do never directly refer to any political events that affected the city in the last decades. The rule of the Shiv Sena or the traumatic experiences with terrorist attacks are not mentioned. Lalli and Sita however

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114 Gaon means a village and vilayat province in Hindi.

engage with a multitude of persons from different religious, caste and ethnic backgrounds. But in *Sacred Games*, Swaminathan's protagonists introspect the decosmopolitanization of Mumbai that occurred simultaneously with its ascent as the global financial metropolis. Lalli and Sita are acutely aware of how the city is changing in line with its growing importance in the global economic system. Also Swaminathan's novels are devoid of any references to Mumbai's iconic or historic buildings and focus instead on the transformations of local neighborhoods like Vile Parle at Lalli's doorstep. Sita observes for example that "the developer's muscle was everywhere" (ib.: 187) and points out how

Vile Parle is rapidly re-inventing itself. [...] In the four years I've lived here, I've watched the place erase itself, inch by inch, like a woman with a long-term commitment to plastic surgery. Very soon, though, the make-over will be total and extreme. Glass-skinned avenues will obscure the labyrinth of lanes. [...] Shops have gone from general stores to shopping centres, but these won't last. By next year, we'll have a mall. (Swaminathan 2012: 33)

The reconstructions and modernization in Vile Parle appears to be so constant and all encompassing that it remains questionable whether this rebuilt cityscape can still be read as a palimpsest as there seems to be little space for older layers of the city to shine through. The modernization invariably follows models of European or US-American cities; the architect Aaftab has for example been hired to design a new waterfront, which Savio sarcastically explains as a "part of the city plan to make us look like some cute European city with five people per square mile" (ib.: 30). This leads to a closing down of traditional restaurants: Savio for example cherishes the restaurant Shantaram's, "the last of the dying breed of Udipi<sup>115</sup> restaurants in Vile Parle" but constantly fears that it might be transformed into a Subway or McDonald's (ib.: 122). The highly exclusionary nature of these transformations is insinuated, as well as its incompatibility with the actual necessities of the city.

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115 Udipi is a city in the Indian state Karnataka whose vegetarian cuisine is widely known in India.

Sita observes that “[t]he wayside dentist was now outed as an Oral Implantologist” and that a multitude of spas and pastry shops have opened which are only affordable for certain groups of the population (ib.: 115). Overall, it is a mode of upgrading that characterizes urban development. This is even the case for slums. Sita points out for an area called Navketan Nagar that “[t]ill last year, it was a slum. Now, buildings are coming up, some legal, some illegal [...]” (ib.: 64). Slums are not completely omitted from the cityscape portrayed, but they are scarcely frequented during the investigations and no investigation is predominantly set in a poor neighborhood.

As in *Sacred Games*, old houses are portrayed as a rarity in the city and do not really seem to fit in their surrounding anymore as Lalli’s and Sita’s walks in Bandra reveal: Old mansions are either crumbling down or have already been replaced by new buildings (ib.: 48). Partly, they are renovated and used for new purposes such as upscale artistic centers:

The old houses were uneasily trying on a new identity, façades renewed with glass and wrought iron and railing herbage. Terraces had gone arty and were being rented out as ateliers. Pop art stained the decayed walls of abandoned houses. (ib.: 187)

This new identity seems artificial to Lalli and Sita as the former residential area is converted into a “showpiece” and inhabitants marginalized and have to contend themselves with the side roads:

People didn’t live here anymore. In a year or two, it would be place to hang out in, the art district of the urban cosmopolitan, a perfect showpiece of a past that had never been. Life had moved elsewhere, into the labyrinth of lanes that led off the main road. (ib.: 187)

The reference to ‘a past that has never been’ suggests that any effort to preserve historic buildings has been subordinated to the commodification of urban space. Buildings are converted into artificial spaces of consumerism for those who can afford it while the original residents are forced to succumb to these gentrification processes.

Lalli and Sita observe how the city is redesigned to cater the needs of a consumer-oriented and above all motorized new middle class. They often walk through the city and are aware that they occupy a special status: “We were intruders, no doubt about that. Nobody minded the traffic, it flowed like blood all day, but pedestrians got noticed” (ib.: 186). According to de Certeau (2011), these walks can certainly be read as strategies of resistance that challenge hegemonic discourses. Aware of changes in society as well as in the cityscape, Lalli and Sita claim a special position that allows them to look through the ambiance of prosperity into the flaws and tensions inherent in the new middle class.

#### 5.4.3.2 Further Indian Settings

Anita Nair’s depiction of Bangalore in her Gowda series covers many concerns that have already been addressed in Chandra’s and Swaminathan’s novels. She similarly portrays Bangalore as a city in transformation with positives as well as negative outcomes. The emergence of the neoliberal city with malls and technology parks is very present in Bangalore. However, *Cut Like Wound* sets out with a detailed description of a buzzing inner city area which has not yet been affected by commodification processes. The focus is on the area around the bus stand in Shivaji Nagar, a “shadowed underbelly of the city” where the first murder takes place (Nair 2012: 7). A crowded area “[buzzing] with life” is depicted which excels in a mixture of different smells:

The smell of meat cooking on charcoal mingled with the aroma of samosas being fried in giant vats of hissing oil. Chopped onion and coriander leaves, pakodas and jalebis, stings of marigold and jasmine buds, rotting garbage and cow dung. (Nair 2012: 6)

The “cloud of a thousand fragrances and desires” includes pleasant as well as unpleasant smells in one place. The crowd is unanimously male: “Men returning from Work. Policemen on the beat. Autoricksaw drivers and labourers. Whores. Eunuchs. Urchins. Beggars. Tourists. Regulars” (ib.: 7). Therefore, it is not surprising that Bhuvana, the man dressed up as a woman, raises attention and is followed by her first victim into a dark road where she strangles him (ib.: 10). The area is once again depicted in *Chain of Custody* in which Shivaji Nagar is described in a multitude of enumerations: The push carts are full of “gewgaws, clothes, sweets, vegetables, dry fruits, plastic basins, flowers, fruits, tea-cups, porcelain jars, shirts and factory-reject shoes”, stalls offer “fruit juices, milk shakes, faloodas and lassi” (Nair 2016: 120–121). The area is portrayed as a space where everybody is equal; nobody is judged for his appearances or accent: “This city within a city didn’t distinguish between clerk and tout, pimp and priest” (ib.: 121). Gowda’s police station is also located in Shivaji Nagar.

The investigation, however, also bring Gowda to the Bangalore of “plate glass malls of branded merchandise and credit-card-flashing customers” (ib.: 121). Besides the construction of a new airport, the development of the city is addressed by the emergence of new coffee shops and restaurants (Nair 2012: 16). Traditional places like the Mavelli Tiffin Room, abbreviated MTR, however, continue to enjoy great popularity. MTR similarly has a brand-like status and is frequented by old Bangaloreans and juxtaposed by new ones who try to present themselves as “true-blue Bangaloreans” but are seen as rootless immigrants (Nair 2016: 173). Change, however, seems inevitable as landowners in central areas are offered a lot of money by property dealers who want to build flats (ib.: 182). The names are often the only memory of the past: The luxurious palace of a real estate developer for example is built on an area that used to be a slum settlement inhabited by scrap dealers and continue to be referred to by its old name Gujri Gunta, which translates as second-hand hole (ib.: 76). What happened to the slum inhabitants, however, is not mentioned.

Gowda points out how rural districts have turned into satellite towns with “[h]igh-rise buildings, a gated community, an international school, restaurants, spas, liquor stores and a multiplex” for the affluent workforce of technology parks (ib.: 155). Gowda himself also lives in a formerly rural area that has become part of the city. The district called Neelgubbi and is a fictional neighborhood which is according to the author Nair an “emblem of the transformation that is happening in what was once considered rural Bangalore” (Nair, quoted in: Anthikad Chhibber 2016). Gowda acquired land in what was before “the wastelands of north Bangalore” and built a house in an area with very little infrastructure against the wishes of his wife (Nair 2012: 42). Over time, however, the area developed with the emergence of consumerist places like “new high-rise apartment blocks and [...] fastfood outlets; the gyms and spas, the sports centre and the liquor marts” (Nair 2016: 163). Development, however, also leads to growing crime rates in Neelgubbi as well as in the city in general (ib.: 96). This comes along with a change in the nature of crimes: Instead of quarrels between neighbors, the police are increasingly confronted with “large-scale gambling, extortion, drugs and prostitution” (ib.: 163). Bangalore has turned into a trafficking hub, as Gowda himself experiences during the investigation in *Chain of Custody* (ib.: 84): Gowda is unsure where to start his search for a disappeared girl as Bangalore does not have a red light district but brothels all over the city. He is nonetheless aware that “[a] whole underground city existed parallel to the visible one” (ib.: 96). Gowda observes that urban growth has an effect on Bangalore’s society:

The city had changed beyond recognition in more ways than the obvious. The sleepy city of Bangalore he had grown up in had transformed into a vibrant city luring people with its cool weather, green avenues, its affordable real estate, its pubs and bands. But that Bangalore too had been replaced by a hard ruthless urbanity that allowed trees to be felled with the same heartless ease as lives were dispensed with. (ib.: 95)

The determining principle is greed which also guides those involved in human trafficking. They do not refrain from treating human beings – in this case children – as commodities for their own economic profit. It is thus not surprising that Santosh who has recently arrived in Bangalore starts to feel scared of the city (Nair 2012: 107). The depiction of Bangalore compromises a major topic in both of Nair's novels and shows how crimes are intrinsically linked to the city. Vis-à-vis the complexity of the city, its hidden underworld and constant transformation processes, a detective figure like Gowda can at best compromise the role of a partial flâneur: He observes changes in his own neighborhood and his jurisdiction, but cannot understand the changes entirely.

Salil Desai has been called a “city-based author of crime novels” for his series set in Pune (Ghosh 2015). Even though Desai's series might be the only one or one of few crime fiction series in English which focus on Pune, the detectives do not really engage with the city. The narrative of *Killing Ashish Karve* includes a few references to actual places in Pune, but could easily be transposed to another setting. Desai largely omits the use of extratextual references, though it is a frequently used strategy to create specific reality effects and to adapt the genre to depict tensions or transformation in the respective urban space. Once again, Desai is rather faithful to the model of classic British crime fiction in which the focus is entirely on the investigation. In the case of *Killing Ashish Karve*, even the crime scene is not a specific place in the city as the corpse is left in a car which is first stolen by a car thief and then towed away because it is parked in a non-parking zone. It is later revealed that the car was originally parked at Aundh Road in the University area, which remains one of the few references to extratextual places in Pune.

The settings of Bhattacharyya's Reema Ray series changes with every novel: *The Masala Murder* is set in Kolkata<sup>116</sup>, but similar to Salil Desai's novel, the setting does not acquire greater importance for the

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116 Also Calcutta was renamed Kolkata in 2001 in accordance with the Bengali name of the city. Bhattacharyya uses the name Calcutta in her novel, which is, however, less of a political statement than the use of Bombay vs. Mumbai as the city was never re-

narrative. Bhattacharyya initially recalls that she planned to set the novel in Shanghai and changed the setting to Kolkata at a later stage (Anthikad Chhibber 2014). Accordingly, various places are named that anchor the narrative in Kolkata such as Sudder Street – a well-known backpacking area with cheap hotels. Reema often ends up there when investigating infidelity cases and therefore she uses the nickname “Shudder Street” for the area (Bhattacharyya 2012: 5). It is also established that she lives in Hazra Road and frequents shopping and business areas like the posh Park Street or the more mixed Chowringhee area with “crowded [...] pavements, dodging hawkers, gropers, walkers and gawkers” and new designer shops (ib.: 167; 13). A larger scope is, however, on the restaurants in which Reema not only eats but also investigates: A Chinese restaurant called “Middle Kingdom” is a frequently used location along with Reema’s favorite bar Ginger and other restaurants with Indian or international cuisine (ib.: 45; 58). These places of consumption are overall in the limelight while the city itself does not play a larger role for the narrative.

This is also the case for CK Meena’s *Dreams for the Dying*: The narrative overall includes three places in South India, Kerala, Chennai and Bangalore and thereby also explores differences between South India which is often seen as one homogeneous region. As illustrated in *Dreams for the Dying*, the presence of different languages like Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu and Kannada impede an easy communication. The region is also characterized by different climates: While Kerala is described as hot and steamy, Bangalore is supposed to be rather dry and cold (ib.: 91; 65).

The references to different cities are a prerequisite for the plot since Uma has various relationships at the same time as each man lives in a different city and she does not have to fear that they might come to know about each other. Besides, the train rides between the different cities play an important role in the narrative as in-between spaces

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named in the local language Bengali; instead the different names were used in different languages.

and Uma the trajectory to read and reflect. Uma lives with her partner VK in a middle class housing society called Sunrise Apartment located in Subhashini Street in Chennai, which is the only exact location given in the novel (ib.: 38). The middle class status of the housing society is underlined by a neighbor who recounts that he turned away a suspicious man who claimed to look for a job as a driver. He replied to that man that “nobody here needs a driver since they are all middle-class people” (Meena 2008: 15). Uma also visits her husband in Kerala once or twice a month, but admits to herself that both live in different worlds:

There couldn't be a greater contrast than that between the staid world she was born and had married into and the parallel one she had plunged into. But had she become a different woman when she was with VK or was it just her surroundings that had changed while she remained the same and blended into the background. (ib.: 228)

While Uma is unsure whether she is the same person in different environments or whether the respective environment changes her, she is e.g. more actively engaged in her affair with Bharat who takes her to a luxurious hotel in Bangalore for a New Year's party. Chennai, Kerala and Bangalore are therefore for Uma associated with very different lifestyles and shape her own behavior. Living in a different city away from her family and especially moving between different cities by train gives Uma the time and possibility to explore herself. The novel therefore transgresses common gendered spatial practices that confine women to the private space or allocate male guardians in public space. Uma opposes this confinement and she not only travels alone but also meets different men on the train. While the various spaces have a specific meaning of Uma, a more detailed depiction of the cities is not the scope of CK Meena's novel.

Gendered spatial practices are also a central concern in Desai's *Witness the Night*. Simran Singh returns from Delhi to her hometown Jullundur and is confronted with a division of male and female spaces she thought to have left behind. She describes Jullundur as “a dusty, hap-

hazardly constructed city in Punjab which resembled an ambitious village” that makes her feel claustrophobic (Desai 2010: 19). It is a place “where nothing ever happened” since the Partition, therefore “most people drank their lassi and desi<sup>117</sup> liquor quite peacefully” (ib.: 30). While poverty is not portrayed as a problem in an area whose economy is based on large-scale agriculture, it is the strong traditional and patriarchal mindset that leads to most setbacks – especially for women. Simran sees it as a bond between her and Durga that she grew up in the same town and thus has “a very good idea what it was like to grow up as a small-town girl” (ib.: 17).

Simran does not respect the gendered spaces and moves around freely during the investigation. However, instead of walking, she takes a cycle rickshaw to avoid the “roadside Romeos” (ib.: 59) which points at the perception of women in public as available, improper and sexually available (see for example Ganser 2009: 76). She also goes to a liquor store by herself which is a huge taboo for women and therefore stands out in the town (Desai 2010: 86). Compared to Desai’s freedom, Durga and other women in Jullundur are subjected to different degrees of incarceration – whether it is the family home, the prison or the mental asylum. These spaces are reclusive and make an unlimited male control over women possible: Simran points out that mental hospitals are often used as a dumping ground for inconvenient people, especially for women who are not wanted by their families (ib.: 145). Simran is similarly put into jail as a scapegoat to make sure that she is in no position to incriminate anybody else. However, even more unsettling is the revelation of the house of Durga’s family as a site of suppression for women. According to the public/private dichotomy, the private space of the home is supposedly the safe haven for women where they should be protected from danger from outside (Ganser 2009: 68). Durga reveals how women in her family were suppressed by male family members, who not only restrict women’s mobility but even had various newborn female babies killed. Therefore, Durga calls

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117 The Southeast Asian term *desi* derives from “desh” (country) and refers for example to local food or clothing in an international setting.

the house “a shamshan ghat” (a crematorium) (ib.: 2). When Durga’s sister got pregnant, she was locked up in a mental asylum and later in a secluded place, where Simran finds her heavily traumatized.

The comprehensive system of oppression of women, works because of the complicity of other women who help to perpetuate the patriarchal system. Therefore, Simran sees leaving as the only exit: Compared to the supervision of women in the small town, the anonymity of a metropolis like Delhi offers the possibility to escape this system and to gain freedom and autonomy.

The impression of Delhi as a place where women can be free is challenged in Desai’s third Simran Singh novel *Sea of Innocence* which develops in the backdrop of the protests after the Nirbhaya<sup>118</sup> rape case in Delhi in 2012. Simran’s investigation, however, takes place in Goa, which as she reveals in the course of her investigation, is not quite the paradise it may appear to be at first sight. During her search for the British girl Liza Kay, she reflects on the dangers which women are exposed to in Goa. She soon admits that her “foolish assumption had been that Goan beaches would be safer than the streets of Delhi for women and young girls” (Desai 2014: 13). She remembers that 20 years ago, women on the beach attracted hardly any attention in Goa, but now she sees many male Indian tourists “ogling at western women, photographing their bodies” (ib.: 44). She identifies this as a pan-Indian phenomenon and wonders:

Was it a larger problem that an apparently modernizing India did not know how to deal with female sexuality and assumed that normal, friendly behaviour and western clothes meant that women were available? (ib.: 26)

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118 The Nirbhaya case (meaning “fearless” in Hindi) refers to the 2012 Delhi gang rape where the student Jyoti Singh was raped by six men on a driving bus in South Delhi. The case as well as the prosecution and trial have received media attention well beyond India and led to large protests about the safety of women in India.

A clash of different views and traditions come particularly to the fore in Goa due to the growing influx of tourists, Indians as well as foreigners in Goa, with very different attitudes towards women. The excessive consumption of alcohol and drugs in Goa furthermore added to the problems.

Simran points out how on the surface, Goa appears as a paradise which offers beaches as well as cultural heritage with churches dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century and a lavish green landscape (ib.: 76; 156). The long presence of foreigners, particularly the hippy community present in Goa since the 1960s, have turned the state into “one of the most assimilative and secular states in India” (ib.: 77). Simran thinks very highly of the local population, but also observes a growing discontent with the transformations Goa is experiencing. While she certainly sees their point, Simran realizes that the local population has also profited from tourism in Goa. Therefore, it seems a rather simplistic reaction “that the inhabitants of this richly resourced state often blamed all its ills on the foreigners and outsiders who, they alleged, had stolen their identity and wrecked their culture” (ib.: 76). She also observes that the mainland of Goa is “almost puritanical, despite the proliferation of the liquor shops and bars” (ib.: 14) and highlights the coexistence of different worlds.

The paradise is increasingly a site of investment and subject to commodification: Ever more budget hotels are built to attract Indian tourists (ib.: 40) along with beach bars and restaurants or offshore casinos. Behind these investments are often politicians and other influential men who have the necessary resources and contacts. While gambling is illegal in India, casino boats offer gambling on the Mandovi River and are a “fashionable step up for the newly rich middle class to be seen here” (ib.: 120). Simran observes that even the giant bazaar that once started as a hippy market is now a purely commercial enterprise visited by up to a million persons (ib.: 132).

Development comes at a price and has many side effects. Simran comes to know many of the hidden and dark side effects of these processes: The nuisance of groups of male tourists who drink too much is just one of these phenomena. Furthermore, the growth has brought along some of the “evils of development visible in India” like slums and garbage piles (ib.: 77). It is particularly the pollution that is frequently criticized (ib.: 270). Other issues are connections between the police, the media and politicians whose main concern is to preserve the reputation of Goa as a peaceful paradise even if that means that crimes like Liza Kay’s disappearance are not investigated properly (ib.: 185). The biggest problem, however, are drugs and while Goa’s Home Minister claims that Goa is drug-free (ib.: 104), the case Simran investigates reveals that drugs are freely available and a highly profitable business in which many powerful stakeholders are involved. Besides a place of consumption, Goa has also turned into “a big transit hub for sending drugs to other places” (ib.: 317). Simran’s investigation therefore overall leads to the conclusion that a dichotomy exists in Goa between the peaceful beach and its hinterland:

The sandy rim seemed almost like another country, which was, for some, ruled by its own laws of behaviour. Even though beaches looked serenely cosmopolitan on the surface and offered a variety of sea sports and other innocent pleasures, there was a looming darkness around the edges. [...] Not everyone on the beach was here for a good time. (ib.: 13–14)

The criminal activities have an effect on the apparently peaceful beach life due to the growing presence of drugs, construction, pollution or men that pose a threat for female tourists. All these problems cause cracks in the image of Goa as a cosmopolitan beach paradise.

Tarquin Hall also includes detailed descriptions and contextualizations on specific extratextual places which play a role in Vish Puri’s novels. While Puri is based in Delhi, *The Case of the Love Commandos* is largely set in different places in the state of Uttar Pradesh: Agra, Lucknow and Govind village. While most Indian crime fiction writers refrain from using landmarks and touristic sights in their novels, Hall

includes many references. As the office of the Love Commandos is based in Agra, the chase of an angry father who follows the volunteers leads past the major landmarks of the city like “the red sandstone ramparts of Agra Fort”, the “sluggish, polluted water of the Yamuna river” or “the gleaming white marble of the Taj Mahal” (Hall 2014: 7). The Taj Mahal also reappears during a second chase and the city around it is described as “a maze of filthy alleys and lanes” (ib.: 221). Hall uses a multitude of enumerations to create the impression of an overwhelmingly crowded and chaotic place: The shops include for example “ironmongers, jewelers, dried-fruits seller and cigarette-paan vendors [...], printers and cardboard recyclers” while the road is filled with “[m]otorbikes and three-wheelers [...] pedestrians, cows and goats (ib.: 7). The chaotic and historically very important inner city is contrasted by emerging ‘Special Economic Zones’ in the city’s outskirts. These zones compromise “hundreds of acres of formerly agricultural land that had been forcibly purchased by the government and sold to industry at a handsome profit” (ib.: 153). A modern Institute for Cellular and Molecular Biology is located in one of these zones and it is clear that the institute is some way connected to the case Puri investigates (ib.: 148). He also points at the parallel coexistence of wealth and poverty and believes that these modern zones are created by poor laborers who live in tents (ib.: 154). Two of Puri’s men supervise the suspicious Institute dressed up as poor laborers, which makes them quasi invisible to anybody anyone around and they can therefore move around freely (ib.: 184).

Puri himself investigates in Lucknow which is characterized by a similar dichotomy of a historic center and modern outskirts: In accordance with its sobriquet “the Constantinople of the East”, Puri admires the heritage of the Mughal empire and British colonialism. He points at “domes and towers of palaces and mosques etched against the somber sky”, the church, the residency building and the “magnificent Charbagh railway station” (ib.: 40–41). Puri also visits the city’s famous Aminabad Bazaar whose “labyrinthine alleyway provided the ideal environment in which to lose a tail – or indeed oneself” (ib.: 123). Local food an important feature of Lucknow, Puri eats for example

“galauti kebab, a mutton biryani and some sultani daal” (ib.: 124). Vis-à-vis the historic center where Puri feels “transported back in time”, gentrification processes are also felt in Lucknow. Leaving the city, Puri observes that “that the crush of contemporary India was closely taking its architectural toll on the city” as malls and offices are built (ib.: 41). While the processes are reviewed critically, the cities are not described as particularly dangerous. It is rather the countryside, particularly the Govind village – referred to as the “deepest, darkest rural Uttar Pradesh” – which appears as a scene of crime, violence and discrimination (ib.: 43). The reasons include continuing feudalism and the presence of the mafia or dacoits which are responsible for kidnapping, smuggling or murder (ib.: 43; 128).

In Govind village, caste separation and discrimination are still everyday practices: The Dalits e.g. have to live in an area called “salla bhangi” outside the village, they neither receive education nor the subsidized food they are entitled too and they are unprotected from the violence exercised by other castes (Hall 2014: 48). The disappeared Ram is from this village and his mother was recently found murdered. Puri’s assistant Facecream comes to the village and pretends to be a teacher. She observes the destitute living conditions of the Dalit population and – similar to Simran’s observation about the city as a place of freedom for women – Facecream concludes that “cities offered the promise of a society free of caste” due to their anonymity (ib.: 132).

In Delhi, references to well-known extratextual places help to reproduce Puri’s movements in the city: His office is in Khan Market, a rather posh area with shops and restaurants, he drops by INA Market, a “labyrinth of ramshackle stalls”, he crosses the central Connaught Place and so forth (ib.: 19; 152). He also frequently comments on the traffic: Puri describes a traffic jam as a “vehicular stew” which “[bubbles] with angry drivers honking and gesticulating at one another” (ib.: 20). Anger and rush seem to be the most common reactions of urban citizens. Puri’s mother critically observes how cities turn into places of consumption with malls, new cars and imported clothes (ib.: 81). Here, huge billboards do not only appear as new kind of landmarks but they

also have an important function. They point at a specific desirable lifestyle – whether they show “images of swanky new housing complexes”, “half-naked, fair-skinned girls” or meaningless slogans like “Live livelier life” (ib.: 81; 285). Due to the omnipresence of consumption, it is thus not surprising that even the pilgrimage site Vaishno Devi which Puri’s family visits is no longer a spiritual journey but has turned into a condensed space of consumption with uncountable restaurants, hotels that have “spas, swimming pools and satellite TV” or direct helicopter rides to the temple (ib.: 121). These developments are contrasted with the destitute situation of the Dalits in rural India who lack basic amenities like water or education and depict India as the amalgamation of different worlds and ages.

While some authors like Tarquin Hall use a variety of settings in the subcontinent, this phenomenon is carried to the extreme in Swarup’s *Six Suspects*. In accordance to the encyclopedic character of the novel (see Chapter 4.5.2), the narrative is basically a cruise through the subcontinent in fast forward mode. Some of the six suspects undertook long journeys before they arrived in Delhi and coincided at Vicky’s party: the tribal Eketi for example leaves the Andaman Islands to look for a stolen stone on the mainland. Thereby, he passes by Chennai, Kolkata, Allahabad, Rajasthan and Varanasi. The US-American Larry Page travels from Delhi to Kashmir where he is kidnapped by a terrorist organization. A particular focus is nonetheless on Delhi and Mumbai, where the coexistence of rich and poor is frequently highlighted: One of the suspects called Munnar Mobile grew up in a slum in Delhi where his family initially did not have electricity or water and his mother had to cook with “cow-dung patties on a mud hearth” (Swarup 2008: 180). By now, he has “a pukka<sup>119</sup> one-and-a-half-room house, with a paved brick fireplace, a ceiling fan and even cable TV” in the same slum, financed largely by stealing phones and doing odd service jobs (ib.: 75). When Munnar finds a large sum of money and can afford branded clothes, he realizes that he has access to many new

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119 Pukka is a Hindi word that translates as ‘solid’ and is used in this context as a reference to a permanent house build from material like concrete. It also suggests a social ascent vis-à-vis slum-dwellers in makeshift houses.

places like posh restaurants and nightclubs (ib.: 188; 198). He wants to start a new life in Mumbai with his new girl-friend, but when he suddenly has to return the money, he more than ever realizes that the city “belongs only to the rich. There is no place for the poor in our metropolises” (ib.: 229). This is also underlined by Larry Page who is shocked to see “entire families living on the pavements” in India (ib.: 282). On the other hand, Larry is also surprised about the luxurious farmhouse of Vicky Rai which is “bigger than the Governor’s mansion in Austin” (ib.: 486). The juxtaposition of these different worlds in Mumbai is an important feature in various Indian crime fiction novels.

#### 5.4.4 Conclusion: (Urban) Space in Indian and Latin American Crime Fiction

These examples show that poverty and inequality do play a role in various crime fiction novels. The coexistence of wealth and poverty are examined as a dark side of the emergence of metropolises like Mumbai or Buenos Aires as ‘global cities’. An interrelatedness is furthermore suggested: The cities attract poor migrants due to their (relative) wealth and their image as a ‘city of gold’ in the case of Mumbai. Therefore, those with money – whether it is a fashion business in *Sangre fashion* or an underworld boss in *Sacred Games* – can profit from cheap labor. The peaceful coexistence of different social classes is under threat. Partly, slums are evicted as in Nair’s *Cut Like Wound*, but the area’s original derogative name continues to be used as a reminder of their history. While different social classes in Buenos Aires are usually more segregated in Buenos Aires than in India (see Chapter 5.4.1), a new coexistence has emerged due to the disappearance of lower class or public spaces which open to all classes vis-à-vis the construction of more exclusive residential, entertainments and business parks. This is for example portrayed in the expansion of malls along the highway out of the city and the emergence of gated communities discussed in Piñeiro’s novels. Urban growth and the rise of real estate prices enhance gentrification processes which follow the vision of the neoliberal city. A focus is thus on the construction of towers and infrastructure that focuses on private vehicles rather than on public transport. In spite

of all challenges, it is often progress and development that are highlighted in the depiction of urban spaces – whether it is the construction of new glass towers or smaller scale upgrades in slums (Chandra; Swarup; Swaminathan; Olguín). Instead of a place of violence and destitution, detectives often point at slums and poorer neighborhoods as living and working environments with a specific function for the city. While scholars like Nichols often underline the focus of crime fiction on “las clases excluidas o marginadas” (2010: 302), this observation cannot be confirmed in the corpus of recent Indian and Latin American crime fiction novels. Poverty and inequality are topics that play a role in some novels, but the major scope is nonetheless on middle or upper class settings: No novel is predominantly set in a slum or lower class neighborhood. These areas are hardly ever explored by the detective in the course of an investigation (Chandra and Olguín). In other novels, however, poverty is largely omitted (Salil Desai, Kishwar Desai, Ocampo, Subercaseaux’ novels). The novels which include significant depictions and commentaries on sites of poverty are mainly written by authors like Chandra, Swarup or Hall who can be certain of an international circulation of their crime fiction novels. They e.g. describe like slums (Chandra, Swarup) or the Dalit neighborhoods outside a village in the countryside (Hall).

In many other cases, it is rather the consequences of transformations of urban spaces for the middle class that are in the limelight of a novel. This includes for example frequent references to everyday nuisances like traffic, weather and pollution in the city. These references help to anchor the narrative as a realistic depiction of a specific urban place that local readers are familiar with. Unlike the perception of crime fiction as a travel genre, the corpus novels refrain from depicting specific landmarks, important historic buildings or touristic sights. Instead, the investigations are largely located in specific local neighborhoods and depict gentrification processes e.g. in Bandra and Vile Parle in Mumbai (Swaminathan) or Ñuñoa in Santiago (Subercaseaux). The detective functions as an urban flâneur in many cases as he or she walks through the neighborhood and critically examines the transformations. The detective also observes the emergence of a consumerist city

whose cityscape is increasingly dominated by temples of consumption where brands serve as new landmarks. These transformations appear so encompassing that it is questionable whether the palimpsestic character of urban space can be maintained. This is exemplified by the depiction of the Presidential Palace La Moneda in Subercaseaux' novel. The Presidential Palace is only a site of crime while allusions to its role during the military coup and Pinochet era are omitted.

The neoliberal city manifested in towers or gated communities supposedly guarantees security and grants those in power a supervision over the city (Piñeiro, Subercaseaux, Chandra, Krimer). The position of power, however, remains fragile as the supervision is constantly contested. Even secured spaces are nonetheless sites of crimes. Furthermore, drawing back on the dichotomy of the urban planner and the flâneur, the power relations are constantly questioned by the detective in the course of the investigation. It is often the artificial character of transformations that is criticized as neighborhoods with a special architecture or a natural paradise like Goa become subject of investments and are turned into places of mass entertainment at the expense of their original beauty (Swaminathan; Nair). While the detective investigates crimes with international connections, the setting in which he/she investigates is generally limited to a national territory. Except in Chandra's *Sacred Games*, a tendency that corresponds to the Europeanization of Swedish crime fiction (see Chapter 5.4.1) cannot be found in the corpus novels. Rachel Dwyer's comment on Indian popular fiction cited in Chapter 3.1.5 also applies to the corpus of recent Indian and Latin American crime fiction: "The west is not seen as being of great importance to anyone; it is sketchy and unreal, more of giant supermarket than a place of interest" (Dwyer 2000: 211). This limitation to a local setting presents the most striking aspect of the glocal character of recent corpus of Indian and Latin American crime fiction novels: Authors employ local figures who investigate in local settings, but crimes whose dimensions generally exceed the limitations of this narrow setting (e.g. drug trade). One can observe the consequences of globally comparable processes, transformations and crimes on a local level and thereby depict heterogeneous outcomes and local particular-

ities. The visions and activities of those in power – or respective, the urban planners to draw back on de Certeau's dichotomy – are strikingly similar and congruent with the vision of a 'global city'. The figure of the detective-flâneur who resists a homogenization of these visions by highlighting negative consequences or downsides of processes and reveal criminal activities of those in power.

Female detectives are interestingly flâneur personas who challenge spatial dichotomies by constantly transgressing them and gain new experiences by investigating in a variety of places from traditional villages in the Punjab (Desai) to slums in Buenos Aires (Olguín). Overall, the city is thereby portrayed as a less restricted place for women than the village or small town. Also for other marginalized groups like the Dalits in India, the city provides more anonymity and freedom.

The importance of local spaces varies widely in the corpus novels: Some merely include a few references to an extratextual place by mentioning the city name, others include extensive descriptions of transformations in particular neighborhoods. While transformations portrayed connect to larger processes that occur on a global level like gentrification and modernization, these changes are portrayed in rather small units like neighborhoods. Furthermore, everyday nuisances like traffic or pollution are prominent topics that (local) readers can relate to. Larger – potentially global – dimensions of certain processes are often insinuated, but a change of the setting is rather the exception than the norm. Instead, the depiction of space is probably the prime example of the globalization of the genre: While crime fiction is used to explore changes that connect to processes of globalization, most authors do so from a local perspective.



## 6 Conclusion: The Glocalization of Crime Fiction in the Global South

The first part of this conclusion summarizes and brings together the findings of the analytical Chapters 4 and 5 by pointing at differences and parallels between the Indian and the Latin American corpus, general patterns and characteristics that were identified as well as particularities that point at the diversity of the corpus novels. This part also discusses how the corpus novels diachronically relate to the history of the genre in the respective region and how they synchronically connect to general developments in the countries' literary production.

The second part of the conclusion summarizes the benefits and challenges of this South-South comparison as well as the use of genre fiction to explore the effects of globalization processes on literary production and literary markets. It summarizes why it is important to take into consideration developments in local markets outside the traditional centers of literary production to highlight the complex and divergent effects of these processes. Overall, it can be concluded that the trajectory of the genre is significantly shaped by its global circulation and adaptation. At the same time, the topics explored in the framework of the investigation of a crime by a detective figure in a specific setting shape and reflect on the locally different – and thus glocal – outcomes of economic and social transitions connected to processes of globalization. Before that, I will add some brief observations on the state of art and the scarcity of secondary sources on literary markets in the Global South.

### 6.1 On the State of Art and the Availability of Sources

The starting point of this thesis was the observation that crime fiction production has grown significantly in India and Latin America after the turn of the millennium. However, compared to actual amount of

literature produced and published in these national markets, the number of titles and authors who have been able to succeed in the global market is rather small. Thus, a gap between production and circulation can be noted in terms of the awareness of this local production which reflects in a rather limited circulation beyond national borders and a lack of research on these phenomena. With a view to these discrepancies, developments in the respective publishing markets and literary production were explored for India, Argentina and Chile in this thesis. Besides, characteristics of the corpus novels and strategies used by writers who adapt and modify the genre in their respective contexts have been scrutinized in the last chapters.

The corpus novels studied here are so recent that various novels were published while the research was conducted between 2013 and 2016. Therefore, this thesis first of all provides an overview and comprehensive insights into very recent corpora of novels that have not been the scope of scholarly attention so far. This is also the case for newspaper articles, surveys and other secondary sources that address changes in the publishing market and examine the relationship between the genre and globalization and its reception in India and Latin America. Due to the lack of other studies to draw back on, the extensive analyses provides together with the summaries of all corpus novels in the glossary (see Chapter 7.1) an extensive study of the characteristics and features of post-millennial crime fiction in India and Latin America. As most works have so far only been published in the respective countries, this thesis is also an introduction to the development of crime fiction in India and Latin America from a wider audience.

The scarcity of research about developments in local publishing markets in the Global South has posed a major challenge for this thesis. To study developments of the books markets in India, Argentina and Chile, a minuscule collection of data was required from newspaper articles, markets surveys, interviews and emails with publishers and other agents involved in the publishing market. My research stays in Delhi, Santiago and Buenos Aires in 2015 have been extremely beneficial to talk to publishers and researchers and to get access to informa-

tion as well as primary literature. The difficulty to access data already points at one conclusion about the book market: While the impact of the publishing industry on literary production cannot be underestimated, getting access to actual data is difficult. Especially with regard to emerging publishing markets like India and Latin America, more qualitative and quantitative research is required to get a better understanding of the impact of the publishing industry on literary production.

Key secondary literature about genre fiction in the Global South used in this thesis was similarly published very recently. Among the important sources for this project were unpublished PhD theses by Pooja Sinha (2013) and Marcelo González Zúñiga (2014). Other works that I have frequently drawn back on are studies by Carolina Miranda (2016) on genre fiction in Argentina and by Emma Dawson Varughese (2012; 2013; 2017) and Suman Gupta (2012; 2013; 2015) on the Indian market. The fact that these three researchers are based abroad already points out various discrepancies and asymmetries in the study of local publishing markets and genre fiction in the Global South. It may suggest a disinterest in local genre fiction or a disconnect between publishing and academia, but could also point at the easier availability of funding for such research in the Global North. However, as has been pointed out in this thesis, the lack of studies does not mean that there is no interesting literature worthwhile to be studied. Quite the contrary, the current lack of studies underlines the importance to look beyond the US-American and European centers to study the impact of globalization processes on literature and literary markets and to include popular fiction in addition to the common scope on literary fiction that many researchers have focused on. The research thus opens up huge corpora of fascinating literary works and refers to a multitude of very engaged publishers and other stakeholders as well as highly dynamic publishing markets in India and Latin America. The information gathered can therefore be seen as a basis to understand the contexts in which the growth of crime fiction in India and Latin America takes place. This study might raise some interest to pay more attention to the complex developments that shape local publishing markets out-

side the centers of literary production and to inspire more research on similar issues. Due to these recent nature of the developments, research projects might still be in its beginnings. The research groups and programs that focus on developments in the Global South mentioned in Chapter 2.1.2 might also touch upon comparable topics such as the development of literary markets.

## 6.2 Summary of the Analytical Chapters

### 6.2.1 Narrators and Protagonists

The corpus analysis has pointed at the diversity of protagonists employed in post-millennial Indian and Latin American crime fiction novels. As the detective continues to be the main protagonist in many novels, this figure has been examined in detail in Chapter 4. Three groups of investigators have been differentiated: female investigators, journalist-investigators and police investigators. These three groups of course overlap as female journalist investigators show. Overall, women detectives and police officers are a novelty in India as well as in Latin America where authors usually draw back on amateur detectives or private investigators. The emergence of all three types of investigators connect to a globalization of the genre: Their characteristics are not totally distinct from figures that can be found in globally circulating crime fiction where women detectives, journalists and ambivalent police investigators are equally a common sight. Yet, they reflect a strategy of Indian and Latin American writers to employ locally credible figures which have not been particularly present in these countries beforehand. Therefore, a police investigator like Nair's Inspector Gowda, a female journalist like Olgún's Verónica Rosenthal or Kishwar Desai's social worker Simran Singh feature as unique selling points for the authors and publishers as the series stand out because of these investigating figures. The unique local characters connect in various ways to developments in globally circulating crime fiction works as has been pointed out in the introductory part of each subchapter of Chapter 4. The rise of the police procedural in India and Latin America, for example, is in various ways connected to the global presence of police procedurals in

print and on screen. On the other hand, Indian and Latin American crime fiction protagonists are also inherently local figures who are for example equipped to confront corruption or are prepared to negotiate with criminals to advance an investigation. Other detectives, however, are faithful to archetypal figures like the detective of the classic British model. An example in the corpus novels is Salil Desai, who depicts a team of two police officers whose crime investigation is largely free from any local markers.

In terms of the narrative techniques, Latin American and Indian authors largely omit a Watsonite narrative situation that has marked many classic British crime fiction works (see Chapter 4). Only Swaminathan's Lalli series is narrated by an assistant-cum-narrator without access to the detective's thoughts. Otherwise, authors employ first or third person narrators with an internal focalization. This leads to a focus on the detective figure or a multiperspectiveness that oscillates between various protagonists in case of a variable focalization. In the first case, the detective's perception and interpretation of an investigation are at the center of the narrative and provide more possibility for an identification between reader and protagonist as the detective's thoughts are included in the narrative. A variable focalization leads to a deprioritization of the detective's perspective, but also allows for the inclusion of multiple opinions and furthers topics which have been explored for various novels (Swarup; Chandra; Meena; Subercaseaux) in Chapter 4.4.

The private life and daily routines of detectives play a significant role in many crime fiction novels and contribute to the humanization of the detective figure. Far from being eccentric masterminds, detective protagonists also have flaws and failures. Several common traits can be identified in the corpus novels: The lonesome detective is virtually absent while teamwork is an important part the investigations: Investigators – whether they are police officers or amateurs – usually work with a large network of colleagues, informers and computer specialists. This partly creates ambivalent situations for female detectives, as discussed in 4.1.3.: The fact that various female detectives can only

advance their investigation after meeting a male supporter affects their otherwise very independent standing. Tanvir Patel sees the emphasis on teamwork as one of the great assets of Indian crime fiction. Patel expresses the hope that novels might teach readers to “resolve issues through cooperative ventures” (2011: 254). However, I would rather argue that the complexity of the cases, the need to access certain databases or to investigate in different places at a time require a team. A lonely investigator would hardly be able to succeed or present a credible figure.

The analysis has furthermore shown that the detective’s families do not play a role in most novels – with the exception of parental figures in some cases. Detectives are single, divorced or estranged from their partners and similarly children do not play a role in most novels. However, many detectives have affairs with a partner whom they meet in the course of the investigation and thereby not only challenge social norms but also deprioritize conflicts between family expectations and own desires that have commonly dominated much of Indian’s women writing (see Chapter 4.1.). The focus on a detective’s private life and features like teamwork also contribute to the aim of realistically depicting an investigation and its protagonists. As explored in Chapter 2.3.5, the notion of the everyday stands in a complex relation to the genre and in this case it is used as a marker of local realism.

In contrast to the international scope of much of the recent diasporic literature by Indian writers and the post-national orientation of their Latin American counterparts (see Chapter 3.1.5; 3.2.5), it is striking that most corpus novels lack such dimensions. Besides few exceptions such as Serrano’s novel, detectives are locally anchored and limited to a national setting. A diasporic detective with Indian, Argentinean or Chilean roots who investigates on behalf of the respective community abroad is a rare exception. Thereby, contemporary works differ from older series like the Cayetano Brulé series of the Chilean writer Roberto Ampuero which has been praised for its ‘global’ character by researchers. As discussed in Chapter 3.2.3, Ampuero’s novels are set in various places that constitute stations of the author’s life and resorts to

these settings in a very stereotypical manner. Instead, recently novels like Krimer's Ruth Epelbaum series refer to a global interconnectedness in subtler ways: The investigator does not leave Buenos Aires, but investigates cases that connect to international drug smuggling or discusses the connection between the fashion industry and the exploitation of workers in Bangladesh. These examples show that the corpus novels include phenomena like international criminal networks, but are overall limited to a national, usually urban setting. Crime fiction therefore corresponds to the claim of local rootedness that particularly characterizes post-millennial genre fiction in India (see Chapter 3.1.5) and points at a globalization of the genre.

In India, this rootedness is also underlined by the use of phrases and sayings in Indian languages that are included in various novels. In many cases, they are not translated; however, this does not affect the understanding of the plot. The inclusion of Indian languages can thus be seen as a clear indicator of a focus on local readers for whom code switching is an everyday phenomenon. Only Tarquin Hall and Vikram Chandra have a glossary available for readers which coincides with the international circulation of these authors. Since the presence of various languages is not such a big phenomenon in Argentina and Chile, no comparable phenomenon is to be expected in the corpus novels. The only exception is the use of Yiddish phrases in María Inés Krimer's novels. The use of different languages overall accounts for a strategy to evoke a realistic depiction of a specific setting or milieu in which the use of these terms is an everyday phenomenon rather than an exotic feature. In contrast to detectives with an ethnic minority background or a different sexual orientation, the detectives of the corpus novels are not primarily characterized by a marginalized position due to e.g. their religion or sexual orientation. Even Sikh or Jewish detectives in Chandra's, Olguín's or Krimer's novels can hardly be considered marginal: being Sikh or Jewish does mean not any advantage or disadvantage for the investigations; neither do the investigations necessarily give insights into the respective community. In contrast to the popularity of the eth-

nic detective discussed in Chapter 2.3, a specific cultural knowledge or sensibility is not the key to solve a crime in post-millennial Indian and Latin American crime fiction.

Instead, the vast majority of detectives in the corpus novels can be considered middle class figures. Indian detectives are in their majority pan-Indian figures that are not presented as specific regional characters even though they live in different cities and speak different languages. Tanvir Patel has claimed that Indian crime fiction writers give a voice to India's marginalized people (2011: 12). Similarly, William J. Nichols underlined that Latin American crime fiction often focuses on excluded or marginalized classes (2010: 302). The corpus novels do not sustain this claim; instead, poor and marginalized groups of society hardly play a role in recent crime fiction novels. Only in a few cases, detectives have to enter lower class neighborhoods or slums (Olguín; Chandra) or address the problem of sweatshops and other forms of exploitation (Krimmer). While poverty and inequality continue to prevail in the Global South as discussed in Chapter 2.1.2, this does not reflect in the choice of protagonists or settings of crime fiction novels from these regions. The problematic situation of lower classes is generally only touched upon and not explored in depth during an investigation. Instead, writers rather talk to and of India's and Latin America's middle classes. Other milieus and social strata partly play a role in the investigations, but it is rather the wide spectrum of different positions and tensions within a middle class space or the gap between the middle and upper class that are scrutinized by the detectives as I have discussed in detail for Swaminathan's and Desai's works (4.1.2.; 4.1.3) or Valdivia's novel (4.3.5).

A contentious issue is the role and self-image of women which play an important role in the corpus novels: While women have usually been voiceless victims in crime fiction – the example of the femicides in Bolaño's *2666* has been discussed in Chapter 3.2.5 – women actually occupy a variety of roles in the corpus novels. As has been explored extensively in Chapter 4.1, women take a lead role as detectives in a great variety of crime fiction novels and portray smart, independent

and liberated women. In contrast to the dominance of male investigators of earlier novels, male and female authors from both regions now increasingly employ female detectives. Most women are not struggling to assert themselves, but they are rather strong characters from the beginning. Thereby, they contribute to the establishment of new role models as the analysis of work by Desai, Bhattacharyya, Swaminathan, Krimer, Piñeiro, Olgúin and Serrano have shown. While these female detectives are certainly inspired by the greater international presence of fictional female detectives, only Swaminathan's detective Lalli directly evokes a foreign model – the figure of the spinster sleuth Miss Marple. Other archetypal figures like the femme fatale do not play a role in any of the novels. Furthermore, the analysis has also shown that women are important supporters or team members in a number of other novels. Female detectives are diverse, of various age groups and backgrounds and include private detectives, journalists and amateurs. In contrast to this diversity of female detectives, it strikes out that the police procedural continues to be dominated by male protagonists and few women have been employed as leading police investigators in Indian or Latin American crime fiction so far.

Even female victims are not necessarily passive bodies exposed to the male gaze, but rather important protagonists. First of all, the dead body is not described in detail and in a sexualized manner in any of the novels. Partly, even victims is given a voice: Due to non-chronological plot structures and the variable focalization, various investigations focus on exploring the lives of female victims rather than their deaths as has been discussed in detail for Meena's novel and Elizabeth Subercaseaux' *La última noche que soñé con Julia* in Chapter 4.1.8. Overall, the omnipresence of female figures in criminal investigations means a shift from the conflicts that are commonly negotiated in women's writing. Particularly in the Indian context, depicting women caught up between societal and familial expectations on the one hand and own desires on the other hand continues to be a central topic (see Chapter 4.1). Crime fiction therefore exhibits more diverse female protagonists that lead a self-determined life, follow a profession that is meaningful to them and engage with partners of their own choice.

In the Indian context, a group of novels has been identified that can be termed chick-lit crime fiction novels. These works depict a coming-of-age experience of a young detective in contemporary India.

The subgenre of the police procedural was long considered unsuitable in the Global South but is now on the rise, which might partly be a spillover effect of the global popularity of police procedurals and respective TV series. As shown in Chapter 4.3, the police investigators and their teams are very heterogeneous and range between meticulously investing officers that largely follow the pseudonorm of classic British crime fiction and more ambiguous figures. Protagonists of the latter type are confronted with a multitude of crimes, engage in acts of corruption on different scales or feel pressured by the public or by the media who criticize the pace of an investigation. The police investigators depicted have medium level positions and are therefore caught up in tensions between superiors and subordinates. While the main investigator might be promoted due to the investigation, he is never the boss from the beginning. As official investigators, police officers often have access to databases and devices and profit from the skills of forensic experts and other specialized staff. The emergence of the police procedural is a prime example of the strategies used by many Indian and Latin American writers to create locally credible and realistic investigators. Authors do away with a binary role allocation of good and bad characters and instead employ ambivalent characters which use particular skills to be able to investigate in a complicated surrounding. As the examples analyzed in Chapter 4.3 have suggested, it is mainly complex figures like Nair's Inspector Borei Gowda, Swarup's Inspector Sartaj Singh or Valdivia's Comisario Óscar Morante who dominate police procedurals in the Global South. While they are very engaged investigators, all of them are struggling because of their private lives and relation to superiors, but stand out through hard work and a specific sensibility which allows them to advance where others fail. However, the investigators also juxtapose the idea of a quick solution of a case with the high impact of coincidence, networks and tenacity required to solve a crime. The example of Salil Desai's Inspectors Morante and Saralkar has also shown that writers also back on more traditional plot

structures where a meticulous investigation certainly leads to the criminal. The negative image of the police, however, is also not ignored by crime fiction writers. Various writers use an amateur or private detective to explore topics like police corruption or the involvement of the police in wider criminal activities (Swarup; Olguín; Piñeiro; Piglia). This can be seen as a strategy to address mistrust in the authorities and the need for alternative investigators.

The employment of a journalist as a detective is a popular choice in India as well as in Latin America as has been explored in Chapter 4.2. In Argentina, journalist investigators draw back on a longer tradition and point at the lack of trust in the police and/or state (see Chapter 3.2.3). Journalists and the media are present in different contexts in the novels: The media are often presented as the upholders of morality and justice in crime fiction as has been analyzed in Chapter 4.2. Journalists like Olguín's Verónica Rosenthal, Piglia's Emilio Renzi, Piñeiro's trio of investigators or Swarup's investigating journalists are highly motivated to investigate crimes and structural violence usually ignored by the authorities. What these journalists furthermore have in common is that they are able to get to the ground of a case and reveal the criminal, but a criminal prosecution is often a different issue: What becomes public is often a product of negotiation. The investigation therefore lays bare the construction of truth and challenges the perception of journalism as objectively reporting the facts. Journalists also play a role as side investigators – the police officers/journalist team is a popular choice – but also occupy more ambiguous roles: Often, they obstruct investigations or are prone to corruption. In various analyzed novels, social media plays an important role in the crime investigation (Desai; Nair; Hall; Piñeiro) and thereby points at the impact of technology on crime investigations. The role of technology has also been discussed in Chapter 5.3.1 which reveals very different stages of computerization of investigations processes: While internet research, databases and the use of hackers are everyday tools for some investigators, other detectives rather rely on traditional methods of questioning suspects or gathering clues. Also questionable methods like intercepting phones, recordings or hacking accounts are frequently used methods. The

state of computerization is partly lamented by police investigators, while others point at the gap between their own methods and the sophisticated technology used in (foreign) TV series like “CSI: Crime Scene Investigation” (Meena; Nair). In other cases, investigators have a large amount of devices like x-ray machines available (Swaminathan; Chandra).

Overall, the presence journalists and the media runs like a red thread through the corpus novels. It accounts for a feature that adds to the aim of crime fiction writers to realistically depict in a specific context. This is congruent with the observation on the mediatization of (middle class) society in the Global South discussed in Chapter 2.1.2. The modification of the investigating figures is therefore clearly a glocal strategy which connects to the effort to create locally credible characters which contribute to the modification and diversification of the genre. While the corpus novels partly defy the genre, it is not systematically transgressed. Furthermore, the corpus of works is not totally disconnected from the developments of a globally circulating corpus of crime fiction: While the detectives are often novelties in the respective context and account for interesting and complex figures, there are no ‘native’ or ‘indigenous’ types that apply radically distinct methods and rationales during an investigation. In this sense, post-millennial Indian and Latin American detectives differ from the postcolonial investigators who point at discrepancies between distinct knowledge systems.

### 6.2.2 Crimes and Fears

The following part summarizes observations about the crimes that are addressed in the corpus novels, largely based on the analysis of the figure of the criminal in Chapter 4.4. Further aspects of the relation between crime fiction and the media can also be detected with regard to crimes depicted in the corpus novels: As discussed in Chapter 3.2.6, Rosa Pellicer’s (n.d.) observation about the increasing tendency to fictionalize extratextual crimes that have caused a stir in Argentinean media also applies to Indian works as the examples of Desai’s *The Sea of Innocence* or Swarup’s *Six Suspects* have shown. Besides fictionaliz-

ing individual cases; however, authors also draw back on 'symptomatic' crimes: An example that has been discussed extensively in Chapter 4.4 are the figure of the false guru who abuses his position of power or the criminal politician who does not respect the law. While in the Indian corpus, specific types of criminals can be identified, this is hardly the case in Latin American works where the criminals are more diverse. Overall, however, two groups of criminals can be summarized for both regions, as has been examined in Chapter 4.4: Investigations often reveal criminal activities of the so-called 'pillars of society' like politicians, doctors, businessmen and spiritual advisers who exploit their position to generate more money or power – while all of these figures should actually have an exemplary function. The criminals usually rely on complex networks that include different agents including loyal police officers or politicians. Criminal wirepullers or masterminds are very present in the novels and can often not be identified or held accountable as the actual crime is committed by a henchman or serial killer, which once again points at the network character and complexity of crime. While the wirepullers in Indian crime fiction are often politicians (or their offspring), political agents are not a major group of criminals in the Argentinean and Chilean crime fiction novels. Politicians are among the protagonists of Subercaseaux' novels and involved in criminal activities but duly resign once their involvement is discovered.

A second group refers to crimes committed in the domestic sphere – usually by family members. These writers follow a tendency already identified by Clemens Franken Kurzen for a group of Chilean crime fiction writers in the 1990s who focused on individual crimes in the context of domestic violence and family conflicts (Franken 2003: 62; see Chapter 3.2.3). Novels by Subercaseaux, Swaminathan, Kishwar Desai or Salil Desai go in the same direction and thereby explore societal norms and tensions or the crumbling down of relationships in a middle class environment. Some of these novels actually correspond to a plot structure which culminates in the revelation of an individual criminal who can be identified and equals restoring an interrupted order in the sense of the classic British model. However, only in few

novels, an individual criminal can be identified beyond doubt. Due to the complex dimensions of many crimes and their perpetrators, the actual criminal is sometimes hard to identify. A convergence of legality and illegality is portrayed as an intrinsic element of society in many corpus novels: As discussed for Olguín's and Chandra's novels, criminal organizations have adopted business-like structures while, as mentioned above, the political and economic sphere engages in criminal activities and maintains links to criminal organizations.

The legacy of Latin American dictatorships like the Pinochet era in Chile or the military regime in Argentina are no longer dominant topics in crime fiction novels. Besides Serrano's 1999 novel and Piglia's *Blanco nocturno* which is set in the 1970s, the majority of the corpus novels are set in post-millennial Latin America and India. This shift has also been observed by Marcelo González Zúñiga and Danilo Santos López as a striking phenomenon since the establishment of the genre in Chile was closely connected to the country's transition to democracy. In this respect, the corpus of post-millennial Chilean crime fiction has deviated from the dominant concerns of the *neo-policial* discussed in Chapter 3.2.3. In the corpus novels, the legacies of the dictatorships are not totally omitted, but none of the crimes investigated connect in any way to these periods. As a topic, the dictatorships come up intermittently: In Ocampo's *Cobayos criollos*, the detective's image of Argentina is shaped by her parents' memories of the country before they went into exile. In Piñeiro's *Betibú*, Nurit Iscar observes how certain security measures applied by the guard of a gated community resemble practices used by the police during the dictatorship and Serrano's detective Rosa Alvallay herself spent various years in exile in Mexico. Besides these minor references, it can be concluded that Argentinean and Chilean crime fiction no longer use the genre predominantly to examine the era of dictatorships and their aftermaths nor do they depict politically motivated crimes. Instead, crime fiction writers seem very present-oriented and depict current concerns and fears.

As pointed out in Chapter 2.3.4, rather than mirroring actual fears, crime fiction novels often highlight specific concerns that match the exigencies of the genre. Thereby, specific fears are intensified and others ignored. Pooja Sinha's observation that Indian crime fiction "reflects on sources of anxiety and disquietude within the middle class" (2013: 186) applies to most novels studied here. The crimes investigated strongly resonate specific concerns such as the impact of organized criminality or the gulf of different views that coexist in a middle class space. More often than not, the original problem and motive of the crimes are grounded in particular tensions and pressures in society. Detectives thereby scrutinize tensions and crimes that have intensified due to transformations connected to processes of globalization in the Global South. As presented in Chapter 2.1.2., transformations connected to the regions' integration into the global capitalist market include the simultaneity of various opposing tendencies: economic growth vis-à-vis widening inequality, a greater access to global consumption products vis-à-vis a new focus on local identity and traditions as well as conflicting ideas about the role of women in contemporary society.

Partly, the crime investigations connect to wider problems that primarily affect the poor like exploitation, organ trafficking or surrogacy, as discussed in Chapter 5.3.3. Structural violence and exploitation are explored by some of the investigators, however, the poor are not the central scope of any investigation and their problems are rather explored as side-topics of another case. The novels by Chandra, Meena, Nair and Krimer explore for example the attractiveness of criminal syndicates or the functioning of trafficking rings and modern-day slavery. As suggested before, the crimes and issues are explored by a middle class investigator who is not an insider to these specific milieus of organized crime. While critics often see a greater focus on poverty and violence in Indian and Latin American literary and movie production as an updated exoticization of the regions for an international audience, this does not apply to the corpus of crime fiction novels. Poverty is not a major topic and the corpus novels do also not subscribe to the violent turn that William J. Nichols described as a characteristic of

Latin American crime fiction (see Chapter 3.2.6): Physical violence does not play a major role in most crime fiction novels, nor do (mutilated) corpses receive much attention. Thereby, recent post-millennial novels divert from the Bolaño-model pursued by various Latin American writers. Also the voyeuristic gaze and eroticization of the dead female body is not a central concern of the corpus novels. Acts of violence is also not the scope of Indian crime fiction novels as neither violent scenes nor dead bodies are described in detail in most works. Here, Indian crime fiction novels deviate from respective movies like *Mardaani* (2014) which contains various fight scenes and more physical violence. In accordance with the relative absence of physical violence, nylon ropes or glass-coated threads are used in various novels as rather silent murder weapons that can be used to strangle a victim but do not require fight scenes or blood to be spilled. These threads, particularly the glass-coated ones that are traditionally used for kite fights in India – account for a paradigmatic and vey local murder weapon in the Indian novels as discussed in Chapter 4.4.1. This relative absence of physical violence, however, can hardly be seen as paradigmatic for Latin America as a whole. As has been mentioned briefly in Chapter 3.2.6, widespread physical violence in Mexico or Colombia that led to the emergence of local subgenres like the *narconovela* or the *novela de crímenes*. Both partly correspond to the idea of violence as a kind of export product for foreign readers that contributes to an ongoing exoticization of Latin America as a violent continent.

Studies that look at foreign or ethnic crime fiction often point at the didactic function of these works. In the Indian context, Tanvir Patel has expressed the hope that crime fiction “may help to educate readership about pitholes of Indian modernization” and teach readers to “resolve issues through cooperative ventures” (2011: 256). With respect to the claim of genre fiction as ‘problem-solving devices’ discussed in Chapter 2.2.3, I remain rather doubtful whether Indian and Latin American crime fiction writers really pursue such an educational mission and are able to point out alternative solutions. Instead, I have demonstrated in the analysis that crime fiction writers often use the format of a familiar genre to raise awareness of ignored problems and

thereby exploit it as a framework for social criticism. *Vis-à-vis* this endeavor, the investigation of an individual crime is no longer at the center of the narrative. For novels by Desai, Chandra, Swarup, Nair, Olguín or Piglia, the shift from the key question has shifted from ‘who is guilty’ to what has caused the problem in the first place, as observed by Andrew Pepper (2016: 2). Rather than offering a solution, it is more an awareness of complex problems and interconnections that is created. With regard to crime fiction’s complex relation to the everyday, physical violence is far from presenting an everyday phenomenon in most novels. Instead, it is the consequences of structural or objective violence as studied by Slavoj Žižek and Zygmund Bauman that are explored here (see Chapter 2.3.4). Furthermore, novels give insights into complex crimes like transnational drug trafficking or terrorism that the reader commonly has no access to. Once again, the topics discussed present selective fears and concerns with a focus on their middle class audience at the expense of other problematics. Overall, however, Indian and Latin American crime fiction corresponds to popular fiction that combines “entertainment with serious social realism” to lay bare the negative consequences of globalization (Joseph Valiyamattam 2016: 152).

In accordance with the diversity of the corpus novels, however, various writers omit references to tensions and problems in contemporary India and Latin America like impunity and corruption. More plot-oriented authors like Salil Desai or Swaminathan’s first detective Lalli novels largely follow the generic conventions. In the Argentinean context, writers like Pablo de Santis form part of a group of ludic crime fiction writers who draw back on models of British writers as well as Borges’ understanding of the genre (see Chapter 3.2.6).

### 6.2.3 The Creation of Realistic Narratives? New Topics and Modified Generic Conventions

As the analytical chapters of this thesis have shown, Indian and Latin American crime fiction writers have often challenged the idea of a narrow generic framework that prescribes a fixed plot structure and other

generic features. Nonetheless, a specific pseudonorm remains valid for writers, readers and reviewers and is used as a point of reference against which new works continue to be judged. This pseudonorm connects to European and US-American predecessors; particularly the characteristics of the classic British model that have been discussed in Chapter 2.2.2. As explored in the analysis, Indian and Latin American crime fiction writers have modified the plot structure and plot elements. As discussed in Chapter 4.5, authors like Chandra, Swarup, Subercaseaux or Piglia have multiplied the number of subplots and crimes or shifted the narrative perspective. In this regard, a connection can be drawn to the complex and polyphone novels of writers like Roberto Bolaño discussed in Chapter 3.2.5. Like in the latter's works, the reader is sometimes the only authority in these novels who can connect the puzzle-like structure of the narrative. By narrating the investigation from the point of view of various protagonists via a variable internal focalization, various authors provide a more complex and ambiguous account of a criminal investigation while deprioritizing the detective's point of view. As the main interpretative power, the detective has usually held the authority over the establishment of the solution and truth in the narrative. In the corpus novels, the detectives fail on various occasions. The main investigation and solution of a specific crime often loses importance as additional investigations come into the limelight, side-topics are explored or the detective's personal life is scrutinized.

The avoidance of a solution and closure is a strategy applied by various crime fiction writers studied here and constitutes one of the most striking characteristics of Indian and Latin American crime fiction. While a non-solution draws back on a longer tradition in Latin America (see Chapter 5.1), this feature is found in novels from all three countries. As elaborated in Chapter 5.1, solution and closure have traditionally been central elements of crime fiction novels. The solution supposedly has a relieving effect on the reader and structures the narrative which gears towards this end. In the corpus novels, however, it was rather the rule than the exception that crimes remain unsolved: Kishwar Desai's novels for example all omit a complete revelation or prosecution of the criminal. In other cases, crimes are not solved due to the limited capac-

ities of detectives who are powerless against the criminals they are confronted with or unable to investigate on a higher level (Piñeiro; Piglia; Swaminathan; Nair; Olgúin). Coincidental solutions or false confessions are further options used by authors to circumvent or challenge the generic conventions (Meena; Nair). In other cases, the detectives also willingly obstruct a solution and decide not to solve a case (Desai; Krimer) or invent another solution (Serrano). In Subercaseaux' and Swarup' novels, the identity of the murderer is revealed to the reader and not to the detective or other protagonists. These various examples make clear that a large part of Indian and Latin American crime fiction is (semi)open-ended.

The analysis has also shown that the question whether a case has been solved is a complicated issue. The question is partly difficult to answer as detectives offer a partial or alternative solution: They partly leave the solution to other investigators or resort to social media to increase the pressure on the authorities. The latter option is definitely a striking feature used in various novels: Newspapers, TV channels and especially social media are frequently used by detectives as other paths to criminal prosecutions are blocked (Hall; Nair; Desai; Piñeiro).

The solution is therefore not a simple revelation of a chain of events that is reconstructed by the detective's combination skills. Instead, this reconstruction is merely a first step: Once the criminal has been identified, the detective needs to engage in a negotiation with the criminal to determine which 'truth' can be shared. Due to the frequent references to the media, the investigations also shed light on journalism and challenge the idea of the objectiveness of reporting and complicate the idea of journalistic freedom. Detectives usually have to make concessions and cannot publish or reveal their entire knowledge. This practice raises questions about the constructedness of truth and knowledge. Against the premises of the classic British crime fiction novel, the solution is no longer a mere reconstruction of the story of the crime that is reconstructed in the course of the story of the detection, to draw back on Todorov's theory (1966). In various novels, a third story is added to the plot: the story of the negotiation of the truth. However, once

again, these elements are not consistently modified and a substantial number of novels end with unambiguous solutions that answer all the questions posed in the course of the investigation (Bhattacharya; Nair; Subercaseaux; Valdivia; Swaminathan; Salil Desai).

Revelations of the constructedness of truth and knowledge are also included in the narratives via metafictional references. Like the (semi)open-ended novels, works with metafictional commentaries similarly raise more questions than the investigation can possibly answer. This is particularly the case in Argentinean crime fiction and has been discussed for the case of Piglia's and Piñeiro's novels in Chapter 5.2.3 where the concepts like 'paranoid fiction' or the 'pyramid of murder' give occasion to reflect on the genre within the narrative. In Chandra's novel, the concept the *leela*, the game played by gods, functions as a metaphor for the entire narrative. As demonstrated in Chapter 5.2, epistemological reflections also come to the fore in novels that self-reflectively discuss the process of writing or storytelling and similarly underline the constructed character of a narrative. Usually, crime fiction writers present the endeavor of the detective in a realistic manner in the sense that the reader has the impression that the procedures depicted mirror an actual investigation practices. The present reflections break this illusion and point at the constructed character of the narrative. The unsuitability of the pseudonorm is underlined by writers who resort to a modification of generic conventions or metaization. Overall, it can therefore be concluded that both strategies seek to replace the unfitting model with a modified version of the genre.

To comply with the exigency of realism as discussed in Chapter 2.3.4, a major catalyst for the development of the genre – crime fiction writers challenge the plot structure, particularly the solution and closure and thereby question notions of truth and justice. They point at the discrepancy between the model – usually the classic British model – and the context and replace this model with a modified version that claims to be more realistic and credible in the respective context. While this strategy is not unique to Indian and Latin American crime fiction, the quantity and heterogeneity of examples identified in novels from both

regions is striking. This implies a contested relation with the European and US-American model: Authors partly break with European models like the classic British crime fiction novel, but nonetheless, the corpus novels continue to be compared to the pseudonorm. Thus, these modifications account for glocalization strategies and strongly resonate Franco Moretti's observation on the novel and the power imbalances of one-yet-unequal global literary system (2006; 2013). The instability between form and context is certainly given here, thus the diversification of crime fiction in the course of its global circulation can be seen as a case study that confirms Moretti's observations in a 21<sup>st</sup> century context. Beyond that, however, Moretti's approach is not very helpful for this thesis which rather advocates paying more attention to local publishing phenomena.

Links to foreign models and predecessors are evoked by intertextual as well as paratextual references. As demonstrated in Chapter 5.2.1, authors frequently refer to diverse European and US-American crime fiction writers. References to archetypical writers like Agatha Christie are common, but contemporary Scandinavian writers also play a role. While these references signal the text's affiliation to a specific genre, they also suggest a preponderance of foreign models and underline the writer's familiarity with the foreign corpus. As discussed in Chapter 2.2.3, generic conventions can be regarded as "bodies of shared knowledge" that facilitate a communication and evoke specific anticipations about a text (Neumann/Nünning 2007: 13). This can be seen as a position taking that points at a writer's intended position in the respective literary field. References to local writers, however, can only be found in Argentinean works and once again point at the longer tradition and establishment of a local corpus in Argentina. In India, it is the gap between the publishing spheres in different languages that divides the long-established tradition of crime fiction in the subcontinent. As explored in Chapter 3.1.2., crime fiction is often presented as a genre that recently emerged in India – even though the novel character is limited to the English language market. Connections to the huge

corpus of works in Indian languages, however, are hardly ever drawn. Intertextual references as well as endorsements and reviews instead refer to foreign writers of the genre.

#### 6.2.4 The Commodification of Society and Space

In addition to the general perception of crime fiction as a consumption product traded in increasingly commodified literary markets, consumerism also plays an important role as a topic that is explored in many Indian and Latin American crime fiction novels. As has been explored in Chapter 5.3, many novels depict a consumerist society that profits from a greater availability of choices, but is also confronted with more decision-making processes on an everyday level. The detectives are often more critical observers of these processes. Besides money, certain consumer products and brands are important status markers. This status is simultaneously questioned e.g. by frequent references to counterfeit products which are presented as kind of normalized crime. In contrast to the usual depiction of the Global South as a place of exploitation (see Chapter 2.1.2), a shift of attention towards a consumer society is striking. However, as the investigations reveal, this society is often shaped by a coexistence of structures of consumption and exploitation. It is particularly the negative consequences of the rise of consumerism and commodification that are scrutinized. The fashion industry for example flourishes in spite of the exploitative conditions on which it is based. Also crimes are shaped by the growing impact of consumerism: Crimes or questionable practices like human trafficking, organ trafficking, surrogacy and drug testing play a role in various novels. As many of these cases disproportionately affect the poor, these cases actually evoke the idea of the Global South – or rather its poor – as a spare part store of the Global North; but increasingly also of a local middle and upper class.

This commodification also affects the representation of space – usually urban spaces – in the corpus novels: As explored in Chapter 6.4, Indian and Latin American crime fiction novels often explore how urban spaces are altered in accordance with social, political and eco-

conomic transformations. This has an impact on the cityscapes and how urban spaces are perceived: In many corpus novels, the city is depicted as a temple of consumerism which consists of malls, restaurants and shops with local and international brands. As the various examples discussed have shown, the detective takes over the role of an urban flâneur who explores a city in the course of his/her investigation. Particularly women detectives challenge gendered spatial practices and defy the perception of public spaces as dangerous for women. Public space itself, however, is portrayed as under threat by privatization or the emergence of gated communities. The impact of fear on urban development is pointed out in various cases as well as the problematic divergence between urban planning and the struggles of a city's inhabitants (gentrification; modernization).

The coexistence of rich and poor in India and Latin America are brought up, but what is particularly mentioned in many novels is the disappearance of space for the poor in metropolitan centers. Spaces of poverty like slums, however, hardly play a role in most novels and are in the best case explored by the detective as an outsider, as discussed in 5.4. Overall, it is particularly power struggles over urban spaces, but also touristic places like Goa that are explored in crime fiction novels – though from a middle class perspective. In the case of Goa in Desai's *Sea of Innocence*, it is the binary of the beach versus the hinterland that is explored by the detective: As the hinterland becomes more and more subject to investment and commercialization, also the beach life is affected and is perceived as a farce rather than a paradise by Desai's detective Simran. Particularly the connection between modernization and the city's underbelly that is explored in many novels: Criminal masterminds, for example, are often located in skyscrapers, but find this position of absolute power challenged in the course of an investigation: In Piñeiro's novel, for example, the supposed culprit is killed in his office in spite of the building's security measures. Frequently, everyday nuisances such as the traffic or the changes in a local neighborhood are commented upon and connect to a (local) reader's experience of the city. The Indian and Latin American crime fiction novels do not evoke colorful local settings in the sense of crime fiction as travel

literature: Tourist sites, iconic places or historic buildings are largely omitted as the scope is on particular local neighborhoods. Partly, the novels thereby revoke the palimpsestic character of urban space: *Vis-à-vis* constant and comprehensive transformations, older layers of the cities are no longer visible. Besides a few exceptions, the corpus novels are set in metropolitan cities with a global status and importance. Local differences are nonetheless taken into consideration: In Mumbai, the decosmopolitanization of the city in the 1990s is brought up or at least insinuated while in Santiago, the division between critics and supporters of neoliberalism is increasingly spatialized.

In contrast to ‘postnational’ tendencies identified by Timothy Robbins and José Eduardo González (2014) for contemporary Latin American writers and the international setting of many Indian postcolonial novels discussed in Chapter 3.1.5 and 3.2.5, crime fiction novels discussed here are largely limited to a national (urban) space and therefore strictly local. Compared to for example Bolaño’s novels, which are set in diverse locales across various continents, the crime fiction writers studied here focus on metropolitan cities like Buenos Aires, Santiago or Mumbai. As analyzed in Chapter 5.4, novels nonetheless explore transformations in urban spaces that are connected to processes of globalization, the effects of neoliberalism or the growing fear of violence. This ‘domestic’ character in terms of the setting has been pointed out by Carolina Miranda for Argentinean crime fiction (2016: 82) or by Liza Lau and Emma Dawson Varughese for Indian popular fiction in English (2015: 92).

### 6.2.5 Results of the Corpus Analysis of Indian and Latin American Crime Fiction Novels

The analysis has underlined the diversification of the genre in Indian and Latin American crime fiction which results in the emergence of specific protagonists – especially detectives, but also criminal figures – settings and crimes that have been subject to modification and alteration. Some general observations about common and different features in both regions stand out in this thesis: The exigency of a realistic por-

trayal of an investigation process, a specific setting and the subject of the investigation are major drivers for the modification of the genre in both regions. Crime fiction is increasingly used to reveal the negative effects of processes of globalization on a local level and thus often portrays the local outcomes of complex and internationally connected criminal processes or enterprises. The topics discussed are therefore inherently glocal in the sense that the form may be global and the cases often have global dimensions, but investigations are locally anchored. The genre is therefore receptive to experiences and fears of crime and violence, but also addresses other insecurities connected to larger economic, political or social transformations. While the genre continues to be appropriated to address problems such as structural and political violence, a (new) focus on the private sphere and crimes occurring in private relationships can also be observed in both regions. Furthermore, a middle class bias can be noted when looking at the investigating figures or the context in which many of the crimes are located. Other similarities are the frequent appearance of specific detective figures (female investigators or journalists, to give just two examples) or the limitation of the setting to a national, urban space. Thereby, particularly for the case of Latin America, crime fiction diverges from the general trend in Latin American literature to locate a plot outside the continent. Furthermore, authors rather address local readers and their detectives largely eschew the role of “ambassadors for a specific nation and culture” which set out to give insights into a foreign culture for international readers (Nilsson 2017: 6). Modifications can be seen as a result of local and global tensions; the presence of (international) crime fiction series and movies on television and on the big screen as well as the corpus of international global bestsellers certainly have an impact on writers and shape horizon of expectations of readers, as I have pointed out for both regions.

While certain patterns and characteristics could be identified during the analyses, they are not continuously applied throughout the corpus novels. Post-millennial Indian and Latin American crime fiction is too heterogeneous to be summarized under a specific new model or new subgenres. Of significance here are counter-examples that challenge a

classification of the corpus novels and point at the distinct agendas of various writers: While some adopt the genre for social criticism, others put a greater emphasis on generic conventions. The few exceptions here are the figure of the evil spiritual advisor as a frequently employed master criminal in Indian crime fiction novels and the chick-lit crime fiction novels discussed in Chapter 4.1.2 for Bhattacharyya's novel. The framework of an investigation is used here as a coming-of-age story of a female investigator. Otherwise, diversity is certainly the most striking characteristic of this corpus of novels which account for a permanent negotiation of local and global elements. These works are, however, not produced in a vacuum, but in a specific local literary field whose specificities have been explored for all three case studies in Chapter 3.

## 6.3 Glocal Markets and Genre Fiction

The analytical chapters of this thesis have given a multitude of insights into the use and modification of post-millennial Indian and Latin American crime fiction. The second part of the conclusion looks at the emergence of crime fiction in India and Latin America in the context of local literary markets and answers the question how the genre relates to disparities in the global literary field. The final part of this thesis follows up on the question why it is interesting to look at genre fiction in the Global South to study phenomena related to the globalization of markets and literary production and reflects on the benefits and challenges of (literary) South-South comparisons.

### 6.3.1 Crime Fiction in India's and Latin America's Literary Markets

A diachronic look into the trajectory of the genre in India, Argentina and Chile in Chapter 3 has revealed distinct histories of the adaptation of the genre. The foreign roots of the genre had a crucial impact on the genre's adaptation in the Global South: In all cases, crime fiction has been consumed for over a century and underwent a similar three-step process of imitation via a territorialization of the foreign genre to the

emergence of own models. The imitation thereby focused on translations, the use of foreign-sounding pseudonyms and the adherence to foreign (British) settings, which were eventually replaced by local writers who developed series in their home country. While the time span of this adaptation process varied widely, own models emerged eventually due to a hybridization with preexisting local forms (India) or the development of new subgenres which were aimed to do justice to the respective context in which these works were produced (like the Latin American neopolicial).

As this thesis has shown, crime fiction transcends binary visions of local versus internationally circulating literature: The genre been adopted by local writers, but also by others of international repute. Some of these writers are criticized for producing exoticizing narratives for foreign readers while fellow writers who may draw on similar strategies do not have to face such criticism. The works of recent writers have partly been translated, though not necessarily into English, but into German or French. The corpus of writers who publish crime fiction includes local writers as well as some living abroad. Therefore, crime fiction accounts for a genre that challenges and transcends various divisions that characterize literary production in the Global South.

While crime fiction is usually categorized as popular genre fiction and framed in opposition to literary fiction (see Chapter 2.2), the corpus novels show that the adaptation of the genre in India and Latin America complicates this binary categorization of literary production. Various authors studied here like Vikram Chandra, Anita Nair or Ricardo Piglia are writers that are usually allocated at the autonomous pole of Bourdieu's model of the literary field. The corpus novels only partly comply with the characteristics associated with the heteronomous pole such as the use of pre-established forms for a pre-existing demand (Bourdieu 1995: 142). Other writers occupy a position in between these poles as they draw back on specific formats, but, as the analysis has underlined, they usually subvert or modify these formulas. The concept of one literary field does certainly not capture the complexities of India's literary production due to the presence of multiple lan-

guages. As has been discussed in Chapter 3.1.3, this translates into to a complex coexistence of different literary fields. Furthermore, also the dynamics and power relations between local literary fields and a global one cannot be tackled with Bourdieu's model.

Nonetheless, the binary of literary versus genre fiction – which often continues to be seen as opposite poles of literary production – has a significant impact on the reception of crime fiction in India and Latin America. In India, most crime fiction novels are associated with commercial fiction and unanimously criticized for their lack of literary quality (see Chapter 3.1.3). Thus, they are eschewed by reviewers and especially by scholars – despite the diversity of recently produced novels. These arguments evoke the division of popular vs. literary fiction and petrify the perceived binary which draws back on different rationales as Suman Gupta has pointed out (see Chapter 2.2.1). In the context of the growing influence of multinational publishers, the rejection of genre fiction reflects the fear of a homogenization and commercialization of literary production. Bourdieu's binary model of the literary field is helpful here to look at the dynamics and power negotiations over literary value and market value that shine through in popular vs. literary fiction debates.

Since crime fiction is a genre that is closely associated with the use of standard formulas – or in this case, a pseudonorm – and exhibits historical connections to colonial centers and discourses (see Chapter 3.1.2), it carries a particular symbolic weight here. The rise of crime fiction raises fears of a homogenization of literary production and a preference for profitable entertainment literature. As the analysis of developments in the Indian, Argentinean and Chilean publishing market has shown, however, these fears are often unfounded: Multinational publishing houses like Penguin Random House, Harper-Collins or the Spanish group Planeta are indeed able to gain ever-greater markets shares. Publishers, however, do not only import or publish internationally circulating titles but also foster the local literary production. The market is overall shaped by distinct and partly contrary developments such as the impact of (new or traditional) independ-

ent publishers who for example focus on innovative formats or niche products. While the emergence of new independent publishing houses has been confirmed in all three countries, their role and impact could not be studied in detail in the frame of this thesis, but would certainly account for an important desideratum for future research projects.

Multinational publishing corporations increasingly focus on producing local titles and try out new formats and thereby provide new opportunities for Indian, Argentinean and Chilean writers to publish their works in a local market. For the Indian market, these developments are mainly limited to the English language sphere, but spillover effects have been pointed out for literature in Indian languages as multinational publishers have for example launched Hindi imprints. The analysis reveals a preference for specific genres like crime fiction which are fostered and commissioned by publishers. While this process means an extension of the logic of the economic field on the literary field, the same processes allow for a growth and development of local literary production as writers do not have to focus on writing for an international audience. The bottom line is thus that processes of globalization lead to diverse effects on local publishing markets in the Global South which also create new possibilities for local agency and glocal outcomes. Various examples discussed in Chapter 3 show that it is entirely possible to become a bestseller in a local market, as the example of the Argentinean writer Claudia Piñeiro has shown. Bestselling Indian authors in English are currently writers of romance novels and Hindu mythological thrillers, but the growing amount of Indian crime fiction has similarly led to the emergence of many successful series. These writers can gain economic capital and are in some cases also able to circulate beyond their home market. Furthermore, various popular fiction writers have also attained symbolic capital in the sense of Bourdieu as spokespersons of a specific generation which they address in their writings – such as the growing middle class.

The emergence of crime fiction novels for a local market in the Global South is thus not a lamentable situation. It could actually also be read as a success story of writers and publishers who produce books that suit

the interests of local audiences in the Global South – but are not completely isolated from the global market and sometimes also subject to international dissemination. This development contradicts the claim that authors in the Global South necessarily need to write for an international market due to the limited size of their home markets. Most of the crime fiction writers rather cater for local interests and readerships instead of focusing on producing books that fit into the horizon of expectations of a foreign audience in the Global North. Thereby, authors also have an impact on local literary production and help to establish specific formats and genres in their home market. However, the fact that formats, publishing and marketing practices and the language are predetermined by the standards of the centers of literary production is also criticized by those looking for more ‘indigenous’ literary products. Whether popular fiction is not always already a hybrid, market-oriented product due to long-term hybridization and recontextualization is a question that has also been raised in Chapter 2.2.3. In terms of marketing practices, specific cover designs or the inclusion of endorsements used to point out generic affiliation were revealed as very recent phenomena in India. The situation is different in Latin America as paratextual references, covers designs and the sorting of bookshops do often not give away a book’s generic affiliation. These differences show how publishers and sales practices can have an impact on the affiliation of a text as a specific genre.

However, a clear-cut distinction between literary and genre fiction can hardly be substantiated with specific textual characteristics and content-related arguments. This binary view rather reflects power struggles between different consecrating agencies about power and authority over the literary field. Nonetheless, the growing sales figures in India speak for themselves and slowly raise more (academic) interest in the market. While the Indian corpus is associated with a commercial pole in the country’s literary field, the genre has a much wider dispersion in Argentina’s literary field due to historic continuities and due to the fact that crime fiction is also associated with esteemed writers like Borges. Nonetheless, the critique of the growing use of ‘literatura light’, to draw

back on Mario Vargas Llosa's term (see Chapter 3.2.5), is present in Argentina and crime fiction is partly criticized as a genre that advances the commercialization of Latin American literature.

Further factors that have an impact on the publishing market have also been taken into consideration in this study. Among them are local reading habits and the impact of the state on the literary market. As discussed in Chapter 3.1.4, the growth of the publishing market and the emergence of popular fiction is related to the growth of an English-reading middle class in India. One of the basic differences between Argentina and Chile are the different readings habits. Low rates hamper a small market like Chile's while book consumption is significantly higher in Argentina (see Chapter 3.2.4). Crime fiction is generally associated with a lower class readership, but has actually been consumed by different social classes. For the recent production in all three countries, a middle class scope can be observed and it reflects in the employment of middle class protagonists, concerns and settings. At the same time, this middle class scope reflects a larger focus on the growth of the middle class and its consumption practices in the Global South as discussed in Chapter 2.1.2.

The state's capacities to levy taxes or restrict imports also have a significant impact on the market and literary production, as observations on the Argentinean and Chilean market have revealed. Furthermore, different degrees of institutionalization of the genre have been addressed: A growing reception of the genre in magazines and newspapers as well as on literary festivals stands out while the presence of crime fiction from the Global South is only slowly growing in academic research. Referring back to the example of the two critics who dismissed crime fiction stories of the Indian writer Shashi Deshpande because they were "not serious works" (see Chapter 4.1.1), this thesis has shown a multitude of authors that have engaged with the genre. Thus, it cannot be ignored by readers, critics or publishers. This thesis thus advocates including sources like magazines or literary festivals in India and Latin America in academic research to keep track of recent developments in the market.

### 6.3.2 Power Imbalances in the Global Literary Field

The exploration of the quantity and diversity of crime fiction series by Indian, Argentinean and Chilean writers raises the question why no phenomenon comparable to the popularity of the ‘Nordic Noir’ or the ‘Tartan Noir’ has occurred so far. The terms refer to an international, almost global circulation and popularity of Scandinavian and Scottish crime fiction, respectively. However, the growing production of crime fiction in India, Argentina or Chile has not resulted in a stronger awareness or concerted marketing efforts to promote these corpora for a wider international audience. Looking at the divergences and dependencies that characterize the global book market is helpful to understand why the rise of crime fiction production in the Global South has so far mainly been a local phenomenon. Preconceptions and stereotypical views of Indian and Latin American literature or the dominance of a few canonic writers continue to have an impact here, but do certainly not suffice to explain the phenomenon entirely.

The fact that Europe or the US still maintain a position as gatekeepers for the access to a global market certainly limits the circulation of authors from the Global South and affects the format and content of works that are published internationally. The importance of these gatekeepers – and the lack of South-South (literary) connections to counter their influence – challenges the idea of crime fiction as a free-floating genre on the global market. The disconnect between the amount of local production and the scarcity of Indian, Argentinean and Chilean crime fiction novels that circulate internationally highlights significant power imbalances in the global literary market. These disconnects particularly obstruct a South-South exchange and circulation. Books usually have to pass through the centers of literary production in the absence of connections or infrastructures that would facilitate the translation and publication of Chilean books in India and vice-versa to give just one example. The low levels of exchange between neighboring countries in Latin America already points at the magnitude of this disconnect. In spite of the globalization of the publishing industry (or maybe because of it), an exchange between Latin

American countries largely functions via publishing houses in Spain. Initiatives like the publication of coeditions by small publishing houses in different countries or the work of the UK-based publisher Bitter Lemon Press which focuses on foreign crime fiction provide steps to counter the dominance of multinational publishers in the global market (3.2.4). Nonetheless, these initiatives remain small phenomena that cannot counter the profound imbalances that shape the global publishing market.

In the 2009 edition of *How to Read World Literature*, David Damrosch claimed that

many works find multiple publishers at the Frankfurt Book Fair, an annual event not tied to any former imperial capital, and these and other books fairs have become venues where publishers and agents from around the world look for exciting new work wherever it can be found. (2009: 106)

While this is certainly true for multinational publishers based in the Global North, the Frankfurt Book Fair is certainly not a neutral ground that is accessible for all publishers. Particularly smaller ones in the Global South lack the resources to participate in such events. Curiously, in the 2017 edition of the same book, Damrosch also mentions the Jaipur Literature Festival besides the Frankfurt Book Fair as historically unburdened events in which “publishers and agents from around the world” participate (Damrosch 2017: 158). Besides the fact that the Jaipur Literature Festival has meanwhile turned into an established literary event, it remains highly dominated by English language publishers. Latin American writers, for example, are notoriously absent in the event. *Vis-à-vis* these far-reaching inequalities and inconsistencies, it is surprising that the effects of power imbalances on the dissemination of crime fiction in the global literary market are hardly addressed in recent. Crime fiction is certainly a global genre with a view to its worldwide consumption, production and reception in accordance with recent publications of Stewart King (2014), Andrew Pepper (2016) or Louise Nilsson et al. (2017). However, I strongly advocate to also take into consideration disparities in the Global South

to get a more holistic picture of the 'glocal' character of crime fiction. Beyond the by now well-researched global circulation and reception of Scandinavian authors, it is essential to also take into consideration recent Indian or Latin American works which give evidence of the simultaneous processes of homo- and heterogenization or the creative adaptation of crime fiction in the face of its global adaptation. Crime fiction is of course just one example here, but it shows how the inclusion of new corpora of works does more justice to the diversity of local literary production in post-millennial India and Latin America than the adherence to established globally circulating Indian or Latin American forms like magic realism or post-colonial writing. Studies often focus on the emergence and the trajectory of the novel or particular works by canonic writers that can certainly be allocated at the pole of literary fiction. The focus on genre fiction, by contrast, expands this narrow corpus and adds a wide span of works from new authors or books published by smaller presses. Due the lack of attention paid by academics to popular fiction from the Global South, a large corpus of interesting books is missed out on.

While crime fiction has been an excellent case study for this thesis, it is by far not the only glocalized genre: Other genres such as romance or – especially in India – mythological thrillers outsell local crime fiction novels by far and commonly dominate the bestseller lists. However, crime fiction was chosen for this comparative study due to various reasons. These include the parallel growth of crime fiction after the turn of the millennium in India and Latin America or its previous status as an unsuitable genre vis-à-vis its longstanding circulation. Furthermore, the tension between the pseudonorm that continues to have an impact on the genre and the constant modification of characteristics to do justice to the claim of realism made crime fiction an interesting genre to scrutinize in this thesis.

### 6.3.3 What Can Be Gained in Comparing: A South-South Approach

While a South-South comparison is the scope of this thesis, it does not draw back on any direct literary connection or exchange between India and Latin America; it is rather the disconnect between both regions and parallel developments in terms of the circulation and adaptation of the genre that provide a basis for a comparative analysis. India, Argentina and Chile can therefore be understood as case studies to explore three scenarios. The regions were selected based on the observation of the growing presence of crime fiction which challenged former notions of the unsuitability of the genre in the respective countries.

Despite the lack of connections between India and Latin America, the extent of parallel developments in terms of the publishing market or the modification of the genre in both regions is striking. The growth of crime fiction novels for a local market and the emergence of new publishers that seek to counter the growing influence of multinational ones are just two examples of similarities in the market development. Differences in terms of marketing practices or the status attributed to crime fiction could nonetheless be identified in both regions. Parallels show in phenomena such as the rise of women detectives, the emergence of the police procedural as well as the avoidance of closure or a solution. Due to numerous connections and parallels, a division of the analysis into an Indian and a Latin American part has been omitted. Fundamental differences between both corpora could not be detected. Small differences show, for example, in the depiction of Indian politicians as thoroughly corrupt and power-addicted while a link between the political sphere and criminals is much less present in the Latin American works. The only specific local figure identified was the criminal spiritual advisor in Indian crime fiction. Otherwise, it is in both regions mainly a unity in diversity that stands out. These parallels in terms of the reception and modification of the genre are not based on any kind of mutual exchange, but they relate to a similar position of both regions in the global (publishing) market: In India as well as in Latin America, the pseudonorm of the classic British crime

fiction novel as well as the wider corpus of globally circulating works have an impact on the reception and production of the genre. As has been shown in the analysis, authors but also reviewers often connect a novel to generic predecessors by using intertextual references. Writers from both regions draw on similar strategies to react to the perceived unsuitability of the genre in the Global South.

This comparison might provide a useful starting point to revise the study of literary production and publishing markets in other regions of the Global South and to pay more attention to local developments. The application of the term Global South as a framework suggests a similar position of literary markets in the Global South that are in a comparable situation of constraints and dependency due to power imbalances in the Global Literary field. Having said this, I do not suggest that publishing markets and genre fiction in other regions of the Global South necessarily follow the same trajectory. The scarcity of studies on local literary developments in the Global South would make it difficult to sustain or reject such a claim in the first place. The point here is rather that literary production in other areas of the Global South is similarly influenced by asymmetric power relations and the growing influence of multinational publishers which significantly – but not exclusively – shape a country's position in the global literary field.

A comparative approach that addresses the similarities and differences between two or various areas of the Global South can help to highlight these disparities, but also to identify different strategies to counter these imbalances. In this thesis, the comparative approach has also been helpful to underline the growing economic impact of areas of the Global South which is no longer only seen as a place of poverty and exploitation that is dependent on the Global North, but also as a place of production and consumption. Changing consumption practices and the impact of media and technology shape particularly the growing middle class and lead to a glocalization of products to match consumer tastes in distinct places. A South-South comparison is very insightful to go beyond common binary views. The publishing industry is a prime example here as the division between canonic authors

who write for a foreign audience vis-à-vis local writers who do not have a market does not adequately capture the complexities and possibilities of the publishing industry. Adopting the concept of the Global South as a framework might not help to advance the search for a new epistemological approach from a Southern perspective that many researchers who work with the concept pursue (see Chapter 2.1.2). However, the concept gives insights into the interconnectedness of global and local phenomena that shape different regions of the Global South today. Overall, this thesis can therefore be seen as a contribution to the study of the impact of processes of globalization on literary production and literary markets. It underlines the simultaneity of different global and local factors that lead to distinct and partly opposing outcomes in different places rather than to a homogenization of markets, forms and contents. Looking at the particular example of crime fiction, I have pointed at the complexities of current developments and highlighted the 'glocal' character that determines the circulation and adaptation of crime fiction at various levels.

To conclude, "Glocalizing Genre Fiction in the Global South" has shown that glocalization processes have an effect at various levels of the adaptation and modification of genre fiction in the Global South. The emergence of the genre connects to glocal phenomena in the publishing market such as the engagement of globally operating publishers to produce local titles. This reflects that globalization processes have an impact on the production and dissemination of literary forms. Additionally, the genre and its conventions themselves are glocalized to match local contexts or authors' efforts to mirror social anxieties and to create realistic or locally credible narratives and protagonists. On a third level, a glocalization can also be observed on the level of the content as the genre is frequently instrumentalized for social criticism and gives insights into the consequences – particularly the downsides – of processes of globalization on a local level. The analytical chapters have certainly made clear that writers from the Global South have produced interesting crime fiction novels which use and challenge the genre in multiple ways, create unique local characters and exploit the genre for various purposes. On all three levels, processes of standardization

and homogenization occur simultaneously with heterogenization and diversification. The specific manner in which regions of the Global South like India and Latin America are affected by power imbalances, but also by changing power relations with complex and conflicting outcomes, leads to heterogeneous outcomes. Overall, it is this inter-relatedness of market forces, social context and form that made crime fiction an interesting object of examination. This thesis gave a comprehensive insight into large corpora of works that do not exist in isolation from the global popularity of crime fiction, but have so far received little attention by authors who conduct research on crime fiction as a world literature or as a global genre.

## 7 Annex: Summaries of the Corpus Novels

### 7.1 Indian Novels

#### **Madhumita Bhattacharyya's *The Masala Murder* (2012)**

Madhumita Bhattacharyya started her female-headed Reema Ray series in 2012 with *The Masala Murder* and has since published two more novels of the series, *Dead in a Mumbai Minute* and *Goa Undercover* in 2014 and 2016. *The Masala Murder* is a coming-of-age story of the young private investigator Reema Ray, who is based in Kolkata and primarily investigates infidelity cases. Besides, she has a job as a food critic for a magazine, which also serves as a cover-up for the principal case she investigates in *The Masala Murder*. Reema looks into the death of the spice importer Mr. Agarwal, a cunning businessman, who suddenly died under suspicious circumstances. Reema is not formally hired to investigate in the case, but she gets involved by accident when she researches for articles on Kolkata's restaurant scene. While talking to Agarwal's widow and several restaurant owners, Reema is surprised to find out that nobody laments his death. Reema is also pleasantly surprised to repeatedly run into Shayak, a mysterious businessman, until she suspects that he could be the murderer. Once it becomes clear that he is also a private investigator, they start to cooperate. Furthermore, Reema's former boy-friend Amit contacts her to look into the kidnapping of his wife Aloka, daughter of an important industrialist who was against the marriage. Even though Reema initially feels these two high-profile cases are beyond her means, she manages to solve both of them. After seeing a video that shows the 'kidnapped' Aloka at a house that is familiar to Reema, she finds her and reveals that the couple itself had staged the kidnapping to obtain ransom money as Aloka's father who had used his power to make sure all other paths are closed for the couple and left them without money. Reema also reveals that Mr. Agarwal was killed by the restaurant owner Vineeta: He had not only stolen her business idea, but also forced her to have sex with him as she

could not pay her debts. Reema does not show any compassion with the culprits who are consequently arrested by the police. As both cases are closed and Reema has proven her detective skills, Shayak offers her a job at his security company in Mumbai and invites her for a date on his boat in the final scene of the book.

### **Vikram Chandra's *Sacred Games* (2007)**

Vikram Chandra is an Indian writer based in the US who teaches creative writing in Berkeley and is best known for his novel *Red Earth and Pouring Rain* (1995) and his compilation of short stories *Love and Longing in Bombay* (1997). In one of the stories titled “Kama”, he introduces police inspector Sartaj Singh, who also appears in *Sacred Games*. His 900-page crime epic made noise before publication for Chandra receiving a 1.000,000 USD advance, but the sales figures did not come up to the publisher's expectations. Nonetheless, *Sacred Games* has been translated into various languages and the US online stream service Netflix released the first season of a series based on the novel in 2018.

The novel oscillates between two main perspectives; the life and work of the Sikh police officers Sartaj Singh in Mumbai recounted by a third-person narrator alternates with the narration of the rise and fall of the underworld gangster Ganesh Gaitonde. This part is told by Gaitonde as a first-person narrator to Singh, but he recounts his life posthumously as he kills himself in the first chapter, and so Sartaj is unable to hear him. Gaitonde has mysteriously returned from a lasting stay in exile and shot a young woman, along with himself. Furthermore, he stayed in a nuclear safe house, therefore his death initiates to a larger investigation on whether there are any indications for a nuclear bomb in the city. The main plot alternates with various subplots that deal with the daily activities of the police in Bombay as well as five insets that depict the life stories of a multitude of side characters. The setting and time span from pre-independence India via the post-independence India-Pakistan conflict to Mumbai in the 1990s. The latter setting is the main scope of the narrative and depicts a moment when the political climate in the city is marked by the rise

of Hindu nationalism and clashes between Hindus and Moslems. Chandra's novel is a huge, almost unmanageable network of connected stories, spaces in and beyond India and such a vast crew of characters (with various nicknames) that an index of persons precedes the novel.

Gaitonde's chapters recount his rise to one of the city's most important underworld bosses who also cooperates with Hindu Nationalist politicians and constantly negotiates with the country's intelligence service. At some point, he gets in touch with Jojo, a young businesswoman who runs an escort service, among other activities, and with a guru called Guruji, whom he starts to trust blindly and whom he consults about any decision-making process. This dubious guru repeatedly talks of the *Kaliyug*<sup>120</sup>, which refers to a circular understanding of time. As the current era will end soon, Gaitonde has the nuclear-safe bunker built for himself. Guruji disappears and as Gaitonde is unable to find him, he eventually becomes desperate. He locks himself in the bunker with Jojo and shoots himself and her after calling Sartaj Singh to tell him his story.

Sartaj's narrative parallels Gaitonde's in the sense that both fear the possibility of a nuclear bomb in Bombay. Like Gaitonde, he also tries to find Guruji which accounts for the main investigation of the novel. Besides Sartaj's investigation about Gaitonde's death, he is confronted with a multitude of other cases that he has to solve along with problems in his private life. In contrast to Gaitonde, Sartaj eventually manages to find Guruji. But to obtain information about Guruji's whereabouts, he has to make a deal with Iffat-bibi, the aunt of another underworld gangster and is forced to betray his boss by staging a scandal. Due to this scandal, his boss has to resign and commits suicide shortly after whereas Sartaj is promoted for this investigations.

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120 As already mentioned in Chapter 4.4.1, Kaliyug is translated and explained in the Glossary of Sacred Games as the "Age of Kali" or the 'Age of Darkness'. The fourth and last of the yugas that pass in the eternal cycle of existence. The Kaliyuga is the most degenerate and morally lacking of the four periods, and ends with pralaya, the great destruction" (Chandra 2008: 33).

### **Kishwar Desai's Simran Singh Series**

Kishwar Desai started her career in television and journalism before turning to fiction. In 2010, Desai won the Costa Book Award for the best first novel for her first Simran Singh novel which has been translated into various languages. She has so far published three novels (2013; 2014) of the series which all depict different instances of victimization of women in India and thereby also meet the *zeitgeist* in the context of the debates in India and abroad about the safety of women in post-Nirbhaya<sup>121</sup> India. Desai lives in India and the UK and is one of the most visible and active promoters of Indian crime fiction. Together with Namita Gokhale, she founded the Crime Writers' Association of South Asia in 2014, organized the Delhi Crime Writers' Festival and participated in festivals such as the Quais du Polar in Lyon, France.

#### ***Witness the Night* (2010)**

In her novel *Witness the Night*, female detective Simran Singh looks into the case of the fourteen-year-old Durga in Jullunder, Punjab, who is accused of having killed her thirteen family members – even though she herself was found raped and beaten at the same place. Simran is a 45-year old social worker from Delhi who grew up in the same town as Durga and is therefore asked by a befriended police officer to look into the case. The narrative oscillates between Simran's investigation as a third-person narrative and diary entries written by Durga as a first-person narrative. The reader is aware of the content of these entries, which discuss the night of the murder and recount Durga's life story as a long story of deprivation and oppression by her family, but Simran only gets access to them at a much later stage of the investigation. Not only does Durga refuse to talk to Simran, also the town residents and the police are not interested in solving the case. Instead, she is confronted with conflicts from the past after meeting old rivals. Simran feels ever more rejected, finds her guest room searched and her internet connection cut of and handles the stress by consuming alcohol and ciga-

<sup>121</sup> The Nirbhaya case (meaning 'fearless' in Hindi) refers to the 2012 Delhi gang rape where a student Jyoti Singh was raped by six men on a driving bus in South Delhi. The case as well as the prosecution and trial have received media attention well beyond India and led to large protests about the safety of women in India.

rettes. She gets some hints from Binny, a daughter-in-law of the family who returned to the UK before the massacre. Simran also meets two men in the course of the investigation who initially seem very dubious: One is Harpeet, the tutor of Durga's sister Shrada who mysteriously disappeared after she got pregnant, and whom Simran suspects to be implicated in the murder as he was also in touch with Durga before the massacre happened. The other person is Gumrit, a journalist who supports Simran eventually to confront the corrupt police officer Ramnath who is interested in the family's house and has Durga transferred to a lunatic asylum to get her out of his way. Threatening to give their findings to a television channel, Gumrit and Simran can blackmail him and arrange a deal: They will keep quiet about their knowledge if all charges against Durga are dropped. In exchange, Ramnath can buy the house under market price – a solution which Simran calls “the negotiations of a normal Indian life” (ib.: 282). Simran takes Durga as well as her long-lost sister Shrada, who she has been able to find in the meanwhile, to Delhi and puts them up in her own house.

### ***The Origins of Love* (2013)**

Simran Singh's second case in *The Origins of Love* (2013) deals with the until recently unregulated surrogacy business in India – which has meanwhile been banned for non-Indian couples – as well as the highly polemic topic of embryonic stem cell research. The novel is thus rather complex and includes various 'stakeholders' involved in different settings in India and the UK. Moving back and forward between different places in a time span of nine months and varying narrative perspective adds to the complexity of the novel.

As a social worker, Simran supports poor surrogate mothers in a surrogacy clinic in Delhi and is asked to investigate a difficult matter: A baby called Amelia has been born with HIV and the surrogate mother disappeared after giving birth. The infection cannot be explained and the parents, an English couple called Susan and Mike, die shortly after that in a car accident. As their address in the documents turns out to be wrong, the clinic doctors do not know whom to contact and ask Simran to go to London to find family members of the baby. In

London, Simran meets Edward who is a sperm donor and she suspects him to be the baby's father and HIV positive. At the same time, she feels very attracted to him. This story alternates with the everyday life in the surrogacy clinic, the delivery of a free surrogacy baby for the female Health Minister who wants to save her political dynasty and the intervention of a Custom's Officer at Mumbai Airport. The latter opposes European embryos to be brought into India to be implanted in Indian women's wombs. However, his moral scruples are just a pretext to make money as he sells these embryos to semi-legal stem cell research clinics. In the course of a long and cumbersome investigation, Simran can reveal the mystery around the HIV-infected baby and uncovers many of the semi-legal activities. However, she also finds herself in a moral dilemma as she finds out that the baby Amelia was created with Susan's egg and the frozen sperm of her gay son who died of HIV. The virus was apparently not removed from the sperm thus the baby was HIV positive. Furthermore, Simran realizes that somebody had tampered with the Susan's documents to cover up this mistake. Back in India, she also uncovers that eggs are deviated to a secret stem cell research clinic in Mumbai. She sees a patient there who turns out to be her first love who supposedly died in a plane crash. However, he has been under treatment ever since and is now improving because of the stem cell treatment. After her return to Delhi, Simran blames one of the clinic's doctors, Dr. Ganguly, to play a double game: He runs his own surrogacy clinic on the side, where he secretly conducts treatments with embryonic stem cells. She suspects that he might be involved in the accident of the parents to get rid of them. Simran sneaks into the Ganguly's clinic where she finds the missing surrogate mother who is injured after an accident. While Simran is able to take a picture and to records a confrontation with Dr. Ganguly, it is difficult for her and the doctors to convict him. Instead, Ganguly denies any wrongdoing and blames the other of baring the way to medical progress. Since any measures against Ganguly would also affect their own clinic, Simran comes up with another solution: Since the Health Minister owes them a favor for receiving a baby, she wants her to revoke Ganguly's license and to raid the clinic as the only way that can prevent him from continuing his highly questionable research.

***The Sea of Innocence (2014)***

The third novel of Kishwar Desai's Simran Singh series, is predominantly set in Goa on the backdrop the protests after the Delhi bus gang rape in December 2012. The novel alludes to the murder of Scarlett Keeling, a 15-year-old British girl raped and murdered in Goa in 2008. The trial was still going when Desai wrote the book, but in the meanwhile, two accused were acquitted in 2016 and the murder remains unpunished (Marszal 2016). In the novel, Simran is asked by Amarjit, a befriended police officer from Delhi, to look into the case of Liza, a 16-year-old British girl who disappeared in Goa. At the center of the investigation, narrated by Simran as a 1<sup>st</sup> person narrator, are several videos of the disappeared girl which Simran receives from Amarjit as well as from anonymous mobile numbers and which for example show Liza being molested by several man. Simran realizes that different agents might be involved in the murder or have an interest in keeping Liza's faith a secret, thus her inquiries fall on deaf ears. From beach vendors to Liza's sister Marian, everybody seems to have a double life. The investigation also establishes a dichotomy of Goa's attractive beaches or its nightlife and the problems of real estate speculation, drug traffic and corruption that the tourist business comes with. Simran realizes that the politician Vinay Gupta and his relative Curtis D'Silva might be involved in this case and many other incidents which involve young women that are unable to free themselves from the grip of these influential men. As in the previous investigations, Simran meets Dennis, a Goan scriptwriter who lives in Mumbai. She not only starts an affair but he also supports her investigation. However, she feels permanently threatened, monitored and is drugged in one occasion. Simran is eventually able to solve many questions which she summarizes in a wrap-up in the last two chapters: She finds out that Liza was brutally raped by Vinay's assistants and that her dead body was brought back to the UK accompanied by Curtis under a false name. The videos were shared by Vishnu, a Goan friend of Liza's who was framed by Vinay's men and sent to prison falsely for molesting Liza. After Vishnu's release, he and Marian shared the videos he took a year ago and they spread rumors that Liza has returned. Simran realizes that she was not hired to find Liza but rather to find out who is behind the videos. It remains unclear

whether there is enough evidence to incriminate Vinay for the murder. Dennis shares a video of Vinay and Liza on social media which is widely condemned in India and abroad.

### **Salil Desai's *Killing Ashish Karve* (2014)**

Salil Desai is a writer and filmmaker based in Pune who has so far published three crime fiction novels. Besides his first novel *The Body in the Back Seat* (2011), republished as *Killing Ashish Karve* in 2014, he published *Murder on a Side Street* in 2012 and *The Murder of Sonia Raikkonen* in 2015. The first and the third novel figure two police inspectors, Saralkar and Motkar, who are investigating in Pune, though very few references to specific locations in the city are included in the plot. In *Killing Ashish Karve*, the police inspectors look into the apparent suicide of Ashish Karve, who was found dead on the backseat of his car with his wrists cut. The plot oscillates between a classic British crime fiction novel and a police procedural: The police identifies a series of persons in Ashish's surrounding – a limited in-group – who had a motive to kill the victim and raise suspicion in the course of the investigation by using false alibies and bringing up new secrets and conspiracies. Ashish's business partner Shreekant, for example, thought about hiring a local gangster to threaten him because Ashish had discovered that his partner had embezzled money from their company. Saralkar realizes that Ashish had a well-kept secret that connects to his murder, which made him the black sheep in the family. In the course of the plot, Ashish's office assistant Suchitra is also found dead in her apartment, which adds another apparent suicide to the case.

The police officers eventually find out that Ashish was homosexual and HIV positive. Nonetheless, he had given in to his mother's pressures to get married. This substantiates the suspicions that his wife Sanjot and in a final interrogation she admits that she killed Ashish together with her father since he refused to get divorced and insisted on having full custody for their son. What made Sanjot agree to the murder was not her own difficulties of being trapped in a loveless marriage, but the fear that her son might also 'become' gay if he was raised by Ashish. Sanjot and her father also killed Suchitra as she tried to extort

money since she knew about Ashish's homosexuality. The motive of the murder consequently arises in the context of the problematic relation to homosexuality prevalent in Indian society. While the murder is completely solved, the case raises doubts about guilt and justice in the context of rigid social norms that victimize not only persons with a different sexual orientation, but also their family members.

### **Tarquin Hall's *The Case of the Love Commandos* (2014)**

Tarquin Hall is a British journalist and writer who is based in India and initiated his Detective Vish Puri series in 2008. Hall's series has been successful within India as well as abroad and has been translated into various languages. The novels generally deal with cases that look into problematic issues in contemporary India such as the unorganized diamond trade in Gujarat or the lack of rights of domestic servants in India. Due to the international success of the series, Hall is often compared to the British writer Alexander McCall Smith, the author of a Botswanan crime fiction series. Furthermore, an extensive website and blog about/by the fictional detective Vish Puri has been set up with background information about the cases, the detective's team or his eating habits (for the link, see Bibliography, section "Websites"). Vish Puri advertises himself as 'India's Most Private Investigator' and is supported by a team that includes Facecream, a Nepali girl who is an expert in disguising herself; Tubelight, who has wide contacts to the criminal world and Flush, a computer expert and hacker.

*The Case of the Love Commandos* (2014) is the fourth novel of Hall's series in which Vish Puri supports the Love Commandos. The real-existing NGO supports couples who are prosecuted by their families that are against their children's relationship. Vish Puri is called to Agra where the Dalit boy Ram Sunder has disappeared from a safe house while the NGO volunteers free his Brahmin girl-friend Tulsi Mishra could be freed from her family. The case takes on bigger dimensions when the dead body of Ram's mother is found close to his village and the suspicion falls immediately on the Tulsi's father, an important industrialist. Facecream's undercover investigation reveals not only

how the Dalits are deprived of their rights in Ram's hometown but also that a medical institute has taken blood samples from Dalits for research purposes for a small compensation.

During Puri's investigation in Agra and Lucknow, he finds out that Hari Kumar, a rival detective, has also been hired to look into the case. The forbidden love story, however, loses importance, as Vish Puri discovers a connection between Baba Dhobi, a Dalit politician and chief minister of Uttar Pradesh and his Brahmin opponent, Dr. Pandey. At some point, both worked in the same hospital as Ram's mother. While Puri is constantly followed and threatened by goons, he nonetheless manages to stage a conviction scene with the help of his opponent Hari Kumar. The two politicians admit to Ram that Dr. Pandey raped his mother a long time ago and that she was killed by Baba Dhobi's men to keep this a secret. Due to the blood test of the research institute, Ram had a proof that Dr. Pandey was his father. Since Flush had equipped Ram with a secret camera, Puri is later able to spread the politicians' confession via the media and the police is forced to act and investigate against them. Ram and Tulsi are finally able to marry, but need to live under a witness protection program. Puri's investigations furthermore oscillate with an additional one carried out by Puri's mother, Mummyji, during her pilgrimage in Kashmir: Due to her persistent following and spying on a suspicious couple, the police is able to arrest them for a temple robbery and she receives wide media attention while Puri's success is ignored.

### **CK Meena's *Dreams for the Dying* (2008)**

CK Meena is a feminist writer and journalist who has published three novels with Dronequill, a small publishing house based in Chennai. *Dreams for the Dying* (2008) includes many elements of a crime fiction novel: It deals with the murder of Uma, a young woman living in Chennai, who is murdered in her home. The subsequent investigation and multiperspective narrative structure brings to light that Uma secretly led a parallel life: Besides her live-in relationship with a university teacher in Chennai, she had a husband in Kerala. The novel thus connects various places in Tami Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka and dis-

cusses the differences in terms of language and habits as well as existing stereotypes between the different states of South India. The dedicated police make a great effort to find the murderer who posed as a waiter from a hotel close by, but they do not find any leads. A topic repeatedly brought up here is the lack of computerization of evidence and of interstate police cooperation hampers the investigation. Uma's violent death quickly loses importance as her double life is scandalized by the media and shocks her partners as well as the police officers. The police officer Magesh tries to analyze Uma's diary for clues that might lead to the murderer; however, he eventually realizes that he had chosen a wrong approach and failed. The murder is technically solved in the end: Out of pure coincidence, the contract killer and the woman who hired him are identified, but if and how they are arrested is not even mentioned. Instead, the revelation that Uma had a love affair with a third man and was pregnant by him comes to the fore.

### **Anita Nair's Inspector Gowda Series**

Anita Nair is an Indian writer based in Bangalore who has published various (often women-centered) novels like *Ladies Coupé* (2001) and won several awards. In 2012, she published the first book of her crime fiction series featuring Borei Gowda, a male police inspector investigating in contemporary Bangalore.

#### ***Cut Like Wound* (2012)**

In *Cut like Wound*, Inspector Gowda's new ambitious colleague, Sub Inspector Santosh, and other police officers chase a serial killer who has strangled several men in Bangalore with *manja* threads – glass-coated strings used for kite competitions. As the title suggests, the strings leave cut-like wounds on the victims' necks. A woman called Bhuvana appears to be behind the murders, but her identity remains unknown until the end. Gowda suspects at an early stage of the investigation that a woman might be the killer or at least involved in the crimes. He thinks the murder series connects in some way to the household of the *corporator* (real estate developer) Ravikumar, who is called Anna. A group of eunuchs frequent Anna's house where he lives with his brother Chikka. Their mother venerated Angala Parameshwari, the

goddess of wrath, which had an impact on the brothers. Anna feels that the goddess regularly comes to him and he celebrates this with a special ceremony. The difficult life of transgender people in India is a topic that runs like a red thread through the entire novel; Gowda and Santosh for example visit a eunuch motherhouse to question its inhabitants. Furthermore, Gowda meets a photographer who invites him to inaugurate a photo exhibition on transgender and also the often embarrassing or disturbing activities of eunuchs on the street to earn money are frequently brought up.

Gowda's private life plays an important role in the novel: He has trouble to connect with his wife Mamtha and his son Roshan, who live 200 km away. He also starts an affair with his former love Urmila and gets to know new sides of Bangalore with her. Otherwise, Gowda is unhappy about his appearance and his performance as a police officer; he does not advance in the investigation and often drinks alcohol. Gowda and Santosh are convinced that the murderer will step out on the night before a religious holiday, St. Mary's Feast. Santosh sees a woman leaving the corporator's house and follows her; but in the end, it is the woman who asks him to join her. She takes Santosh to an old factory site and knocks him down. When she is about to kill him, Anna arrives at the site that he acquired recently and finds his brother Chikka dressed as a woman. The brother confesses that he takes victims to the same room where he was abused by an older man as a child, but later derived pleasure from these encounters. Out of guilt, he tried to get rid of the man – the first *manja* threat victim. Chikka claims that a goddess tells him to dress up as a woman and to kill men. Chikka shoots Anna and when Gowda arrives shortly after that, he claims that he killed Anna because he was the series killer. Santosh is brought to hospital and not only survives, but also recorded the conversation on his phone.

### ***Chain of Custody* (2016)**

In Nair's second Borei Gowda novel, *Chain of Custody* (2016), Gowda and his team investigate several cases related to child trafficking which connect to a rather complex plot network. Different threads start to

come together when the lawyer Dr. Rathore is murdered. The murder has already occurred before the beginning of the narrative and the discovery of the corpse is described in a prologue. Part I then returns to nine days before the murder and recounts a child trafficking investigation; part II reconnects with the Prologue and deals with the events that happen after the murder. The plot overall includes various examples of child abuse and trafficking, but also depicts the dynamics in Gowda's team. Besides, the troubles in Gowda's private life remain an important topic: He is generally shaken by the changes in the city and the crimes he is confronted with on a daily basis. Gowda continues to be disillusioned about his family situation and has trouble to establish a connection with his son. He continues his affair with Urmila, though the private and the professional spheres overlap continuously: Urmila for example works for an NGO for child trafficking and Gowda is personally confronted with the topic when his maid's daughter Nandini disappears.

The plot includes various subplots that depict various instances of human trafficking. One story deals with Rekha, a college girl who is persuaded by her boy-friend Siddharth to spend an evening with a man for money. She unsuspectingly becomes an escort girl and meets the lawyer Dr. Rathore who is not interested in a physical relationship with such a young girl. The meeting was arranged to placate him by Pujary, the private assistant of the MLA<sup>122</sup> Papanna. After the meeting, the lawyer resigns from the planned business deal with the MLA, but stays in touch with Rekha. Another sequence recounts the arrival of three young boys who are brought to Bangalore by Krishna, a faithful follower of the Pujary. They are stopped by the NGO against child trafficking for which Urmila (Gowda's love affair) works. However, two boys can escape with Krishna and are given to the lawyer Dr. Rathore for household work. Later, they are sold by Krishna to a factory as he needs to raise money.

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<sup>122</sup> MLA is the acronym of Member of Legislative Assembly, a politician who is elected as a representative for a specific electoral district.

The main plot, however, evolves around the disappearance of Nandini. The 12-year-old girl is kept in brothel, but is spared for a special party of a mining businessman who likes young girls. When Krishna sees her and falls in love with her, he tries to save her. However, Pujary refuses to let her go as he needs her to please the mining businessman. Disillusioned, Krishna calls the NGO and tells them about the brothel. Therefore, Nandini can be freed in the same night when the lawyer is killed. During the investigation, another 12-year-old girl from Mumbai and a boy are found by chance as Gowda and his men raid an abandoned flat used by traffickers.

The murdered lawyer lived in a gated community where CCTV and entry checks are common, therefore Gowda's superior Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Vidyaprasad considers it an open-and-shut case. Among the persons who visited the lawyer on the night of his death are Krishna as well as Pujary and his wife, who sits in a wheelchair. Even though the couple's alibi is questionable, Gowda eventually hears from Vidyaprasad that Krishna has been arrested after he confessed that he committed the murder. Gowda, however, does not believe Krishna and is convinced that Pujary's wife Gita killed the lawyer with a blunt object. He concludes with because of the angle of the blow revealed in the post-mortem report. He manages to interrogate Krishna who tells him the truth: Krishna saw the murder when he went into the lawyer's house to steal money and was later called by Pujary to clean up fingerprints at the crime site. Krishna himself suggested the false confession and he thinks this will give him eternal power over Pujary. Gowda therefore theoretically knows that the Pujary's are involved in multiple crimes, but his hands are tied and he cannot arrest them. While this leaves the police team disillusioned, it appears that the last word has not been spoken: In the novels' epilogue, two team members talk to a crime journalist of a Kannada<sup>123</sup> newspaper about the case and suggest that Pujary might not get away scot-free.

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123 Kannada is a Dravidian language that is mainly spoken in the state of Karnataka, of which Bangalore – officially called Bengaluru since 2006, is the state capital.

### **Kalpana Swaminathan's Detective Lalli Series**

Kalpana Swaminathan is a surgeon based in Mumbai who has published children's books, short stories, non-fiction and crime fiction novels with Penguin India. She writes partly alone and partly in collaboration with Ishrat Syed under their pen name Kalpish Ratna. She has so far published five Detective Lalli novels whose latest novel *Greenlight* came out in 2017. She often sticks to classic fiction formulae; her first Lalli novel *The Page Three Murders* published in 2006 resembles a British murder mystery. It occurs in an isolated country-house in Mumbai where a limited number of persons are spending the weekend, among them Lalli as the detective figure, but also the murderer. Lalli is often presented as the Indian avatar of Miss Marple, but the old lady detective is actually a retired police officer and lives in Mumbai with her 'adopted niece' Sita, who functions as her side-kick and narrator of the stories.

#### ***The Monochrome Madonna* (2010)**

In *The Monochrome Madonna*, Lalli claims halfway through the investigation that murder is about 'pure crime', while the dead body is merely "the opening gambit" (Swaminathan 2010: 242). The novel initiates when Sita is called to help by an old friend, Sitara. When Sita arrives at her flat, she is first of all surprised to see an edited print of the Sistine Madonna with Sitara's face hanging on the wall – and secondly by a dead man lying on the floor. She finds Sitara drugged, but even after the effect wears off, she continues to behave in a weird manner, Sitara refuses to meet her own husband Vinay and claims that she knocked the man down. She leaves a diary for Lalli in which she recounts how she found "variety items" from different women kept like trophies in a suitcase and bit by bit starts to consider her husband Vinay to be a serial killer. As Vinay is now also a suspect of the murder, even he himself gets ever more convinced that he might actually be a schizophrenic serial killer and confides in police inspector Savio. Lalli reveals that Sitara used to work for an NGO for women before and was once threatened by the husband of one woman. It turns that this husband was Sanat Varma, a man involved in any kind of small crime and the victim in Sitara's house. Meanwhile, Sitara claims to be in a

psychiatric clinic to be safe from her husband, but as Lalli reveals in the final chapter, she was actually hiding in her cottage outside Mumbai with Ramona, a girl she met at Lalli's place. In a kind of showdown, Lalli stages Vinay's suicide; to confront Sitara his body is hanging from the fan when she returns home and Lalli and Sita observe that she approaches the body and puts Ramona's earring in his pocket. Then they take Sitara to Lalli's home for a final showdown and conviction. Lalli has found out that Sitara had a double-life and worked for the 'Variety Club', an escort service, run by the murdered Sanat Varma. Lalli also reveals her motive: "You did it all to find out how far you could go" (ib.: 238) together with Vinay, but since he refrained from murder, she killed him herself and made her husband believe he was a serial killer. She does not even show remorse when she is confronted with his apparent suicide. Lalli also observed how Sitara tried to suffocate Ramona in the cottage so that she could later pin the murder on Vinay. However, Ramona's bed had also been prepared by Lalli and Ramona was not inside. At that point, Ramona calls and Vinay appears alive at the meeting. In a final statement, Vinay admits that he tried to create Sitara as his Madonna to have something he could believe in, though in fact he was always aware of the emptiness inside her.

### ***I Never Knew It Was You* (2012)**

*I Never Knew It Was You*, Swaminathan's fourth Lalli novel was published in 2012 and deals with a rather complex case which dates back to the 1980s and confronts Lalli with the limits of her crime solving skills. The case recounts three different stories of children rejected by their families for choosing the 'wrong' partner. It sets out with Sita running into Anais, an old acquaintance from school, at the airport. Anais carries a cardboard box that she hands over to a woman called Mrs. Katarkar. The latter expects her son, but when she instead receives his ashes, she first leaves the box with Sita and then later throws the ashes into a gutter. After accompanying her home, Lalli asks Lily, a young informant, to keep an eye on the woman. She finds out that her son migrated to Australia and walked out on his parents years ago. From a later conversation, Lalli deduces that her son was homosexual and HIV positive and therefore the mother rejected to take care of him.

Lalli is asked by Aaftab Shiraz to find his disappeared niece who turns out to be Sita's acquaintance Anais. She was rejected by her Moslem family for marrying a Christian man and is only in touch with Aaftab. After his early death, she turned into a glamorous working woman. Sita and some police officers check her house in a semi-slum area and later find her dead body strangulated with a pink nylon cord in a river close by. The murder brings Lalli back to an older unsolved murder series which started in the 1980s. Not only Savio's dog fell victim to it, also Lalli was attacked once herself with a nylon cord. While Lalli managed to find the killers who executed the murders, she has never been able to catch the *rassiwalla* (Hindi for rope maker) or wirepuller who instructs them. The third case that plays a role here dates back to the 1980s as well, when Lalli saved Maybelle Pereira, a Catholic girl who had been imprisoned by her family for falling in love with a Muslim boy – Aaftab Shiraz. However, while she was recovering, her dead body was found on the train tracks where she apparently committed suicide. Lalli's investigation reveals that Maybelle is also believed to have committed suicide as well as her sister Lucy who could not handle to see her locked-up, but actually both were killed by their parents with a pink nylon cord.

A topic that comes up repeatedly during the investigation is a diamond called Sada Suhagan. Lalli is frequently asked if she is wearing such a gem. It turns out that the Sada Suhagan is made from the ashes of a human being and a macabre business. A contract for the creation of the gem is made with a company called Immortals while the person is still alive. Several persons are so interested in the gem that Lalli wonders whether they might be willing to speed up the process. While searching for Anisa's murderer, Lalli finds out that Aaftab follows a *jyotish*<sup>124</sup>, a spiritual advisor who is also the mastermind behind the company Immortals. Aaftab produces the gold settings for the necklaces as Lalli observes. Lalli reveals that he was afraid that his wife would find out about Maybelle or the gem business and asked the *jyotish* for advice.

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124 A *jyotish* roughly corresponds to an astrologer; Jacobsen et al. elaborate on the term which translates as "knower of the (celestial) lights" (2015: 217).

He had Maybelle killed with a nylon cord. The *jyotish* later advised Aaftab to kill Anisa who was also working for Immortals and knew too many of his secrets. While Aaftab can be convicted, the *jyotish* as the wirepuller remains free and can continue his activities. A shared motive for committing the crimes here is the concern about family integrity and the wish to punish rebellious family members which makes persons receptive for the *jyotish's* easy solutions.

### **Vikas Swarup's *Six Suspects* (2009)**

Vikas Swarup is an Indian diplomat and writer who is best-known for his novel *Q&A* (2005), on which the movie *Slumdog Millionaire* is based. His 2009 novel *Six Suspects* provides an example of an Indian crime fiction novel that has been widely published outside India and has been translated into several languages. The structure of the novel alludes to a classic crime fiction novel and the 27 numbered chapters are organized in the following divisions: Murder, Suspects, Motives, Evidence, Solution and Confession. *Six Suspects* deals with the investigation of the murder of Vicky Rai, a son of a politician who was accused of having shot the waitress Ruby Gill in a crowded bar. After his acquittal, he is shot at a party which he hosted to celebrate this occasion. Swarup's novel is clearly inspired by the highly polemic Jessica Lal case: In 1999, Manu Sharma – a politician's son – shot the bartender Jessica Lal in a crowded bar in front of dozens of witnesses. Nonetheless, he was initially acquitted and only sentenced in a second trial in 2006 after numerous protest campaigns (Bhadra/Khan 2014: 122f.).

The crime fiction novel does not involve a detective figure, but is instead framed by various newspapers and TV reports with an investigative function. In the first chapter, columnist Arun Advani summarizes Vicky's trial, the shooting at the party and the arrest of six suspects. The following chapters go back in time and recounts the background stories of these six suspects who all had a motive to kill Vicky. Among them is Mohan Kumar, a highly corrupt retired politician who suddenly believes he is Gandhi and protests against corruption in contemporary India. While he used to have a good relation with Vicky

before, he is now a thorn in his flesh. The second suspect is the actress Shabnam Saxena who feels molested by Vicky, but gets into trouble after her assistant teams up with her double and both run away with all her money. When her sister is then raped in her hometown, she finds and kills the rapist. In this emergency situation, she is convinced that only someone as influential as Vicky can help her. A tribal called Eketi from the Andaman Islands is also among the suspects who has been looking for an important stone that had been stolen from his tribe. Together with the Welfare Officer Ashok Banerjee, he tries to retrieve the stone in different parts of India. Banerjee follows his own agenda and wants to revenge the murder of his brother, who was killed by Vicky in a drunk and drive accident. He thus tells Eketi that the stone is with Vicky and makes a plan with him get it back on the day of the party. The fourth suspect is a petty criminal called Munna Mobile who finds a huge amount of ransom money by accident. Suddenly he can afford new clothes and gets access to posh nightclubs. He falls in love with a girl he meets in a club; by coincidence, the girl is Vicky's sister Ritu. When the family finds out their meetings, they beat Munna and lock Ritu up. Both plan to elope on the night of the party, but in the meanwhile it is discovered that Munna stole the ransom money. Since he has to pay it back, he has no money for a new start with Ritu anymore. However, on the party, a movie director eavesdrops on his conversation with Ritu and offers Munna a role as the hero in his next movie. The fifth suspect is a US-citizen called Larry Page who fell for an online fraud and came to India to marry an Indian girl he met online but does not actually exist. The pictures sent to him were of Shabnam Saxena, therefore he stays in India to follow the actress. He starts to work in a call center that belongs to Vicky, but is kicked out after a fight. Before leaving India, he joins Vicky's party when he hears that Shabnam will also be present. The last suspect is Vicky's father Jagannath Rai, the politician who is also involved in all kind of corrupt activities, but gets tired of having to save his son from being legally prosecuted. When he finds his political career threatened because of Vicky's controversial acquittal, Jagannath hires one of their henchman, Mukhtar Ansani, to have his own son shot. Ansani informs

Vicky about this order, who offers him more money if he kills his father instead of him. Ansani, however, vanishes before he can kill anyone as he is the man who is killed by Shabnam after raping her sister.

These complex network of parallel stories dominate large part of the book and in some way always connect to Vicky Rai's ruthless criminal activities. All suspects coincide in the party where they all bring a weapon and have a motive to kill Vicky. All of them are arrested shortly after the murder and the media is taking over to discuss the case in the section called "Solution". In columns by Advani, tapes with Jagannath instructing his son's murder are brought to light. The police meanwhile accuse Eketi of being a Maoist insurgent from Jharkhand and the murderer. Shortly after, he dies in police custody. Advani writes an accusing column to the President of India and the police of their handling of the case since Eketi told him in an interview before his death that he is from the Andaman Islands. Advani's columns alternate with breaking news reports by Barkha Das, who reports about protests after Eketi's death in police custody. The section 'Solution' therefore terminates without the conviction of a murderer. In the last section and Chapter "The Truth", a first-person narrator who does not give his name but could be the columnist Advani admits that he killed Vicky. He came to the party disguised as a waiter and hid a weapon in the sole of his shoe. He confesses to the reader that he committed the murder as a concerned Indian citizen who was tired of the lawlessness of people like Vicky and hopes that the current protests spark a larger protest movement.

## 7.2 Latin American Novels

### **María Inés Krimer's Ruth Epelbaum Series**

María Inés Krimer, an Argentinean writer based in Buenos Aires has so far published three crime fiction novels in Sasturain's series *Negro Absoluto*. Her series features the middle-aged Jewish female detective Ruth Epelbaum based in Buenos Aires and the settings commonly connect in some way or another to the Jewish community in Argentina.

In Krimer's first novel *Sangre kosher* (2010), which has been translated into German and Italian, Ruth Epelbaum traces the modern-day version of the Zwi Migdal, a Jewish prostitution ring that dominated Argentina's brothels at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. What strikes out in her series is furthermore the role of Yiddish which is used for example for family relationships and specific sayings and only partly translated into Spanish. Ruth has a close relationship with her maid Gladys – called *shikse* in Yiddish – whose husband is a police officer. Therefore, she can also contribute significantly to Ruth's investigations. Ruth is also supported by Lola, a transsexual friend who has an extensive network from which Ruth can profit to gather information.

### ***Siliconas express* (2013)**

*Siliconas express*, Krimer's second novel of the series, focuses on the beauty scene and the plastic surgery business in Buenos Aires. The novel is set in large parts in beauty clinics and salons and includes TV reports about plastic surgeries and beauty treatments that detective Ruth sees rather critically. The plot consists of multiple abruptly ending scenes, dominated by dialogues and Ruth's thoughts. Therefore, motivations and explanations regarding the plot and its protagonists are largely omitted or need to be drawn by the reader from dialogues and thoughts. For her second case, Ruth is hired by a man called Katz to find Silveyra, a man who used to work with the famous plastic surgeon Vidal. As a starting point, Katz provides Ruth access to a party at Vidal's house in a country – a private neighborhood – outside Buenos Aires. Through Gladys' husband, Ruth finds out that Silveyra was given a suspended sentence for illegal drug trafficking. Furthermore, Norita, a woman who works at Ruth's favorite beauty salon is a friend of Katz and also of Vidal's son Rafa who apparently gets drugs from Silveyra. At the party, Ruth asks Vidal about Silveyra who warns her not to get into trouble. She also sees her former lover Hugo having sex with the editor of the *Cosmopolitan* magazine at the party and finds her dead shortly after that. This murder does not affect Ruth's investigation in any way. She continues to receive information from Nurita about Silveyra's involvement in a silicon business and a gym where he can be

found. Ruth finds him but also realizes that Katz has kept information from her as there seems to be a link between Silveyra, Katz, Vidal and a TV presenter called Marcia Teresa.

Ruth therefore goes to visit Katz, but finds him dead and just leaves his house. Vidal's wife Sara calls Ruth after their son disappeared and wants her to find him; however, Ruth does not put much effort in finding him. Instead, Ruth makes an appointment at Vidal's clinic where she sees a girl who does not look like a typical client. She draws some conclusions and goes to a casino boat in Puerto Madero where she meets the TV presenter Marcia Teresa and Silveyra. The two murders are solved in this conversation: He admits that he operates with drugs in breast implants smuggled by Paraguayan girls. He also reveals that the editor had to die because she asked too many questions about the plastic surgeries. Marcia tells Ruth that Silveyra does everything for her and even agreed to kill Katz. As she starts to make fun of him, he shoots Marcia.

Later, Nurita provides Ruth with the computer password as she also used to work at Vidal's clinic. Ruth returns to the clinic and finds data of foreign girls who had their breast implants removed in the clinic, but is caught by Vidal. As Ruth reveals in the last chapter, Vidal then carried out a liposuction on her and removed almost all her fat. At a critical moment, his receptionist returned, set off an alarm and saved Ruth from a life-threatening situation. The clinic is shut down later on because clinic waste was found in the normal bin. Vidal manages to get away and goes to Switzerland for a workshop while his wife commits suicide.

### *Sangre fashion* (2015)

In *Sangre fashion*, the third book of Krimer's Ruth Epelbaum series, the detective investigates in the fashion business in Buenos Aires by looking into the designer and model business as well as into the working conditions of those who produce the designer clothes in sweatshops. At a fashion show that Ruth attends, the model Bárbara is killed and her twin sister Tamara disappears. Shortly after that, Ruth is hired

by Eva, a manager of Tamara's model agency, to find the disappeared twin sister. Ruth's friend Lola provides her with information and tells her that the twin sister planned to open a shop in La Salada, a large market for counterfeit designer products in Buenos Aires. Ruth reports to Eva that Tamara went out with the son of an industrialist, but she is increasingly suspicious of Eva's motives to hire her. She later receives a call from Tamara herself who asks her to accompany her to a house where they also stumble upon the dead body of a designer's assistant. The next day, Ruth meets the journalist Ariel Meyer who has written about the working conditions of sewers in Bangladesh. Ruth's maid Gladys also talks to her about the exploitation of Bolivian sewers who are held in slave-like conditions in sweatshops in Buenos Aires. Ruth then goes to the workshop of a fashion designer and finds people working in similar conditions in the backrooms. Ruth continues her investigation and visits the textile industrialist Jaime Lapidus whose son Martin allegedly had an affair with the victim Bárbara. Jaime admits that he supported Bárbara financially since he was happy that his gay son showed interest in a girl. Shortly after that, Ruth comes to know that Martin committed suicide though the reason remains unknown. At the funeral, Ruth meets the twin sister Tamara who is in disguise as she does not want to be recognized. Ruth goes to Tamara's apartment. Tamara makes a very fragile impression on Ruth, but her maid Gladys is highly suspicious of her.

Later, Ruth locates an illegal workshop in a suburb of Buenos Aires but when she reaches it, she finds it has recently been abandoned by the workers. Inside, she finds Eva's dead body and leaves. The next day, Gladys tells Ruth that the workshop has been searched by the police and that Eva's corpse has been found. The workshop is supposed to belong to Jaime Lapidus, but since it is later revealed that it actually belonged to Eva, he is not prosecuted or sentenced. Gladys suspects Tamara to be the murderer of her sister. In a final scene, Gladys tells Ruth that she checked Tamara's phone when Ruth brought her to her apartment. With the help of a GPS tool, Gladys has managed to find out that Tamara was at the fashion show where Bárbara was killed. Since they

are monozygotic twins, they have the same DNA; thus her involvement in the murder cannot be proven. Ruth concludes that since there is no evidence to convict Tamara, it is better to leave a case unsolved.

### **Flaminia Ocampo's *Cobayos criollos* (2015)**

Flaminia Ocampo is an Argentinean writer and scriptwriter based in New York whose novel *Cobayos criollos* was published in 2015 by the crime fiction series Negro absoluto of the Argentinean publishing house Aquilina. In *Cobayos criollos*, an unnamed female private investigator from New York with Argentinean routes is asked to come to Buenos Aires to investigate the murder of the US-American Kathy Gateway. Kathy used to work for a US pharma company and disappeared after an event she organized in a luxury hotel. She invited psychologists and patients that prescribed and tested a new antidepressant called Zexed. A topic that is addressed in the backdrop of the novel but gains significant presence in the course of the plot are the dubious activities of globally operating Big Pharma companies and the highly controversial issue of drug testing. The title *Cobayos criollos* alludes to the 'creole guinea pigs' that take part in drug tests. The patients here, however, are not destitute victims, but affluent patients from Buenos Aires' upper class which generate high profits for the company.

A week after Kathy's disappearance, her dead body appears in the River Plate. It turns out that she was shot, but eventually died of a respiratory arrest due to an overdose of legal drugs found in her stomach. The investigator travels to Buenos Aires under the cover of a journalist. While she emphasizes her Argentinean routes, she is treated like a foreigner. The detective has trouble to advance with the investigation of the murder. Her main leads are videos and voice recordings from the night of the event that Kathy herself had had installed to supervise the conversations from a secret cabin. The detective also meets various participants who were present at the event. Among them is Leonora Zeller, a patient who took the antidepressant and whose gun disappeared on the night of the event. Besides her, the detective's efforts to meet suspects generally remain unanswered, and while she can uncover several intrigues and affairs, there are no real leads to the murderer.

The detective feels threatened: her hotel room is searched, somebody pushes her on a busy street and she almost falls into an elevator shaft. Eventually, she can make sense of the events of the evening and the activities at a youth clinic run by the doctors Reynold and Degues Royoa. She finds out that the patients of the youth clinic are ‘double guinea pigs’ of the pharma company who provides drugs to the clinic and also of the sect Scientology who finances the clinic. The detective also resolves parts of the case, for example she finds out by watching the video that Leonora had her revolver with her at the event and sees in the video that Kathy herself took the revolver out of her handbag. She also realizes that a police officer an event manager and the hotel’s public-relations associate are in cahoots together and got Kathy drugged. Overall, the detective shows little interested in solving the case and arresting the culprits. Instead, she emphasizes that her role is to write a final report about her findings and she then returns home. The information is thus passed on to the police and she advises them to check a blood spot in Dr. Reynold’s office in the youth clinic and he is later on arrested for the murder.

### **Sergio Olguín’s *La fragilidad de los cuerpos* (2012)**

Sergio Olguín is an Argentinean writer and journalist, who has published several novels such as *Lanús* (2002) or *El equipo de los sueños* (2004), which have been translated into various languages. He has also edited anthologies, more notably in this context *Escritos con sangre. Cuentos argentinos sobre casos policiales* (2003) which includes crime fiction stories by contemporary Argentinean writers. In 2012, he published the first novel of his Verónica Rosenthal series, *La fragilidad de los cuerpos*, depicting a young female journalist investigating in contemporary Argentina. The second and third part of the series, *Las extranjerías* and *No hay amores felices* appeared in 2014 and 2016; none of these crime fiction novels have been translated into English until date.

In *La fragilidad de los cuerpos*, Verónica initiates an investigation about the effects that suicides and accidents have on conductors of commuter trains in the Greater Buenos Aires region. She reveals very questionable policies which led to the suicide of a conductor who killed himself

after various fatal train accidents. During the investigation, Verónica comes across a macabre betting game: Young boys from poor neighborhoods are convinced to stand on the tracks while the train is approaching and intend to jump off as late as possible. The narrative oscillates between various protagonists; besides Verónica's perspective, the plot is advanced by *el Peque*, a 10-year-old boy who joins a local football club. At the club, young boys are offered 100 pesos to participate in a competition by the trainer Rivero who recruits boys for the train competitions via the club.

Verónica's private life is an important second scope of the novel as she starts an affair with a married conductor, Lucio, and gets very attached to him. She frequently requires help from Federico, a young lawyer who works at her father's office who is in love with her. He frequently supports her investigation with information and logistics. Verónica finds out that several boys have died during the train competitions but literally finds all doors closed to advance her investigations as the victims' families were convinced to move away. She finds out that the competition is part of a larger network of criminal activities which lead to the criminal Juan García who went underground years back. The network includes the Ministry of Housing as well as a group of contract killers who are hired to eliminate persons that threaten García's activities. Verónica meets Rafael, a former barman of the football club who got suspicious of Rivero. He gets Verónica in touch with *el Peque* and his friend who are supposed to participate in the next train competition. Meanwhile, García offers Verónica a deal to provide her with documents to uncover a scandal that involves the Ministry of Housing if she drops the investigation of the train competitions in exchange, which she rejects. In a kind of showdown, the contract killers are sent to Verónica's house to kill her and Rafael. She can prevent this by running her car into them. For the final competition shortly after this incident, however, Verónica arrives too late and finds out that Lucio has been shot by one of Rivero's men when he tried to catch one of the competitors. Verónica is devastated after that and starts to write her article about the events. She offers García not to mention him in her article if he provides her with details about those involved in

the train competitions. Rivero and other persons involved are arrested and the article she publishes about the deadly game causes quite a stir. Verónica keeps her promise not to mention García, but she sends her material to a fellow journalist who has been investigating García's activities beforehand.

### **Ricardo Piglia's *Blanco nocturno* (2010)**

Ricardo Piglia (†2017), one of Argentina's most renowned writers and literary critics, was professor of Spanish and Portuguese Languages and Cultures at Princeton. He is widely known for his postmodern novels like *Respiración artificial* (1980), *La ciudad ausente* (1992) or *Plata quemada* (1997) and literary criticism like *Crítica y ficción* (1986). While several of his works at least partly allude to crime fiction, *Blanco nocturno* (2010). He for which he won several awards like the Rómulo Gallegos Award or the Casa de las Américas Prize for the latter novel, which is the one most closely associated with the genre of crime fiction.

In *Blanco nocturno*, the investigating figure is Piglia's staple character and alter ego Emilio Renzi, a journalist of the newspaper *El Mundo* who comes to a village in the Province of Buenos Aires to write about the murder of the American-Puerto Rican Tony Durán. Rumors have it that Durán came to the village because he had an affair with the twins of the founding family of the village, Sofia and Ada Belladona. The twins were born by the second wife of Cayetano Belladona. Cayetano also had two sons, Luca and Lucio, from his first marriage with an Irish woman, who started a car factory outside the village in the 1960s. They later had to close it as the brothers were not able to pay the credit for machines bought in the US due to currency fluctuations. Lucio died a year ago and since then Luca hides in the factory, convinced that he will soon achieve a breakthrough with a new project.

When Tony is found dead in his hotel room, Comisario Croce and the recently arrived assistant Saldías carry out an investigation. The village inhabitants suspect the hotel's night guard, a Japanese called Yoshio Dazai, to be the murderer since both men were very close.

Croce doubts that Yoshio is the murderer and suspects that he has been framed by witnesses who claim that they saw a Japanese men entering Durán's room. Croce finds out that the murder was a contract killing and that a jockey called el Chino killed Durán because he was in desperate need of money to buy a horse. When el Chino finds out about Croce's suspicions, he commits suicide. Croce is on bad terms with Chief Prosecutor Cueto who he claims that Croce stole money from the crime scene. Cueto forces Croce to retire and promotes Saldías.

Croce interns himself in a madhouse while Renzi continues to investigate. Renzi searches the Municipal archive, which displeases Cueto as well as Cayetano Belladona. Renzi also gets in touch with Luca and visits the closed factory plant. He finds out that the plant is about to be confiscated by investors who want to turn it into a shopping mall. Once again, Cueto has a finger in the pie as he is the head of a fake financial consortium that bought the factory's mortgage debt. To pay the debt, Cayetano offered his son Luca undeclared money from his mother's heritage that was stored in a bank in the US. This was the money that Durán brought to the village. Renzi discusses the case with Croce who thinks that Durán was probably murdered to prevent that Luca receives the money. Without the money, the company is about to be confiscated. In a farce trial, Luca is set up by Cueto who says that the family will only get money if Luca confirms that Yoshio killed Durán. Luca affirms this since this is the only way to save the company and Yoshio is found guilty. Afterwards, Renzi thinks about this unsatisfactory solution and develops a new type of crime fiction in which everybody is suspicious and pursued at the same time which matches the characteristics of this case. After Renzi's return to Buenos Aires, he hears that Luca committed suicide since he could not cope with the situation. In an Epilogue, Renzi states that he thinks of Luca from time to time and remembers him as someone who had the courage to follow his dreams.

**Claudia Piñeiro's *Betibú* (2011)**

Claudia Piñeiro is one of Argentina's best-selling crime novelists whose books generally deal with women in contemporary Argentina. Her first novels *Tuya* (2003) and *Las viudas de los jueves* (2005) have been translated into various languages and won awards in Argentina as well as abroad. Her novel *Betibú*, published in 2011, is certainly the one that is most faithful to the general characteristics of crime fiction. A movie adaptation of the novel was produced by Miguel Cohan in 2013.

In *Betibú*, the protagonist Nurit Iscar is hired to write a non-fiction column, a chronicle, for a newspaper about the suicide of the important businessman Pedro Chazaretta who was found dead in his house in a gated community, called *Country* in Argentina, outside Buenos Aires. Nurit, nicknamed Betibú, was once considered Argentina's best crime fiction writer, but turned to ghostwriting after her only love story received bad reviews. For the column, she moves to the same private neighborhood La Maravillosa. She gathers clues that raise doubts about the apparent suicide of Chazaretta which appear as columns in the newspaper *El Tribuno*. Two journalists support her, Jaime Brena and a young journalist only referred to as *el pibe de Policiales* or *el pibe* ('the boy' in Spanish). From Comisario Venturini, a befriended police officer, Brena is provided with first-hand information about the victim Chazaretta and can arrange a visit to the crime scene. One of Chazaretta's friends, Luis Collazo, who also lives in the community is found dead shortly after. Through Facebook, *el pibe* manages to find Roberto Gandolfini, who was also friend with both victims in college. Brena meets him and finds out that two more persons of the original group of college friends died recently. They eventually find the last member of the group, Emilio Casabets, who refuses to talk to Nurit and her team. Casabet's wife later tells Brena and Nurit that Casabets was raped by his friends in college but the crime was never prosecuted. Nurit suspects that Roberto Gandolfini is behind the murders and goes alone to his office in downtown Buenos Aires. She confronts him with her theory that he observed the rape and now takes revenge by having all the friends killed in an unsuspecting manner. Gandolfini neither confirms nor rejects Nurit's theory, but he threatens her indirectly.

Nurit thus decides to end the column and to resort to fiction. She writes a last column which the editor rejects to publish. *El pibe* is disillusioned that Gandolfini cannot be prosecuted and makes sure Nurit's rejected report circulates on Social Media. In the novel's final scene, a TV channel reports that Gandolfini has been murdered in his office. His death thus raises the question whether he was really the wirepuller behind the murder series.

### **Marcela Serrano's *Nuestra señora de la soledad* (1999)**

Marcela Serrano is one of the most important Chilean writers of the 1990s who has published several novels focusing on women since the publication of her first novel *Nosotras que nos queremos tanto* in 1991, for which she won the Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz Prize, to one of her recent works, *Diez mujeres* (2011). Serrano published a crime fiction novel, *Nuestra Señora de la Soledad* in 1999, which deals with a Chilean female detective, Rosa Alvallay. She is hired to find the disappeared crime fiction writer Carmen Ávila by the writer's husband, Tomás Rojas. She disappeared during a stay in the US and nobody has a clue about her whereabouts. Rosa also consults Carmen's crime fiction series hoping to find clues about her abode and finds many autobiographical elements that relate to Carmen's life. Rosa decides to go to Mexico to look for the author, since she lived there before coming to Chile. The stay also means a return to the past for Rosa, who spend some time in Mexico in exile. Another novel confirms that Rosa is on the right track: In *La loba* by the Mexican writer Santiago Blanco, she finds a scene which describes a woman dancing in a bar that strongly resembles Carmen's husband's account of how they met in Mexico. Rosa arranges a meeting with the writer and follows him afterwards to Oaxaca to a particular blue house. In disguise, Rosa makes some inquiries and sees a woman that looks different from Carmen, but Rosa has no doubt that it is the disappeared author who changed her face. Realizing how content Carmen looks in Oaxaca, Rosa gets sad about her own conventional life and returns to Chile. She decides not to solve the case and instead invents her own detective story about what happened to Carmen.

## Elizabeth Subercaseaux' Crime Fiction Novels

### *Asesinato en La Moneda* (2007)

Elizabeth Subercaseaux is a Chilean fiction and non-fiction writer based in the US. While several of her books have been translated, her crime fiction novels are only available in Spanish. *Asesinato en La Moneda* (2007) deals with the investigation of the murder subsecretary of the Interior Ministry and lawyer Mariana Alcántara who is found dead on her birthday in her office in La Moneda. An investigation is carried out by Inspector Cabrales and Julieta Barros who follow possible leads and come across a variety of suspects who might have killed Mariana. The investigators uncover a scandal which involves the Chilean President who put pressure on the Supreme Court not to reopen the Lalo Corrales case. Lalo Corrales might have been sentenced wrongly for serial rape and murder 15 years ago due to Mariana's efforts. They also reveal that Lalo's family hired a dubious detective – only described as the “hombre de la jaqueta gris perla” to pressure on Mariana to reopen the case. Due to incriminating evidence, the President resigns and it turns out that he protected his mentally retarded brother who is the actual murderer. As this scandal unfolds, the search for the murderer of Mariana largely fades in the background due to a lack of any actual leads. Furthermore, it turns out that Lin, the Chinese cook of the Presidential Palace tried to blackmail Mariana who had an affair with Pablo Ariztía, the doctor of La Moneda. As the investigators find out, the detective as well as Lin left notes which disappeared from Mariana's office. The Chinese is eventually convicted as the perpetrator. He remains nonetheless a pitiful convict who wanted to return to China but was heavily indebted and thus decided to blackmail Mariana. When the detectives confront Lin that he was the last person who saw Mariana alive, he eventually confesses that he shot Mariana because she pointed a gun at him in the first place.

### *La última noche que soñé con Julia* (2012)

Subercaseaux' 2012 novel *La última noche que soñé con Julia* is also a crime fiction novel and deals with the disappearance of Julia, a middle-aged woman in Santiago. She recently got divorced from her hus-

band Jonás and started a new life with Luciano Orrego and her daughter from her first marriage. At a party at her new home, Julia disappears without a trace. Luciano's father Pastor, an influential industrialist, asks Ignacio Alberti, a journalist and childhood friend of Luciano, to investigate. Pastor confides a well-kept family secret to Ignacio Alberti: Julia's mother Teresa Montes was a distant cousin of the Orrego family and was raped Luciano's brother Tadeo 40 years back. Afterwards, the father took care of the issue and promised Teresa to support her financially if she refrained from filing a complaint. Teresa died of cancer some years later and Elena grew up with her aunt Marisa. Pastor is afraid that Elena's disappearance might be linked in some way to this secret and therefore does not want to call the police, but hires Ignacio instead. He starts to question family members, but the search does not go quite as planned.

This narrative includes the point of view of different protagonists, including Julia's ex-husband Jonás, who copes very badly with the divorce. Another narrative recounts Julia's love story with Tadeo from her perspective. The rape of Elena's mother soon becomes public knowledge and Tadeo, who is now a politician, has to step down. Ignacio is kicked out from his newspaper after his editor finds out that he was working on the case, but did not publish anything. Inspector González who has meanwhile been informed and Ignacio do not have any leads about Julia's abode. At some point, they interrogate her gardener, who mentions a big hole in the garden that needs to be closed. However, nobody has noticed that hole in the garden after Julia's disappearance. González calls a forensic team and they start to search the garden. At this point, the narrative goes back to the night of Julia's disappearance and recounts the evening from Julia's point of view. Jonás, who was not invited to the party, secretly showed up and talked to her in the garden which leads to a steep terrain. In a fight, he pushes her and she falls down the steep slope at the edge of the garden. Jonás can only retrieve her dead body, which he then buries in the hole in the garden and leaves. The final scene is summarized by Jonás. After Julia's body is found in the garden, the police still have no clues about the

murderer. Jonás is aware that nobody suspects of him since he was not seen at the party. He first decides to confess, but changes his mind and returns home, so that the case remains unsolved.

**Mario Valdivia's *Un crimen de barrio alto* (2015)**

Mario Valdivia is an economist who has self-published six eBooks in Chile. Four of them are crime fiction novels that feature Comisario Óscar Morante who investigates cases in contemporary Santiago. Two of his books, *Un crimen de barrio alto* (2015) and *Tres balas para el diputado* (2015) have so far been published by Planeta Chile.

In *Un crimen de barrio alto*, Comisario Oscar Morante and his team investigate the murder of Clarisa de Landa, a successful businesswoman and part of Santiago's upper-class society who has been murdered in her apartment in the Barrio Alto, a rich part of Santiago. The novel sets out with Morante wondering about the odd pose and expression of the victim. Clarisa's maid Ana points out that several very valuable paintings are missing, but does have any leads on who could be the perpetrator. Ana is afraid that the police might suspect her nephew Carlos who committed various crimes in the past. The police find out about Ana's connection to him and focus on hunting Carlos. Morante and his team follow different leads and find out that Clarisa had a secret lover. A search for the paintings comes to nothing as nobody has offered them for sale in Chile or abroad. Morante gets increasingly frustrated with the investigation as he does not make any progress. His team starts to interrogate employees at the Banco Comercial Popular de Chile where Larisa used to work. The boss personally hired Clarisa for the Marketing department as well as for other tasks since he suspected that his top employees were embezzling funds. The murder of Clarisa might thus connect to larger criminal activities within the company, and the boss eventually hires an external company to check the bank's financial transactions. However, nobody can be incriminated for Clarisa de Landa's murder. The team wonders where the disappeared paintings could be hidden. A warehouse with rentable storage spaces comes to their mind. Morante has the owner announce that they warehouse had a water damage and the police start to supervise the warehouse. This

strategy pays off and Morante is able to convict and arrest Juan Carlos Urmeneta, the lawyer of the bank, for the murder of Clarisa when he comes in to check the paintings.

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- Betibú* (2014). Movie. Directed by Cohan, M. Production: Haddock Films, Instituto Nacional de Cine y Artes Audiovisuales (INCAA), Televisión Federal (Telefe), Argentina.
- Bobby Jasoos (2014). Movie. Directed by: Shaikh, S. Production: Born Free Entertainment, India.
- “Brigada scorpion” (1997). TV Series. Directed by: Eyzaguirre, J.; Necochea, C. Production: TVN, Chile.
- “Caminho das Índias” (2009). TV Series. Directed by: Schechtman, M. Production: Rede Globo, Brazil.
- Cidade de Deus* (2002). Movie. Directed by: Meirelles, F.; Lund, K. Production: O2 Filmes, Brasilien, Frankreich, USA.
- “Columbo” (1968–2003). TV Series. Directed by: Saltzman, P. Production: Universal Television; Studios USA, USA.
- “Crime Patrol” (2003-present). TV Series. Directed by: Iyer, S. Production: Sony Entertainment Television India, India.
- “CSI: Crime Scene Investigation” (2000–2015). TV Series. Directed by: Zuiker, A.E et al. Production: Jerry Bruckheimer Television; Alliance Atlantis; CBS, USA/Canada.
- “Disparos en la biblioteca” (2012). TV Series. Directed by: Mucci, M.; Ferrante, P. Production: Centro de Producción e Investigación Audiovisual (CePIA), Argentina.
- “Heredia y Asociados” (2005). Movie. Directed by: Arredondo, D. Production: TVN, Chile.
- La virgin de los sicarios* (2000). Movie. Directed by: Schroeder, B. Production: Canal+, Les Films du Losange, France/Colombia.
- Mardaani* (2014). Movie. Directed by: Sarkar, P. Production: Yash Raj Films, India.
- No One Killed Jessica* (2011). Movie. Directed by: Gupta, R. K. Production: UTV Spotboy Motion Pictures, India.

- Pink* (2016). Movie. Directed by Roy Chowdhury, A. Production: Rashmi Sharma Films, India.
- PK* (2014). Movie. Directed by: Hirani, R. Production: Rajkumar Hirani Films; Vinod Chopra Productions, India.
- “Profugos” (2011–2013). TV Series. Directed by: Larraín, P.; Jakubowicz, J. Production: Fabula Productions; Efe3, Chile.
- Rahasya* (2015). Movie. Directed by: Gupta, M. Production: UVI Film Production Private limited; Viacom18 Motion Pictures, India.
- “Savdhaan India – India Fights Back” (2012–present). TV Series. Directed by: Agrawal, G.; Gavandi, P.; Chauhan, V. Production: NA Media, India.
- Shaheb Bibi Golaam* (2016). Movie. Directed by: Gupta P. D. Production: Friend’s Communication, India.
- Slumdog Millionaire* (2008). Movie. Directed by: Danny Boyle  
Production: Celador Films; Film4, United Kingdom.
- Talvar* (2015). Movie. Directed by: Gulzar, M. Production: VB Pictures, India.

This study offers a comprehensive overview of post-millennial Indian (English) and Latin American crime fiction. Drawing on genre theory and the field of literature & globalization, Neele Meyer examines the history of crime fiction and traces similar developments in the book markets in these largely disconnected regions.

In an analysis of the characteristics of the genre, the author studies the works of 17 writers from India, Argentina and Chile focusing on aspects like detective figures (particularly women detectives or journalists), the plot structure, intertextuality, settings or the impact of media and technology. The analysis shows that authors consciously choose the globally circulating genre and modify it as “social commentaries” to accommodate economic or social transformations. Neele Meyer challenges the idea that the global presence of the genre leads to homogenization and argues that the global circulation of crime fiction in the Global South is a ‘glocal’ phenomenon that reflects the heterogeneous outcomes of processes of globalization.

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