DOMESTIC TYRANTS: CHANGING POLITICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF MOTHERHOOD IN THE CONTEMPORARY SPANISH NOVEL

by

JULIA CORINE BARNES

(Under the direction of Stacey Dolgin Casado)

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the origins and continued presence of the literary figure of the tyrannical mother in the works of five contemporary Spanish novelists. With the advent of Enlightenment contract theory, and the exclusion of women from the public sphere, misogynistic representations of mother-figures acquire a political connotation. The tyrannical mother figure is used by progressive writers to represent their conservative political enemies, because coding these conservative ideologies as feminine casts into doubt their legitimacy. Even in the works of women novelists, the tyrannical mother figure continues to have influence as a political tool. This dissertation analyzes novels of Ana María Matute, Ana María Moix, Almudena Grandes, Josefina Aldecoa and Lucía Etxebarria in order to show the continued use of the figure and how more recent novelists have attempted to contest the stereotype.

INDEX WORDS: Motherhood, Feminism, Spain, Novel, Tyranny, Dictatorship, Ana María Matute, Ana María Moix, Almudena Grandes, Josefina Aldecoa, Lucía Etxebarria

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

CHAPTER

1 INTRODUCTION 1

2 REJECTING THE MOTHER: TYRANNICAL MOTHERS AND GRANDMOTHERS IN *PRIMERA MEMORIA* (1959) AND *LA TRAMPA* (1969) BY ANA MARÍA MATUTE AND *JULIA* (1969) BY ANA MARÍA MOIX.....39

3 RECUPERATING THE MOTHER: THE RECOVERY OF HISTORICAL MEMORY IN *MALENA ES UN NOMBRE DE TANGO* (1994) AND *EL CORAZÓN HELADO* (2007) BY ALMUDENA GRANDES.....74

4 REINVENTING THE TYRANNICAL MOTHER: NEW REPRESENTATIONS OF MOTHERHOOD IN NOVELS BY JOSEFINA ALDECOA AND LUCÍA ETXEBARRIA 109

5 CONCLUSION.....143

6 REFERENCES 147

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

When Federico García Lorca finished *La casa de Bernarda Alba* in June of 1936—one month before the Nationalist uprising that would lead to the Spanish Civil War and 36-year dictatorship of Francisco Franco—he created a quintessential character in Spanish letters. Bernarda Alba, with her phallic cane, intransigent attitude and domineering rule of her household, has become the measuring stick against which all other representations of authoritative women characters are compared. Conversely, Bernarda's youngest daughter, Adela, represents sexual, personal and political freedom in her rebellion against an autocratic mother. Critics often see in the work two parallel interpretations: one, a critique of women's sexual repression in García Lorca's native Andalucía (Burton 260; Busette 179). The other—bolstered by the play's serendipitous concurrence with the Nationalist coup and García Lorca's assassination by Nationalist troops—casts the play as political allegory (Galerstein 187-89). In this light the battle between Bernarda and Adela serves as a prelude to the battle between Nationalist and Republican Spains that takes place from 1936-1939. Miguel Martínez, for example, argues that "el tema central no es [. . .] *La Casa* del título, sino la gran *Casona Nacional*, España" (59). Bernarda represents the ruling oligarchy, while the other characters represent "el pueblo español, en lucha perpetual contra la tiranía" (61).

One might think that a discussion about the portrayals of contemporary Spanish women writers should hardly be introduced via a pre-war male playwright; yet a quick examination shows *Bernarda Alba* to be an obvious touchstone. The authoritarian mother and grandmother

figures in *Primera memoria* (1959) and *La trampa* (1960) by Ana María Matute, and *Julia* (1969) by Ana María Moix, have begged comparisons to García Lorca's ubiquitous character. Catherine Davies says of Matute's doña Práxedes, for example, that like Bernarda Alba, she is a patriarch "more ruthless than a man" (189). Linda Gould Levine likewise compares Julia's controlling and overly-devout grandmother to García Lorca's archetype (307). Like García Lorca's play, these novels also offer metaphorical political readings pitting their young female protagonists—representations of progressive, or at least non-conformist, ideologies—against older mother figures who represent conservative ideologies and the Francoist regime in particular. This analysis argues not that Moix and Matute's characters derive from García Lorca's, but rather that all three works participate in a long-lived literary phenomenon.

This dissertation explores the representation of this literary phenomenon—the tyrannical mother stock character—in the works of five contemporary Spanish women novelists. They are: Matute and Moix's previously-mentioned novels, Almudena Grandes's *Malena es un nombre de tango* (1994) and *El corazón helado* (2007), Josefina Aldecoa's Civil War trilogy *Historia de una maestra* (1990), *Mujeres de negro* (1994) and *La fuerza del destino* (1997), and finally, Lucía Etxebarria's *Un milagro en equilibrio* (2004).[1] Each of these works recognizes the prominence of the tyrannical mother. Moix and Matute's novels, for example, use this character to the exclusion of other representations of mothers. Even as Grandes attempts to question and transform images of Spanish motherhood, she continues to use the tyrannical mother in her political critique of Francoism and conservative politics. Finally, Aldecoa and Etxebarria replace the tyrannical mother with more nuanced understandings of motherhood and politics.

These works also examine the Civil War and ensuing dictatorship. *Primera memoria* and *Julia* examine the conflict metaphorically, using the *Bildungsroman* genre to show the war and

the regime's impact on young women protagonists and on society. Others, like Aldecoa's trilogy and Grandes's *El corazón helado,* tackle the war issue literally, by using memory to reexamine the conflict. *Malena es un nombre de tango* and *Un milagro en equilibrio* focus primarily on women's subjectivity in the 1990s and 2000s, yet dedicate significant sections to the Civil War and dictatorship. Tellingly, the novels all acknowledge a particular concept of Spanish history, identity and politics called the "two Spains," which I will define momentarily. This dissertation argues that the theme of the Civil War and Francoism, combined with the mental construction of the "two Spains" connect directly to these and previous authors' use of the tyrannical mother figure.

This tyrannical mother figure has many personae: the oppressive mother, the castrating mother, the omnipotent mother, the phallic mother, and the devouring mother. Like Bernarda Alba, she exercises near-total control over her children and often serves as an obstacle in the protagonists' search for autonomy and liberty. Her presence is so prevalent in twentieth-century novels that Katharine Rogers writes: "While previous generations focused on the whore, twentieth century misogynists focus on the devouring mother" (264). Rogers locates the prominence of this mother in Freudian theories that portray mothers as the antithesis of civil society (235-37). This present study intends to add a political nuance to current understandings of this oppressive mother figure. Accordingly, it refers to the character described above as the "tyrannical mother" in order to call to mind the political implications of the word "tyrant" as one who illegitimately usurps political power.[2] This nuance does not detract from much criticism that focuses on this character from a more psychoanalytical perspective; it argues in addition for the importance of ideology and politics in her creation and repeated use. Psychoanalytical understandings of oppressive mothers and political representations of the tyrannical mother are

both related discourses of modernity, and both discourses serve to exclude women from politics. Particularly in Spain, the appearance and repeated use of the tyrannical mother character appears in politically progressive texts that adhere to the "two Spains" concept of Spanish history and politics.

The "two Spains" concept of identity is "el mito *qua* relato metahistórico" that "ha recorrido, en diversas figuraciones y semánticas los últimos siglos, de la Ilustración al franquismo" (Arnscheidt and Tous 13). As the name suggests, its posits a bipartite division between an old Spain, parallel to the Old Regime of the Enlightenment, which allies political absolutism, the aristocracy and the Catholic Church, and a new Spain, or New Regime, represented by modernizing and progressive reformers, and increasingly by the political left and laicism. While the Enlightenment in Spain is often considered the origin of the "two Spains" construction, Teresa Ann Smith reminds us that eighteenth-century Spain problematizes this very dichotomy. The liberal reformers often worked with and for the Bourbon kings, casting into doubt the supposed cleft between liberalism and absolute power (5), and many of Charles III's enlightened reforms sought to curb the power of the Church.[3] A case in point is Spain's most famous Enlightenment reformer, Benito Jerónimo Feijóo (1676-1764), who was given official approbation by Ferdinand VI in 1750 (Bolufer Peruga 395). Additionally, the possibility of dividing Spain into two opposed ideologies presupposes a united nation of Spain, which due to the prominence of regional autonomy and regional nationalisms continues to be an anachronistic and overly-simplified construction.

Nevertheless, throughout the nineteenth century, the image of "two Spains" continued to gain traction. Vicente Cacho Viu chronicles the use of the term throughout the century, arguing that it was part of a wider European phenomenon that did not necessarily connote the Cain and

Abel mentality understood in the concept today (49-50). By the period just prior to the Civil War, however, the concept of "two Spains" does assume this diametrically-opposed meaning:

> Pre-Civil War political discourse was peppered with a vocabulary of bloody struggle and exhilarating conquest, legacies both of the Reconquest of Spain from the Moors and of the colonial experience. The image of a broken Spain and of two Spains was habitual in the nineteenth century. [. . .] Spanish history was presented variously as an eternal contest between the orthodox and the heterodox, between Spain and anti-Spain, between the traditional and the modern, between *hispanidad* and *europeísmo*, between Catholic and liberal values. After the Civil War of 1936-1939, such brooding speculations were renewed with greater intensity. (Preston *Politics* 30-31)

In the twenty-first century, despite attempts stemming from the political transition (1975-81) to project a de-politicized, united Spain (Arnscheidt and Tous 13), the "two Spains" understanding of history still holds sway. It is especially prevalent among those who want to reintroduce the politics and history of Spain's Second Republic (1931-1939) to official cultural discourse. Because Matute, Moix, Grandes, Aldecoa and Etxebarria all participate in the discourse of the "two Spains," this present study acknowledges the importance of this construct even as it recognizes the construct as just that—a construct, and not a realistic portrayal of Spanish politics and identity.

In spite of the differences in Spain's Enlightenment with other European Enlightenments, the philosophical and political sea change begun in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries gives rise to the division expressed in the "two Spains" concept that extends throughout Spanish modernity. Gender becomes an important category of analysis at this time as well, so important that some critics have credited Padre Feijóo with single-handedly introducing "the woman

question" into public discourse in Spain (Smith 17). The appearance of the tyrannical mother as an important literary trope stems from the Enlightenment debate regarding women, rationality and citizenship, and thus deserves extended discussion.

Benito Jerónimo de Feijóo is primarily known today for his 1726 *Defensa de las mujeres* from his *Teatro crítico universal de errores comunes* (1726-1740). In this work, Feijóo defends women's rational equality with men. He comments, for example, that while misogynist writers fault women's moral and physical capacity, "donde más fuerza hace, es en la limitación de sus entendimientos. Por esta razón, después de defenderlas con alguna brevedad sobre otros capítulos, discurriré más largamente sobre su aptitud para todo género de ciencias, y conocimientos sublimes" (326-27). He argues first that women lack access to education, but that this does not equate to a lack of "talento para más" (351). Arguing against Aristotle, he then deduces that there is no relation between physique and intellect, and he acknowledges that women may be physically weaker, "pero no que sus operaciones mentales sean más, o menos perfectas" (370). Feijóo's arguments sparked a polemic between the "ancients" and the "moderns" in Spain, "one in which defenders of intellectual progress looked to Europe as a model, while supporters of tradition feared that foreign influence would contaminate Spanish morals and religious orthodoxy" (Bolufer Peruga 395). In fact, the discussion about women's place in the "modern" world took place on a pan-European level (405). Feijóo read and respected the contract theorists like Locke and Hobbes, and the same ambiguities regarding women that appear in their works appear in his. While Feijóo argues for women's rational capacity, for example, he does not advocate social equality for women, suggesting instead that improved education for women will help them fulfill their domestic duties (399).

Numerous critics have studied the apparent shortcomings of the Enlightenment: specifically, how an ideology that espouses universal human rights and freedoms could simultaneously exclude women, the colonized and other ethnicized people. Carole Pateman's *The Sexual Contract* and *The Disorder of Women* (both from 1989) offer the most sustained and influential critique of Enlightenment and later modern understandings of gender. In her study of the contract theorists—Locke, Hobbes and later Rousseau—Pateman demonstrates how traditional patriarchy, meaning the law of the father, transformed into a modern fraternal patriarchy. The traditional patriarchy, echoed in Freud's story of original patricide, gives way to a fraternal bond among men who defy the traditional law of the father, but intend to maintain conjugal control over women (*Disorder of Women* 42-43; *Sexual Contract* 24-25, 103). Contract theory argues that all people are born free and equal, and that the only legitimate justification for subordination must be because the individual agrees to it (through a social contract) (*Sexual Contract* 39-40). Both the contract theorists and their opponents who espoused absolutism and traditional patriarchy recognized the revolutionary potential of contract theory for women. For if women are born free and equal to men, there is very little reason that they should freely submit to an institution like matrimony that often works against their individual interests. And yet none of the contract theorists, much like Feijóo who argued for women's equality but had no intention of implementing it, really considered extending their political reforms to women. Locke overcomes this problem by separating paternal from political power, creating his famous private and public spheres, and arguing that within the private sphere, men still hold natural power (Locke; *Sexual Contract* 91-93). Regardless of some Enlightenment thinkers' belief in the rational equality of women, they never intended for women to exercise public or political power; nor did they question the hierarchal organization of the traditional patriarchal family.

The universal individual forms the basis of contract theory. Historian Joan Scott demonstrates how the term "individual" as conceived by Enlightenment thinkers simultaneously includes and excludes because "individual" contains two contrasting meanings. An individual is the "abstract, prototypical" human, thereby supporting Enlightenment universalism, but at the same time the individual is a being unique from all others, which undermines this very universalism ("Universalism" 3-4). Therefore, Scott argues that the individual *a priori* contains the concept of other, and especially the sexualized other: "The female was not an individual because of her evident non-identity with the human prototype and because she was the other (whose desire, the desire for whom) confirmed the (male) individual's individuality" (4-5). Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, women are continually cast as the other to men's individualism and rationality and denied access to arenas of public power. Definitions of femininity serve to exclude them from political power.

Pateman analyzes the works of a variety of modern thinkers from Hobbes to Hegel regarding their attitudes towards women and politics. From Hobbes and Locke's initial ambivalence towards women as individuals, she demonstrates a progressing radicalization of attitudes towards women in Rousseau, Freud and Hegel. As shown in chapter 5 of *Emile*, where he treats women's proper education, Rousseau restricts women's roles specifically to the domestic sphere, particularly to child-rearing (Rousseau 263). When women's natural sentiments and emotions are allowed outside of the home, however, the results can prove disastrous to civilization. Pateman documents how Rousseau's restriction of women from the political sphere repeats itself in the works of Freud and Hegel. In *Civilization and Its Discontents,* for example, Freud says the following about women:

> Furthermore, women soon come into opposition to civilization and display their retarding and restraining influence [. . .]. Women represent the interests of the family and of sexual life. The work of civilization has become increasingly the business of men, it confronts them with ever more difficult tasks and compels them to carry out instinctual sublimations of which women are little capable. [. . .] Thus the woman finds herself forced into the background by the claims of civilization and she adopts a hostile attitude towards it. (50-51)

Hegel likewise argues that "when women hold the helm of government, the state is at once in jeopardy" (496; Pateman *The Sexual Contract* 17, 29). Pateman concludes that this trend in excluding women from politics originates in the belief of women's particularity (versus men's universalism). Says Pateman:

> According to Rousseau and Freud, women are incapable of transcending their sexual passions and particular attachments and directing their reason to the demands of universal order and public advantage. Women, therefore, cannot take part in the original contract. They lack all that is required to create and the protection (as Hobbes put it) afforded by the state and law to civil individuals. Only 'individuals' can make contracts and uphold the terms of the original contract. Women are the opposite to the civil law; they represent all that men must master to bring civil society into being. (*Sexual Contract* 102)

Unlike women, men are understood to be capable of sublimating their passions and acting in a disinterested manner, the prerequisite for civil society. Because women lack this ability to suppress their own desires for justice, they represent "a constant threat to social order" (Coole 90).

Pateman's *The Sexual Contract*, which was issued in Spanish translation in 1995, has proved influential among contemporary Spanish feminist philosophers of the Enlightenment. The most influential of these scholars, Celia Amorós, Rosa Cobo and Ana Puleo, are all connected to the *Universidad Autónoma Nacional de Madrid* and to Amoros's seminar on women and the Enlightenment. Cobo, for example, concurs with Pateman about the contract theorists: "Paradoxically, all of the great contractualist authors who proposed freedom and equality as natural rights for all individuals would justify the denial of those political rights for women, either in the name of a feminine ontology inferior or 'different' from the masculine one, or in the name of tradition or political opportunity" (92). Amorós also argues that Enlightenment and later Modern reformers excluded women and colonized people from their definitions of humans who could claim universal rights by ontologically restricting their access to the category of human (110). She nevertheless maintains an optimistic understanding of universality. In spite of excluding women, the Enlightenment also provided a vocabulary which women reformers were able to appropriate and re-signify to legitimate their own liberation (124-25). Specifically, writers like Mary Wollstonecraft and Olympe de Gouges used the analogy with the Old Regime to accuse men of acting the part of the Old Regime against women's reform efforts (119, 124). Amorós argues that the Enlightenment potential of universal human rights can be attained by broadening the terms "universal" and "human" until they include previously rejected groups. Other theorists—Joan Scott, for example—doubts that the ambiguities between universalism and feminism can be so easily reconciled ("Universalism" 1).

Women's exclusion from the political sphere leads to the creation of the tyrannical mother figure. The Spanish anti-reform conservative critics accused the Enlightenment and later modern reformers of being *afrancesados*, or unduly influenced by French influences. The

progressives responded in kind by adopting a stock character—the older, often widowed, irrational mother—and politicizing her. She represents all that they considered backward, reactionary and illegitimate about the Old Regime. Because women were defined as being unsuitable for wielding political power, the representation of a political ideology through a female figure immediately casts doubt on the legitimacy of the power she may wield. Joan Scott comments on this tendency towards gender coding in general:

> Oppositions rest on metaphors and cross-references, and often in patriarchal discourse, sexual difference (the contrast masculine/feminine) serves to encode or establish meanings that are literally unrelated to gender or the body. In that way, the meanings of gender become tied to many kinds of cultural representations, and these in turn establish terms by which relations between women and men are organized and understood. ("Deconstructing" 448)

In this case, the opposition or binary, Man/Reason-Woman/Unreason attaches itself to the discourse of political representation. Negative associations of femininity then can be used primarily to discredit certain ideologies, and conversely further serve to justify the exclusion of women from public power.

The tyrannical mother as a literary phenomenon, then, is a product of Enlightenment and modern discourse about civil society and gender. Authors who utilize it tend to be progressives who want to cast the ideology of the Old Regime in a negative light and question its legitimacy. They accomplish this primarily by gender coding the representation of political ideology. Liberal or progressive representations are coded masculine while conservative ideologies are coded feminine, especially by representing these ideologies as tyrannical mothers. This gendered understanding of politics works in tandem with the “two Spains” concept which

divides Spain into moderns and ancients, religious and lay, rightists and leftists, and now masculine and feminine.

Even progressive works that ostensibly advocate for women tend to use the tyrannical mother figure to portray conservative ideologies negatively. *La casa de Bernarda Alba* may be the most famous example, but it is certainly not the first. Nineteenth-century Spain is replete with examples of progressive or reform-minded authors who use the trope. Leandro Fernández de Moratín's 1806 comedy *El sí de las niñas* is just such a work. It first reads as a proto-feminist work that advocates for women's education and liberty in marital arrangements. Moratín utilizes a strict gender coding in the work, however, showing Enlightenment reason to be masculine in the figure of don Diego and religious fanaticism to be feminine in the figure of doña Irene. Don Diego, through his use of reason, is able to overcome doña Irene's selfish insistence at marrying off her daughter against her will. Kathleen Kish cautions that this play, like others of the period, serves as a "school for wives" (184). Female characters who overstep traditional definitions of womanhood (as wives and mothers) are consistently punished in the drama of the period, while obedient women are rewarded with advantageous marriages (192-94). Julio Prieto Martínez also argues that the work offers a few necessary reforms to avoid more socially-unsettling ones occasioned by the French Revolution. He concludes:

> *El sí* no sólo reafirma la ideología patriarcal dominante en la sociedad de la época (a través de la figura ejemplar de don Diego, modelo de autoridad patriarcal y de "padre ilustrado", sino que se sirve del variado repertorio de estrategias misóginas que una inveterada practica social y textual pone a su disposición de cara al escarnio de una figura femenina (doña Irene), cuya comicidad no es arbitraria o inmotivada (como casi nada lo es en esta minuciosa pieza de relojería neoclásica). (494)

This early example of the tyrannical mother occurs almost simultaneously with the creation of a Spanish national identity occasioned by Napoleon's invasion and the war for independence, as well as the ideological division of this nation into two Spains (Alvarez Junco 22, 35).

Doña Irene is not simply "caprichosa, insensata, mojigata, beaturrona, irracional, [y] capaz de imponer a su hija decisiones absurdas tomadas por motivos egoístas," as Jesús Canas Murillo suggests. Within the play, she represents traditional Spain and particularly the Catholic Church—a fact not missed by the play's censors.[4] Doña Irene is the character most connected to the Church. She has been able to educate her daughter Paquita in a convent thanks to family ties with the Church—family ties that she pathetically mentions at every moment (58-60). Diego and Irene's conversations are loaded with critical humor, and both Irene and the Church are the unwitting objects of this humor. For example, Doña Irene mentions the nuns "Trinidad" y "Circuncisión" making fun of Church naming practices (58). She reveals to don Diego that her celebrated relative, the bishop, actually dies in route to assume his post (59). Regardless, he was writing an eighty-volume autobiography—one for each year of his life. Don Diego's sardonic reaction, "Sí, pues ya se ve. Todo se imprime," puts both doña Irene and the Church in their place (59). Because the play uses a female character to represent the Church, doña Irene becomes not just a bad mother, but a tyrannical one. The critique of doña Irene is not personal, but political.

Benito Pérez Galdós's novel, *Doña Perfecta* (1876), also offers a paradigmatic example of the tyrannical mother at the service of a progressive "two Spains" agenda. As Randolph Pope says of the work that "las antiguas distinciones entre Españas progresista y tradicional, de derechas y de izquierdas, religiosa y laica, todas basadas en una cierta ideología [es] perfectamente representada por Galdos en su *Doña Perfecta*" (66). It examines the problems of

Spanish society of the era which continued to be divided between "New Spain" and "Old Spain." The intolerance and religious extremism of the restored Bourbon dynasty concerned Galdós, and Rodolfo Cardona's description of the resultant political tension is strikingly similar to that of Moratín's day:

> La base del problema surgía de dos maneras diametralmente opuestas de ver el mundo: de un lado estaba la visión europeizada, liberal, con su espíritu igualitario, y que se centraba y estaba encarnada en la metrópolis; del otro lado, la visión tradicionalista, regional de la provincia, aferrada a su primitiva fe religiosa y opuesta, a veces con fanatismo feroz, a cualquier idea nueva que pudiera resultar en cualquier cambio en sus veneradas creencias" (24).

The novel shares several similarities with *El sí de las niñas*; an arranged marriage initiates the plot, for example, but most importantly, the eponymous character parallels doña Irene, only with money and without any of doña Irene's unwitting humor.

Pepe Rey is a young engineer, educated outside of Spain, who has returned to his family's hometown of Orbajosa in order to claim an inheritance and possibly to wed his younger cousin, Rosario. As he falls in love with Rosario, he concedes to the marriage, but his progressive beliefs insult church members and his aunt Perfecta, who controls the local oligarchy. Doña Perfecta and the priests launch a smear campaign against Pepe, who for his part, refuses to back down from his positivist ideas or to withdraw his marriage proposal for Rosario. Ultimately, the priests and doña Perfecta order Pepe Rey's murder, and they are able to pass this murder off as a suicide. Don Diego's optimism that reason will prevail from *El sí de las niñas* is completely absent from *Doña Perfecta*. In this work, the strength and hypocrisy of

the traditionalist camp overwhelm reason, and Pepe Rey's murder shows the extent it will go to maintain power in Spain.

While both sides of this fight are intransigent in their beliefs, the narrative voice clearly sides with Pepe Rey (Cardona 26). The clergy is even more strictly identified with doña Perfecta than it is with doña Irene; many times Perfecta manipulates the priests and other times she allows them to manipulate her. She even interprets the conflict with her nephew in historically Spanish terms of the Spanish Reconquest of 1492 and of a divided Spain: "—Como a los moros—repitió doña Perfecta.—Es cuestion de moros y cristianos" (249). For their part the priests are omnipresent, penetrating at all moments into Perfecta's house, and they are vigilant of all of the townspeople's behavior. Perfecta's informal but effective secular and ecclesiastical controls ally themselves in order to consolidate their power, and they destroy any attempt to curb this power, however reasonable it may be. That Galdós chooses to portray small-town secular authority as a woman, in spite of the fact that local oligarchy of this era would almost certainly be male, shows how much easier it is to discredit an enemy that is feminized.

Along with Galdós, Leopoldo Alas (a.k.a. Clarín) is known as the master of the Spanish novel. His naturalist masterpiece *La regenta* (1884-85) once again utilizes the tyrannical mother figure. Doña Paula, and not the archbishop, ultimately pulls the strings of power in Vetusta, with tragic results. From a notably poor background, Paula astutely studies who has power and money in her society, and she determines that it is the higher ecclesiastics. Blocked from this role herself, she instead installs her son, Fermín, as a powerful Church figure. She easily controls both Fermín and the actual archbishop Camoirán through emotional extortion and intimidation (505, 539). She also directs the lucrative business dealings of the local church, bankrupting men like the drunk don Santos. Like doña Irene in *El sí de las niñas* and *Doña*

Perfecta, doña Paula is a tyrannical mother because she epitomizes corrupt political power in the novel. While *La regenta* boasts an apparent pro-woman agenda because it acknowledges women's sexuality and the injustice of repressing this sexuality, it uses feminine gender coding to critique the Church. This anti-clerical stance, personified in doña Paula, was the main reason that the novel was banned under Francoism.

Progressive authors like Moratín, Galdós and Clarín not only condemn what they consider a backward and oppressive conservatism in Spanish society; they also suggest that the political power that conservatives wield is illegitimate, since mothers, by patriarchal definitions, should not exercise political power. Ironically, these representations of tyrannical motherhood also deny the reality of most Spanish women of the period. While the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Spain witness a curtailing of most women's participation in society, both by law and custom, these representations seem to suggest that in spite of real restrictions, women, through motherhood, continue to garner the most power. Ultimately, representations of the repressive mother serve to justify restrictions on women since without these restrictions the power that women exercise turns tyrannical. These representations of motherhood are overtly political, and their influence casts a long shadow on contemporary Spanish narrative.

While the Spanish Second Republic (1931-1939) is often seen as a moment of liberation for Spanish women, several scholars have actually shown the continued ambivalence of progressive reformers during the Republic towards women. Women as well as men were to benefit from the promised agrarian reforms touted by the new government. Other reforms that would affect women included a push for lay and co-education. From a legal standpoint, Spanish women gained several key rights under the Second Republic. After acrimonious debate, the Republican parliament enfranchised women in October, 1931. Civil marriage and divorce were

two other goals of the Republic, and divorce was legalized in 1932. And in Cataluña, due to the sex reform movement of the anarchists and the medical eugenics movement, the *Generalitat* legalized abortion in December 1936 (Nash "Pronatalism" 161-62). These reforms certainly suggest that the Second Republic would espouse a more pro-woman agenda than the governments that preceeded and followed it.

Historian Mary Nash has successfully argued, however, that it is wrong to read too much into Republican attitudes towards Spanish women. While women gained legal equality under the constitution of the Second Republic, they were far from gaining social equality in general ("Pronatalism" 161). Nash documents, for example, how motherhood was still considered the logical norm and biological imperative for Spanish women, and that advocates for women—both male and female—tended to couch their reform agenda in terms of helping women become better mothers ("Un/Contested Identities" 30-31). This, in turn, demonstrates their concern for Enlightenment-inspired social utility, not individual fulfillment. During the first part of the twentieth century—including the 1920s and 1930s—, religious arguments about women's place in society ceded to medical and scientific arguments that nevertheless reinforced women's primary goal of motherhood ("Un/Contested Identities" 33, 35). Much like the Enlightenment reformers before them, most Republicans viewed reforms for women as necessary to modernize Spain. They did not, however, view full social and political equality as an ultimate goal.

Judith Keene, for example, studies the contentious debate around women's enfranchisement during the Second Republic. She argues that women's inclusion in discussion of Spanish democracy is born from the "New State" model of democracy, which only reluctantly acknowledged the unacceptable contradiction of denying suffrage to vast sections of the population (329). This model of democracy was countered, however by what she calls the

"Latin Model" which viewed women's suffrage suspiciously, assuming that women would vote conservatively and support the Catholic Church (333).[5] While suffrage was granted to women in 1931, the major leftist delegates abstained from the vote, while ironically the Catholic Church supported women's suffrage (336). Even proponents of women's rights, like Victoria Kent and Margarita Nelkin, argued against enfranchising women, based on a belief that women are controlled by the Church and would vote conservatively. Of the three female deputies in parliament, only Clara Campoamor supported the immediate enfranchisement of women, for which she was blacklisted (341).[6] A sincere commitment to women's autonomy and welfare cannot be demonstrated by the Republican left. The ambivalence of and distrust toward women, demonstrated by the delegates of the Second Republic, are best understood as a continuation of attitudes towards women initiated during the Enlightenment, the moment that propels the rift between the "two Spains."

The progressive works cited above, as well as the liberal Second Republic's attitudes towards women, contribute to what Celia Amorós labels the uneasy relationship between the political left and feminism (109). While several of the works claim pro-woman agendas, their use of the tyrannical mother figure as a trope to discredit conservative ideology betrays their true ambivalence towards women. Taking into account Teresa de Lauretis's claim that when men make feminist arguments, it is often to forward their own agendas, this is perhaps not to be unexpected (21). This study, however, focuses on novels written by (and some would argue for) contemporary Spanish women. Perhaps more surprisingly than their male counterparts, these women authors also utilize the figure of the tyrannical mother, this time specifically as a representation of Nationalist Spain and the Francoist regime. Matute, Moix, Grandes, Aldecoa and Etxebarria all wrote their works after the defeat of the Second Republic. Matute and Moix

published their novels during the second half of the Franco regime, while Grandes, Aldecoa and Etxebarria wrote theirs two decades into the Spanish democracy. As such, the political conservatism represented by their tyrannical mothers takes on a different connotation from that of earlier modern reformers. She represents specifically the Nationalist cause and the Franco regime. Without exception, their novels criticize the treatment of women during this era and reject Francoist ideals regarding womanhood and motherhood, yet they still recognize and at times employ the dualistic representation of the tyrannical mother.

When Francisco Franco's military rebellion triumphed over Republican forces in Madrid on April 1, 1939, Spain's second short-lived experiment in democracy ended. Backed by the military, remnants of the Carlists, the aristocracy, the Falange (Spain's fascist party), and the Catholic Church, Franco touted a return to a mythic tradition that he himself did much to create. His adoption of the symbolism of the *Reyes Católicos* served to connect his regime to a unified nationalist past that set Spain apart from the rest of Europe. He found it politically expedient to exaggerate the liberal reforms of the prior government and to connect these reforms to the destruction of the family, civil society and the nation. Because of the moderate legal reforms gained by women under the Second Republic, as well as the growing—if not particularly influential—international discourse of women's emancipation in Spain, the status of Spanish women formed an important focal point of the Francoist platform. *La mujer moderna*, a representation of women gaining traction in the first third of the twentieth century, was an effective political enemy for Franco, for it fed on fears that the emancipation of women would lead to the disruption of society (Nash "Un/Contested Identities" 31-32). As Marina Warner has argued, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, fears of social disruption sparked by feminist

reforms have often caused critics to blame women's emancipation for social and economic upheaval (17).

Mary Nash, among others, has demonstrated that Francoist rhetoric demonizing the Republic for women's emancipation was more an effective political tool than a realistic representation of Spanish women in the 1930s. Nash questions Franco's characterization of the radical liberal changes of the Second Republic, suggesting instead that Francoist rhetoric creates the myth of major social upheaval which the nationalist forces must overcome (161-62). As shown above, women's legal equality under the constitution of the Second Republic did not result in full social and political equality (161). And against Franco's claims of the "thousands" of lives lost to voluntary abortion, Nash has shown through hospital records that legal abortions were negligible (162). Carme Molinero suggests that the real difference between the Francoist view of women and the tradition that came before it was only "la voluntad de asegurar la desigualdad de género a través de la intervención política, interrumpiendo un proceso de cambio social significativo iniciado en el ventenio precedente" (77).

Nonetheless, contrasting with the legal equality of the sexes recognized under the Second Republic, Franco reinstated the restrictive Civil Code of 1889 (Arkinstall 48). Under this code, as well as that of 1870, women lost the political rights gained under the Second Republic and were instructed in obedience and martyrdom to the family. A married woman was the legal equivalent of a minor with her husband serving as guardian; she had very little control over her inherited property, and none over any earnings she may have made (Telo 83). The *licencia marital* prohibited wives from working, traveling, or obtaining a passport without their husbands' permission (83). Married mothers were denied *patria potestad*—the legal authority over their children—and even widows who remarried lost the *patria potestad* over the children

from earlier marriages (82). Until 1970 fathers could adopt out children without a mother's consent (89). Arguing that work outside the home decreased women's reproduction, the 1938 *Fuero del Trabajo* restricted women's ability to work outside the home, saying that the state "libertará a la mujer casada de la fábrica y del taller" (Borreguero et al. 18).[7] In this *Fuero* Franco explains how the hierarchically-arranged family unit would form the basis of post-war Spanish society. He also continues a tradition of anti-woman rhetoric that couched the loss of rights and status in terms of exalted paternalistic discourse.

The Francoist pronatalist agenda encouraged a *de facto* enforced maternity through marriage and birth prizes that were awarded to male heads-of-household. Monetary prizes were awarded upon marriage; married couples gained preferential treatment in getting loans, and when four children were born to a family, the principal was decreased by twenty-five percent (Nash "Pronatalism" 171). A *subsidio familiar*, begun in 1938, was included in the male head-of-household's paychecks, and the state defined large families (in order to award them) into three categories: those of 4-7 children, those of 8 or more children, and a special honorary category of 12 or more children (171). Under some situations, women could receive these awards, but they were targeted mostly to compensate male workers for paternity and to reinforce patriarchy (172-73). Needless to say, contraception and abortion were criminalized, demonstrating Adrienne Rich's observation that states restrict family planning when leaders perceive the need for soldiers, workers and consumers (273-74). Similar to Vichy France, abortion became not a crime against humanity, but a crime against the state (Nash "Pronatalism" 168).

The changes enacted by the Franco regime sought to legally enforce a conservative ideal for society. The regime argued that a hierarchically-organized family, with wives submissive to their husbands and constrained to domestic affairs, would re-establish social order. This family

organization also served to justify through analogy the hierarchically-organized new state (Molinero 68). Its analogy with the patriarchal family served as symbolic compensation to men who were to be subjugated to the tutelage of the state. Just as individual men experienced a loss of civic power, their position as head of the family was consolidated and emphasized. Women's public participation in this new regime was strictly curtailed, and the state made recourse of the nineteenth century feminine ideal of the *ángel del hogar* to project society's expectation of Spanish women. Beliefs in innate biological and spiritual differences between men and women—legitimated both by religious and scientific arguments of the time—coalesced in an attempt to restrict women's identity to motherhood. As Christine Arkinstall has argued, after the Civil War, motherhood became the only identity available to Spanish women (47). Francoist emphasis on motherhood served a second purpose in addition to the establishment of social order. After the war—which left upwards of one half of a million people dead, imprisoned or in exile—Spain faced a decimated population (White, Matthew). Franco needed Spanish women to accept the responsibility to repopulate the nation, and therefore motherhood became a patriotic duty as well as a presumed biological imperative. The new regime's success at getting women to procreate would also be important at reestablishing a glorified Spanish empire (Richmond 2, 75).

Just as the dictatorship dissolved all labor unions and instead re-organized workers under the obligatory nationalist union, women's representation before the state was the women's auxiliary of the Falange, the *Sección Feminina*. Formed at her brother's request in 1934, Pilar Primo de Rivera headed this organization until its disbandment in 1977. During the war years, the small membership supported the nationalist war effort by visiting Falangist prisoners and aiding their families (Richmond 3). In 1939 the organization's mission changed to the (re)-education of all Spanish women—both victors and the defeated. The organization sponsored

educational campaigns aimed at improving the health of mothers and their children, provided needed food and supplies for the poor, and brought cultural programs to the isolated Spanish countryside. While undoubtedly the organization helped many Spanish women who were suffering through the decade of hunger after the war, as María Teresa Gallego Méndez argues, the *Sección Femenina* did not view women as individuals but as the means to the end of the healthy Spanish family (167). From their viewpoint, the leaders of the *Sección Femenina* saw themselves defending the traditional dignity of women as wives and mothers against atheism, communism and feminism (Enders 377). Other Spanish women, especially those opposed to the Falangist ideology, resented their subjugation to this organization, and particularly to the six-month mandatory social service that all unmarried women between 17-35 years were to perform.[8] The completion of this social service became a pre-requisite for securing certain employment and even for obtaining a drivers license. While ironically the elite management of the *Sección Femenina* may have transgressed the rigid gender definitions of Francoism by playing leading managerial and administrative roles, they directed the thousands of women under their tutelage that women's fulfillment lay only in marriage and mothering.[9]

The Nationalist state communicated its pronatalist message in numerous ways. The most obvious is the aforementioned six-month social service required of unmarried women. This service was divided into two phases; during the first, women were instructed in Falangist ideology, which saw women's role as supportive wife and mother. The second phase focused on community work. This social service became a requirement for women who wished to pursue university study and certain careers. Through state agencies like the *Escuela de Puericultura* in Seville, women who wished to have access to ration books had to attend "voluntary" classes (Núñez Gil and Rebollo Espinosa 184). Through encyclical letters such as *Divini Illius Magisri*

(1929) in which the Church advocated different educational aims for men and women in order to "achieve biological determinism" and *Casti Connuii* (1930) which extolled the feminine virtues of piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity, the Church advocated that the genders should only be mixed upon marriage (Morcillo Gómez 57-58). Catholic lay organizations, like *Acción Católica*, which competed for influence with the *Sección Femenina*, went even further at teaching women their subjugated position within postwar society. And while Spain has a long tradition of conduct manuals about and directed to women—beginning with Juan Luís Vives *La educación de la mujer cristiana* (1528) and Fray Luís de León's *La perfecta casada* (1583)—the nineteenth century witnessed an explosion of this literature which continued throughout the Franco era (Grothe 513).[10] Several critics, such as Meriwynn Grothe, Marina Núnez Gil, María José Rebollo Espinosa and Encarnación Barranquero Texeira, have examined the conduct literature of the era. And Martín Gaite in *Usos amorosos de la posguerra* (1987), and Luis Otero in *Mi mamá me mima* (1998) have written works that intersperse and contrast their personal experience with excerpts of this literature. Though the state, the *Sección Femenina*, and the Church did not agree on every topic, their literary propaganda about women's role as mothers give the appearance of a united front.[11]

In spite of the enormous effort of the state, the Church, Catholic lay organizations and the *Sección Femenina* to direct women's energy towards motherhood, the pronatalist campaigns seem to have failed to a great extent. Carme Molinero, for example, doubts the efficacy of Francoist rhetoric towards women. Many scholars agree that the Spanish feminist movement of the early twentieth century lacked the impact of the North American or British movements.[12] For many Spanish women, however, the discourse of gender equality that circulated in the first four decades of the twentieth century may have made antifeminist discourses ring hollow

(Molinero 69). Beginning with the Caudillo's own pretentious rhetoric of "liberation" from the workplace, the consistent use of feminist terminology and arguments, even when turned on their head, shows the very influence of this discourse. At times overtly demeaning, at other times grandiose and patronizing, and almost always paranoid and reactionary, antifeminist advice towards women did much to show the influence that Spanish feminists ideas had gained before the war (65-66). Often framed in exalted, flattering language, much advice to women attempts to obscure the loss of autonomy and agency being advocated for them.[13] Father Delgado Capeans comments in 1941, for example, that feminism "no se contenta con ser la dulce compañera del hombre, la amante esposa y la madre abnegada" (Molinero 69). Pope Pius XII does not grasp the irony of his comment against women's work when he says that "la salida de la madre del hogar tiñe a éste de una ligera tristeza y la joven no experimentará gusto alguno en las cosas domésticas, no sabrá comprender su nobleza y belleza, ni desear a dedicarse a ellas un día como madre" (Molinero 69). Mercedes Sanz Bachiller, a leader of the organization, *Auxilio Social* comments on "la grandiosa, espléndida y magnífica maternidad" (Gallego Méndez 165). In 1994, a writer for the women's magazine *Medina* drops the elevated language altogether and preachs instead that:

> La vida de toda mujer, a pesar de cuanto ella quiera simular—o disimular—, no es más que un continuo deseo de encontrar a quien someterse. La dependencia voluntaria, la ofrenda de todos los minutos, de todos los deseos e ilusiones es lo más hermoso, porque es la absorción de todos los malos gérmenes—vanidad, egoísmo, frivolidad—por el amor. (quoted in Martin Gaite *Usos amorosos* 45)

At the *Sección Femenina's* third nacional conference, spiritual advisor Fray J. Pérez de Urbel says that "la mujer, en el sentido estricto de la palabra, es maternidad" (Gallego Méndez 166).

Finally, at the first national conference in 1943 Pilar Primo de Rivera sums up the Francoist attitude toward women in her now-famous comment that "las mujeres nunca descubren nada: les falta desde luego el talento creador, reservado por Dios para inteligencias varoniles; nosotras no podemos hacer nada más que interpretar mejor o peor lo que los hombres han hecho" (Molinero 72). One must question the need for so many exhortations to women for submission, marriage and motherhood if indeed, as these authors argue, these roles are natural, biological and inevitable. The ideal projected by the regime does not necessarily measure up to the reality.

To see women under Franco only as subjugated and oppressed is to inscribe them in the role of victim and deny them any agency. Mary Nash, for example, doubts the regime's success at convincing women to take up their national duty and procreate. Birthrates began to fall at the beginning of the twentieth century in Spain—a phenomenon that Franco and his supporters blamed on feminism, abortion, birth control and the Republic, but which actually began decades earlier (Nash "Pronatalism"164). In spite of attempts to convince women to become mothers, the birth rate continued to decline throughout the 1940s and 1950s, increasing momentarily during the 1960s when the economy had stabilized and when the state had stopped its pronatalist agenda (173-74). In spite of the enduring myth—propagated both by the left and the right—that Spanish women were and are easily controlled by the Church and the state, Nash's statistics suggest that, throughout the Francoist era, women made reproductive choices based on their personal situations and not on propaganda.

Those authors interested in dealing with representations of Spanish motherhood confront a three-century discourse about women's role in society that culminates in Francoist efforts to define Spanish womanhood. At the same time, however, contemporary discourses about motherhood also influence their representations. Because of the strong connection between the

Franco regime and Spanish motherhood, during the 1975-78 transition to democracy the status of women became embarrassing to the new administration (Radcliff 506). There existed general consensus among the Spanish leaders of the transition that women had to be modernized in order to erase the backward definition of Spain in contrast to the rest of Europe:

> [W]omen's rights were a point of differentiation with the socially conservative authoritarian regime, and thus were congruent with and symbolic of the larger political transformation. More specifically, women's rights carried the European caché that embodied modernity and democracy in the Spanish transition. (508)

This attitude does not differ much from the transition leaders' Enlightenment forebearers. Article 14 of the 1978 Constitution guarantees gender equality in the new state. Birth control was legalized in 1978 and divorce in 1981, though divorce in Spain was cumbersome and expensive until the "express divorce" law was enacted in 2007 (Hamilos). Abortion reform was an even more difficult sell; while abortions in a few cases were legalized in 1985, Spain retained the most restrictive abortion laws in Western Europe until 2009, when the last restrictions on abortion were lifted (Govan).

Real changes for Spanish mothers and other Spanish women remain on the political surface. The public presence of women has increased, but within the home, the *doble jornada*, or double day, remains so entrenched that many Spanish women opt not to have children (Fernández Vargas 49). In 1990, Spain and Italy had the lowest fertility rates in Europe (Hooper 175). In 2009, Spain and Italy are tied once again at 1.31 children per mother (Central Intelligence Agency). Expenditures on "care services"—those people and institutions that care for the young, the sick and the elderly—in Spain lag behind other European Union Nations (Salvá Mut and Forteza 364). Much of this unpaid work is being performed by women who are

more likely to care for the sick and the elderly and grandmothers who are likely to provide care for their grandchildren, causing one author to comment that "women's unpaid caring labor serves as a shock absorber for adversity and economic crisis (Carrasco and Rodríguez 51). The combination of a birthrate unable to sustain the current populace and an aging population who will require public insurance and pension payouts has already caused some pundits to bemoan the decline of Spanish motherhood (Cruz 147). Jacqueline Cruz, for example, has studied *El País* editorials, advertisements, popular movies and current best-sellers, and she concludes that Spain is experiencing a new pronatalist propaganda campaign aimed at women (170).[14] She argues that the increased presence of the visibly pregnant woman in these media has at its aim to promote motherhood:

> Este tipo de publicidad idealiza, no ya la maternidad en ejercicio de otras épocas, una maternidad hasta cierto punto <<activa>>—mujer cuidando y educando a los niños—, sino la maternidad en su aspecto más físico, más contingente y por tanto más pasivo. En el fondo, lo que se hace es fundir a la mujer-objeto-reproductor y a la mujer-objeto-sexual en un nuevo objeto destinado a la mirada, no ya del hombre, sino de la mujer, con vistas a incitarla a la imitación. (168)

Pressure for women to become mothers, therefore, is not limited to a Franciost past. Many younger novelists especially engage contemporary representations of motherhood as well as historical ones. Of works studied in this dissertation, Grandes's novel *Malena es un nombre de tango* and particularly Etxebarria's *Un milagro en equilibrio* analyze both historical discourses about motherhood and the current state of mothers in Spain.

While *El sí de las niñas* and *La casa de Bernarda Alba* suggest that historically theater has been an important genre in critiquing conservative ideologies and proposing modern reforms,

this dissertation focuses particularly on the novel as a vehicle for representations of the tyrannical mother. As Joan Ramón Resina sumizes, "cultural anti-Francoism was primarily lyric and dramatic but the Transition has been narrative" (9). This focus on narrative, and particularly on the novel, is based at least partially on changing consumer and publishing values. Printed editions of poetry and drama no longer appear economically viable to publishers, who prefer to concentrate their publishing and marketing resources on super-star novelists like Arturo Pérez-Reverte, Almudena Grandes and Lucía Etxebarria (Witt 183; Martín Nogales). The novel reigns supreme in the late twentieth and early twenty-first-century Spanish publishing world. In addition, the novel—as Nancy Armstrong points out—has historically been the vehicle for defining and establishing bourgeois conceptions of motherhood (9). In Spain as well, the novel has played a prominent role in the creation of a bourgeois ideology—an ideology at whose center is the proper role of women in society. Because of this, an analysis of the tyrannical mother turns logically to the novel.

It has become a commonplace among those who study mother characters in literature to comment on the dearth of critical works pertaining to the subject. In her study of the nineteenth and twentieth-century English novel, for example, Natascha Würzbach argues that studies of the mother figure have been less popular than other common female tropes like the whore, the madwoman and the *femme fatale* (370). As Susan Suleiman has pointed out as well, when works do focus on mother figures, it is often from the perspective not of the mother, but of her child, relegating the mother to object status (356). Beginning in the 1990s, however, and continuing more strongly in the new millennium, critics have begun to fill this gap, creating a new branch of feminist and gender studies called Motherhood studies. This increase in literary and critical output is due both to increased interest in the topic by critics and also to increased interest by

authors, most of them women, to explore motherhood increasingly from the perspective of mothers themselves. In Spain as well, novels about motherhood are on the rise as are critical treatments of them. In a 2006 volume, *Narrating Motherhood(s), Breaking the Silence*, dedicated to the treatment of Spanish, Anglo and African-American treatments of motherhood, Helena Establier mentions no fewer than ten monograph-length works written after the year 2000 that focus on Motherhood Studies in contemporary Spanish literature and society (80).

This dissertation participates in the growing focus on Motherhood studies in contemporary criticism. It takes as its starting point the work that has been and is being done in this area, from Simone de Beauvoir's polemic chapter on motherhood in *The Second Sex* (1949) to Adrienne Rich's foundational and unsurpassed *Of Women Born* (1976) to the growing corpus of work from the 1990s and 2000s. It further relies on recent academic studies on the topic by critics like Christine Arkinstall and Emilie Bergmann that chronicle changes in the representation of motherhood over the past forty years for the purpose of demonstrating how conceptions of Spanish motherhood have changed since the end of the dictatorship. This study draws its corpus from the preliminary suggestions of Arkinstall and Bergmann, who have identified almost sixty novels written from 1969 through 2009 which focus purposefully, if not exclusively, on motherhood. It then narrowed this corpus to nine novels by focusing on the following criteria. In addition to belonging to Arkinstall and Bergmann's list of works about motherhood, these novels focus specifically on the Civil War conflict and the Francoist dictatorship. Like most novels about this period of Spanish history written by women, they are non-conformist in their portrayal of Francoism (Pérez 169). They also acknowledge an understanding of Spanish history and politics explained in the "two Spains" theory. Finally, they utilize negative images of mothers and grandmothers as metaphors for the Francoist regime.

While the novels in this study were chosen based on the above criteria, they share other thematic and structural elements that are worthy of note. The first is the overwhelming use of the *Bildungsroman* genre in which a young female progatonist navigates and attempts to undermine societal expectations that are often oppressive to women.[15] In *Primera memoria* and *Julia*, the social pressures for women prove overwhelming to the protagonists, and these works conform to Anis Pratt's definition of a female *Bildungsroman*, which requires a "growing down" of the protagonist as she enters adulthood (14). In *Malena es un nombre de tango*, *Mujeres de negro*, and *Un milagro en equilibrio*, the protagonists must still fight against oppressive mores as they become adults, but they more often succeed in their struggle to create a definition of womanhood at odds with society. Detailed accounts of the protagonists' upbringings, and especially of their relationships with their mothers, foreground these novels' use of the *Bildungsroman* genre.

A second but related motif shared by all of the novels in this study is their sustained use of personal memories. In *Primera memoria* and *La trampa* memory is the vehicle by which the reader comprehends Matia's current adult state of psychological stagnation. The story is told primarily in the past tense by an adolescent Matia, but the adult Matia also interjects and comments on the unfolding memories. In *Julia* the past violently interrupts Julia's present by means of uncontrollable memories that neither allow the protagonist to sleep nor to progress into adulthood. The later works in this study—those by Grandes, Aldecoa and Etxebarria—engage in a more overt connecting of personal memories with national history, which reflects the late twentieth and early twenty-first-century movement to re-write the Francoist history of Spain. These works focus on Republican memories in an attempt to have them crystallize into official history.

Due perhaps to the longevity of the Francoist regime and to the collusion with the regime on the part of much of the population, memory politics are still in the initial phases in contemporary Spain. Many critics recognize the inherent fragility of personal memory, as well as the political relationship between memory and official history. Pierre Nora's contrast between memory and history has proven influential among critics of Spanish history, like Salvador Cardús i Ros, Claudia Jünke and Michael Roth, who recognize that memory is less a faithful rendering of past events, than an attempt to construct and justify the present. As such memory, and its communal equivalent—history—, become sites open to constant contestation and reinterpretation. Narrative representation, as in the novels of this study, both participates in this contestation and reinterpretation and obscures the contestable nature of memory and history. Roth states, for example, that "[n]arrative memory, which is at the core of historical representation both on paper and on film, *transforms* the past as a condition of retaining the past" (emphasis in original 100). Jo Labanyi argues that in contrast to works that utilize a "haunting motif" to express the precarious state of memory, works in the realist vein attempt to give a transparent and uncomplicated account of the past (103).

In spite of critical acknowledgement of memory and history's frailty, on the whole, the novels of this present study continue to view the past unproblematically. Whether by personal memory, or—as is popular in these novels—learning about the past from an older, often female, generation, these texts do not question the ability to recover the past. Grandes's historical saga *El corazón helado,* for example, suggests that the past can be recovered and that that failure to to do so leads to a stagnated present. In *Malena es un nombre de tango* and *Un milagro en equilibrio,* the past provides a liberating counter-discourse that is needed to allow the protagonist to mature. While Gabriela in Aldecoa's trilogy recognizes the tenuous nature of memory and the

past, the narrative she provides suggests otherwise. In spite of warnings to the contrary, she does deliver a coherent narrative of her memory and of national history. Eva Agulló in *Un milagro en equilibrio* likewise recognizes that the historical recovery in which she engages must remain unfinished and partial. It nevertheless allows Agulló to use the past to transform her present. *Julia* is the novel that most recognizes the difficulties and dangers of memory, as both the memories of Julia's violent past and her inability to understand these memories threaten to destroy her.

Finally, the novels selected share several narrative and structural strategies. The protagonists are generally the first-person narrators of their stories. Along with the motif of memory, the choice to use a first-person narrator also lends to the testimonial potential of the novels. *Julia* is once again the glaring exception to this tendency, as the oppressive third-person narrator serves instead to show Julia's lack of personal agency. In spite of the overwhelming use of first-person narrators, however, the novels all demonstrate a commitment to representing multiple voices and perspectives. They achieve this plurality of voices in different ways. *Primera memoria* privileges the first-person narration of its protagonist, and yet the work utilizes both an adolescent Matia and an adult Matia to narrate its work. *La trampa* introduces even more voices. Matia maintains control of the work through her first-person "diario en disorden," and yet other characters narrate as well. Like *Primera memoria, Julia* presents multiple voices in the two representations of the same protagonist, twenty-year-old Julia and her six-year-old alter ego, Julita. The eponymous heroine of *Malena es un nombre de tango* narrates in the first person as well, though large sections are dedicated to the first-person accounts of Soledad and Magda. As an avid listener, Malena has first-person access to these other accounts. *El corazón helado* splits protagonism of the work into two characters—Álvaro and Raquel—, but many

characters from the past also share their stories, whether through letters, artifacts or third-person accounts. Aldecoa's trilogy is a dialogic narrative that shares first-person protagonism between mother and daughter. As Christine Arkinstall points out, it is unique in its privileging of the voice of the sick, dying mother (73). Etxebarria's *Un milagro en equilibrio* likewise is ostensibly dialogic. Eva Agullo's first-person diary written for her newborn daughter is ultimately controlled by the protagonist. Her tendency to directly address her daughter as "tú," in addition to including her mother's history given through other first-hand accounts, gives the illusion of several voices contributing to the work.

The preference for first-person narrators suggests a preference for personal testimony in the novels. In contrast, however, the use of multiple perspectives implies the communal nature of these works. This interweaving of the individual and society demonstrates the feminist adage that "the personal is political." While this study focuses on the metaphorical political uses of the tyrannical mother figure, the female protagonists also serve a metaphorical role for the current state of Spain. This is shown particularly in the tendency to have important events in the protagonists' lives coincide with important historical events. Malena's most important romance, for example, coincides with Franco's death. Two of Aldecoa and Etxebarria's characters' birthdays correspond to the dates of the Second Republic. Almost all of the important personal events in Gabriela's life happen in tandem with major political events. Both the structures and contents of these novels suggest the importance of women's experience when reconsidering Spanish history and politics.

Chapter two of this dissertation analyzes *Primera memoria* and *La trampa* by Ana María Matute and *Julia* by Ana María Moix. These novels are classic examples of the gender coding explained in the first part of this introduction. In each novel, father and grandfather figures

represent the Republican side of the war, while mother and grandmother figures represent the Nationalist side. The young female protagonists of these novels do not overwhelmingly endorse the politics espoused by their male relatives. They do, however, offer tacit approbation of non-conformity towards Francoism. The protagonists stridently reject the tyranny of their mothers and grandmothers, whose beliefs and actions are discredited repeatedly throughout the novels. While both Matute and Moix question oppressive attitudes towards young women, they uncritically continue to employ the tyrannical mother as a figure to discredit conservative ideology.

Chapter three discusses two novels by best-selling author Almudena Grandes. In *Malena es un nombre de tango* (1994), Grandes confronts contemporary representations of motherhood that continue to be informed by conservative and especially Francoist discourses about women. Malena fights to reject these discourses and to create a more liberating vision for women who become mothers. The novel simultaneously attempts to recuperate long-silenced Republican memories, and in particular the Republican grandmother who serves as an important counter-discourse to Francoist maternal policy. *El corazón helado* (2007) similarly focuses on the Republican side of the "two Spains" conflict, and also employs the leftist activist grandmother as a positive role model. In spite of obvious attempts to redefine motherhood, however, the novels simultaneously utilize tyrannical mother figures to portray Francoist politics. The result is a rather schizophrenic and feminized portrayal of the "two Spains" conflict which simply inverts traditional dualisms about women without questioning the nature of dualisms themselves.

The fourth chapter analyzes Josefina Aldecoa's Civil War trilogy: *Historia de una maestra*, *Mujeres de negro,* and *La fuerza del destino* and Lucía Etxebarria's *Un milagro en equilibrio*. By including minor characters that conform to the tyrannical mother figure, both

authors recognize the preeminence of this image. Their works are dedicated, however, to questioning the dualistic treatment of women as well as the under-represented mother-daughter relationship. In Aldecoa's works, Gabriela eschews the "two Spains" representation of history because of her experience of motherhood. She and her daughter, Juana, maintain a non-idealized relationship that continually negotiates the possible pitfalls in the mother-daughter relationship. Etxebarria inverts the traditional gender coding of the previous novels, and in *Un milagro en equilibrio*, the mother's family is Republican while the father's is Nationalist. By discovering the hidden Republican past of her mother and learning what this mother experienced after the War, Eva Agulló is able to break the connection between motherhood and political tyranny. By prioritizing the experience of mothers as subjects, Aldecoa and Etxebarria's novels—more effectively than Grandes's—interrogate and reject the representation of the tyrannical mother.

It is apropos to include a final note on the theoretical underpinning of this dissertation. In her chapter on motherhood, Beauvior argues that "pregnancy is above all a drama that is enacted within the woman herself" (520). While agreeing with this statement, this study argues in addition that motherhood is a drama enacted on the page; i.e., that written (and visual) representations do not so much reflect our understandings about motherhood as they create those understandings. Feminist theorist bell hooks affirms the "political power of representation" (57, 72). From a Spanish context, Mary Nash also forefronts the power of representation when she cautions that "[i]mages and representations do not mirror the complex world of women" ("Un/Contested Identities" 26). By emphasizing the political and ideological function of the tyrannical mother figure, this dissertation hopes to disentangle this representation from real women. The written word always entails a political struggle for the power to represent reality and to be represented. While a reader is never condemned to accept the reading(s) implied by a

text, the job of a sophisticated reader is to recognize and analyze the literary techniques which lead to particular readings of works, to see who is silenced and who is granted a voice. This study, therefore, participates in the postmodern distrust of the text as creator, not reflector, of reality (Hutcheon 32-33).

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[1] Some confusion exists regarding the spelling of Etxebarria's name (with or without the written accent mark). The Castillian spelling requires a written accent mark, but Etxebarria's name derives from Basque and does not. Her first novel *Amor, curiosidad, prozac y dudas* spelled her name erroneously with an accent mark. I spell her name without the written accent mark, as it appears on the title page of *Un milagro en equilibrio.*

[2] John Locke, whose *Second Treatise* will be an important point of departure for this study, defines tyranny as:

> Usurpation is the exercise of power, which another hath a right to; so tyranny is the exercise of power beyond right, which no body can have a right to. And this is making use of the power any one has in his hands, not for the good of those who are under it, but for his own private separate advantage. When the governor, however intitled, makes not the law, but his will, the rule; and his commands and actions are not directed to the preservation of the properties of his people, but the satisfaction of his own ambition, revenge, covetousness, or any other irregular passion.

[3] It was Charles III, for example, who expelled the Jesuits from the Spanish-American colonies.

[4] The Inquisition picked up on the anti-ecclesiastical humor in the play. Various censors examined and corrected the play between 1815 and when the Inquisition was abolished in 1820. Doña Irene's lines particularly irritated the censor José García y Carillo, and he cut or amended many of her lines, including that one about Irene's bishop uncle (Dowling 239). He was particularly incensed at doña Irene's comment to her daughter that "el complacer a su madre, asistirla, acompañarla y ser el consuelo de sus trabajos, ésa es la primera obligación de una hija obediente" even above a call to a holy order (Moratín 87; Dowling 239-40). Don Diego himself, however, stays well above the fray. Rather than attacking the church himself, he allows doña Irene to unwittingly do it for him through her foolishness and superficiality. Ultimately, the Holy Office decided that the play "is lacking in the respect which holy things pertaining to religious worship deserve and with which they should be treated; because it is unbecoming and offensive to the ecclesiastical estate; and because it is insulting to the Christian and pious education of girls in the convents of nuns" (quoted in Dowling 241). Even the priest charged with defending the work to the tribunal disliked it, and he accompanied his defense with a letter saying he only defended it because he had to (242). The judges did not believe the defense case that the play criticized only parental and not church authority, and the play was forbidden in 1816 and again in 1819 (242).

[5] Women's supposed political conservatism is a much-loved discourse, but Gerard Alexander has made a convincing case against the argument that women's conservative vote lost the left in the 1933 Spanish national election. Among other arguments, he questions how the left then returned to win in 1936 if women vote with the Church (359). He argues that a loss of faith in Azaña's government, by both women and men, is what cost the 1933 election (358).

[6] Nelkin had not yet been seated at the time of the enfranchisement debate. As a socialist, however, she opposed feminism as a bourgeois institution and was concerned that women's enfranchisement would result in conservative votes (Keene 333, 335).

[7] Rosa Conde and Teresa Carballal dispute this. Birth rates don't seem to coincide with employment rates for women (100).

[8] In *El cuarto de atrás,* Carmen Martín Gaite offers an interesting anecdote about trying to avoid this service by studying abroad (36). And in *Usos amorosos de la posguerra española,* she says of the *Servicio Social*:

> La verdad es que el cumplimiento del Servicio Social constituía un trago que únicamente el buen humor y los pocos años podían hacer más llevadero. Duraba seis meses a seis horas diarias, o sea que, descontando los domingos y fiestas de guardar, era una media de quinientas horas las que tenía que emplear la soltera o viuda sin hijos menor de treinta y cinco años para doctorarse como <<mujer muy mujer>> , antes de aspirar a otro tipo de doctorados o expansiones propias de los hombres. (64)

[9] Ironically, most of the leadership of the *Sección Femenina*'s was single.

[10] According to Aurora Morcillo the two sixteenth-century works were republished in the 1940s and 1950s (56).

[11] The Church, for one, eyed suspiciously certain modernizing tendencies of the *Sección Femenina* like physical education and a timid and belated support of women's employment and higher education (Enders "Problematic Portraits" 384).

[12] Because feminism was co-opted by the major political parties, a well-organized feminist movement never took off in post-Franco Spain (Hooper 171).

[13] Susan Suleiman comments on the tendency to cloak anti-woman ideologies in flattering terms, arguing that the mother is elevated "precisely to the extent that she prostrates herself before her son" (369).

[14] While not specifically one of the texts that Cruz studies, the June 20, 2007 edition of *¡Hola!* Magazine offers a glimpse into the cultural climate in Spain, showing that maternity and motherhood prominently concern Spanish society today. The four photographs on the cover of this issue display mothers: three show celebrity baptisms and feature mothers holding their babies while a fourth boasts a pregnant Thalía posing seductively on a bed, caressing her slight stomach. The stories inside the magazine extol the joys of motherhood, such as Columbian actress Juana Acosta's comment about her infant daughter:

> Me ha cambiado por completo. Todo. Totalmente. No hay palabras para explicarlo. Tengo otra percepción del mundo, lo relativizo todo. ¡Ha cambiado hasta mi manera de relacionarme con los demás! Es un amor tan grande que creo que es una sensación que sólo las madres conocen. Tengo la sensación de haber enloquecido de amor, y siento que ese amor cada día crece, crece y crece. (98)

[15] *El corazón helado* is the one exception. It does not utilize the *Bildungsroman* genre for either of its protagonists.

CHAPTER 2

REJECTING THE MOTHER: TYRANNICAL MOTHERS AND GRADMOTHERS IN *PRIMERA MEMORIA* (1959) AND *LA TRAMPA* (1969) BY ANA MARÍA MATUTE AND *JULIA* (1969) BY ANA MARÍA MOIX

The decade between 1959 and 1969 witnessed the publication of the three novels that form the corpus of this chapter: *Primera memoria* (1959) and *La trampa* (1969) by Ana María Matute, and *Julia* (1969) by Ana María Moix. While these novels are near contemporaries chronologically, their author's personal circumstances differ regarding their experience of the Civil War and its aftermath. Matute experienced the war first-hand, as her family lived in Barcelona during this time, while Moix was born nearly a decade after the end of the war. Neither author is known as a politically compromised author, yet they write novels critical of the Francoist regime. *Primera memoria* offers an implicit condemnation of the Nationalist uprising and regime by using an allegorical island also split into warring factions and meant to represent the Spanish nation. *La trampa* suggests that the social and political elite, who dominated Spain before the war, continue to dominate the country several decades later. *Julia* also condemns the Francoist regime by suggesting mental illness as the appropriate response to the atmosphere of oppression fostered under the regime. The three novels employ the strategy of the tyrannical mother—or in their specific cases, grandmother—in order to communicate their critique. This tyrannical grandmother is strongly associated with the Francoist regime and the Church. *Primera memoria* and *La trampa* represent this grandmother *en lieu* of any other maternal figure; the actual mothers in these novels have died before the narrative action begins. In *Julia* the grandmother maintains her importance, but this novel offers representations of a strongly allied

mother and grandmother, both of whom represent—with variations—the tyrannical mother. While these novels prioritize the psychological conflicts of their protagonists, they also employ political subtexts that feminize political conservatism through the use of the tyrannical mother (or grandmother) figure. Like other novels analyzed in this dissertation, *Primera memoria*, *La trampa* and *Julia* assign specific genders to represent the Nationalist and the Republican causes; specifically, the novels code the Nationalist cause as feminine and the Republican as masculine. This gender encoding contributes to the condemnation of conservative ideologies. The protagonists of these novels remain unable to free themselves of the oppression waged more at women, and it is their mothers and grandmothers who symbolize this oppression.

Ana María Matute is one of a handful of Spanish women authors to have entered the canon, a feat based principally on the critical acclaim of her short stories and of her 1960s trilogy *Los mercaderes.* The first and last novels in this trilogy, *Primera memoria* and *La trampa,* respectively, form the corpus of this chapter, as the second novel, *Los soldados lloran de noche* (1963) departs from the others both in character development and plot.[1] More emphasis will be given to *Primera memoria*, since in *La trampa* doña Práxedes's continued presence is not as prominent, but suggests rather that after the War, the same oligarchic arrangement of Church, State and money continue to control Spain (Brown 28).

Primera memoria introduces readers to Matia, a fourteen-year-old rebellious girl forced to live with her grandmother, aunt and cousin at the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. Her own mother having died six years earlier, and having been separated from her Republican father, Matia quickly intuits that she occupies a weak position among her stridently Nationalist maternal family. Matia's stunted coming-of-age coincides with her growing awareness of the political maneuverings on the unnamed island—believed by most critics to be Mallorca and to represent a

microcosmic Spain. Matia learns that her domineering grandmother, doña Práxedes, not only rules over the island but also that she and her conservative political allies are responsible for the murder of a local Republican, José Taronjí, whose son Manuel Matia befriends. Jealous of Manuel because of his relationship with Matia and because Manuel is favored by the eccentric and admired Jorge de Son Major, Matia's cousin—Borja—frames Manuel for a robbery that he and Matia committed. Matia is unable to summon the courage to defend her friend, and remains silent as he is sent to reformatory school. Matia as the first-person adult narrator explains the lingering guilt and psychological stagnation caused by her betrayal of Manuel.

La trampa picks up Matia's story several decades later. She and her son, Bear, return to the island to celebrate doña Práxedes one-hundredth birthday, which doña Práxedes has decided to celebrate a year early. The reader learns that after the war, Matia has moved with her Republican father, Franc, to the United States where she marries, has her son Bear, and divorces his father. Matia's wealthy and overshadowing mother-in-law, Beverly, convinces Matia to leave Bear with her, and this abandonment explains both Matia's continued psychological crisis and the distant relationship she has with her son. Matia continues to narrate some sections of *La trampa* in the first person—the sections entitled "Diario en disorden." Sections about Bear are narrated in the third person and describe how he befriends a political activist named Mario, who is planning a political assassination. Mario narrates his own sections in the first person, while the final narrator, Mario's girlfriend Isa, is narrated in the third person. Unaware of Bear and Mario's plans, Matia agrees to hide Mario for several nights in the grandmother's large house. During these nights the reader learns that the assassination Mario is planning is really a personal vendetta against the man who killed Mario's Republican father. Matia and Mario have an affair, and Mario decides not to go through with the murder. Bear, however, takes it upon himself to

fulfill the plan, not bothering to hide his identity. The novel ends with Matia's desperately writing in her diario: "Y Bear, ¿dónde estás?, ¿Dónde estás ahora? ¿Adónde vas?" (669). This ending is ambiguous; Bear's actions can be understood as a random act of violence or as a rejection of the oligarchy still in power in Spain (Frame; Soliño 205).

Critical treatment of these novels revolves around three main axes. Critics like Lucy Lee Bonnano and Donna Janine McGiboney focus on *Primera memoria* as a woman's *Bildungsroman*. The traditional *Bildungsroman,* they argue, narrates the coming-of-age of a male protagonist, who, after overcoming many struggles, is able to take his place as an adult in society. In the case of a female protagonist, however, these critics show how a coming-of-age for women entails a "growing-down" or stifling of potential in order to conform to society's expectations for women (Pratt 14; Lee-Bonanno 19). The physical and psychological stagnation of women as they become adults leaves them, at least in the case of Matia, disillusioned with adulthood in general. The male *Bildungsroman* often follows a Freudian script; the male child must overcome and separate himself from the feminine—represented in the home and the maternal—in order to take his promised position in the male world of civilized society. For Matia, however, both the private and public domains are represented through the tyrannical mother figure. While most critics of this vein recognize that doña Práxedes represents the arch-conservative factions of Nationalist Spain, they do not investigate the ramifications of choosing a woman figure to represent conservative politics and the reigning social order. McGiboney, for example, runs into trouble in her Lacanian interpretation of the *Bildungsroman* in *Primera memoria.* She wants to connect Matia's progressive silencing with her entry into the Symbolic, or Law of the Father. In order to do so, she suggests that Mosén Mayol, the village priest, represents this Symbolic (613). The much more obvious character who represents the Law of the

Father, taken to be patriarchal civilization, however, is doña Práxedes. Matia's grandmother complicates McGiboney's attempt at a Lacanian interpretation of the work.

Several prominent Spanish women authors of the second half of the twentieth century, among them Matute, Ana María Moix, Carmen Martín Gaite and Ester Tusquets, write highly metatextual works that comment on the impact of fairy tales on women and girls.[2] A second vein of criticism of Matute's works investigates her extensive referencing and re-writing of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales. *Primera memoria* makes sustained reference to Andersen's "The Little Mermaid" and "The Snow Queen." Christopher Anderson points out that while Gerda, the protagonist of "The Snow Queen" manages to overcome much hardship in order to save her friend, Kay, Matia ultimately lacks the courage to save her friend Manuel (21). Anderson and Lynn Sheay criticize Matia for not recognizing the liberating potential of the fairy tale endings—especially when the Little Mermaid is given the possibility of eternal life (11). María Elena Soliño, in her feminist analysis of fairy tales in Matute, Martín Gaite and Tusquet's works, however, recognizes the mores subversive criticism that Matute makes when Matia denies to Gerda and the Little Mermaid their "forced" happy endings (185). Rather than misreading the fairy tales as Anderson and Sheay suggest, Matia realizes that the stories with their tacked-on and unconvincing happy endings deceive women readers (185). *Primera memoria* and, to a lesser extent, *La trampa* critique the entrenched stories that attempt to inscribe women readers into constricting roles for women.

Any feminist re-reading of the fairy tale genre necessitates an examination of the evil (step)mother character. Certainly an easy identification can be and has been made between doña Práxedes in *Primera memoria* and the Snow Queen or the evil sea witch in "The Little Mermaid." An important difference exists, however, between these storybook villains and the

tyrannical mother figure. Soliño argues convincingly that the evil (step)mothers and witches of fairy tales represent transgressive figures who must be re-inscribed into patriarchal discourse and/or destroyed. These fairy tale women are active, loquacious, highly sexualized and represent the very chaos which patriarchal society must vanquish (37). In contrast, the tyrannical mother represents patriarchal society itself, only invalidated and vilified through the use of female imagery. Fairy tale writers like Andersen and the Grimm brothers utilize the same negative associations with the feminine to create their villains as do the writers of the tyrannical mothers, but to different ends. The fairy tale authors seek to protect patriarchal society by eliminating feminine elements, while the progressive authors who utilize the tyrannical mothers represent traditional patriarchal society itself as feminine to show its flaws and illegitimacy.

Critics have made numerous attempts to understand the overwhelming presence of evil women in fairy tales. Bruno Bettelheim suggests maternal splittling—the child's need to separate a mother into two beings (one good and one bad) in order to preserve the belief in a wholly-good mother (67, 69).[3] Marina Warner argues that due to maternal mortality, many children in the past were raised by surrogate mothers who may have favored their own offspring over their stepchildren (213). Against these interpretations, Soliño convincingly questions the very evilness of these mothers. She documents, for example, how in successive editions the Grimm brothers add more and more violence against women, how they make the move from "mother" in the original stories to "stepmother" in their later versions, and even how they make the surrogate mothers more evil (25, 36)[4] The misogyny of these tales is due less to their folk origins than to the time and circumstance of their publication. A major focus of the tales is precisely to punish women who do not conform to patriarchal expectations.

It is much less easy to explain why authors like Matute, who deftly criticize certain aspects of fairy tales, continue to employ evil mother figures. Soliño and Guadalupe Cabedo both suggest that the evil mother figure actually functions as part of the author's rebellion against idealized maternal norms. Soliño says that "referring to fairy tale mothers is a way of portraying the opposite of the ideal womanhood the Regime imposed," and Cabedo too argues that women writers of the war generation do not want to offer Francoist maternal models to their readers, preferring instead to vilify or eliminate the maternal figure (preface; 57). They both propose that the transformation from mother to surrogate mother softens the impact of maternal vilification for the reader: "Y por lo tanto, ese antagonismo no parecerá tan escandaloso al lector de la posguerra; sin que incluso, para dicho lector, la actitud de estas jóvenes le parecerá el comportamiento más apropiado y lógico" (Cabedo 58). This strategy of representing evil mothers in order to counterbalance Francoist idealizations of motherhood strikes one as unconvincing at best and counterproductive at worst. One negative image of motherhood simply replaces an equally damning one.[5] It requires a lack of imagination to suggest that women writers of the war and postwar generation only conceive of mothers as dead, wholly good or wholly evil. Neither is convincing Cabedo's suggestion that these negative mother figures represent the authors' actual mothers; at least in Matute's case, the author seems to have enjoyed a happy family life (60).[6] A better explanation for the continued presence of evil mother figures in women's writing is the historical and political trope of the tyrannical mother. By utilizing the tyrannical mother, Matute engages a figure with historical ties to the Enlightenment that effectively discredits the conservative political forces that her protagonist Matia resists in *Primera memoria* and *La trampa*. She simultaneously engages the fairy tale tradition so important to her works.

Critical interest in Matute's works focuses not only on the personal and the psychological but also on the political representations in her works. References to the "two Spains" construction of history often allegorized in the Cain and Abel myth as well as specific references to the Civil War appear repeatedly in her short stories and novels. Janet Pérez argues, for example, that "in the case of Matute, the war becomes her single most absorbing preoccupation" (161). Several critics have focused on the "two Spains" / Cain and Abel motif in *Primera memoria*. Matia's father, who is fighting on the Republican side, opposes Borja's father, a Nationalist colonel. The Taronjí family likewise shows the theme with members from the conservative side of the family killing the Republican José Taronjí. Marie-Linda Ortega even suggests that the Cain and Abel opposition between Borja and Manuel (who may be half brothers) can be read as a symbolically fraternal conflict between Franco and Manuel Azaña (108). And while these same critics also recognize doña Práxedes's negative representation and her support of the Nationalist cause, very few question how the dynamics of the Cain and Abel myth change when one of the siblings is portrayed not as a brother, but as a sister. In one attempt to acknowledge this, Ortega goes on to say that doña Práxedes is a "figura inaugural, depótica, que despierta a la fuerza la imagen de su alter ego masculino, imposible de plasmar en aquellos años de censura, la del dictador Francisco Franco" (104). She thereby suggests that using doña Práxedes as a stand in for Franco serves as a strategy to circumvent the censorship that a more realistic portrayal of Franco would provoke. Using the feminine figure as tyrannical power is therefore an allegorical method of evasion. While Ortega at least recognizes and tries to reconcile these curious gender discrepancies, her explanation cannot account for the presence of the tyrannical mother figure both before the Franco years and well after them. Portraying the Nationalist cause and the Franco regime as feminine, however, makes a more biting

condemnation than if they were represented in a male character. The historical association of women with chaos, injustice, cruelty, partisanship and an overall threat to (patriarchal) civilization helps to condemn the regime and the cause as much as the concrete actions in the novel.

While all critics recognize the negative influence of doña Práxedes, several also connect this influence with the Nationalist forces of the Civil War. For example, while Emilie Cannon simply regards doña Práxedes as "domineering" and "shrewish," Janet Díaz and Patrick Gallagher recognize the full ideological import of her character (37). Díaz refers to the many "wars" fought on the island, suggesting that they all make reference to the Civil War "which is ever present" (133). One of these wars is "the 'war' of Matia's grandmother to preserve the *status quo*" (133). Gallagher also believes in the metaphoric use of war on the island to represent the national situation, and he connects doña Práxedes with all of the violent or repressive incidents that occur on the island, including the murder of José Taronjí. Upon her return to her grandmother's house after finding Taronjí's body, Matia realizes with horror that everyone in the house already knows about the murder (74). The many references to theater in the novel suggest doña Práxedes as the master puppeteer who controls not only the townspeople, but the government power, the priest Mosén Mayol, and the Taronjí brothers who serve as a *defacto* home guard, rounding up Republican sympathizers in the night and executing them near the *plaza de los judíos* (72-73).[7] Anne Hardcastle as well argues for a political interpretation of *Primera memoria*, suggesting that the novel deals with collective guilt due to complicity with the Franco regime: "Even though no historical or political events take place [. . .], [*Primera memoria* is] explicitly aware of the national historical context and superimpose[s] the political drama on family members who take on allegorical significance" (391). The preference for using the

tyrannical mother figure in doña Práxedes is itself a political choice that implicitly judges the ideology she espouses.

In a gendered contrast to doña Práxedes's representation of conservative political forces, male characters represent the Republican or liberal cause. As stated previously, Matia's absent father is fighting on the Republican side, creating a direct connection with the liberal cause and masculinity. Another father, José Taronjí, also represents the Republican cause. He is executed early on in the novel for his attempts at land and property reform; he has lists of property that should be redistributed to the poorer inhabitants of the island, including doña Práxedes's lands and those of her aristocratic, eccentric cousin, Jorge de San Major. While these fathers represent the Republic *en absentia*—since one is away fighting and the other dead—Soliño argues that José's adopted son, Manuel, most actively represents the Republic in the novel (195-96). He chooses solidarity with his plebian mother, stepfather and siblings over the aristocratic potential of his biological father, Jorge. When the Taronjí brothers execute José, Manuel leaves school—paid for by Jorge—and takes his place in his mother's family. Symbolically, the red hair characteristic of his family marks him politically as a *rojo* and associates him with his Jewish ancestry (Schraibman 153).

In contrast to doña Práxedes's evil, Manuel represents not only the marginalized Republic, but also a Christ figure, as numerous critics have noted. Patrick Gallagher points out the connection between Manuel's name and the name "Emmanuel" and notes how he is the most positive character in the novel (78). The title of the entire trilogy, *Los mercaderes*, refers not only in Catalán to the bourgeois controlling class, but references the biblical story of Christ expelling the merchants from the temple as well (Cannon 42). That Manuel comes from a historically humble and marginalized *converso* family, and that he is the one character

consistently characterized as overwhelmingly good, bolsters his representation as a Christ character. Matia's final betrayal of him reminds the reader of Peter's betrayal of Jesus, and the novel ends with a rooster's crowing, mirroring the New Testament story. Soliño in fact, points out the irony that censors let pass a clear and rather radical positive association between Jewish ancestry, Republicanism and Christ (197). The Republic is not portrayed over-idealistically, but enough positive imagery is associated with it to suggest tacit support for liberalism. The novel specifically codes this liberalism with the masculine through Manuel and Matia's father.[8]

Conversely, Matute's novels code as feminine the Nationlist side of the war. Both *Primera memoria* and *La trampa* tellingly begin with Matia's description of doña Práxedes. The descriptions focus on negative aspects that will be developed more fully in the novels. In the first, for example, Matia describes her grandmother's white hair which gives her an "aire colérico" and the "bastoncillo de bambú con puño de oro," which—much like Bernarda Alba to whom she has been compared—fuctions as a symbol of her masculinized power (11). *La trampa* begins similarly with a description of doña Práxedes' bony hands as she sits eating apricots. Watching her grandmother eat—itself a suggestion of power through devouring—reminds Matia of doña Práxedes's authority, as she is the one person capable both of imposing table etiquette and of breaking with impunity her own rules. This first description of food control epitomizes Práxedes's control both over Matia and the other inhabitants of the island. Matia remembers: "Entonces, hace tiempo, ella decidía lo que era o no era correcto, tanto en la mesa como en el mundo que me destinaba. [. . .] la recuerdo contraviniendo sus códigos, sus amonestaciones, su ley. La vuelvo a ver, ahora, y sigue pareciéndome, igual que entonces, delincuente y ejemplar" (410).

This cold and dominating grandmother extends her constant vigilance over both of her grandchildren, but especially over Matia, who as a girl has less opportunity for escape than her male cousin, Borja. Matia is brought to her grandmother's island from her arcadia-like mountain retreat where she lived with her father's servant after her mother's death. Even though Matia narrates *Primera memoria* in first person, it is doña Práxedes's voice, channeled through Matia, that narrates Matia's arrival:

> Fui entonces—decía ella—la díscola y mal aconsejada criatura [. . .] víctima de un padre descastado que, al enviudar, me arrinconó en manos de una vieja sirviente. Fui—continuaba, ante la malévola atención de las de Son Lluch—embrutecida por los tres años que pasé con aquella pobre mujer en una finca de mi padre, hipotecada, con la casa a medio caída a pedazos. Viví, pues, rodeada de montañas y bosques salvajes, de gentes ignorantes y sombrías, lejos de todo amor y protección. (Al llegar aquí, mi abuela, me acariciaba.) (14-15)

Doña Práxedes's power extends to framing the discourse around Matia's childhood. She reframes Matia's time in the mountains as a negative one. For Matia, though, it represents what Anderson calls a "golden age" of innocence and love, while the parenthetical addition proves immediately false to the reader who already knows doña Práxedes's caress to be "indiferente" (16; 14). Doña Práxedes has the power over Matia to impose her discourse as truth.

Doña Práxedes's plans for Matia become readily apparent: "Te domaremos" she tells Matia as soon as she arrives on the island (15). Matia and Borja are confined to the house in the care of their tutor, Lauro; they must plot their escapes and visits to the village (20). When Borja and his friends leave for a three-day camping trip, Matia feels abandoned to her grandmother and aunt's control. In this situation she becomes acutely aware of her more fragile position due to

her being female. Her grandmother carefully examines her: “La abuela me miraba los dedos, por si aún estaban manchados de tinta. Acercaba su gran nariz a mi boca para oler si había fumado” (92). Doña Práxedes’s vigilance becomes more progressively physically invasive: “La abuela solía meter su dedazo huesudo en mi boca, como un gancho” to see if Matia was eating prohibited candies (104). When Matia and Borja are caught going to visit Jorge de Son Major, doña Práxedes invades Matia’s personal space, but not Borja’s: “Me cogió la cabeza entre sus manos huesudas, y sentí clavarse en mi mejilla derecha su brillante [. . .] Sentí sus ojos en los míos, físicamente, como dos hormigas recorriendo mis niñas, mi córnea dolorida” (184). Matia considers particularly humiliating, however, the criticisms that doña Práxedes makes over her physical appearance (104). This scrutiny reminds Matia of her precarious position within doña Práxedes’s world; since Matia lacks money, her only hope is to use beauty to marry well. Matia feels dehumanized by the treatment:

> Sentada en su mecedora, escrutándome con sus redondos ojos de lechuza, me obligaba a andar y a sentarme, me miraba las manos y los ojos. (Me recordaba a los del pueblo, los días del mercado, cuando compraban una mula.) [. . .] En aquellos momentos la odiaba, no podía evitarla. Deseaba que muriese allí mismo, de repente y patas arriba, como los pájaros. Con el bastoncillo de bambú me reseguía la espalda y me golpeaba las rodillas y los hombros. (105-06)

This resentement over attempts at bodily control reappears in all of the novels studied in this disseratation. Matia greatly resents the control her grandmother exercises over her, and yet she is helpless to resist this control. As Lee-Bonanno has pointed out, her attempts at rebellion—sneaking out with Borja, drinking and smoking—, all of which doña Práxedes discovers, do very

little to free Matia (23). Her most rebellious act, befriending Manuel, brings actual devastation to him and psychic destruction to her (Hardcastle 397).

In the opening description of doña Práxedes Matia already recognizes that the control her grandmother exercises over her extends also to the entire island: "Y desde allí, con sus viejos prismáticos de teatro incrustados de zafiros falsos, escrudiñaba las casas blancas del declive, donde habitaban los colonos; o acechaba el mar" (11). The motif of doña Práxedes's scrutiny of Matia, which parallels her scrutiny of the entire island, appears repeatedly throughout the novel. As Matia returns home after seeing the body of José Taronjí, she recognizes that the household already knows about the murder, and she connects this to her grandmother's constant vigilance of the island (Gallagher 74):

> Las ventanas de las casas de los colonos estaban encendidas, y seguramente la abuela espiaría desde su gabinete con sus gemelos de teatro. Sentí una sorda irritación contra ella. Allí estaría, como un dios panzudo y descascarillado, como un enorme y glotón muñecazo, moviendo los hilos de sus marionetas. Desde su gabinete, las casitas de los colonos con sus luces amarillas, con sus mujeres cocinando y sus niños gritones, eran como un teatro diminuto. Ella los envolvía en su mirada dura y gris, impávida. Sus ojos, como largos tentáculos, entraban en las casas y lamían, barrían, dentro de las habitaciones, debajo de las camas y las meas. Eran unos ojos que adivinaban, que levantaban los techos blancos y azotaban cosas: intimidad, sueño, fatiga. (55)

The selections quoted above emphasize doña Práxedes's vision; her eyes are described as invading animals, first as ants—which are invasive and unrelenting—, then as an owl—known for its sharp eyesight—, and finally as tentacles—which can capture their prey. Matia also

focuses particularly on the women and children in the village homes, suggesting their, like her own, defenselessness against doña Práxedes's penetrating vision.

Matia connects her own gendered oppression with the social oppression occurring on the island, and she comes to understand her grandmother's involvement in both.[9] Just as the fighting on the mainland is divided into "two Spains," the town as well is divided into two bands, separated by social class. The children, whose gang wars imitate the real war of their parents, divide down class lines into "Ellos" and "Nosotros" (84). The sons of doña Práxedes's administrator, however, play with Borja and Matia because their father, as doña Práxedes's employee, insists on it: "Iban con Borja porque su padre se lo mandaba, pero me parece que pensaban de manera diferente a la nuestra" (85). Matia continues: "Los dos [sons of the administrator] parecían devotos, o por lo menos lo fingían, para complacer a su padre, y su padre lo hacía para complacer a la abuela. (En la isla todo iba así)" (85). This obsequience towards doña Práxedes continues in the adult world as well. In one instance, the mayor's wife sends doña Práxedes an elaborate ceramic tray with the first grapes of the season. Matia's grandmother ceremoniously tastes the grapes, and judging them unworthy, "las uvas, con una gota perlada, quedaron olvidadas en la bandeja" (132). This seemingly unimportant detail sticks in Matia's mind, and later she makes the association with the grapes and the tyrant-like power that doña Práxedes wields over those around her: "(doña Práxedes, ferozmente indiferente, catando uvas ácidas, despidiendo preceptors inútiles)" (143).[10]

These suggestions regarding the extent of doña Práxedes power become more explicit as Matia unravels the political maneuverings on the island. The Taronjí brothers are the most fearsome group as they regularly detain and execute Republican sympathizers:

> Cuando en el pueblo caía la hora de la siesta, o al resguardo de cualquier otra quietud, en esos momentos como de espera, resonaban en las callejuelas las pisadas de los hermanos Taronjí. Los Taronjí, con sus botas altas, sus guerreras a medio abotonar, rubios y pálidos, con sus redondos ojos azules, de bebés monstruosos y sus grandes narices judaicas. (Ah, los Taronjí. La isla, el pueblo, los sombríos carboneros, apenas se atrevían a mirarles un poco más arriba de los tobillos, cuando pasaban a su lado). Los Taronjí llevaban los sospechosos a la cuneta de la carretera, junto al arranque del bosque, más allá de la plaza de los judíos. O a la vuelta del acantilado, tras rebasar Son Major. (27)[11]

While the Taronjí brothers inspire fear in the townspeople, doña Práxedes not only does not fear them, not only looks down on them, but she seems to direct them from behind the scene. After a mass celebrating a Nationalist victory on the mainland, the island oligarchy convenes at the mayor's house: "Estaban los dos hermanos Taronjí, aunque el pequeño—el Chino lo dijo—*no tenía propiamente cargo oficial*. Mosén Mayol, el alcalde, su mujer, otros mandones del pueblo y el vicario. Mosén Mayol y la abuela reinaban, despreciaban y callaban" (74-75). At this reunion, the Taronjí brothers demonstrate their connection with doña Práxedes, though she prefers their contact to be clandestine and ignores them: "La abuela hablaba con el alcalde, y por dos veces los Taronjí quisieron dirigirle la palabra. Pero ella fingía no verles" (75). At one point, the Taronjí brothers detain Es Ton, the husband of one of doña Práxedes's servants, but quickly release him, Es Ton supposes because "[e]lla [doña Práxedes] me defendería" (41). José Taronjí's illegal detention and murder by the Taronjí brothers—whom Matia calls "los amigos o, a lo menos, partidarios de mi abuela"—is the most brutal act that Matia witnesses, but it is not the last. Matia grows increasingly aware of the injustices committed in the town even as she struggles against injustices committed against her in the home. The common denominator that

connects of all these events is doña Práxedes, who rules over both the town and her household with coldness and severity.

Critics often point out that Matia's choice between Borja and Manuel and her decision to betray Manuel at the end of the novel represent her movement from childhood into an oppressive adulthood ruled by doña Práxedes. Most neglect to point out, however, that her decision is also a political one between justice and injustice, liberty and despotism, and liberalism and conservatism.[12] Throughout the novel Matia wavers between the two political poles that her grandmother and father represent respectively. On the one hand, she knows that she is against doña Práxedes's despotism, since she has experienced it personally, but given the context in which this despot wields absolute power, she feels helpless to fight it. Doña Práxedes wages a character assassination against Matia's father, calling him at best "corrompido" and at worst "comunista, masón, libertino, judío y, posiblemente, si hubiera nacido en Cataluña o las Vascongadas, separatista" (14; 426). In *La trampa,* Matia recalls what could have been a positive moment when her father writes to her at the end of the war, but doña Práxedes purposefully sabotages this moment, denying to the father any semblance of dignity (427). In addition, Borja stridently condemns Matia's father and the Republican cause, calling him "un rojo asqueroso" and suggesting that he should be executed like José Taronjí (204). The Nationalist newspapers that doña Práxedes reads also contribute to the propaganda campaign against the Republican forces, accusing them of atrocities against an innocent population (157-58). Unsurprisingly, this one-sided knowledge causes Matia at times to identify with her maternal clan on the island, as when she refers to "them" versus "us" during the children's gang war (84).

In other moments, however, Matia tries to defend her father's cause, such as when she tells Borja that "también mi padre se juega la vida por culpa *vuestra*," or when she forbids him from maligning her father (emphasis in original 51; 204). She even notices, as does Jorge de San Major, that while most people assume her hair to be dark, really it is tinged with red—a clear association with Manuel and with communism (174). The most important moment when Matia attempts to combat her grandmother and cousin's ideology comes when she befriends Manuel and explicitly rejects her own family. She tells him: "Me parece muy mal lo que os han hecho, lo que están hacienda en este pueblo, y todos los que viven en él, cobardes y asquerosos. . . Asquerosos hasta vomitar. Les odio. ¡Odio a todo el mundo de aquí, de esta isla entera, menos a ti!" (118). Matia's ignorance of the Republican cause and her abandonment deep in Nationalist territory, however, limit her possibilities for real choice. She recognizes that she really knows very little about her father, "(tan desconocido, tan ignorado; ni siquiera sabía si luchaba en el frente, si coloraba con los enemigos, o si huyó al extranjero)" and she admits that she has had to "inventarme un padre" (52). In the end, Matia is overwhelmed by the conservative forces surrounding her and is silenced by fear. She chooses complicity with the regime—a regime discredited and feminized by the character of doña Práxedes—, and this complicity stunts her growth in adulthood and continues to even years later in *La trampa*.

Both *Primera memoria* and *La trampa* use gender-coding to comment on the political situation in Spain. Doña Práxedes is characterized by a series of negative characteristics, such as duplicity and intransigence. These negative characteristics tied to her femininity serve to critique the Nationalist forces during the Civil War. Matia's father and Manuel, who represent the Republican side of the war, fare much better. They are able to set aside their personal interests and act for the greater good. They serve as a better model, though they ultimately are incapable

of helping Matia escape from her Nationalist grandmother. As will be shown below, a strikingly similar gender association occurs in Ana María Moix's *Julia*.

2009 marks the 40th anniversary of Ana María Moix's innovative novel *Julia*. Critics have identified *Julia* as a bridge work between the earlier generation of post-war women writers like Carmen Laforet, Ana María Matute and Carmen Martín Gaite and more recent women novelists (Brooksbank Jones 161). The novel is important because it is an early work that approaches taboo and controversial topics like child sexual abuse and lesbianism. This chapter acknowledges the importance of these themes and of the psychological deterioration of the protagonist, but like with *Primera memoria* and *La trampa,* it focuses primarily on the gendered political representations in the novel. Julia's mother and grandmother symbolize the oppressiveness and hypocrisy of the Francoist regime and of political, social and religious conservatism in general. Julia's father and grandfather, conversely, represent the defeated Republicans and anarchist liberalism. As such, a good deal of the novel repeatedly discredits Mamá and doña Lucía's power, showing it to be duplicitous, corrupt and destructive of the protagonist, Julia. Papá and don Julio fare much better, although their influence—as in *Primera memoria and La trampa*—is not enough to counteract the prevailing Francoist ideology of the era. Read as a political allegory, the mother and grandmother figures in *Julia* represent not so much real women as the tyrannical mother of progressive Enlightenment thought.

The narrative action of *Julia* transpires over the course of one night during which Julia, a chronic victim of insomnia, suffers through recollections of various traumas in her life. Because of her intense and irrational fear of the dark, the reader initially assumes that Julia is a little girl, but quickly is surprised to learn that she is a troubled twenty-year-old university student. Julia's

obsessive mental wanderings give clues to her current psychological frailty; from early and sustained rejection by her frivolous mother and indifference from her father, to a violent rape she suffered at age five, to the death of her brother, Rafael, the traumas she has suffered prove insurmountable. Julia turns to a series of women—her aunt Elena, her high school Latin professor Mabel, and her university literature professor Eva—who serve both as surrogate mothers and as timid forays into lesbianism, and yet each are disappointing and ultimately reject Julia. A five-year stay with her anarchist grandfather, don Julio, and his attempt to instill self-esteem and love-of-liberty in his granddaughter ultimately are not enough to help Julia overcome her situation. The reader learns that a year prior to the beginning of the novel Julia has attempted suicide. Julia's schizophrenic alter-ego, Julita, a representation of Julia from when she was raped at age five, dominates Julia's adult persona, and keeps her from attaining psychic unity. The novel ultimately proves circular, as the reader learns that this day will be like all others before, and the reader doubts Julia's ability to reconcile with Julita, who has come to dominate all aspects of Julia's life.

Critical treatment of the novel focuses on Julia's psychological deterioration. Sandra Schumm, for example, argues that Julia's increasing isolation, detachment from reality, and her experience of personal fragmentation with Julita evince a diagnosis of schizophrenia. Geraldine Nichols suggests, in fact, that the novel must be autobiographically based because otherwise the extremism of Julia's obsessions and neuroses alienate the reader (113). Other critics, like Christopher Soufas and Melissa Stewart, have focused on the narrative structure of *Julia* and in particular the odd but strategic choice of a third-person narrator in what otherwise appears as a very internalized and personal work. The dominating control of the third-person narrator, shown

in the lack of dialogue conventions which would give characters some autonomy, parallels Julia's own lack of psychological autonomy (219; Stewart 44).

The rape that Julia experiences as well as her incipient and timid experiments with lesbian relationships are narrated so obliquely that some early critics have missed them entirely. In a 1976 article, for example, Margaret Jones argues that the dominating characters in the novel are all women, overlooking entirely Víctor's attack of Julia (113). And Geraldine Nichols suggests that the trauma that creates Julita is learning of her mother's infidelity, which occurs in the same 24-hour period as the rape (118, 121). Gema Pérez-Sánchez proposes that *Julia* requires an "attuned reader" in order to fully grasp the themes of lesbianism and child sexual violence (93). The oblique references that require an attuned reading serve a dual purpose: they both evade the literary censorship still functioning in Spain in 1969 and they parallel the psychic breakdown that Julia undergoes by refusing the reader a transparent, coherent narrative. More recent critics of the novel focus much more thoroughly on the psychological repercussions of the violence that Julia experiences and of her lesbian relationships. Beverly Richard Cook, for example, explains that the psychological doubling caused by Julia's traumatic experiences represents women's initiation into patriarchal order: "The protagonist's violation exemplifies the rape trauma archetype that introduces the young woman into the patriarchal world. The female hero's search for emotional autonomy is replaced by her initiation into a society that denies freedom and power to women" (662). Amy Brookbank Jones agrees, suggesting that Víctor's injunction to Julia not to speak about the rape represents patriarchal silencing of women (81; Schumm 166). In spite of what appears to be a negative ending—Julia recognizes Julita's dominance and believes that all her days will repeat in endless monotony—Christopher Soufas proposes that acknowledging Julita's presence gives Julia at least the potential for recognizing

and coming to grips with her traumatic past instead of continuing to repress it (160). When Moix picks up the family's story in her 1973 novel *Walter ¿por qué te fuiste?* Julia has died, suggesting that if there was hope for her recovery at the end of *Julia*, it is tempered by a pessimism regarding one's ability to overcome the past.

Unlike *Primera memoria* and *La trampa* in which most critics recognize the political subtext, critics disagree about the importance of historical and political references in *Julia*. Melissa Stewart argues that socio-political context is eclipsed by popular references to movies and music, impeding Julia's attempt to remember her past due to an inability to tie this memory to a broader social context (48). Michael Thomas agrees that Moix abandons the social protest of the realist novels of the 1950s and 1960s, citing her brother Terence's despair at Moix's lack of political commitment (111). And yet, while Thomas says that "la novela de Moix no es de protesta social," he also adds "pero sí se pueden percibir en ella las causas de la enfermedad nacional" (111). While the Francoist regime of the 1960s was in a process of loosening the restrictions of the early post-war years, political and social repression were still part of social consciousness. Several other critics do stress this political and historical context of the work. Ellen Maycock's treatment of internal exile suggests, as does this present chapter, that Julia's mother and grandmother represent Francoism while her grandfather and father represent the defeated Republicans, internally exiled within Spain. Catherine Bellver argues that Moix's novel reflects a generational angst caused by the repressive atmosphere of Spain in the 1950s and 1960s (30).

Among critics who focus on the political and social ramifications of the novel, Christopher Soufas argues that *Julia* is both anti-regime and anti-generational. An extended explanation of Soufas's article is appropriate because this chapter takes his arguments to their

logical conclusions and makes obvious some ideas that Soufas only implies. His article suggests a reading of political allegory and comes close to proposing that *Julia* should be read as a novel of political memory. Soufas argues that Francoism favored the category of literary generations because of the tendency towards a groupthink mentality under the aegis of a strong leader. Literary generations therefore thwart efforts at personal "autonomy and self-development" (218). The controlling narrator in *Julia* parallels the Francoist regime of the time; while overt governmental oppression does not appear in the novel, the characters have internalized this oppression, which denies them any possibility of autonomy or individuality (219). The novel, accordingly, does not represent the malaise of Julia's generation in particular. Rather, the older generations simply replicate their problems in the younger generation because no one has come or can come to grips with the past (220). All are equally condemned to reproduce their problems. Julia's obsessions first with her mother and then with Elena, Mabel and Eva, symbolize Spain's obsequious relationship with the regime (224). As stated previously, Soufas is one of the few critics of *Julia* who sees Julita's presence at the end as potentially positive because Julia (and Spanish society) may finally confront her past rather than continuing to repress it (223).

If, as Soufas implies, the work can be read as a political allegory, then the three traumas that Julia suffers are quite telling. The rape inflicted upon Julia at a young age symbolizes the Civil War and the defeat of the Second Republic. Critics have repeatedly pointed out the double entendre of the rapist's name, Víctor, suggesting that he represents the victorious side of the war. Julia's capricious mother is specifically associated with Víctor (Maycock; Schumm 159). The indifference alternating with hyper-vigilance to which Julia's mother subjects her, represents the regime's control which, like Foucault's description of the panopticon, doesn't require an overt

physical presence to control Julia since it has been psychologically internalized. The third trauma, Rafael's death, represents the one person who tries to be an autonomous individual and free himself from Mamá and the regime. Rafael's sickness and death prevent him from becoming independent of his mother and from becoming an artist. His sickness makes him dependent on his mother, and she ultimately chooses the operation that kills him.

Linda Gould Levine states that "in Julia's grandmother Moix has brought together the most intolerant clichés that have been voiced about Spanish politics, literature, sexuality and women. To this degree, she follows in the long tradition of doña Perfectas and Bernarda Albas who have populated fiction for the past one hundred years" (307). Doña Lucía certainly resembles these characters in her vociferous and self-centered religiosity, her preoccupation for the "*qué dirán*," as well as in her attempts to impose a conservative social order on the other members of the family. Interestingly, and quite tellingly for this study, Moix seems to have transferred at least one anecdote of her own father's conservatism onto doña Lucía. José Castellet includes a short autobiographical piece by Moix in his 1970 *Nueve novísimos poetas españoles*. In this piece, "Poética," Moix explains how her brother, writer Terencio Moix, would read Sartre behind their father's back because: "mi padre—se llama Jesús, y es monárquico y sentimental—, [. . .] aseguraba que Sartre era la reencarnación del demonio y que sus lectores quedaban inmediatamente esclavizados al servicio de Satán" ("Poética" 217). In the fictionalized treatment of this episode, however, the tyrannical grandmother, doña Lucía, and not the defeated Republican Papá, reacts against the dangers of Sartre:

> La abuela revisaba los libros que leían ella y Ernesto. Conservaba el título y el nombre del autor en la memoria y cuando tío Ricardo aparecía por casa le preguntaba. Veneno para la juventud, declaró tío Ricardo en una ocasión en que la abuela le preguntó sobre

> *La náusea*, de un tal Sartre. La abuela hojeó el libro en cuestión y otros del mismo autor que halló en la habitación de Ernesto. Los destrozó y ordenó a Aurelia: haga el favor de quemar esa basura, Sartre es la reencarnación de Satanás. Pero Ernesto compró de nuevo los libros. (163)

Critics have commented on the possible autobiographical basis for *Julia*, and this episode certainly suggests that at least some anecdotes in the novel come from Moix's experiences. More importantly for this dissertation, however, is the phenomenon that the beliefs of a *pater familias* have been transferred onto a mother figure.

As the bourgeois owner of a Barcelona clothing factory, doña Lucía *de facto* supports the Franco regime and receives its benefits. However, she is characterized first and foremost by a reactionary religiosity that borders on self-parody. Throughout the novel, she inflicts her power over the children by ordering them to pray and to attend mass with her. When Julia's parents separate, doña Lucía appears to the children:

> Y les hizo rezar otro padrenuestro: para que no suceda lo irremediable, el escándalo. Los besó a los tres entre lágrimas y a continuación les dio a besar el crucifijo de oro que siempre colgaba de su cuello. Repartió tres estampitas de Santa Rita entre ellos y les ordenó: leed la oración nueve veces, de rodillas. Santa Rita es la patrona de los imposibles. (112)

Doña Lucía's prayers are connected to her power over the children—particularly over Julia—and to her preocupation for avoiding scandal: "La abuela Lucía le obligaba a rezar el rosario cada mañana y cada noche: uno, para la recuperación de Rafael, y otro, para evitar el escándalo" (128). When Rafael dies of a mysterious disease that has plagued him throughout his young life, doña Lucía again imposes her will upon the family: "Durante los tres meses de luto riguroso

impuesto por la abuela Lucía, no se encendió la radio, ni la televisión, ni el tocadiscos [. . .] También a Julia la vistieron con ropas negras, y cada día, por la tarde, la abuela Lucía la obligaba a acompañarla en sus oraciones" (150). Julia is particularly singled out for these prayer sessions with her grandmother—the other family members do not participate—, and they are torturous for Julia:

> Pero lo que más la aterrorizaba eran las tardes en la habitación de la abuela Lucía a donde la reclamaban para rezar. El dormitorio de la abuela le parecía a Julia una sala de tortura, una estancia ideal para enloquecer. [. . .] San Antonio, San Pancracio, San Nicolás, Santa Lucía, con los ojos en un plato que sostenía en la mano; la Virgen de Fátima, la Virgen de Lourdes, y otras. [. . .] Frente a la cama, una capillita, con un Cristo ensangrentado, acaba de completar el santuario de la abuela Lucía. (151)

Doña Lucía's prayers at this time are also telling of her obsession with social appearances and money and her conflation of these with good morality. Among prayers for Rafael and other family members, she adds "que no faltara trabajo en la fábrica, que se arreglara la situación de Mamá (el escándalo me mataría, decía) [. . .] y a nuestros enemigos, perdónalos, pero mantenlos lejos" (151).

Apart from her sincere, albeit misguided, religiosity, doña Lucía is best known for her hatred of don Julio—Julia's anarchist paternal grandfather who fought on the Republican side of the Civil War and who remains unrepentant. In a speech repeated several times throughout the novel, doña Lucía characterizes don Julio:

> La abuela Lucía era quien peor hablaba de don Julio: un ateo, Dios mío, un anarquista, peor aún que si hubiera sido comunista. Un sanguinario. Vosotros no podéis saberlo porque no vivisteis las terribles jornadas de la Semana Trágica. Barcelona era un río de

> sangre y todo por culpa de hombres desalmados como don Julio. ¿Qué culpa tienen las monjas y curas de que los políticos se tiren los trastos por la cabeza? Anarquista, y encima grosero. (85)

Doña Lucía's repeated attempts to discredit don Julio backfire, as Julia and her brother, Rafael, admire this larger-than-life figure. In spite of some initial misgivings, Rafael later comments to Julia about their grandfather: "Tenías razón, es un tío. No se perdía ninguna de las reuniones que el abuelo organizaba en casa, por las noches, después de cenar, [. . .] Rafael escuchaba con interés y observaba a todos con los ojos muy abiertos. Luego comentaba con Julita: lo de las bombas es cierto. Por lo visto don Julio era un pez gordo, un dirigente" (115). Not surprisingly, Ernesto, the one sibling strongly allied with Mamá, does not admire don Julio, and the feeling is mutual as don Julio takes to calling him "Carne de cañón" (103). As will later be argued, don Julio represents both existential and political liberty versus the tyranny of doña Lucía and Mamá.

Julia's mother lacks both the religious devotion and the political commitment of doña Lucía, and yet the tyranny she wields over Julia proves much more destructive. Mamá's strong alliance with doña Lucía, as well as her material benefits from the family's factory, also ally her to the Franco regime. Schumm has suggested that Mamá has been unable to become independent of her own mother and remains dominated by her (163), but in many ways Mamá does live independently of her mother; she simply conducts her affairs quietly. Both Mamá and doña Lucía believe in keeping family scandals quiet, suggesting a bourgeois class that inflicts a false morality on others and conducts its own sins quietly:

> La abuela Lucía encontraba inmoralidades en casi todo el repertorio de amistades y parientes. Quien no tenía una hija que llegaba a casa pasadas las diez, tenía un hijo gandul que iba por mal camino, o una esposa adúltera. A Fulanito de tal le habían dejado

> en estado una hija soltera. La abuela se escandalizaba: eso le pasa a una hija o nieta mía, y la mato o no la vuelvo a ver en mi vida. Julia pensaba que de no ser tan cobarde le daría a la abuela el gusto de echarla de su asquerosa presencia. Mamá daba la razón en todo a la abuela Lucía. Claro, ya sabemos que todos tenemos que callar, pero las cosas se hacen a escondidas, no hay que armar escándalos y dar que decir a las malas lenguas. (158)

The irony, of course, is that Julia's family—with the exception of the unplanned pregnancy—boasts each of these sins. Julia has come home late, Ernesto hides his homosexuality from his family, and Mamá has at least one lover.

Mamá is characterized primarily by her vanity, self-centeredness, and infidelity. She is also manipulative. From the extreme and most often rejected adoration for her mother during Julia's childhood, Julia's attitude toward her mother as an adolescent and young woman turns to bitter resentment and hatred. This antipathy culminates in her suicide attempt, which she regards as an act of revenge against both her mother and grandmother. The third-person narrator begins a campaign against Julia's mother early in the novel. As a child, Julia would feign sick to stay home from school, and would wait outside her mother's bedroom hoping that Mamá would want to play with her. Even when the mother does give Julia attention, it is negative; she refers to Julia as "la fea," for example (37). On the rare occasions when Mamá wants to be entertained by Julia, even then the mother's games seem vindictive and cruel:

> A veces Mamá no tenía nada que hacer y a media mañana gritaba Julita, Julita. Entonces ella corría hacia el dormitorio, abría la puerta y se lanzaba sobre la cama. Mamá la descalzaba y ella se metía dentro de la cama sin desvestirse. Mamá remordía las orejas,

> las nariz, le hacía cosquillas. Julita se ahogaba, no podía contener la risa. Se cubría el pecho con los brazos para protegerse del ataque de Mamá [. . .]. (17-18)

This "ataque" parallels Víctor's later real attack in which Julia also tries to defend herself. Julia's inability to breathe also occurs during the rape and at other traumatic moments when Julia feels corralled or threatened. The other game that Mamá at times plays with Julia is to pretend that she is going to throw Julia out of the fifth floor window, but as a child Julia is so desperate for her mother's attention that she craves even these games (37-38).

From the indifference and neglect of Julia's childhood, Mamá, together with doña Lucía, comes to exert more and more control over Julia's life: "Fue después de la muerte de Rafael, cuando Mamá empezó a querer a Julia.[. . .] Mamá ortogaba su cariño a rachas" (17). As a young adult, Mamá's interest in Julia exclusively involves interrogating her. Mealtimes become unbearable for Julia as Mamá and doña Lucía single her out for criticism and interrogation especially regarding her whereabouts and her personal appearance, which they do not find feminine enough: "El resto [de la casa] se le caía encima, sobre todo el comedor, durante las horas de la comida. Mamá empezaba por demostrarle el control que tenía sobre ella, la mayor parte de las veces gratuitamente, como si quisiera darle a entender que aún podía ejercerlo con más severidad" (41). Mamá insists on total control over her children; when deciding on whether or not to submit Rafael to a brain operation, Mamá tells Papá that "se hará lo que yo decida," after which Rafael promptly dies (142). Again, when Mamá does not want Julia to associate with her university professor, Eva, she declares to her husband that "de mis hijos mando yo" (204). Mamá's declarations of power are deceptive; up until the 1970s, fathers had the legal right to adopt children out without their mother's permission, and the *patria potestad* was not rescinded until 1970 (Arkinstall 49; Telo 89-90). Despite a penal and economic code that greatly

favored fathers, however, *Julia* suggests that the maternal figures, Mamá and doña Lucía, are the ones who wield true power, and that this power has become tyrannical.

Against doña Lucía and Mamá, who are both implicitly and explicitly representatives of the Franco regime, *Julia* juxtaposes the much more positive male characters, don Julio and Papá. In her article on *Julia*, Ellen Maycock points out several representations of political exile in the novel. Don Julio, the unrepentant anarchist, exiles himself from Barcelona to a small town in the Pyrenees because he cannot or will not cope with having lost the Civil War. Papá, according to Maycock, represents the defeated Republicans living within the regime and being forced to continually compromise with this regime in order to survive. Mamá is the "Víctor"—a double entendre of the rapist's name with whom she is associated—while Papá is the loser of the Civil war. Julia's parents' marriage is described using battle and competitive terminology: "Era como si Mamá y Papá se entretuvieran jugando una interminable partida de naipes y ellos, Julita y Rafael, fueran las cartas. [. . .] Don Julio aseguraba que Mamá tenía ganada la partida" (117). Julia resents Papá's return to the family home after a long separation from his wife, because "aquel regreso significaba el triunfo de Mamá" (34). Papá is the figure who could have curbed the unjust power that Mamá and doña Lucía exercise over Julia, and his defeat "tuvo como resultado aumentar la supremacía de Mamá y de la abuela Lucía para hacer y deshacer cuanto les viniera en gana" (190). Julia comes to resent her father for his impotence and his willingness to collude with the injustice of the regime.

Papá's father, don Julio, offers to his granddaughter, Julia, the one possibility of eschewing her mother and grandmother's control and of insisting on her own freedom. In spite of doña Lucía and Mamá's attempts at character assassination, don Julio is the most positive character in the novel—both to Julia and to the reader. Despite a gruff appearance and

commanding demeanor, don Julio takes a genuine interest in his granddaughter and tries to improve her self-esteem. He tries to instill in her his own anarchist principles: "Una de las cosas que voy a enseñar a mi nieta es demostrarle que puede vivir sin que nadie gobierne sus actos" (93-94). Against her tyrannical mother and grandmother, don Julio encourages Julia to demand her liberty: "Tú por ahora trata de aprender una sola cosa: eres libre, nada más. Únicamente somos libres. En nombre de esa libertad uno tiene el derecho, incluso la obligación, de matar si es preciso" (97). Don Julio is not a perfect character; his education of Julia borders on narcissism, and much like doña Lucía, he speaks to Julia in commands even when teaching her about her freedom. In her study of doubles in the novel, in fact, Catherine Bellver argues that don Julio is principally interested in creating an alter ego of himself in Julia (39). And yet don Julio is the person most capable of combating Mamá and doña Lucía's tyranny. While doña Lucía's attitude toward don Julio has already been explained, don Julio's reaction towards doña Lucía and Julia's mother is equally vitriolic: "Don Julio aseguraba que Papá nunca debió casarse con una hija de aquella arpía: una beatona insoportable, una hipócrita, una ricachona asquerosa, y su hija una estúpida. [. . .] Matarlas, eso hay que hacer, gritaba el abuelo con tono virulento, matarlas" (99-100). Julia likes that her grandfather defies her controlling mother and grandmother: "A Julita le gustaba que el abuelo hablara mal de Ernesto, de la abuela, y en el fondo se alegraba también de que lo hiciera sobre Mamá. Enmudecía en cuanto el abuelo empezaba a lanzar insultos contra toda la familia, pero en su interior sentía una profunda alegría" (103). When Papá comes to take Julia back to Barcelona, don Julio is sincerely upset, realizing the danger this implies for Julia: "Te van a amarrar, Julia. Debes tener cuidado y prestar atención. Esa gente es capaz de destruir cinco años en un par de semanas. No lo consientas" (125). Both Julia and the reader realize that don Julio is correct in his prediction.

As a young woman Julia bitterly resents her mother and grandmother's increasing control over her, and she timidly and mostly unsuccessfully attempts to rebel against them. She refuses to dress femininely, which irritates her mother, and she finally refuses to attend mass with her grandmother. Even in this one victory, Julia's mother must show her supremacy: "Mamá le soltó una bofetada: me da igual que vayas o no a misa, pero te prohíbo faltar el respeto a tu abuela" (162). It goes without saying that Julia's conservative family opposes any involvement in the student protests of the era, and her mother attempts to tighten her control on Julia: "No eres una niña para poder pegarte, pero sí tienes edad para verme obligada a vigilarte" (201). Julia's most rebellious act is to begin a relationship with her college professor, Eva, who, in addition to being her father's former girlfriend, also represents free-thinking and has ties to don Julio. Eva represents a challenge to the regime's control because she teaches Julia to think critically and to value her own opinions—two activities that contrast with Julia's prior education. Mamá forbids Julia to see Eva, but Julia ignores her mother and continues seeing Eva clandestinely. When Julia's deception is discovered, her mother promises her: "No pondrás los pies en la calle, sola, mientras viva" (211). Mamá's extreme reaction can be understood on one plane as jealousy against Eva; if Eva and Julia are lovers, then their relationship represents the loss of Mamá's primacy over Julia. On a political plane, however, Eva's association with don Julio, Papá and the Second Republic also represent a threat to the continued primacy of the Franco regime. Julia wishes she could yell to her mother and grandmother that "os aborezco y no tolero vuestra asquerosa autoridad," but instead she attempts suicide as a way of getting revenge against her family. Interestingly, Julia chooses a drug cocktail made specifically from her mother and grandmother's pills (213).

Christopher Soufas and others advocate that the end of *Julia* is ambivalent. Julia appears completely defeated, unable to impose her autonomous will either externally on her family or internally on her alter ego, Julita. Soufas is correct that if Julia can stop repressing her memories of the traumas she has suffered—which represent the traumas that Spain experienced with the war and the Franco regime—, she stands a chance at overcoming them. The end suggests, however, that Julia will be unable to come to terms with her past. Julia's disillusionment with her mother and grandmother—representatives of the rightist regime—does not convince the reader that she will be able to overcome their control. While the novel utilizes the feminized figures of tyranny—the mother and grandmother—in order to criticize the unjust control exercised over Julia, the more positive masculine counterparts, don Julio and Papá, are ultimately unable to aid Julia in her fight for freedom.

By now, the correlations between *Primera memoria, Julia* and to a lesser extent *La trampa,* should be obvious. Both *Primera memoria* and *Julia* are *Bildungsromans,* focusing on the progressive deterioration of their female protagonists, who are slowly destroyed under the oppressive atmosphere of the Civil War and post-war Spain. The works subscribe to a "two Spains" understanding of Spanish history, the Civil War and the Franco regime, which divides the country into liberals and conservatives. They further use gender coding to represent each side. Matia's grandmother and Julia's mother and grandmother represent the victors of the Civil war: the Franco regime. The representations of these women, which rely on stereotypes about women and particularly older women, bolster the negative portrayal of the regime in the novels. Doña Práxedes devours the objects of her gaze—either the food (grapes, apricots) that she eats or Matia and the townspeople who are subject to her devouring vision. Both she and doña Lucía are portrayed as hypocritical, extremely partial to their own interests, and willing to manipulate both

people and religion to attain their personal goals. For her part, Julia's mother is narcissistic and capricious. She refuses to set aside her own desires for the good of another person. These women represent the chaos and threat that femininity represents to legitimate (masculine) political rule, which requires instead justice, the ability to be disinterested, and impassionate reason. The feminization of the Franco regime is then itself a prominent tool of the critique of these works. In the next chapter, it will be shown that this political metaphor does not lose its potency after the death of Franco or the Spanish transition to democracy. Almudena Grandes, in her treatment of Spanish history and the Civil War, also finds the tyrannical mother (and grandmother) to be an effective tool for discrediting Francoism and political conservatism in general.

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[1] The second novel follows Manuel after his release from the reformatory. Joan Lipman Brown argues that the repeating theme of good versus evil is what unites the three novels to form a trilogy, but even she acknowledges that *Los soldados lloran de noche* does not seem to fit with the other two novels (30-31). She explains that the idea of the works forming a trilogy first appears in Matute's prologue to *Primera memoria*. It is this explanation of intent, even when two of the novels had not been written, that gives lasting power to the idea that they form a coherent unity (20).

[2] While Ana María Moix's *Julia* does not include specific fairy tales as metatext, Emilie Bergmann argues that Moix's use of the Freudian family script is meta-textual in *Julia* and keeps the narrator from exploring more liberating aspects of lesbianism. The Freudian family script is its own sort of fairy tale or myth (148, 151). Soliño demonstrates that, in other works, Moix does analyze the ramifications of children's literature (265). I would argue that in *Julia* another text that Moix rewrites is the Demeter/Persephone myth. It explores what happens to the daughter when the mother does not save her from the underworld and even colludes with the daughter's rapist.

[3] Soliño rebukes Bettelheim's interpretations for their Freudian sexism and asks why children must split their mother into good and bad and yet not their father? (39-40).

[4] She demonstrates, for example, how in earlier versions of "Snow White," Snow White's mother simply abandons the child. In later additions, this mother has become a stepmother and evil queen who personally tries to murder the girl. The Grimm brothers also embellish the ending, having the evil stepmother dance over burning coals at Snow White's wedding (Soliño 33-36).

[5] Even Simone de Beauvoir, often criticized for her negative portrayal of motherhood, portrays negative aspects of motherhood in order to show how patriarchal roles constrict and demean women.

[6] Janet Díaz, in an often-referenced work on Matute, says that Matute's mother, while indeed being the "classic middle-class wife" also supported Matute's literary goals and saved many of her works from childhood. Matute also seems to have been close to her grandmother (19-21, 23).

[7] Gallagher argues that while Matute privileges the Civil War as a major theme of *Primera memoria*, her use of the Cain and Abel motif tends to dehistoricize and depoliticize the war, effectively rendering the war, and war in general, an existential and not a political issue (79). This may be another reason that the novel was able to bypass censorship.

[8] Marie-Linda Ortega characterizes Matia's deceased mother as a liberal woman, and yet there is not enough textual evidence to support her characterization as a political one (106). She does seem to eschew her mother's wishes and marries a liberal man for love, not money. She may be a rebellious spirit within the family, but neither is the

marriage portrayed as a particularly happy one. Matia does not remember her parents ever being together, and her mother certainly does not serve as a positive role for Matia. The mother's representation is highly ambiguous.

[9] The recognition does not appear to be mutual. While Matia connects her own gendered oppression with the social oppression occurring in the town, no one in the town sympathizes with Matia's marginalized position.

[10] The episode with the grapes is analogous to the later episode with the apricots in *La trampa*.

[11] In each of the above quotations, the comments enclosed in parentheses are interjections by Matia the adult narrator instead of Matia the child narrator, who narrates most of the work.

[12] Two critics who do recognize the political implications of Matia's choice are Anne Hardcastle and Marie-Linda Ortega. Hardcastle argues that an acceptance of adulthood as portrayed in the novel is an acceptance of the Franco regime (398), while Ortega says that Matia's desire not to choose sides is a political choice for the regime (111).

CHAPTER 3

RECUPERATING THE MOTHER: THE RECOVERY OF HISTORICAL MEMORY IN *MALENA ES UN NOMBRE DE TANGO* (1994) AND *EL CORAZÓN HELADO* (2007) BY ALMUDENA GRANDES

Only twenty years separate the publication of *La trampa* and *Julia* from the first novel of Almudena Grandes, yet these twenty years have proven decisive in contemporary Spanish history. Between 1969, when the first two novels appeared, and 1989, when Grandes published her erotic best-seller *Las edades de Lulú*, Spain witnessed the death of a dictator and his 36-year dictatorship, the ensuing transition to democracy, several failed coup attempts, and the electoral victory of the long-banned socialist party PSOE. For women in Spain, the changes were perhaps most dramatic. The Constitution of 1978 guaranteed legal equality under Article 14; in addition, the successive administrations of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s abolished some of the more restrictive Francoist-era laws affecting women, such as legalized employment discrimination, the *patria potestas,* and head-of-household laws.[1] Grandes's novels certainly reflect the many changes occurring in Spain over this period; she has set her novels during the *movida* culture of the 1980s and the *cultura del pelotazo* of the 1990s. Yet, as this chapter argues, Grandes maintains contact with earlier novels as well—especially in her employment of the tyrannical mother. This chapter analyzes two of Grandes's novels, *Malena es un nombre de tango* (1994) and her most recent novel, the monumental *El corazón helado* (2007). These novels attempt at least partially to untangle the gender coding seen in *Primera memoria, La trampa* and *Julia.* Accordingly, her novels no longer maintain the strict association between masculinity and the political liberalism of the Second Republic. She introduces, for example, a Republican

grandmother figure who serves as a positive role model for her protagonists. At the same time, Grandes continues to use the tyrannical mother figure to critique the Nationalist cause and Francoist regime, thereby enabling the association between femininity and sociopolitical conservatism. What results is a feminized Cain and Abel struggle of "two Spains" in *Malena es un nombre de tango,* as well as a portrayal of Francoism alive and well even into the twenty-first century through the use of the tyrannical mother, Angélica, in *El corazón helado*.

Unsurprisingly, critical treatment of Grandes's works questions this dualistic treatment of women. On the one hand, her novels frequently portray women protagonists struggling against oppressive social and sexual mores, and thus they seem to advocate for women's autonomy.[2] In *Las edades de Lulú,* for example, Lulú fights (unsuccessfully) to define an active sexuality for women, while the four protagonists of *Atlas de geografía humana* (1998) more successfully overcome the trials they each face.[3] On the other hand, critics have accused Grandes of simply reifying the heterosexual couple, suggesting that what these protagonists need more than anything else is a good man. Accordingly, her novels offer reactionary portrayals of women even as they are cloaked in the guise of women's personal—and particularly sexual—liberation. Jackeline Cruz, for example, argues that both *Las edades de Lulú* (1989) and *Malena* "afirma[n] la necesidad de que la mujer se aleje de un camino de promiscuidad sexual, rebeldía e independencia, para elegir a un compañero adecuado que la sepa guiar en el papel que más seguridad pueda ofrecer a la mujer: el de buena esposa y buena madre" (158). In the introduction to their work, Ángeles Encinar and Kathleen Glen demonstrate that heterosexual love is the basis of *Atlas de geografía* as well, and that the moral of this novel is that "love makes the world go round" (15-16). Perhaps the most biting and long-lasting criticism of Grandes's treatment of women comes from Barbara Morris and Lou Charnon-Deutsch. They

caution against assuming that women writers will provide anti-patriarchal representations of women, and—using *Las edades de Lulú* as their example—they argue that this erotic novel bolsters phallocentric culture, merely with a woman's name on the cover (310-311).[4] Grandes denounces traditional marriage as a vehicle for women's fulfillment, yet her novels consistently locate women's fulfillment in relationships with men.

Grandes's ambivalence towards women characters particularly reveals itself in her treatment of motherhood. If the female protagonists tend to evoke great sympathy in readers, secondary female characters—mothers, grandmothers and sisters—often are manipulating, arbitrary, inconstant and controlling. Grandes's mothers defend the social *status quo* even if such a position hurts their daughters. They provoke eating disorders through their criticism—as in the story "Malena, una vida hervida"—in order to force daughters to conform to female beauty standards. In "Amor de madre," the mother drugs her daughter in order to maintain control over her. Alicia Redondo Goicoechea says of these stories collected in *Modelos de mujer*: "En esta colección, lo que más abunda, en cuanto a personajes, son los de mujeres mayores, malas, mezquinas, incluso asesinas, de las que sus víctimas, que suelen ser más jóvenes, se tienen que liberar" (243). Sometimes mothers side with abusive ex-husbands at the expense of their own daughters, like Ana's mother in *Atlas de geografía humana* and Maribel's in *Los aires difíciles* (2002). Summing up this tendency, Encinar and Glen comment that in Grandes's works "abundan personajes que han mantenido relaciones problemáticas con sus madres—por falta de amor o comprensión—y, en consecuencia, intentan compensar el desamor de su infancia dándose con avidez al sexo y a la búsqueda de amor" (15).[5]

While most mothers in Grandes's works control and oppress their daughters, the mothers in *Malena es un nombre de tango* and *El corazón helado* reach the status of tyrannical mothers

as defined in the introduction to this study. Like Moix and Matute before her, Grandes offers a critique of Spanish history and politics of the twentieth century from a political perspective at odds with the Francoist regime.[6] Rosalía Cornejo-Parriego studies the historical panorama offered in *Malena*, showing that it spans the Restoration to the Democracy and offers Malena's family as a microcosm of the Spanish family (44-45). Alicia Rueda-Acedo goes further and suggests that Grandes's entire literary output narrates Spanish history of the twentieth century (249). Of all of Grandes's works, *El corazón helado* most engages with her politics and the "recuperation" of Spanish memory; as such, it is the culmination of a series of novels that offer dissident Republican representations of Spanish history. Because of these novels' emphasis on re-interpreting Spanish history and politics, and contradicting official Francoist history, the oppressive mothers in these novels take on a metaphorical importance as representatives of the Francoist regime.

In a marked departure from the 1970s and 1980s, interest in "recuperating" the previously silenced stories of the Spanish Civil War and the Franco regime has been rising in the last two decades.[7] A 1977 amnesty law freed the last political prisoners of the Franco era, but that same law also prohibited citizens and the government from investigating and prosecuting alleged war crimes and human rights abuses of the Franco regime. This legislation, while imperfect, arguably helped foster a non-violent transition from dictatorship to democracy (Davis 863, 867). Fear of another military uprising persisted until at least 1982, and since many of the same Francoist beaurocrats managed the transition, immunity from prosecution was a prerequisite for their participation in the process (Preston *Triumph of Democracy* 224-225). This resulted in a *desmemoria* or *pacto de olvido* that glossed over the regime's crimes in exchange for a peaceful political and economic transition. Beginning in the 1990s, however, a new generation of

Spaniards who were not raised fearing political reprisals began to question the *pacto del olvido* and to introduce into public discourse the still-open wounds of the war and the dictatorship. Novels, movies and documentaries began to appear that represent the losses and injustices faced by the defeated Republicans of the war and their lives under Franco (Davis 874).[8] In 2000, journalist Emilio Silva founded the *Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica* (ARMH) after locating his Republican grandfather's remains in an unmarked mass grave. The ARMH at first functioned as a non-governmental organization, but in recent years it has—with the help of the United Nations—pushed the Spanish government to support efforts to uncover Nationalist mass graves containing the remains of Republican supporters. This struggle has received widespread national and international media attention, particularly when poet Federico García Lorca's family initially opposed exhuming his body from the unmarked grave where he was buried after his execution in 1936.[9] Cinta Ramblado-Minero cites ten current internet-based organizations dedicated to the recuperation of memory about the Spanish Civil War ("Novelas" 379)

In 2007 the movement earned a victory when the Spanish parliament passed the *Ley de la Memoria Histórica*, which promises government support in preserving the memory of those of both sides who suffered during the war and ensuing dictatorship. The law, at least a partial victory for the left, continues to incite controversy. For example, the ARMH complained that the conservative administration of *Partido Popular* leader José Luís Aznar refused to facilitate the release of documents that would help people locate missing family members (Davis 867). Even under the more liberal PSOE administration of José Luís Rodríguez Zapatero, access to military records and closed archives has not been forthcoming. In 2008, renowned judge Baltazar Garzón ordered archives to be opened, though he was later judged to have overstepped the boundaries of

his position and forced to rescind the decision (Keeley).[10] The ultra-right group *Manos limpias* has pursued Garzón for his action, and just recently (September 9, 2009) Garzón was ordered to testify before the Spanish Supreme Court regarding his alleged overreach (Yoldi). This case has made memory politics in Spain more visible and increasingly polemical. A group of former *Sección Femenina* members named *La Nueva Andadura,* for example, is countering works that criticize their historical role and close association with Francoism, and are writing their own history (Enders 386-387). Jo Labanyi points out some reactionary revisionist histories that have entered the bookstores in recent years (96). Both sides recognize the importance of winning the battle of public opinion, since current attempts at historical revision may eventually crystallize as collective memory. This may signal a shift from an unreflective confidence in the ability to recover the past to a more nuanced understanding of the nature of collective or national memory.

Almudena Grandes's progressive political leanings are no secret. From her humorous video clip "La pescatera," promoting the political party *Izquierda Unida,* to her numerous interviews and public statements supporting the 2007 *Ley de la Memoria Histórica,* Grandes has unabashedly advocated leftist politics in Spain. A firm ally of the ARMH, Grandes was among a group of prominent Spaniards who, in September of 2007, delivered a petition, comprising five hundred signatures of the country's intellectual elite who supported the law. Her advocacy of the law stems from her commitment to the Second Republic:

> En los años 30 este país era un país modélico, estaba a la cabeza de Europa con una cultura y una legislación impresionante, y de todo eso no se ha vuelto a hablar. Sólo se dice que la República son obreros desalmados quemando iglesias. Sobre eso habría que escribir, nos están robando a los españoles una parte de nuestra historia. Antes de

> morirme me gustaría vivir una III República, pero es difícil porque no hay ninguna corriente de opinión organizada que se pueda oponer a la monarquía. (Anabitarte)

Most recently, Grandes has inherited the *El País* editorial column once written by the late Manuel Vásquez Montalbán; Grandes commented in a recent interview that she is aware of being the only writer left of the PSOE to occupy such a prominent place in the paper (Maccuici and Bonatto 141). Her political commitment also shines through in *Malena* and *El corazón helado*, which give voice to the stories of defeated Republicans. Grandes's progressive ideology impacts the way that she represents Spanish history, and in particular the role that women characters play in this representation.

Malena es un nombre de tango captures both the ambivalent representations of women that have disquieted literary critics of Grandes's works, and the recuperation of Spanish history that is at the forefront of Grandes's novelistic agenda. In particular, the representation both of women and of the "two Spains" construction of history in this novel are tied up in its treatment of motherhood. The protagonist, Malena, overcomes oppressive sexual taboos aimed at women and creates a definition of motherhood that frees her from Francoist *ángel del hogar* propaganda. She does this principally through her unfolding knowledge about dissident women—her erstwhile silenced Republican grandmother Soledad and her rebellious aunt Magda—who serve as alternative positive role models for Malena. A liberating subjectivity for women is tied directly to Malena's ability to "recuperate" her forgotten family history. Simultaneously, though, the novel relies on and exploits negative representations of motherhood—representations that arose from the legacy of progressive Enlightenment and modern writers—even as it attempts to create a more positive vision of motherhood.

Malena, the first-person narrator and protagonist of this novel, is born into a prominent, but progressively obsolete, family in 1960, during what has been called the *apertura de España*, but still firmly in the midst of the Franco dictatorship. The novel is a *Bildungsroman* which focuses particularly on Malena's sexual and maternal development. Malena is uncomfortable in her body; for example, as a child she prays to the Virgin to become a boy (16). As an adolescent and adult, she struggles unsuccessfully to exercise a sexuality that is both accepted by society yet also pleasurable to her. This struggle leads her through a series of failed relationships, and culminates with her losing her husband to her twin sister. An attentive listener, she learns of the other "losers" in the family—in the novel called "los de la sangre de Rodrigo" due to a longstanding family curse. These losers include her bigamist grandfather and her maternal aunt Magda. They also include her paternal grandmother Soledad, the widow of an assassinated Republican judge, and her uncle Tomás, who has to hide his homosexuality. A valuable present from her grandfather finally helps Malena liberate herself from the oppression of her mother and her sister (both named Reina). By the end of the novel, Malena has created both a sexual and maternal identity free of social and familial control.

Malena's coming-of-age parallels Spain's own maturation, as the novel narrates the waning years of the dictatorship, the transition, the *movida* and the *cultura del pelotazo* of the 1990s (Rueda Acedo 266-267). Malena's family functions as a microcosm of the Spanish nation and especially of the "two Spains" construct which posits a Cain and Abel-like conflict between leftist and rightist factions of Spain and which leads inexorably to the Spanish Civil War. Grandes feminizes the construct, however, and this story principally narrates the struggle between the Reinas and the Magdalenas in the family. As mentioned above, in the spirit of the "two Spains" image of Spanish twentieth-century history, Malena's family is divided into

winners and losers. The winners—specifically the female genealogy of women named Reina—adapt themselves to Francoist mores and learn to manipulate these rules for their own gain. The losers—often more authentic family members with more leftist leanings—pay dearly. They never learn to manipulate the social rules left over from the dictatorship and are repeatedly punished for not conforming to society and their family's expectations. There are numerous doubles in the novel that suggest a reading of the "two Spains" construction of history. There are two families—the legitimate and the illegitimate—two families, two houses, two pregnancies and numerous sets of opposed twins (Cornejo-Parriego 45). These doubles show both the winning and losing sides of the Fernández de Alcántara family and of post Civil War Spain.

The use of the Two Spain construction of Spanish history and politics create the strict dualism about women in the novel, though the dualism is inverted from traditional concepts of good and bad women. Alicia Redondo Goicoechea names these two categories the "brujas" and the "hadas," and she also notes that "brujas" in Grandes's case refer to women who are able to ally themselves with traditional mores about women, while the "hadas" refer to those women who struggle against these mores and are more sexually transgressive (243). The four-generation line of women named Reina—aptly named as they impose rules upon others—represent the conservative Spain of the "two Spains" historical construction. They are intransigent, manipulative and impose a hypocritical morality on their daughters and sisters. They are also specifically identified with conservative Spanish politics of the dictatorship and the democracy. Opposite the Reinas, Soledad, Magda and Malena embody both a more liberal concept of motherhood and of politics. While Magda rejects motherhood entirely, Soledad functions as an important counter voice to pronatalist discourses, and both of these women aid Malena in constructing her own versions of woman and motherhood.

The two competing visions of motherhood represent the conflict between Old and New Spain. Maternal martyrdom, sexual prudishness and complete dedication to children comprise the first and are represented by the three Reinas. The second—represented by Soledad and Magdalena—explores the ambivalences that motherhood can represent for many women. The Reinas espouse a naturalized concept of motherhood based on the nineteenth-century *ángel del hogar*. This understanding located women's biological and spiritual destiny in legitimate motherhood. Mary Nash has documented how religious justification of the early twentieth century was replaced by medical discourses that justified defining women and their reproductive capacity ("Un/Contested Identities" 32). The Francoist regime, however, continued to offer both religious discourses alongside scientific ones. The Virgin Mary—represented as a passive and sacrificing mother—was offered as the ideal woman to whom Spanish mothers should aspire, though Susan Suleiman cautions against over-estimating the symbolic importance given to mothers, noting instead that "the mother is elevated precisely to the extent that she prostrates herself before her son" (369).

Malena's grandmother Reina appears to conform to the religious exaltation given to motherhood under Francoism. Magda comments about Reina and the constrictive roles apportioned to women at the time:

> Luego venía siempre el segundo misterio del mismo rosario, la señora es una santa, la señora es una santa, la señora es una santa. . . Es complicado, ser hija al mismo tiempo de un cabrón y de una santa, [. . .] porque, claro, hay que elegir, no se les puede querer a los dos igual, y si eres una niña es peor, porque después te toca aprenderte el resumen, todos los hombres son iguales, todos cerdos, y nosotras tontas, por tragar con lo que

> tragamos, y santas, sobre todo santas, todas santas, [. . .] Nosotras teníamos que ser como mamá, unas santas, porque era eso lo que tocaba. (466-467)

Continuing with this religious idealization of motherhood, Reina also utilizes the ideal of maternal martyrdom. When Magda asks why she did not leave her bigamist husband, Reina replies: "Lo hice por vosotros, sólo por vosotros" (470). Malena's mother, Reina, also conforms to the maternal expectations for women. Magda repeatedly calls her an "estampita," showing how she acts out the pious figures on religious cards (475, 485).

Malena's sister Reina in particular attempts to conform to social expectations for mothers. She accepts definitions of motherhood that seek to locate all of woman's fulfillment and use of energy there: "Reina estaba embarazada y le parecía maravilloso tener el hijo que siempre había deseado tener para que prestara a su vida el auténtico sentido y la completara en la dimensión más trascendental en la que puede realizarse una mujer como ser humano" (390). In addition, she believes that the physical experience of pregnancy can only be positive, and that "después de algo tan importante, mi relación con mi cuerpo habrá cambiado para siempre" (400). Once her daughter is born, Reina maintains that she lives entirely for her, and this level of attention at first seduces Malena's own son, Javier. He compares Reina's traditional motherhood to Malena's less-than-perfect version. Among the comparisons that Jaime makes between his mother and his aunt, he criticizes his mother for not turning down the covers of his bed, for not fixing him special lunches, for going out with friends, "porque Reina le había contado que no salía nunca sola por ahí desde que nació su hija" (506). He also criticizes Malena for wearing makeup, black stockings, high heels, and for not chastising him enough when he is bad. Finally, he criticizes her for working, "porque Reina le había dicho que no trabajaba para poder disfrutar plenamente de su hija" (506). From his negative description, the reader learns that Reina's

mothering beliefs include a dedication to domestic work, isolation in the home, a rejection of sexuality, intervention in the child's daily activities, and total dedication to the child. What is interesting is that Reina maintains this understanding of motherhood well into the Spanish democracy, suggesting that the political transition has changed less than anticipated.

The dualistic portrayal of motherhood offered in *Malena es un nombre de tango* does not itself suggest that the three Reinas represent the tyrannical mother. The historical construction of the "two Spains" is certainly apparent in this portrayal of motherhood, however, and the political associations made between the two types of motherhood do ultimately support that the Reina's are tyrannical mothers. The Reina's are not simply overbearing mothers, oppressive mothers or even victimized mothers who have interiorized Francoist discourse about women. They are all of these things, and they also embody the illegitimate power of the Francoist regime and of political conservatism in general. They are the symbol of this illegitimate power in the novel. Unlike Soledad and Magda, for whom the novel expends great detail describing the historical context of their lives in order for the reader to sympathize with their struggles, the work makes no effort to understand the Reinas on a human level. Rather, their one-dimensional portrayal of villains serves as a foil for the more positive women. The Reinas therefore serve a metaphorical role in the novel as a stand-in for the Francoist regime. It is this role, combined with the judgment of political conservatism communicated through the novel that elevates these characters to the level of the tyrannical mother as seen in *Julia*, *Primera memoria* and *La trampa*.

Unsurprisingly, motherhood reflects the Reinas religious, social and political values. Malena's maternal grandmother is specifically allied with the Catholic Church and the Nationalist side of the war. Malena first realizes that she comes from a wealthy family when she

sees her grandmother's name engraved in her convent school as an important donor. In contrast, Malena's wealthy grandfather paradoxically wants the Republican side to win (117). In spite of potential loss of land and money, the Republic would allow him to divorce his wife in order to marry his true love, Teófila. Because of the Nationalist victory, Reina is able to deny him that divorce and to shame and coerce him into returning to his "legitimate" family in Madrid. The text inverts common critiques of Francoism. While critics often blame the dictatorship for denying women rights and for limiting their autonomy, *Malena es un nombre de tango* suggests, not that divorce laws promulgated under the dictatorship might entrap women in marriage, but rather that conservative women manipulate these laws to their own ends in order to control unruly men. Reina, through her affiliation with the Nationalists, is able to wield power over her defeated Republican husband. Pedro is relegated to a position of silence and is ostracized within the family.

Malena's sister Reina also embodies the political conservatism of her grandmother, even after the transition to democracy. Reina's political conservatism has roots in her concept of idealized motherhood. Malena comments on this connection between politics and motherhood:

> La maternidad, como una droga mágica que todo lo cura, había convertido a mi hermana en una mujer tan sumamente conservadora que su rostro había alcanzado el carácter de una rareza excepcional, [. . .], porque últimamente, y dando el más valioso testimonio de una improbable victoria de la ideología sobre la genética, había conseguido parecerse físicamente a nuestra madre más que yo. (444)

By the end of the novel, Malena takes to calling her sister "Mamá Ganso" to show her conservatism (537). Reina certainly does not represent the social and political conservatism of the Francoist regime. She has consistently called herself a feminist and a progressive. The

feminism and progressivism that Reina espouses, however, becomes as oppressive and controlling as previous social conservatism. Reina and her lover, Jimena, insist to Malena, for example, that she cannot identify with Holden Caufield in *The Catcher in the Rye* "porque está escrito por un tío" (351). And Reina's so-called feminism does not impede her from acting the part of a human incubator for her lover, Gustavo, an irony that Malena does not point out to her sister because "al fin y al cabo, la feminista siempre había sido ella" (402).

In line with the theme of representing defeated Republican history in a positive way, the novel conversely condemns the political and social conservatism of the three Reinas. Both Francoism and conservatism after the transition are portrayed as duplicitous and insincere. These women supporters of the conservative cause are not more moral than other characters; they rather force their family members to live secretive lives. Malena's grandmother, insists on the appearance of a normal marriage even as everyone knows about her husband's second family. Magda suggests that Reina insists on this arrangement out of a desire to control and possess (471). When Malena comments that she thought her grandmother was a wealthy woman, Magda replies: "Y lo era, casi tanto como él, pero no se ocupaba del dinero y además, la versión oficial era muy distinta. Mamá siempre se comportó como si dependiera económicamente de su marido, porque para triunfar como santa, más vale ser pobre, ¿comprendes?" (468). Reina has adopted the role of martyr in order to manipulate the other members of the family. The text makes no attempt to sympathize with the grandmother, Reina, suggesting instead that she should have made an arrangement with her husband (116). The representation of Malena's maternal grandparents' tortuous marriage ignores several commonplaces about women's subordinate status in marriage during the dictatorship. This arrangement could have imperiled Reina and her children's status in post-war society. Instead of

presenting her as the victim of Francoist laws concerning women, however, the novel presents Reina as the most important enforcer of Francoist values.

Malena's mother as well displays many of the hypocritical and deceitful qualities that the novel associates with Francoism and political conservatism. While—much like in *Julia*—Malena's mother is less specifically interested in politics, she is still connected to the dictatorship through her association with wealth and status. This Reina betrays her sister Magda at least twice—once when Magda chooses her father over her mother, and again when Reina denounces Magda to her mother for having gotten an abortion. Reina demonstrates a great deal of duplicity; she also gets pregnant before getting married but is able to hide her peccadillo by saying that the twins were born prematurely (460). In spite of her own transgressions, Reina maintains the outward appearance of sexual prudishness. Malena comments, for example, that "mamá, [. . .] ni siquiera permitía que su marido la besara en la boca delante de nosotras [her daughters]" (51). Reina also harshly judges her own daughter when she discovers that Malena has had premarital sex. Malena recounts:

> No me dolió la bofetada que me pegó mamá apenas me tuvo delante, ni que me gritara que no quería volver a saber de mí en toda su vida en una sala de espera repleta de gente extraña, ni que me llamara puta a gritos en plena calle. Lo que me dolió fue que, cuando paró un taxi y abrió la puerta para que mi hermana pasara adelante--¡Vamos hija!--, ella ni siquiera se volvió a mirarme. (224-225)

Finally, Malena's sister Reina has three affairs, one with a married woman and two with married men—one her sister's husband—but is still able to position herself as the good girl and the good mother. The sins of the three Reinas are not so terribly different from the sins of the losing side of the family. The difference is that the Reinas are able to hide their sins, manipulate moral

rules, and reframe the discourse in a way that makes them appear morally upright. Much like Julia's grandmother and mother in Moix's novel, appearances and the *qué dirán* prove to be much more important to Malena's grandmother, mother and sister than any sincere commitment to morality.

Towards the end of the novel, Magda ties this world of appearances directly to the dictatorship. Speaking to Malena about her generation that grew up under the dictatorship, she says:

> No podíamos elegir, ¿sabes?, nosotros no pudimos elegir. Mis padres sí, y los suyos, y vosotros también, tú has podido decidir qué quieres ser, cómo quieres vivir, qué quieres hacer pero nosotros . . . Cuando yo era joven, el mundo era de un solo color, bastante oscuro, y las cosas de una sola manera, sólo había una vida, que era la única buena, y había que tomarla o tomarla, porque no se podía dejar [. . .]. Además nosotros estábamos acostumbrados a hacer siempre las cosas en secreto, bajo cuerda. (465)

Malena's sister Reina, however, has demonstrated that the duplicity cultivated under the dictatorship still exists in democratic Spain. Malena's education as well has subjected her to some of the same struggles that Magda's generation faced. Malena, too, has learned and interiorized that the world is divided into good and bad people, and that she is one of the bad people. She, too, learns that the way to survive in this world is to keep secrets. Ultimately, however, Malena is able to free herself of the Reinas' oppression. She owes much credit to her grandfather's valuable brooch that offers her economic independence. She owes as much credit, however, to the lessons of Soledad and Magda, who have taught her alternative models from those of her Francoist education.

Faced with the definition of motherhood offered by the three Reinas, Malena's aunt Magda rejects motherhood entirely. Malena as well expresses extreme misgivings about becoming a mother and in sacrificing herself entirely to her child: "Más madre que mujer ya para siempre, mi cuerpo un templo de generosidad y amor infinitos, un recinto sagrado que a nadie le interesaría profanar nunca más. El cambio no me gustaba" (391). When Malena becomes pregnant, she considers abortion, yet she opts to have the baby because—unlike Magda before her—she has an alternative model of motherhood available to her. Malena's re-education is begun by her grandfather, but a great deal of it is effected by women: the servants who teach her about her family's bigamist past; Magda, who fills in the story; and especially by Soledad, Malena's paternal grandmother. Soledad reveals to Malena her family's Republican past, and in the longest single treatment of motherhood in the work, deconstructs the Francoist appropriation of motherhood. Malena comments that her "familia paterna carecía de historia" (249). This deconstruction of motherhood is therefore tied to a recuperation of historical memory. Soledad fills in this history, when finally she has a granddaughter willing to serve as an interlocutor who has been denied to Soledad until this point.[11] When Malena asks Soledad if she and her family were "rojos," Soledad sets out to correct her granddaughter's Francoist education which demonized all Republicans as communists (252-253). Soledad comments on the truncated state of memory in Spain:

> Has vivido demasiado tiempo en un país secuestrado, y hace demasiados años que se rompieron de golpe todos los hilos. A veces pienso que, al cabo, el mayor delito del franquismo ha sido ése, secuestrar la memora de un país entero, desgajarlo del tiempo, impedir que tú, que eres mi nieta, la hija de mi hija, puedas creer como cierta mi propia historia. (253)

Malena's education has proven to be a censored one, and it is Soledad who informs her that in Spain there were indeed suffragists (257).

Framed in between Soledad's teachings about the Second Republic, the War and its after effects, Soledad offers to a scandalized adolescent Malena a deconstruction of Francoist pronatalist ideology. Soledad confesses that she has never been partial to children and that the maternal instinct "es como el instinto criminal, o como el instinto aventurero [. . .] El caso es que no se puede esperar que lo tenga todo el mundo" (264). In contrast to Malena, who has been taught that pregnancy is "maravilloso," Soledad counters:

> A ratos me hacía ilusión, notar las pataditas del feto y esas cosas, pero en general me parecía algo bastante raro, y otras veces un estorbo. Y tenía miedo, siempre, me daba miedo estar así, porque sentía que no podía controlar nada, que mi propio cuerpo se escapaba, que pasaban cosas allí dentro sin que yo lo supiera, a veces pienso que por eso mis embarazos fueron tal malos, no sé . . . [. . .] Yo no me sentía más guapa, ni más viva, ni más feliz, ni esas cosas que se dicen." (265)

Soledad's dissenting interpretation of motherhood serves a re-educational function for Malena, much like Simone de Beauvoir's chapter on motherhood in *The Second Sex* served a re-educational function for many post-World War II readers. Though critics have accused Beauvoir of being anti-mother, Linda Zerilli defends Beauvoir's treatment of motherhood when viewed in its historical context. During the war, the Vichy government imposed a pronatalist discourse similar to Franco's in Spain. Like Franco's 1941 Abortion Law, for example, the Vichy government made abortion a crime against the state (Nash "Pronatalism and Motherhood" 168; Pollard 174). After the war, a decimated French society needed to convince women to assume their naturalized maternal duties (Zerilli 115). In this context, Beauvoir's discourse serves as a

valuable correction to the idealization and naturalization of motherhood. Soledad's discourse serves a similar function, though in her case the context is the Francioist pronatalist campaign. Against discourses that try to contain women's creativity and fulfillment entirely within maternity and motherhood, both Beauvoir and Soledad warn of the potential for pregnancy to alienate a woman from her body. As quoted above, Soledad was afraid of the changes occurring in her body because during pregnancy she felt out of control. Using stronger words, Beauvoir similarly argues: "The fetus is part of [the mother's] body and it is a parasite that feeds on it; she possesses it and is possessed by it" (520). And while combating the naturalization of motherhood, Beauvoir counters that it is really "a social and artificial morality [. . .] hidden beneath this pseudo-naturalism. That the child is the supreme aim of woman is a statement having precisely the value of an advertising slogan" (550). Malena has interiorized the pronatalist discourse, and Soledad assumes the role of exposing it as a marketing strategy aimed at controlling women.

Beauvoir, like Adrienne Rich later, deals with the problem of maternal violence. She insists that violence is a logical outcome for two reasons: first, because the mothers who try to live by the discourse of idealized motherhood are unfulfilled and frustrated, and second because if motherhood is the only power allotted to women, they will fight to keep this power and become oppressive (Beauvoir 551-553; Rich 256). Soledad's relationship with her first two children—conceived and born during the Second Republic—demonstrates a healthier situation according to Beauvoir and Rich: a mother who has both childcare help and interests apart from her children. After marrying and starting a family, Soledad continues working on her dissertation, and "si [los niños] me estorbaban, tocaba el timbre y desaparecían [. . .] Total, que la verdad es que pasaba muchas horas con ellos, pero no estaba obligada a hacerlo, ¿entiendes?,

eso era lo bueno" (265). From a class perspective, Soledad's ability to buy her way out of child-rearing burdens suggests no actual discourse to defend women's right to personal fulfillment. It does suggest, however, that under the Second Republic, wealthy women were able to enjoy fulfilling activities outside of traditional definitions of motherhood. The war and the Franco regime, however, reinscribe Soledad within a strict definition of womanhood and motherhood. In spite of her avowals against liking children, Soledad can only get a job as a teacher of young children—a job she is grateful to get (269). When she is unable to dedicate herself entirely to her third son, and instead maintains a series of discreet romantic relationships, Jaime resents her "por no ser una buena madre, una versión más de la inmaculada criatura—su pecho redondo, puro espíritu—que debían ser las buenas madres de aquellos tiempos, la inconmovible esfinge maternal que todas las madres del mundo han tenido que ser alguna vez, en cualquier sitio, en cualquier época" (379). Due to her experiences under the Second Republic and the Franco regime, Soledad has access to alternative models of women and mothers, and she strongly revises Francoist attitudes towards motherhood.

Malena is at first scandalized by Soledad's disavowal of a maternal instinct, and she comments:

> Aún recuerdo cuán profundamente me escandalizaron aquellas palabras de la abuela, cuánto me lamenté por haberlas escuchado, [. . .]. Durante algunos años dedicaría todavía muchas horas a desmenuzar aquella desazonadora confesión, y me dolería de ella como de una infección peligrosa, concentrándome en aislar el virus y matarlo antes de llegar a exponerme a su contagio. (266)

While Soledad's beliefs about pregnancy and motherhood contrast with Malena's own Catholic upbringing, Soledad's demythification ultimately aids Malena during her own difficult

pregnancy and motherhood. About her pregnancy, Malena comments: "Nunca llegué a sentir una felicidad específicamente física a consecuencia de mi estado y tuve que darle la razón a mi abuela, porque en ningún momento me encontré más guapa, ni más sana, ni más fuerte de antes" (400). Just as Malena feels that her transgressive sexual desires make her an unnatural woman, she fears that her negative feelings toward pregnancy and motherhood make her an aberrant mother. Soledad is the first and most important person to offer Malena a model of motherhood that allows for the personal autonomy of the mother.

The Nationalist grandmother, Reina, imposes restrictive sexual and gender roles on her family. The Republican grandmother, Soledad, undermines these roles by offering her granddaughter a new history that includes the forgotten experience of the Second Republic.[12] Malena is able to use Soledad's dissident history to carve out for herself a liberating sexuality and motherhood. Malena's maturation comprises her sexual development and economic independence, but her confidence as a mother is also crucial in her ability to free herself from the false morality of her sister, mother and grandmother. In contrast to her sister and mother, Malena comments about this mothering style to her aunt, Magda:

> Mi madre tiene un concepto diferente del tuyo en lo de ser abuela, en realidad es mucho más rígida que yo, se pasa la vida regañándome porque no sé imponerle una disciplina. A mí me da igual que un día no se bañe, ¿sabes?, o que cene cada noche a una hora, y aunque le meto pronto en la cama para que me deje tranquila, si protesta porque no tiene sueño, le dejo estar con la luz encendida, leyendo, y no le digo nada cuando habla solo. Ella no entiende esas cosas, y mi hermana tampoco, pero si a mí no me gustan las acelgas, él también tiene derecho a que no le gusten, ¿no? (484)

Malena's motherhood refuses to demand perfection either of her or of her son, and it recognizes her need to lead an adult life and not to allow herself to be subsumed entirely in her son's life. Malena loses her son, Jaime, to Reina for a time; he is seduced by Reina's constant attention and chooses to live with her. Ultimately, however, Jaime rejects Reina's superficial perfectionism and her inability to see the world other than in terms of good and bad. Reina, following her Francoist education, tells Jaime that the only heroes are those who win, or rather that a person cannot lose a war and still be a hero (534). Malena has taught her son about his namesake, her grandfather Jaime, who was killed fighting on the Republican side of the Civil War. Reina, who has no interest in recuperating the history of this side of her family, does not know about this grandfather. Malena, then, protests the official story of Spanish heroism and offers to her son both an alternative motherhood and an alternative history.

In *El corazón helado*, Grandes intensifies her commitment to the recuperation of Spanish history that she has developed in *Malena es un nombre de tango*. *Malena* balances the themes of women's subjectivity with politics and history, but *El corazón helado* makes the decisive move towards historical recuperation. The novel is a veritable *tour-de-force* of twentieth-century Spanish history and politics, and it explores these themes in depth from a variety of viewpoints. To say that *El corazón helado* is a novel dedicated to the recuperation and vindication of the Republican cause in Spain borders on understatement. About the novel Grandes comments: "Yo no quería ser neutral, porque yo no soy neutral ni creo que haya que ser neutral, además me parece que España es el único país de Europa donde no está claro que en una guerra entre fascistas y demócratas los fascistas sean los malos y los demócratas sean los buenos" (Maccuici and Bonatto 128). Topics in the one-throusand-page novel include the fates of Republican

exiles, concentration camps in France, the *maqui* resistance, defeated Republicans who stay in Spain, the *División Azul*, Franco's appropriation of the Falangist movement, the children of Republicans sent to the USSR, the generation born after the Civil War (both in exile and within Spain), student protests of the 1950s and 1960s, the political and economic deals made during the transition period, and contemporary Spanish society. The novel ends on a sinister note by suggesting that the same people who illegitimately benefited under Francoism remain in power even into the twenty-first century. Women's participation in the Republic is still a concern of the novel's attempt at recuperating historical memory; much like Soledad in *Malena es un nombre de tango*, for example, Grandes includes the Republican grandmother Teresa, a positive character in the novel. In a surprise ending, however, Grandes includes the tyrannical mother, Angélica, again upholding the gender coding of earlier works.

El corazón helado narrates the love-at-first-sight romance of two distantly-related protagonists, Álvaro Carrión and Raquel Fernández, who meet when Raquel mysteriously attends the funeral of Julio Carrión, Álvaro's father, in April 2005. While Álvaro believes that he comes from an upstanding, Nationalist family, through his relationship with Raquel he discovers a Republican side to his family, as well as the political and economic double-dealing that established the Carrión family wealth. Álvaro's sections are narrated in the first-person, prioritizing the experience of his recuperation of family—and national—history. Raquel's sections, and those about her family, are narrated in third person, the reason for which becomes evident when the reader learns how Raquel knew Álvaro's father. Rather than being his lover as Raquel first tells Álvaro, the reader learns that Raquel has extorted money from Julio as vengeance for his betrayal of her Republican family in the aftermath of the Civil War. The past narrations of the Fernández/Carrión family are mixed in with Raquel and Álvaro's love story.

The novel thereby gives the impression that the national past continually intrudes into the present. As in the case of *Julia,* this juxtaposition of past and present impedes the present from overcoming the past and threatens the future. Julio Carrión's wealth and power—which extend beyond the Francoist years into the twenty-first century—are built upon his deceit and thievery of the Fernández family, and Spanish democracy has yet to hold Carrión accountable. The grandchildren of the war generation, whom Álvaro and Raquel represent, continue—as Grandes puts it—"pagando los platos de la Guerra Civil" (Anabitarte). Álvaro confronts his family, especially his mother Angélica, but instead of the victors' acknowledging their crimes, Angélica's power is so entrenched such that she can continue to ignore dissident histories with impunity. In the end, it is unclear if Álvaro and Raquel's relationship will survive the unfinished business of Spanish democracy.

Just as in *Malena es un nombre de tango*, the "two Spains" motif plays a major role in *El corazón helado.* The opposed Carrión and Fernández families are really part of the same national family, suggesting a Cain and Abel conflict. The noble actions of Raquel's grandfather, Ignacio, are continually contrasted to the self-serving actions of Álvaro's father, Julio Carrión. In contrast to Ignacio, who held sincere socialist/communist beliefs, fought bravely, acted honorably and suffered the consequences, Julio never takes an ideological stand, plays both sides off each other, and comes out ahead through his double-dealing and deceit. If this were not enough, Antonio Machado's untitled poem gives the novel both its title and interior structure and makes the "two Spains" understanding of Spanish history and politics quite clear:

> Hay un español que quiere
> vivir y a vivir empieza,
> entre una España que muere

y otra España que bosteza.

Españolito que vienes

al mundo, te guarde Dios.

una de las dos Españas

ha de helarte el corazón.[13]

Basing itself on the poem, *El corazón helado* is divided into three sections: "El corazón," which narrates Raquel and Álvaro's meeting and romance, "El hielo," which narrates the intrigues and betrayals in the Carrión/Fernández family that results in Raquel's family defeat, and "El corazón helado," which culminates in Angélica's refusal to dislodge the official Francoist history that has benefited her for so long. By using the "two Spains" conflict, Grandes combats the phenomenon of depoliticizing the Civil War conflict and of reducing the War to a conflict between two equally valid sides that both committed crimes. Rather, this novel comes down squarely on the side of the defeated Republicans, and suggests that Francoist crimes must be publicly denounced in order for justice to occur.

El corazón helado represents the changing state of memory politics in Spain through the 1970s through 2005. It narrates, for example, the curious turn that the official winners of the war (and those who still have power and money) have lost the war of public opinion. A ten-year-old Álvaro asks his father—a veteran of the pro-Nazi *División Azul*—"Y tú, ¿por qué ibas con los malos papa?" leaving his father to justify his actions which previously had been a source of power (289-90). For the children and grandchildren of the war generation, their grandparents' actions during the war have become a source of pride or shame, respectively. Álvaro's best friend, Fernando, for example, is intensely proud of his grandfather's Republican ideology and commitment, which netted him sixteen years in a Francoist prison. Fernando also uses his

family's history to his own advantage, impressing progressive women at the university at Álvaro's *facha* expense (291-93). In addition to Álvaro, other progressive students of this era show shame of their fascist family background, like Elena Galván, "una chica muy, muy progre de una familia muy, muy facha" and Raquel's friend Berta (293, 505). And yet while the opinion of the progressive thirty-something generation may have turned decidedly against their Francoist background, there remains no doubt who really maintains power. While Carrión shows no sincere interest in Álvaro's doctoral graduation, "pagó la comida en un restaurante cuyos precios desbordaban con mucho las posibilidades de cualquiera que no fuera él" (291). Carrión's class may have lost social capital, but it still maintains real economic and political control.

El corazón helado dedicates itself to the recuperation of the Republican experience before, during and after the Civil War. It aims to undo the state of *desmemoria* in Spain, and to denounce the political transition under which many Francoist beaurocrats—like Julio Carrión—continued to profit at the expense of truth and justice. The grandchildren of the original war generation react towards remembering in a variety of ways. Álvaro's wife, Mai, for example, represents a social group who believes that the past is best forgotten and that there were atrocities committed by both sides. Mai argues that one should not judge the actions of those who lived during the Civil War, but Álvaro condemns her lack of commitment. Álvaro's brother-in-law, Adolfo, tells Mai and Álvaro about his Republican grandfather's fate—Nationalist supporters buried him and other Republicans alive in a mass grave in the Canary Islands at the beginning of the coup. Mai's reaction to this scene is one of inconvenience. She tells Álvaro later: "Yo comprendo que es terrible, y que debe de ser muy duro vivir con algo así, pero me ha parecido un poco desagradable, la verdad, [. . .] seguir dándole vueltas a una historia tan antigua después

de tantos años" (392). And when Álvaro and Mai read Julio Carrión's letters and files documenting his participation in the fascist movement, instead of judging Carrión, Mai tries to excuse him:

> Pero también hay que comprenderlo, ¿no?, porque el pobre, a ver, ¿qué iba a hacer? En aquella época, con lo que era este país, una vida tan dura, y el hambre que estaban pasando. . . [. . .] porque no puedo juzgarlo. Yo no tengo derecho a culpar. . . [. . .] Nosotros no vivimos aquello, Álvaro, no sabemos qué habríamos hecho en una situación tan difícil, tan complicada, con tanta violencia, tanto odio, tantos muertos. Nosotros no tenemos nada que ver con eso, al revés. Supongo que, en el 36, tú y yo habríamos sido pacifistas. (309)

Álvaro rejects his wife's dismissal of history, and he judges her even more harshly when he recalls that her grandfather also enlisted on the Republican side of the war, only to be killed three days after its outbreak (310). Her willingness to assign her own grandfather to oblivion rather than to vindicate and honor his beliefs distress Álvaro, who believes it is time to bring all of these stories to the surface and to assign blame and responsibility. Tellingly, Álvaro eventually abandons his marriage to begin a relationship with Raquel, who is also unwilling to allow Spanish society to suppress Republican history.

Ideologically, Mai, who is "tan progresista, tan pacifista" appears to differ markedly from Álvaro's conservative and reactionary siblings. When Álvaro confronts his brothers, Rafael and Julio, and his sisters, Ángelica and Clara, with the news that their wealth is ill-gotten, the siblings react negatively and take actions to preserve the *status quo* and to keep the past safely buried. Rafael reacts violently and Angélica asks Álvaro not to tell her husband, Adolfo, saying: "Ha pasado mucho tiempo, ¿no?, y él. . ., bueno, pues está siempre dándole vueltas a lo de su abuelo,

está obsesionado con ese tema" (854). Clara also begs her brother to let the story be: "Déjalo, Álvaro, por favor [. . .]. Déjalo ya, una historia tan fea, tan sucia [. . .] ¿A ti, qué más te da?" (903). Clara incredibly resorts to sticking her fingers in her ears and closing her eyes to avoid knowing about the past, a graphic image representing Spanish society as a whole (907). In spite of their apparent differences, the novel indicts both the grandchildren of some Republicans like Mai who are willing to bury their own past, as well as the grandchildren of Nationlists who have more to lose if the truth surfaces. Both sides seem content to let bygones be bygones so as not to disrupt the seemingly successful Spanish democracy, and their own place in it.

For characters like Álvaro and Raquel, however, the past is still an open wound. They live among historical artifacts—ID cards, letters, photos, bracelets and even buildings—that become loaded with meaning as the work progresses. Álvaro finds identification cards documenting Julio Carrión's participation both in the *Juventud Socialista Unificada* and in the *Falange Española Tradicionalist* / *JONS*, showing that Carrión astutely and cynically played both sides of the war (311). Álvaro also finds a photo of Carrión with Raquel's great-aunt Paloma, a woman whom the reader learns that Carrión viciously has betrayed and destroyed. Raquel keeps a picture of her grandfather as a *maqui*, continuing the resistance to fascism from outside of France. While Raquel doesn't know the particulars of this photo, the reader learns of Ignacio's actions and how he befriends other important Republican characters. She also wears an antique bracelet that once belonged to her great-aunt Casilda, who remained in Spain after the war. In the most poignant plea for remembering in the novel, Casilda tells Raquel's father both how Francoism has tried to erase Republicanism from history and how she thwarts this attempt at historical annihilation. Casilda returns monthly to the wall where her husband was shot by

Nationalist troops, leaving flowers and carving in his name and dates. The police remove the flowers and erase the dates. Casilda comments:

> Se las regalarán a sus mujeres, [. . .] pero me da igual. Yo sigo comprando flores, para que se jodan, y las sigo dejando en la pared donde lo fusilaron, para que se jodan, y me sigo vistiendo de negro para que se jodan, para que se jodan, para que se jodan. . . [. . .] Escribo Mateo Fernández Múñoz todos los meses, y escribo 1915, una rayita, 1939, y también sé que lo borran en seguida, pero para poder borrarlo, antes tienen que leerlo. ¡Qué se jodan! Porque lo que quieren es que Mateo no haya vivido nunca, eso es lo que quieren. (637)

When Raquel wears the bracelet, the reader understands its significance for recuperating history. These artifacts surround Álvaro and Raquel and become living reminders of the need to reassess Spain's past.

Álvaro initiates the search for his father's history in an attempt to reconcile the father he knew with the (erroneous) news that Raquel Férnandez Perea was his father's lover, but he stumbles upon his father's duplicitous past. As mentioned above, he finds ID cards that point to father's double-dealing. More importantly personally for Álvaro, it also includes a rediscovery of Teresa González Puerto, Álvaro's socialist grandmother, whom he has always believed to be a simple homemaker who died of tuberculosis in 1937. Álvaro finds a poignant letter that Teresa writes to her son that reveals her political activism, and Álvaro realizes that his father has intentionally erased memories of Teresa from his life, and therefore from his children's lives as well (302-07). Álvaro visits the civil registrar of his father's hometown where he finds out that Carrión has also erased a sister from his official memory, and Álvaro is able to find a former pupil of Teresa's who explains to Álvaro about her political activism and leadership role in

promoting socialism in the hometown. Encarna says of Teresa: "¡Pues claro que era socialista! Bueno, socialista es poco, ella era mucho más que eso, ella fue. . . la que lo inventó, como si dijéramos. En este pueblo nadie sabía lo que eran los socialistas hasta que a tu abuela se le ocurrió meterse en política" (397). She also reveals to Álvaro that Teresa really died in a women's prison in 1941, and not, as Álvaro was told, of tuberculosis (400).

Álvaro's discovery of his Republican grandmother has enormous personal repercussions for him. On the one hand, Teresa offers him a family member of whom to be proud, as he has previously been ashamed of his Francoist family background. She also gives him a concrete reason to pursue even more fervently the truth about his family's past. He wants to vindicate Teresa and to rescue her from the oblivion that Carrión designated for her. Of his newly-found grandmother he says: "Yo te habría querido tanto, te habría admirado tanto, habría presumido tanto de ti en el bar de la facultad, con las chicas que me gustaban. . . [. . .] porque yo soy tú, una parte de ti, porque quiero serlo y nadie me lo va a impedir, porque nadie tiene poder para impedírmelo, y yo te quiero tanto, tanto, tan de verdad, tan de repente, abuela" (388).

Gender-coding of politics in *El corazón helado* seems much less easy to identify than in *Malena es un nombre de tango*. A superficial interpretation suggests that Grandes has completely switched the previous gender coding of Moix and Matute. Álvaro and Raquel, for example, can represent the Nationalist (Álvaro) and Republican (Raquel) sides of the conflict due to their families' alliances. Álvaro's liberal ideology, however, makes this association impossible, even though his family is Nationalist. Raquel's grandfather, Ignacio, in addition to Teresa and myriad other secondary figures, represent the Republican cause, also making any facile assignment of gender untenable. The novel appears, rather, to offer a successful vindication of men and women's participation on both sides of the Civil War conflict. In a

surprising ending, however, the novel reestablishes the association between femininity and political conservatism. Álvaro's mother, Angélica, represents the tyrannical mother who even into the twenty-first century will not relinquish control over her children and the nation.

Angélica has actually played an important role in legitimizing Julio Carrión's double-dealing. A distant member of the Fernández family, when Julio Carrión steals all of the Fernandez's properties, she offers to marry him to obscure an otherwise transparent theft. By marrying her family's worst enemy, the person who stole all their wealth, Angélica shows herself to be as opportunistic as Carrión. The novel suggests, in fact, that opportunists, not dedicated falangist ideologues, are the true winners of the Civil War. After Carrión's death, Álvaro confronts his mother about her and her husband's dishonorable actions, and he expects her to make certain excuses. He implores:

> Necesito que me lo expliques, para poder creérmelo, ¿sabes?, [. . .] Necesito que me digas por qué papá engañó a todo el mundo, por qué traicionó a la gente que confiaba en él, por qué nunca creyó en nada, por qué nunca quiso a nadie, por qué mintió, por qué robó [. . .]. Explícame por qué tu marido enterró en vida a su madre, por qué la negó, por qué me la robó, y salva a tu madre, de paso, devuélveme a mi otra abuela, si puedes.
>
> [. . .] No entiendo a mi padre, no entiendo a mi abuela y no te entiendo a ti, que eres mi madre, no sé cómo pudiste casarte con el hombre que os había echado a la calle, el que os lo había quitado todo, el que tu madre odiaba más que a nadie en el mundo. Papá era su peor enemigo, tú su única hija, pero no se te ocurrió elegir a otro. (914)

Astonishingly—both for the reader and for Álvaro—Angélica shows no fear, remorse or even anger. Rather, she adopts "aquella impasibilidad casi insultante," asks Álvaro for a cigarette and comments that he needs to cut his hair (916). She thereby assumes the duplicitious attitude of

the Francoist generation that has served her and others like her for so long. She knows that she has long since won the war and that all that she and others like her have to do is refuse to participate in the recuperation of historical memory. Angélica then hides behind a traditional grandmother's discourse, imploring Álvaro to bring his son to Sunday dinner: "Estoy deseando verle, esto es lo que llevo peor de vuestros divorcios, de verdad, es que lo llevo fatal, lo de no ver a los nietos, es horrible" (917).

Of the characters whom the novel holds accountable for the injustices of the Civil War and Francoist regime—Julió Carrión, especially, but also Angélica's mother Marina, and the Falangist Eugenio—Angélica is the only one left standing at the end of the novel, and therefore is the ultimate victor. She also is the character who displays the least compassion or remorse for her actions. She contrasts negatively even with Julio Carrión, whom Raquel intimidates through fear of publicly denouncing his actions and whose fatal heart attack is probably caused by this fear. Without the reader realizing it until the end, her machinations have controlled much of the plot. The power she wields was, and continues to be, ill-gotten and illegitimate, and it represents in this light those who colluded with Francoism, both before and after the transition. Álvaro particularly condemns his mother, as she in all other ways appeared to coincide with the traditional mother who teaches morality and the difference between good and evil. He says to her: "Tú me enseñaste lo que era bueno y lo que era malo, mamá, me enseñaste que no debía ser egoísta, ni avaricioso, que no debía envidiar a mis hermanos, ni pegarme con ellos, que todos debíamos compartir lo que teníamos, y perdonar. Tú me enseñaste el Padrenuestro, ¿te acuerdas?" (913). This extreme contrast between the idealized mother and Angélica's unjust actions further shows her illegitimate power. As such, the tyrannical mother reappears in *El*

corazón helado, as at the end of the novel Grandes utilizes this character as the ultimate condemnation of the long-lived regime in Spain.

Christine Arkinstall explains how the preferred family image of Spain under Francoism was that of a mother and son. This image has obvious ties to the Madonna-Christ dyad, but it also takes on political significance, "with the State and the Church belying their patriarchal premises by representing themselves as feminised bodies: the *Madre Patria* (Maternal Fatherland) and *Santa Madre Iglesia* (Holy Mother Church) respectively" (48). Seen in this light, Grandes's choice to emphasize the idealized mother-son relationship between Angélica and Álvaro in this moment is telling. As demonstrated above, Álvaro's main argument against his mother is that her past actions contradict her otherwise idealized status of mother. By contraposing the maternal image of Angélica with her true nature, Álvaro replaces one maternal representation of Francoism as a mother with another—that of the tyrannical mother.

One might expect the tyrannical mother figure to diminish with the development of feminist critique in Spain. This chapter shows, however, that the image continues to wield power over the imagination as well as it continues to condemn political and social conservatism through its manipulation of the feminine. Grandes combines a commitment to leftist politics with a condemnation of feminist beliefs. In an interview with Veronica Añover, she criticizes feminism for its dogmatism, a criticism also clearly demonstrated in Malena's "feminist" sister, Reina, in *Malena es un nombre de tango* (806). In this same interview, Grandes advocates for more similarities than differences between men and women. *El corazón helado* attempts to show these similarities by including both men and women's participation in Spanish history. In spite of her avowals to the contrary, Grandes does also advocate for women's sexual and social liberation, as seen in Malena, Soledad and Teresa. The result of this anti-feminist but pro-

woman advocacy is a confused use of both reactionary and liberating representations of women. Much like the modern writers before her, Almudena Grandes's novels demonstrate that certain advocacy for women does not eliminate women from the status of other.

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[1] Concha Borreguero argues that the changes initiated during the *apertura* and continuing through the transition occurred too quickly to be digested. These changes created "mujeres aparentamente <<muy modernas>> que en el fondo se regían por esquemas tradicionales" (13).

[2] While the majority of her protagonists are women, *Te llamaré Viernes* (1991) has a male protagonist. Grandes comments that the decision to use a male protagonist in *Te llamaré Viernes* caused the writing of this novel to be a "monstruoso esfuerzo" and that she would need a good reason to use a male protagonist again (Introduction *Modelos* 17). In *Los aires difíciles*, Juan and Sara share protagonism, and in *El corazón helado*, Grandes employs both a male and a female protagonist, Álvaro and Raquel.

[3] Lulú's mother in *Las edades de Lulú* is one possible exception to the tyrannical mother. While she also represents the conservative Spanish mother, she is a pathetic character with her varicose veins and amorphous body, deformed from eleven pregnancies (nine live births) (130). She represents a different conservative (in this case Francoist) mother—the victim of Francoist pronatal policies. In contrast, the other mothers I mention all serve as loci of power. They inflict rules on others, and rarely does the reader see the repercussions of these rules on the mothers themselves.

[4] Morris and Charnon-Deutsch also say that "if, however, we read *Lulú* in its historical moment--as a document of the conflicting forces that shape women's lives, that they in turn internalize, and that influence their perception of subjectivity--then the novel takes on the cast of allegorical brilliance" (316).

[5] Sisters do not fair any better. They defend their (unjust) economic privileges with ferocity and, because they know the protagonists intimately, they know best how to manipulate them.

[6] All of Grandes's novels in some way engage the project of Spanish history from a leftist viewpoint. Ellen Maycock, for example, argues for a historical interpretation of Grandes's best-known work, *Las edades de Lulú* (1989). She argues that the protagonist's struggle for subjectivity stems in large part from maternal neglect caused by her mother's attempt to fulfill impossible demands for mothers during Francoism.

[7] The problematic word "recuperate" is often used when referring to Spanish memory and history. While this word hides the difficulties of actually recovering the past and fails to acknowledge that memory is not so much recuperated as it is created, the term is a common one in Spain due to the *Associación de la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica*, formed in 2000. This present work continues to use the word "recuperate," while recognizing its dangers, because Almudena Grandes views her work within this trajectory.

[8] Davis suggests Dulce Chacón's *La voz dormida*, Ricard Vinyes *Los niños perdidos del franquismo* and Isaías LaFuente's *Esclavos de la patria*, all from 2002 (874).

[9] Another narrative feature that drives this news story is that PP president Aznar is the grandson of a prominent Fascist leader while current PSOE president Zapatero is the grandson of a Republican captain assassinated at the beginning of the war by Nationalist forces (Labanyi 96).

[10] Garzón is the judge who attempted to extradite Agusto Pinochet to Spain in 1998 to face human rights abuse accusations. Madeline Davis argues that the Pinochet case, which received extensive international media coverage, is at least partially responsible for the new interest in the Civil War and the dictatorship in Spain. Many Spaniards and others questioned how Pinochet could be put on trial, but not the Franco regime (869). Garzón has also made headlines for putting out an arrest warrant for Osama Bin Laden and for attacking the Bush administration's war in Iraq.

[11] Jo Labanyi suggests that some older Spaniards' silence regarding their experiences in the war and under Francoism may have less to do with trauma, and more to do with lacking an interested interlocutor (109).

[12] The Reinas' in *Malena es un nombre de tango* are not the only female figures made to metaphorically represent a political ideology. Soledad serves as a stand-in for the Second Republic. Among Malena's few treasured possessions is a painting of Soledad as an allegorical representation of the Republic.

[13] In an interview with Raquel Maccuci and Virginia Bonnato, Grandes expresses her admiration for Machado, as well as her irritation at those who attempt to depoliticize him and his works:

> Mira, lo de Machado es algo tremendo. Machado es el dechado –nosotros llamamos dechado a lo que es lo máximo, el dechado eran los pañitos de muestra que hacían las niñas en los colegios—Machado es el dechado de virtudes republicanas por excelencia. Machado, cuando acabó la guerra, estaba muy cerca del Partido Comunista de España. Él fue el que inauguró los dos últimos congresos de las Juventudes Socialistas Unificadas y él tenía prevista llegar a la URSS. Pero en el año 1941 (Machado murió en el 39) Dionisio Ridruejo tuvo el valor—hace falta mucho valor—de hacer una edición en Editora Nacional de las poesías de Machado, diciendo que Don Antonio Machado no tenía ideas políticas; que tenía sentimientos, pero ideas políticas no. Entonces a partir de ahí ya de Machado se puede decir lo que se quiera, pero Machado es Machado y estuvo donde estuvo y escribió lo que escribió, y sabía perfectamente quién era y de qué lado estaba. Claro, se le intenta manipular sin parar porque es el poeta nacional español, porque es el escritor que más ha influido en las generaciones sucesivas, es el escritor más admirado. Este país mío es tan absurdo que somos el único país del mundo que tiene al poeta nacional enterrado en otro país, pero eso no cambia las cosas. En el caso de Machado ha habido un intento constante de manipularlo porque la mejor manera de que la historia del cincuenta por ciento fuera verdad sería que Cercas tuviera razón, pero da la puñetera casualidad de que ni a García Lorca lo mataron por ser homosexual. . . Porque la de García Lorca es otra historia, ¿no? O sea, a García Lorca lo mataron por rojo, y si Antonio Machado hubiera caído en el bando rebelde lo habrían fusilado y punto final, y está clarísimo. García Lorca también era un gran poeta y quisieron fusilarlo, y no lo fusilaron por homosexual, lo fusilaron por republicano. ¿Sabes. . .? son ideas muy irritantes. Yo me enfado mucho. (136-137).

CHAPTER 4

REINVENTING THE TYRANNICAL MOTHER: NEW REPRESENTATIONS OF MOTHERHOOD IN NOVELS BY JOSEFINA ALDECOA AND LUCÍA ETXEBARRIA

This chapter analyzes the works of two contemporary women writers that manage to avoid historically stereotyped images of mothers like the tyrannical mother. Josefina Aldecoa and Lucía Etxebarria are almost never considered simultaneously, as they seem to belong to different literary generations and employ contrasting styles. Critics—taking Aldecoa's lead—locate her in the literary generation of writers who were children during the Civil War and who experienced it and its aftermath firsthand—the so-called "niños de la guerra" generation that also includes Carmen Martín Gaite and Aldecoa's husband Ignacio. In contrast, Etxebarria was born three decades after the start of the Civil War and claims no firsthand knowledge either of it or of the first Francoist decades. Rather, she is considered a founder of the punk or *Kronen* generation of writers of the 1990s, famous—or infamous, depending on the critic—for their *pasota* or quasi-nihilist attitude and apparent lack of interest in social, political and historical issues.[1] Yet Aldecoa's 1990s Civil War trilogy, *Historia de una maestra* (1990), *Mujeres de negro* (1994) and *La fuerza del destino* (1997), and Etxebarria's 2004 novel *Un milagro en equilibrio,* reevaluate how twentieth-century history impacted the mother-daughter relationship in Spain. These novels attempt to undo the silences imposed on women by the Franco regime and to re-open dialogue between mothers and daughters.

In spite of their generational and stylistic differences, numerous similarities between Aldecoa's trilogy and Etxebarria's *Un milagro en equilibrio* suggest that these works should be

studied in tandem. They prioritize and interrogate the relationship between mothers and daughters and suggest that this relationship has been interrupted by the Civil War and the Francoist dictatorship. The novels adopt a dialogic structure that establishes open communication between mothers and daughters in an attempt to objectify neither. Because the novels study how Spanish history and politics have impacted women's relationships, they participate in the current movement for the recuperation of historical memory in Spain. This is new terrain for Etxebarria, whose works have not entered into this genre previously. In doing so, both authors demonstrate an awareness of the tyrannical mother figure in their works, and yet they undermine this stereotype.[2] The novels studied in this chapter contest the gendering of progressive political discourse that codes political conservatism as feminine/female and political liberalism as masculine/male. Aldecoa's trilogy and *Un milagro en equilibrio* represent mothers who are themselves or whose families are political progressives and defeated Republicans. This change in representation helps break the negative associations between women and the political sphere that the other novels considered in this study have maintained. It also combats the unproven commonplace that women are more socially and politically conservative than men.[3]

As shown in the previous chapter, however, Almudena Grandes's novels also begin to disentangle this coding by including characters like Soledad and Teresa—the lost Republican grandmothers. Gabriela, in Aldecoa's trilogy, and Eva Agulló's great-aunts and grandmother in *Un milagro en equilibrio,* serve a similar recuperative function. Grandes's novels nevertheless continue to utilize the tyrannical mother, and so more must be at work in Aldecoa and Etxebarria's novels that allow them to successfully challenge this stock character. This chapter argues that the political positioning of the various works accounts for this difference in representation. Grandes, like the politically progressive male and female authors before her,

writes primarily as a political leftist and boasts no particularly feminist agenda. Instead, the commitment of her works to the "two Spains" theory of Spanish history emphasizes a dualistic notion of politics and history that portrays both men and women as political extremes. In contrast, the ideological stances of Aldecoa and Etxebarria's novels are primarily feminist and secondarily progressive. The act of prioritizing women's experience rather than considering women's experience as symptomatic of other social ills differentiates these final novels from the ones studied in earlier chapters. Both Aldecoa's and Etxebarria's quite different feminist advocacies lead them to reject the dualistic representations of the "two Spains" and to explore a more nuanced and complicated understanding of women and politics than that allowed by the tyrannical mother, and even of her opposite, the Republican grandmother.

One must take great care when discussing the "feminism" of Aldecoa's trilogy. Aldecoa herself does not adopt the term, as many women novelists in Spain are hesitant at being labeled feminine or feminist due to the pigeonholing and historical devaluing of literature written by women (Freixas 14, 19-20).[4] Like many of her compatriots, Aldecoa denies writing feminist literature, though she does so less vociferously than, for example, Almudena Grandes (Interview with Añover 806). She may avoid the term; however, in interviews and in her trilogy she adopts the clear stance of "difference feminism," which emphasizes supposed differences between men and women. This branch of feminism therefore emphasizes and values the historically devalued associations with the feminine like emotions, peace-making, and nurturing. These feminine associations are most often connected with women's biological ability to reproduce and cultural tendency to mother.[5] Along feminist lines, Aldecoa strongly defends public coeducation, suspecting that attempts to differentiate between boys and girls discriminate against women (Dupláa 117). In an interview with Christina Duplaá, she suggests that the surge in women's

education during the 1990s is due to new and better maternal models for girls: “Las niñas son hijas de madres que trabajan. Ha cambiado el modelo de madre, y esas madres profesionales, con su ejemplo, su trabajo, su feminismo más o menos fuerte, son un Nuevo modelo para sus hijas” (118). From this stance, Aldecoa appears to adopt a feminist position even as she avoids the label.

Yet for Aldecoa, women’s autonomy and motherhood are ambivalent. In her interview with Duplaá—as in others—Aldecoa talks about the “handicap” of motherhood for women (119). Motherhood limits women professionally because women who become mothers are unable and/or unwilling to devote themselves entirely to their profession: “Creo que la mujer en el momento que es madre tiene ya hipotecada de cierto modo su vida profesional” (Leggott 93). In an interview with Lynn Talbot, Aldecoa emphasizes this maternal dilemma: "La trampa de la maternidad, [. . .] hace muchas veces que la mujer renuncia a llegar más allá en su carrera profesional porque no quiere renunciar los goces y delicias de la maternidad" (242). While she recognizes the cost that motherhood brings to contemporary women, she argues that the experience of motherhood is worth the price: "Creo personalmente que merece la pena no renunciar la la femenidad" (242). In *Historia de una maestra*, Gabriela experiences this tension between her profession, her political beliefs and her status of mother. As will be shown below, it is precisely Gabriela’s experience of motherhood that allows her to more successfully navigate the political extremism leading up to the Civil War. This special status given to mothers and motherhood locates Aldecoa and her works within the ideology of “difference feminism.”

Aldecoa’s trilogy *Historia de una maestra* (1990), *Mujeres de negro* (1994) and *La fuerza del destino* (1997) also aims at the recuperation of historical memory of the Second Republic and its aftermath. It further endeavors to insert women’s political and historical

experiences into the post-Franco record. Though Aldecoa is often placed in an older generation of writers with her husband Ignacio Aldecoa and Carmen Martín Gaite, Aldecoa's trilogy is contemporary with Grandes' first novels, including *Malena es un nombre de tango*. The tone and language of these novels are strikingly different; *Malena. . .* has a more cosmopolitan air and makes recourse to less verisimilar strategies for its narrative effect, while Aldecoa's trilogy shows the political commitment to represent rural women schoolteachers' contributions to the Second Republic.[6] *Malena. . .* prioritizes the voice of its protagonist, deals with the wealthy and centers on Madrid, while the trilogy has two protagonists, deals with the working and lower classes and centers on provincial Spain. What unites these works, however, is their faith in the recuperation of historical memory linked with an interrogation of motherhood.

Historia de una maestra narrates the first-person account of Gabriela López Pardo, a rural school teacher from León, starting with her graduation from normal school in 1923 and leaving her at the outbreak of the Civil War in 1936.[7] The text is framed by references to an interlocutor, called only "tú" at the beginning of the work. The reader learns in the third volume of the trilogy, *La fuerza del destino*, that Gabriela's daughter, Juana, requests her mother's memories during their exile in Mexico, after Juana has returned from studying in Madrid. Juana's desire to learn of her mother's memories comes from her own experience of exile and her "miedo de perder las raíces, la familia, el paisaje" (35). The novels set themselves up, then, as a communication between mother and daughter. *Historia de una maestra* narrates Gabriela's experiences as a school teacher in rural Spain, Guinea, and the mining town of Los Valles. It relates her marriage to another school teacher, Ezequiel, their optimism regarding the Second Republic, Juana's birth, and Ezequiel's death by a Nationalist firing squad at the advent of the Civil War. *Mujeres de negro* narrates Gabriela and Juana's life during and after the war, their

exile in Mexico, Gabriela's marriage to the wealthy Mexican, Octavio, and Juana's decision to return to Spain in the early 1950s to study at the university in Madrid. While in Spain, Juana meets and participates in early student movements against the regime, and she returns to Mexico upon her graduation to help her mother during the sickness and death of Octavio. *La fuerza del destino* takes up the story two decades later, with Gabriela's return to Spain following Franco's death. Juana is now living in Madrid, married to a leftist political leader and is caught up in the events of the Spanish political transition to democracy. The final novel has two inverted themes: Gabriela, now in her seventies, faces declining health and death just as the Spanish political transition and the beginnings of Spanish democracy and economic boom are in their ascendancy. Gabriela dies in 1982 just as the socialists win national elections. While all three novels are narrated in the first person, Juana's formative experience in Spain in *Mujeres de negro* is couched in between the two novels that give priority to her mother, Gabriela's, voice and story.

Analysis of Aldecoa's trilogy has focused both on the historical representations in the novels as well as the prominence of the mother-daughter representation. Sarah Leggott and Lucía Llorente even suggest that the works are fictionalized testimonials with strong autobiographical elements. Interviews with Aldecoa about her trilogy tend to focus on the autobiographical elements in the work as well, suggesting a transparent relationship between history and narrative.[8] The representation of the mother-daughter relationship, as well as the prioritizing of the mother's voice, has been an important focus of literary criticism of the works. Christine Arkinstall calls Aldecoa "perhaps the author who most consistently investigates and demythifies the mother-daughter relationship" (73). Yolanda Pascual Solé argues that Gabriela's more important exile is emotional, not geographical, because Gabriela is continually displaced within the communities where she lives either because of gender norms, her progressive lay

beliefs, or her pedagogical commitment to the poor. In one of the best articles written about the trilogy, David Herzberger argues that narrating her life back to herself allows Gabriela to form a sense of self.

This present treatment of the novels also focuses on the interplay between history, memory and motherhood, but with a different end. Unlike *Malena es un nombre de tango*, Aldecoa's trilogy rejects a dualized representation of "two Spains"—or "dos bandos" as Gabriela calls them. It is precisely Gabriela's experience of pregnancy and motherhood as simultaneously self and other that allows her to eschew the dualism of Grandes's novel. Because of this rejection of strict political dualism, Aldecoa's novels do not utilize the stock character of the tyrannical mother; rather the mother is the subject, not object, of two of the three novels. Even though Aldecoa and Grandes personally are committed to similar political platforms and to the movement to represent Republican Spain, by not emphasizing the dualistic nature of the "two Spains" theory of history, Aldecoa's novels manage to avoid many of the antagonistic representations seen in Grandes's novel.

Both *Malena es un nombre de tango* and Aldecoa's trilogy approach the relationship between history, memory and text as an uncomplicated one. While Malena learns about her family and nation's past from a variety of people, their accounts coincide and complement each other, suggesting that the past can indeed be wholly recuperated and narrated. Only in one instance does the novel question the inherent accuracy of memory: Malena's mother blames her daughter, Reina's, frailty on her own poor gestation, while Malena remembers being subtly blamed for taking placental nutrients destined for her twin sister. The text sides with Malena's story, leaving the reader to believe that the mother has revised history to suit herself. All three novels of Aldecoa's trilogy also comment on the fragility of memory—but especially Gabriela's

first person accounts of the first and third novels. She comments at the beginning of *Historia de una maestra* that memories cannot be narrated sequentially, but rather that "una vida la recuerdas a saltos, a golpes" (13). Comments of this sort occur most frequently toward the beginning of the two novels, and serve almost as a disclaimer. But as Herzberger points out, these qualifications do not become a sustained critique of the text's ability to narrate memory. Rather, "we discern scant wariness in either of the narrators over the efficacy of narrative as a means of re-presenting the past and their own location in it [. . .] And rather than undermine their mimetic adequacy, as often occurs in contemporary fiction, the novels develop as if story and life were commingled to produce metonymic sufficiency" (136). Both Aldecoa and Grandes's works suggest the mimetic ability of art to represent the real and the remembered.

In spite of their shared political commitment to represent silenced voices and their faith in the ability of narrative to do so, some important political differences between Grandes's and Aldecoa's novels contribute to their dissimilar treatments both of history and of motherhood. While Grandes's dualistic treatment of both themes demonstrates a search for origins that idealizes women's participation in the Second Republic as a sharp contrast to Francoist oppression, Aldecoa avoids this approach. To a contemporary reader, Gabriela can seem disappointing and provincial compared to the rebellious and cosmopolitan Soledad of Grandes's novel. Soledad is a liberated woman. She studies at the university, keeps up with current politics, goes out and parties with her friends, and even mimics Josephine Baker by dancing topless at a club. As argued above, she maintains an autonomous life from children and husband. While one must allow for a variety of ways to be a woman during the Second Republic, perhaps more than reflecting women's reality during the this time, Grandes's character personifies late twentieth-century desires about women's liberation. As historian Mary Nash has argued, women

may have gained certain rights during the Second Republic, but this did not necessarily change social beliefs about women as mothers and caretakers ("Pronatalism" 161).

Aldecoa's protagonist, Gabriela, is about the same age as Soledad, yet her experiences of the Republic represent women in a state of flux and uncertainty regarding their roles. As a teacher, Gabriela has a certain autonomy and even moves on her own to Guinea to teach. And while aware of the inequity of gender roles in her own marriage, she does not rebel against them; rather she accepts that child-rearing and housework are her responsibilities in addition to her teaching. Gabriela finds herself in the ambivalent position of teaching other women to stand up for their rights, but in her own home and marriage she becomes a "buena esposa, buena madre, buena ciudadana" (*Historia de una maestra* 176). Gabriela confesses to her friend, Marcelina:

> Había luchado por imbuir a las mujeres en mis clases de adultos la conciencia de sus derechos. Y sin embargo, ahora me veía atrapada en mi propia limitación. Marcelina parecía entenderlo y me miraba de reojo, malhumorada pero con una inflexión de ternura en la voz al decirme:—Ustedes, las que han estudiado, mucho predicar pero a la hora de dar trigo, ¿qué? Ni trigo ni ejemplo ni nada. ¡Pobres mujeres! (174-175).

More thoroughly than *Malena es un nombre de tango, Historia de una maestra* explores the ambivalences of the era as they pertain to women rather than showing the Second Republic as a utopia for women.

Even with these struggles, Gabriela participates in the educational reforms of the Second Republic. She and her husband, Ezequiel, celebrate when the Republic is declared, this historic moment coinciding serendipitously with their daughter's birth (*Historia de una maestra* 104). They immediately set out implementing the educational reforms—like co-education and the removal of religious symbols from the school—that the new government decrees. They even

serve as intermediaries between the suspicious townspeople and a traveling "Misiones Pedagógicas" (131). In spite of her obvious support of the Second Republic, however, Gabriela disavows political extremism: "Si yo quisiera explicar lo que era entonces para mí la política, no sabría. Yo creía en la cultura, en la educación, en la justicia. Amaba mi profesión y me entregaba a ella con afán. ¿Todo esto era política?" (*Historia de una maestra* 107). As a teacher, Gabriela sees her role as fostering justice and free-thinking in her pupils: "Mis sueños, vapuleados como estaban, aún eran los de siempre. Educar para la convivencia. Educar para adquirir conciencia de la justicia. Educar en la igualdad para que no se pierda un solo talento por falta de oportunidades. . . ." (200). As David Herzberger argues, Gabriela's resistance to become more actively involved in politics like her husband is connected to her vision of education (140). Rather than splintering Spain into "dos bandos," Gabriela sees the solution less in political activism and more in education and literacy; as she says to Ezequiel: "Tú sabes muy bien que no se puede salvar a un pueblo ignorante" (*Historia de una maestra* 229).

Gabriela's resistance to divide Spain into good and bad helps her establish relationships with a variety of people who disagree with her politically. Eloísa, the conservative and religious daughter of Los Valle's Republican mayor, becomes Gabriela's friend. When the more politically liberal activist, Inés, antagonizes Eloísa by saying that women shouldn't have been given the vote since they will vote conservatively, Gabriela comes to Eloísa's defense (*Historia de una maestra* 187). This friendship saves Gabriela during the war when Eloísa gives Gabriela and her family a place to stay when Gabriela cannot find work due to her Republican associations (*Mujeres de negro* 10). Gabriela later repays the kindness to the wife of a Nationalist commander who moves in next door even as Ezequiel is imprisoned by Nationalist forces (*Historia de una maestra* 222). While in exile in Mexico as well, Gabriela does not

participate with those exiles who criticize those who stayed in Spain. And as Herzberger again points out, Gabriela's understanding of educating for the unity of Spain helps her eschew the dualism of the "two Spains" even as the country itself is splintering (140). Because of the personal relationships Gabriela establishes even with those with whom she disagrees, the novel does not divide Spaniards into good and bad.

Sarah Leggot argues that Gabriela and the other women's more inclusive political maneuverings are ultimately more successful than the men's more idealistic and polemical politics (124). Gabriela emphasizes in the first and third novels how women create a community and help each other with child care, sickness and other traditional women's issues. In *Historia de una maestra* she comments: "Si voy mirando hacia atrás siempre encuentro en el pasado una mujer que me ha ayudado a vivir" (173). And in *La fuerza del destino* she further comments: "Antonia me recuerda a otras muchas mujeres que han vivido a mi lado a lo largo del tiempo, que me han ayudado y han sido para mí mujeres-hermanas, mujeres-madres. Cuántas me vienen a la cabeza" (159). The male characters, like Ezequiel and Eloísa's father, who are on whole more outwardly political and combative, end up imprisoned and assassinated because of their actions, leaving the women characters "siempre pagando los platos rotos de todo." (*Historia de una maestra* 222).

Gabriela's pedagogical vocation shapes her attitudes towards politics, but her attitudes towards pregnancy and motherhood also influence her vision for society. When Gabriela becomes pregnant, she begins the process of withdrawing from the outer world and focusing instead on the changes in her body: "No estaba triste ni contenta. Había caído en una indiferencia placentera y serena. El embarazo me alejaba del mundo exterior. Me encontraba escuchándome por dentro, observando el más mínimo cambio dentro de mí. Una punzada, un

murmullo, un temblor, un pequeño dolor, una oleada de calor o de frío" (*Historia de una maestra* 99). This withdrawal from the outside world becomes more pronounced upon Juana's birth:

> La maternidad me colmaba de nuevas sensaciones. Lo mismo que en el embarazo mi cuerpo, replegado en sí mismo, se había aislado del mundo exterior, ahora, con la niña cerca de mí, creía percibir todas las vibraciones de la tierra.
>
> Mi vida transcurría ajena a cualquier fenómeno que no fuera el de mi maternidad. Cuando la niña dormía en su cuna, yo me instalaba a su lado y sin darme cuenta me sentía caer en un letargo. Como si todavía no se hubiera resuelto la separación, el corte del cordón que nos una, seguía yo prisionera del ritmo y la frecuencia de sus funciones vitales: dormía cuando ella dormía y me embargaba el dolor cuando ella, por la menor causa, lloraba. (112)

These quotations highlight the import role that maternity plays in the trilogy, an importance echoed by "difference feminism." First, Gabriela's experience of pregnancy and motherhood cause her to withdraw from the exterior world, which is becoming increasingly marked by political strife. Her rejection of political dualism, therefore, must be interpreted at least partially as her response to motherhood. As the second paragraph demonstrates, her understanding of mothood casts into doubt the self-other split at the heart of dualistic representations. Even after giving birth to Juana, Gabriela continues to interpret the mother-daughter dyad as a unified subject.

Gabriela's motherhood also triggers a marked turning away from her father, towards her mother, and therefore towards the creation of the community of women analyzed above. As a young woman Gabriela's father is the most influential person in her life. His lay beliefs and dedication to education convince Gabriela to become a teacher. In her early years, Gabriela's

mother plays a much reduced role. However, these roles become reversed when Gabriela becomes a mother. Ezequiel and Gabriela's father bond over politics while Gabriela begins to prefer to spend time with her mother:

> Yo preservaba mi paz refugiándome en la indiferencia tentadora de mi madre. Nos sentábamos en las sillas bajas a la sombra de los árboles y cosíamos las dos. Le contaba historias de los niños, le hablaba de nuestros amigos. Juana nos acompañaba. Jugaba y charlaba sin cesar y alegraba todos nuestros momentos. Evoco aquel verano y veo el pequeño grupo que formábamos las tres, mi madre, mi hija y yo, unidas en una plácida armonía, voluntariamente aisladas de los insistentes presagios de nuestros hombres. (*Historia de una maestra* 205)

This representation does suggest a certain gender-coding in the novels, though it differs from that studied previously. Male characters, like Ezequiel, Gabriela's father and the Republican mayor of Los Valles represent not just the Republic, but also active and even extreme politics. Gabriela and her mother come dangerously close to representing a-politicism, thereby reifying traditional stereotypes of women that refuse to acknowledge women as political actors. Gabriela's own activity, as a Republican schoolteacher and a dedicated career professional, contradict this representation. Motherhood may serve as a handicap into the entry of extreme male politics, but it does not hinder Gabriela from less dualistic forms of social and political activism.

The representation of Gabriela as a mother, and its effect on her life, contrast strongly with the representation of women who are political activists. Inés is a fellow schoolteacher who uses her classroom for what Gabriela considers inappropriate political ends. Gabriela is never comfortable with what she considers Inés's stridency, and she rejects both Inés's teachings on birth control and her urging for Gabriela to join the miner's strike: "Hubiera querido decirle:

<<Tú no sabes lo que es un hijo.>> Pero no era justo. Inés hubiera hecho lo mismo aunque hubiera tenido muchos hijos. Me sentía culpable y cobarde. Una sensación de impotencia me dominaba" (214). In Mexico as well, a young politically active woman, Soledad, moves to the *hacienda* to help Gabriela with her school. The reader learns that Soledad leaves Mexico City because of her romantic involvement with a married man. Both Inés and Soledad betray Gabriela by having affairs with her husbands (Ezequiel and Octavio), leaving the reader to associate Gabriel's rejection of these women as a rejection of women political activists. Inés and Soledad are selfish and do not participate in the community of mutual sharing created by the other women in the novel.

It is nevertheless possible to interpret Gabriel's withdrawal into motherhood and rejection of political activism as a reification of maternal stereotypes about women. In interviews, Aldecoa seems to support this reading, and she emphasizes repeatedly the limitations women confront when they opt to be mothers (Talbot 242). And yet, Gabriela's more generous attitude towards others proves more successful than the men's vociferous politicizing (Leggott 124). Education, consensus building and measured change are preferred to strikes and divisiveness. The novel only partially supports essentialist definitions of women. Gabriela does struggle to find a balance between motherhood and political activism, but she also is a professional woman dedicated to pedagogy. And in spite of Gabriela's attempts to depoliticize her profession, education is shown repeatedly to have political importance to society and the nation. In every school where Gabriela teaches, for example, she confronts a hostile ruling oligarchy that is distrustful of the liberalizing tendency of education. Gabriela learns to balance multiple competing and contradictory roles. She becomes an early example of the *doble jornada* that many working women face.

Just as Gabriela's beliefs in education shield her from dualistic divisions in society, her experience of motherhood also keeps her from splitting Spanish society into the "two Spain" concept of good and bad, self and other. Throughout the three novels, Gabriela and Juana's relationship is represented as one of constant tension and yet of solidarity; while they both recognize each other as autonomous subjects, they also acknowledge the shared bond that unites them as mother and daughter.[9] Jessica Benjamin's maternal theory of intersubjectivity accounts for this non-dualized relationship. This theory disputes Freud's Oedipal objectification of the mother and posits instead that subject formation depends on the mutual recognition of autonomy between mother and child. As Andrea Bailey summarizes:

> [I]f the need for differentiation depends upon mutual recognition between two subjects, then the narrative can have a much different shape. The protagonist's main task will be not individuation but social interaction, which will not be at the expense of her own subjectivity or plot, as has so often been the case with the mother/daughter plot. Narrative will be driven by negotiation and fluctuation, authority and submission, identity and rejection, ambiguity and paradox. Rather than focusing on the protagonist's struggle for differentiation through the real and/or metaphorical destruction of the other (a movement away from the mother and toward the father), the plot will be propelled by the struggle between (at least) two subjects who interact within an intersubjective space without falling into polarizing patterns of domination and submission.

This unidealized, mutual recognition describes the dialogic relationship between Gabriela and Juana. The mother/daughter plot strives not to fall into clichéd vilification or idealization. Gabriela and Juana's relationship faces many tensions, but even as the women recognize these tensions, they remain committed to a relationship of solidarity, based partially on their shared

experience of war, defeat and exile. Juana, for example, leaves for Spain in order to separate from her overly-austere and cautious mother:

> Yo me había ido para separarme de mi madre, yo había necesitado dejar atrás la pesadumbre de mi madre, sus trajes negros enlutándola desde tan joven, yo me había ido para vivir sin remordimiento mi propia vida. No era un acto de rebeldía. Yo quería a mi madre, admiraba su entrega a los demás, le agradecía todo lo que me había dado, lo que me había exigido. Pero necesitaba huir de ella, del rictus de su boca, del reproche callado de sus miradas. El reproche nos alcanzaba a todos, nos envolvía en un cerco oprimente, pero especialmente a mí. Me sentía siempre culpable de un error, una omisión o un exceso. (*La fuerza del destino* 176-177)

Yet when Juana's cowardly lover, Sergio, rejects her due to family pressure, Juana turns back to her mother by writing her a letter. Juana worries her mother will judge her for premarital sex, but "la respuesta de mi madre no se hizo esperar. Era una carta rebosante de amor y comprensión" (*Mujeres de negro* 199).

Likewise Gabriela also recognizes her relationship of negotiation, differentiation and yet of solidarity with Juana. Gabriela considers Juana's move to Spain a betrayal that left her defenseless when she discovered Octavio's affair with Soledad: "Así que Juana me abandonó en un período negro de mi vida. Me dejó dolorida y convaleciente de un desengaño quizás irremediable" (*La fuerza del destino* 152). Gabriela's return to Spain after Franco's death is ambivalent; she comes in search of Juana, of whom she says "mi pasión es Juana," yet she suspects that her return has been a mistake (112). In spite of her fractured relationship with her daughter, however, Gabriela's last words are to Juana: "Juana, hija mía, Juana" (223). Gabriela and Juana's success at maintaining their relationship even as they disagree with each other

informs Gabriela's capability to sustain personal relationships in the face of conflict. This ability accounts for rejection of dualism and political extremism more in tune with the "two Spains" concept of Spanish history found in the trilogy.

Aldecoa's prioritizing of maternal themes in *Historia de la maestra*, *Mujeres de negro*, and *La fuerza del destino* is central in her ability to eschew images of the tyrannical mother. Motherhood, along the lines of "difference feminism," is portrayed as a special state that allows Gabriela to complicate traditional concepts of self-and other. This awareness helps her avoid extreme politics, which ultimately fail, and to instead build coalitions with people of diverse ideologies. The work does not forgoe gender-coding entirely. Political extremism is coded as masculine in the figures of Ezequiel and Gabriela's father and largely rejected. In contrast, Gabriela represents slower political change based on compromise and respect for those of differing beliefs. This gender-coding can also lead to problematic readings of the works, as Gabriela's emphasis on her maternity coupled with a certain passivity, can lead to the reification of naturalized understandings of women and mothers. The trilogy attempts to avoid this reification, however, by showing Gabriela's agency as a committed professional and as a mother. The representation of the mother-daughter relationship also refutes the tendency towards dualistic political representations of women.

Unlike Josefina Aldecoa, Lucía Etxebarria is one of only a handful of contemporary authors who overtly espouse their feminist advocacy. In a 2004 interview, for example, she acknowledges the unpopularity of the term: "Fue idea mía decir que era feminista en España, y eso que cuando conseguí el contrato con la editorial me dijeron que por favor no usara el término "feminista" porque si no el libro no se vendería. Y ahora lo que he hecho es conseguir que

muchas chicas jóvenes se atrevan a decir que lo son" (Añover and Pérez Franco 184). In her essay, *Nosotras las que no somos como las demás*, Etxebarria advocates for third wave feminism, which she calls "*post feminismo*, *tercera ola feminista* o *feminismo del poder* (versus *feminismo de la diferencia*)" (emphasis in original) (8). Third wave feminism, she explains, expresses the beliefs of a generation of women who have been raised to assume their equality with men, though they realize that this equality has not yet been fully attained (8-9). In Spain, many younger men and women have rejected as strident or dogmatic beliefs of North American second wave feminism, and Etxebarria advocates instead a scrutiny of imposed gender roles both on men and women (10). Any distancing from second wave feminism also implies a distancing from the sticky and problematic history of feminism and motherhood, and, to name one, Nancy Friday's rejection of motherhood as well as the difference feminists' over-idealization of it. *Un milagro en equilibrio* accepts motherhood as a legitimate option for feminist women, even as it strives to problematize and critique medical, religious, popular and political discourses about it.

The narrator of *Un milagro en equilibrio* is Eva Agulló, a thirty-something semi-successful writer and a new mother. Eleven days after the birth of her daughter, Amanda, Eva begins a diary intended not only for her daughter but also for a wider reading public; as one aim of the diary is to correct the dearth of literary representations of pregnancy, birth and the postpartum (43). Eva refers to her diary as a "retahíla desordenada de notas," suggesting an homage both to Carmen Martín Gaite's *Retahílas*, and to Matia's "diario en disorden" in Matute's *La trampa*. The diary/novel is divided into three sections, loosely corresponding to Eva's explanation of her life prior to Amanda's birth, the sudden sickness and death of her mother, and finally the events at her mother's funeral that precipitate Eva's rejection of her biological family. The chronological story of Eva's life before Amanda and how she begins a

relationship with Amanda's father is continually interrupted by descriptions of Amanda as a newborn and later by descriptions of the declining health of Eva's mother. Like Aldecoa's trilogy, *Un milagro en equilibrio* privileges the first-person dialogue between a mother and daughter, though in this case the daughter is too young to respond to her mother. The novel alternates temporally and thematically, which, along with the interruptions of Amanda and Eva's mother, contribute to the illusion of a multi-vocal experience of three generations of women in spite of Eva's ostensible control of the entire work.

The sudden sickness and demise of Eva's mother precipitates a crisis in Eva, who strives to finally know this woman as a person and not just a mother. The realization that Eva has really never known her mother gives new meaning to her diary; through it Amanda will learn about her own mother as a person. She tells Amanda at the end: "No quiero que tengas que enterarte, confusamente y por terceros, de partes trascendentales de la historia de tu madre, como me sucedió a mí" (437). Eva realizes that her lack of open communication with her mother has resulted in Eva's reliving the mistakes that her mother made, especially that of suffering emotionally abusive relationships with men. This realization helps Eva break with her emotionally abusive father and brother, while it also helps her imagine a healthier relationship between mother and daughter in which the daughter does not unwittingly repeat the same errors as her mother (347).

Compared with Etxebarria's more famous novels *Amor, curiosidad, prozac y dudas* (1997) and *Beatriz y los cuerpos celestes* (1998), *Un milagro en equilibrio* has received very little critical attention. Only two article-length studies analyze the novel: first, Silvia Bermúdez compares *Un milagro en equilibrio* with what she calls the only other work in Spain to deal directly with pregnancy, Carme Riera's published diary from 1998, *Tiempo de espera* (95).[10]

Second, Sandra Schumm focuses on the silencing of women and especially mothers under the Francoist regime. She argues that the Virgin Mary is an unrealistic role model for women because the Church progressively denied to Mary any empowering or even material characteristics she may have possessed historically (156). The result is a generation of silenced and invisible women and broken communication between mothers and daughters that Eva tries to mend with her diary to Amanda.

Un milagro en equilibrio marks a narrative change for Etxebarria. *Amor, curiosidad, prozac y dudas* and *Beatriz y los cuerpos celestes* both interrogate sexual roles offered to women and offer "dissident" sexualities such as lesbianism as alternative models. Carmen de Urioste, for example, sees in the first novel a call to resist compulsory heterosexuality and in the second the representation of lesbianism as a viable option (130). The mothers in both novels at first seem much closer to the tyrannical mother image than Eva's mother in *Un milagro en equilibrio*. Juan Senís Fernández says of these mothers, for example, that they are upper-class women who are "rígidas (frígidas, incluso) que son vícitmas de su propia educación machista y su catolicismo ultranza." More important for this study, Cinta Ramblado Minero—who calls Beatriz's mother a "madre castradora"—argues that Beatriz rejects her mother precisely because she never tries to connect her mother's situation to concrete historical and political antecedents. Rather, "*Beatriz y los cuerpos celestes* es un claro exponente de la condición posmoderna, asociada con la alienación, el individualismo y la relativa falta de conciencia histórico-social" ("Conflictos generacionales"). Both Cristina in *Amor* and Beatriz are products of the *desmemoria* of the Spanish political transition, and fail to see their mothers' experiences in their Francoist contexts. The result is a move to reject the mother without attempting to understand her circumstances.

In *Un milagro en equilibrio*, however, Eva eventually performs an abrupt reversal from these earlier protagonists, emphasizing instead how the historical and political events of twentieth-century Spain altered and damaged the mother-daughter relationship (Ramblado Minero "Conflictos generacionales").[11] Rather than the facile dismissing of mothers of the earlier novels, Eva Agulló interrogates nearly every discourse about motherhood—from medical discourses to psychological, popular, social, and especially historical and political ones. As a writer, Eva understands the power of textual and visual representations to create rather than describe reality, while as a feminist she is suspicious of how these representations of mothers disempower women. Her critique of representation from a feminist perspective coincides with Celia Amorós's definition of feminism as "la mirada extrañada" and of feminist theory as "teoría crítica que irracionaliza la visión establecida de la realidad" (16, 60). While the second section of the novel, "Este valle de lágrimas," analyzes specifically the Civil War and the Francoist regime's attempt to define motherhood, the first section, entitled "El efecto Bambi," critiques contemporary representations of women and motherhood. The first section prepares the reader for the more in-depth critique of the second section. Regarding Carmen Riera's 1998 pregnancy diary, which Bermúdez's article considers an important meta-text for Etxebarria's novel, Eva argues that it offers an over-idealized image of pregnancy. The fictional Eva writes the real-but-fictionalized Riera an e-mail in which she says: "Me ha encantado tu libro, pero lo que describes no se parece en nada a mi vivencia del embarazo" (41). In contrast to Riera, who idealized pregnancy because she wanted her daughter to believe "que ella había nacido como resultado de un acto de amor y no de una simple crisis de vómitos," Eva chooses to give a more ambivalent portrayal of pregnancy (41).

Eva's critique of representation then extends to the canonical literary world, which she finds devoid of any adequate treatments of pregnancy. Eva holds up *Madame Bovary* and *Ana Karenina* as two novels supposedly about mothers that neglect to mention their experience of labor and mothering:

> Apenas hay descripciones de partos ni embarazos en los clásicos, omisión no tan sorprendente si se tiene en cuenta que el noventa y nueve por ciento de la literatura universal está escrita por hombres, y por eso queda constancia de los modelos exactos de botines que calzaba la Bovary (hasta Vargas Llosa tiene un estudio sobre el particular) y de sus desvelos para encontrar unas cortinas elegantes que le dieran un toque de distinción a su saloncito, pero nada se cuenta de esos largos nueve meses que pasó embarazada ni de las doce horas de parto que atravesó (si es que no fueron más) ni del mes de puerperio que debió pasar en la cama (como cualquier otra burguesita decimonónica). (43)

In more contemporary literature as well, Eva is not able to find convincing portrayals of pregnancy and maternity. Even among women authors, "parecía que la mujer que escribía no paría y viceversa," demonstrating Susan Suleiman's contention that "mother's don't write, they are written" (43; 356).

Eva particularly criticizes pregnancy manuals, parenting magazines and medical discourses that misrepresent pregnancy and motherhood to women. She targets sexist representations like the pregnancy manual that suggests to expectant mothers to "llamar a la abuela y decirle si tiene que tejer los patucos azules o rosas," and that shows pregnant women only doing traditional household chores "para que no dudemos de que una mujer preñada es una ama de casa y no una ejecutiva" (44). Eva's graphic designer neighbor points out to her that the

photos of pregnant women in another manual have been airbrushed to show "tripa de preñada pero muslos y senos de virgin prepúber" (45). She deconstructs medical and social pressure for breastfeeding and connects them to the current lack of public support for mothers in Spain:

> A veces me parece que esa insistencia en la lactancia materna contra viento y marea, *y que no promociona a su vez un cambio en el mercado laboral que pudiera propiciarla*, oculta en realidad una promoción del retorno a los valores tradicionales. Sí, de acuerdo, dar de mamar es lo más natural, también o más natural sería salir de paseo en taparrabos y follar al aire libre. Pero lo que me ha acabado de reafirmar en mi postura es un dato del que me acabo de enterar vía Internet: ¿sabes quién es la presidenta de La Liga de la Leche en Texas? Laura Bush. Acabáramos. (emphasis in original 121)

Eva resists the imposition of gender in baby clothes, and points out that neighbors who previously would not acknowledge her suddenly validate and legitimize her as a mother (124, 308). Finally, the fictional Eve writes a letter to the real life magazine *Padres* suggesting that they "dejen de formentar estereotipos sexistas en su publicación" (138). In each of her critiques Eva demonstrates how representations of motherhood serve to construct mothers to serve society, and how these representations can alienate women from themselves.

Eva's critique of representation extends beyond the framing of mothers and pregnancy to other scripts that women and girls are taught in popular culture. She compares, for example, two popular American movies—*Purple Rain* and *Thelma and Louise*. The first—much like the fairy tales that Matute critiques in *Primera memoria*—reinforces representations of gender that prove harmful to women. In *Purple Rain*, the male protagonist hits his female love interest, but to the adolescent viewers in Eva's clique, "no nos parecía que hubiese nada raro en aquella relación. [. . .] Y no hablábamos de abuso y sí de amor, de pasión" (79-80). Eva compares this movie to

television talk shows, as they also reinforce the script of domestic abuse, urging women to return to violent situations in order to uphold the discourse that male violence expresses heterosexual passion (80). Against these negative examples, Eva places *Thelma and Louise*, whose female protagonist rejects her boyfriend's proposal, offered during a violent episode. Louise's rejection causes a twenty-four-year-old Eva to call her "una estúpida por rechazar al buenorro de Michael Madsen" (236). To the thirty-something Eva, however, after reading "algún que otro libro feminista sobre la necesidad de redefinir las relaciones de pareja," Eva recognizes that Louise "es una chica lista, y una chica lista no se casa con un tío que va por ahí destrozando habitaciones de hotel sólo porque sospecha que su chica se puede estar planteando dejarle" (81, 237). These popular representations of women and of heterosexual love set both men and women up to repeate unhealthy patterns of dominance and submission. While an adolescente Eva accepts the scripts and attempts to enact them in her own life, the adult Eva recognizes the danger to women of continuing to represent these roles. She also recognizes that the members of her family follow social scripts that create male victimizers and female victims.

One final episode demonstrates Eva's desire to interrogate representation and to show how it can falsely construct reality. When an innocent but suggestive picture of her and friend David Muñoz appears in the tabloid magazine *Cita* (a transparent reference to *¡Hola!*), Eva explores how the photograph, divested of its original context, comes to represent something quite different for *Cita's* readership. She goes further, however, by also exposing the machinations of the publishing and media industry behind the photo when she reveals that it was David's own wife—currently playing up the role of abused and jilted spouse—who leaked information against David to the tabloid. Eva explains what the public doesn't see—how the "truth" is commodified by the media industry by offering Eva larges sums of money to tell her side of the story (118,

13). Through her criticisms of print and visual media, Eva foregrounds how representation attempts to construct reality rather than innocently reflect it. The feminism she espouses acknowledges "a politics of representation in response to feminist concerns with fetishized images of women" (Coole 186).

One common representation that Eva does not question in the first section of the novel is that of her own mother, Eva Benayas. Instead, Eva prepares the reader for a representation of her mother that we have seen several times now—the tyrannical mother. Much like Matia's grandmother, Julia's mother, and Malena's mother and sister, Eva's mother criticizes her daughter's unfeminine personal appearance: "Porque desde que recuerdo he escuchado a mi madre decir según entraba en mi habitación: <<*Hija, mira que eres desastre, que tienes tu cuarto hecho una leonera*>> (16). Throughout her adolescence and adulthood, Eva attempts to conform to her mother's expectations. For example, Eva refuses to accept the lucrative exposé in *Cita* because of her mother's idea of proper femininity, "porque a mi madre, que siempre había mantenido la consigna de que una dama sólo debe aparecer dos veces en la prensa, el día de su nacimiento y el de su boda, la habría matado del disgusto" (113). In spite of her repeated rejection of the gendering of infants through clothes and toys, Eva also acquiesces to her mother's preferences when she dresses her daughter, Amanda:

> Tú, que ibas de lo más moderna con tu ranita malva y tu chaquetita verde, todo un alegato indumentario en contra de los estereotipos sexistas, aunque me temo que tu abuela no hubiera estado muy de acuerdo conmigo y le hubiera dado un conato de infarto (otro) si te hubiese visto. (Es por eso por lo que cuando vamos a comer a casa de mi madre te llevamos vestida de blanco y rosa.) (124)

Despite her critical and controlling attitude toward her daughter, Eva Benayas never rises to the level of the tyrannical mother, for three reasons. First, Eva Agulló acknowledges her incomplete representation of her mother and takes actions to correct it. Second, part of this correction shows her mother to be from a defeated Republican family and her father's family from a Nationalist one. Finally, culpability shifts throughout the novel from the maternal to the paternal, and in the end Agulló laments the lost relationship with her mother as she breaks contact with her abusive father.

In the first section of the novel, Eva confesses to her daughter her own alcoholism, and also an abusive relationship, from both of which she slowly manages to free herself. Noting that these events seem to have little to do with the story of Eva's pregnancy and Amanda's birth, she nevertheless emphasizes to Amanda their importance: "No puedes entender tu historia si no entiendes primero la mía, aunque en principio no parezca que tengan mucha relación estas líneas que escribo con tu vida" (83). When Eva's own mother becomes critically ill in the second section of the novel, Eva comes to understand this for herself as well—that she can't understand her own life without understanding that of her now-dying mother. The prologue to the second section of the novel, which comes from Margaret Atwood's 2000 novel *The Blind Assassin*, is telling:

> Menuda invención son las madres. Espantapájaros, muñecos de cera para que les clavemos agujas, simples gráficos. Les negamos una existencia propia, las adaptamos a nuestros antojos: a nuestra propia hambre, a nuestros propios deseos, a nuestras propias deficiencias. Como he sido madre, lo sé. (148)

In the first section of the novel Eva has proven to be appropriately suspicious of representations and the power that they have to create—and not reflect—reality. This prologue suggests that the

representation that Eva will question in this section of the novel will be one of her own creation. Eva will compare the representation she has created of her mother with what she is able to learn about the woman, Eva Benayas: "Y como yo vivía en mi propio mundo y era incapaz de darme cuenta de que ella tenía un mundo ajeno, personal e intransferible, del que yo no formaba parte" (412). In doing so, however, Eva Agulló does not simply exchange one representation for another; she understands the difficulty of recovering the past, especially now that her own mother—the object of this representation—has been silenced. Eva recognizes that her mother's coma has reduced her to a state of powerlessness and lack of communication similar to her newborn daughter, Amanda: "Pero su percepción podría ser tan limitada como la tuya, [. . .] Porque ahora ella es como tú: incapaz de moverse o incluso de sobrevivir sola" (312). She therefore attempts not to impose any totalizing representations on either mother or daughter, recognizing instead that any narrative she is able to construct regarding her mother's past (and daughter's future) must remain tentative and unconfirmed: "Y sé que nunca la conoceré del todo, que no entenderé sus mecanismos o resortes y no tiene sentido que me empeñe en descifrar un misterio que a mí no me pertenece" (402).

Eva Agulló comes to understand her mother as a nuanced person; she does not excuse Benayas's past oppressive and critical behavior, but Agulló also recognizes her mother's dissatisfaction with her own marital and family situation. Eva comments about her mother: "Desde que tuve uso de razón vi llorar a mi madre al menos una vez por semana por una cosa u otra, bien porque se había peleado con mi padre o porque se trataba de uno de aquellos días en que se encontraba demasiado fatigada y no podía levantarse de la cama" (411-12). She wonders if her mother's negative attitude could be from "el puro cansancio de cargar cada día con la culpa, la amargura y la frustración a las espaldas" (412). As a child Agulló cannot understand

the causes of her mother's melancholy and she assumes that she must be the cause (412). This childhood feeling of culpability causes Eva Agulló to distance herself from her mother, and even to hate her. She seeks independence from the family as quickly as possible. Much as Gabriela in *Historia de una maestra* interprets motherhood in a way incompatible with strict political dualisms, Eva Agulló's own experience of motherhood is what forces her to realize that her own mother should not be so easily dismissed. By first engaging and then piecing together parts of her own mother's history, Eva Agulló discovers that she has unwittingly followed the same path as her mother, accepting the emotional abuse of her father, brother and male partners much like her mother did. She also ascertains why her mother may have felt helpless to avoid her situation, while in contrast Agulló has the opportunity and obligation to break the cycle for herself and for Amanda.

Eva begins her recuperation of personal memory about her mother using four sources: a school essay that her niece has written about Benayas, Eva's own family memories, and the personal recollections of Benayas's sister-in-law Reme, and closest friend Eugenia. The school essay serves as a realization of how little Eva knows about her mother, and also how Eva has failed to link her mother's personal past to the country's past, instead assuming like many historians that history and politics do not affect women. While Eva Agulló is a sophisticated and educated woman with an expansive education, she has never connected what she knows about the post-war period specifically to her mother, who lived during this period. After reading Laurita's school essay, Eva reacts with amazement at all that she does not know:

> Pero yo nunca había oído hablar de todo aquello ni conocía tampoco detalles del hambre que tu abuela había llegado a pasar pocos años antes de iniciar aquellas relaciones, cuando el azúcar, el arroz, las judías y el aceite estaban racionados [. . .] Y mucho menos

> sabía que tu abuela se había pasado casi toda la juventud vestida de negro, porque el color de los lutos llegó a ser casi el habitual de las prendas de vestir pues rara era la familia que no había sufrido la pérdida de algún familiar. [. . .] Otra de las cosas que ignoraba es que tu abuela no tuvo un traje rojo hasta el año sesenta debido a que en la posguerra aquel color pasó a estar tácitamente prohibido, y también desconocía que la tía de mi madre, Sabina, sospechosa de roja porque tuvo un novio que cayó luchando a favor de la República, se quedó soltera. (166-67)

The history of Eva Benayas that Eva Agulló learns from her niece's essay forces Agulló to recognize how little she knows about her mother. Suddenly her mother's manias, like saving sugar packets from restaurants or compulsively buying canned foods, make sense to Eva (168).

Laurita's essay about Eva Benayas initiates Eva's nostalgic investigation of her mother's past. Eva then begins a search through her own memories of what she knows of her mother's family and their Republican past. She remembers a curious comment that her father makes during a fight he has with his wife: "*El favor que le hizo al casarse con ella y traerla después a Madrid*" (emphasis in original 178). Tía Reme and Eugenia clarify for Eva what this might have meant. Tía Reme emphasizes the Benayas's family's delicate situation after the end of the war, explaining to Eva what happened to her great aunt Sabina: "La raparon y la purgaron con aceite y ricino, hasta en la cárcel estuvo, y aún no había cumplido los dieciséis, en Benalúa, en la prisión de mujeres" (266). From Eugenia, Eva Agulló learns how this family history directly affected her mother. Both due to her family's Republican past and to her (erroneous) belief that she couldn't have children, Benayas was not allowed to marry her true love, Manuel. Rather than telling her the truth, however, Manuel, "como el perro del hortelano," strings Benayas along

until she is nearly thirty and "mercancía usada" (331, 333). The "favor" that Agulló's father does for her mother is to marry her and take her away from the gossip of their hometown, Elche.

Both Silvia Bermúdez and Sandra Schumm's critical essays on *Un milagro en equilibrio* stress the work's goal of reestablishing a line of mother-daughter communication that has been broken by the Francoist appropriation of motherhood and silencing of women (Bermúdez 101; Schumm 153). While certainly Francoist and Church education of women taught women tellingly "a representar. No a ser," *Un milagro en equilibrio* suggests two additional causes for the lack of mother-daughter communication, both also rooted firmly in history and recent politics (Martín Gaite *Usos amorosos* 64; Schumm 155). One is the fear of retaliation and denouncement that many families of the defeated had to endure. Eva learns from Tía Reme that Eva's Republican grandfather moved Benayas's birthdate from April 13 to April 14 so that it would coincide with the Second Republic. When Eva Agulló questions why she never heard this story before, Reme replies: "—Hija, porque era un secreto [. . .]. Como comprenderás, en tiempos de Franco mejor no decirlo. Bastantes problemas tuvo ya la familia como para sacar esa bromita a la luz" (266). Eva learns more about her family's Republican past from Eugenia, and again fear motivated the family to keep these stories hidden: "Porque tenían miedo, porque entonces se represaliaba a cualquiera, podías acabar en la cárcel sólo porque hubiera habido un rojo en tu familia, y si tenías la suerte de estar libre no encontrabas trabajo de ninguna manera. . . Ésa era la política de los nacionales, la tierra quemada" (330). While Eva Benayas's attempts to conform to society's expectations of her do contribute to the mother-daughter rift, silence caused by fear additionally impairs this relationship.

Un milagro en equilibrio suggests one further reason for the breach in communication between mother and daughter: the lack of an interested interlocutor. Eva Agulló recognizes that

she shares part of the culpability of not knowing her mother as a person. Laurita's school essay demonstrates the voice of an older woman very much interested in telling the events of her life, and after reading the essay Eva must recognize that "nunca me he parado a escucharla" (169). In her article about memory and the Civil War, Jo Labanyi also points to the lack of interest on the part of children as a reason that many parents and grandparents have remained silent about their experiences of the war and regime (109). Eva Agulló's previous disinterest in her mother's past, as well as the sudden renewal of interest in the twenty-first century is a metaphor for a cultural process occurring simultaneously in Spain. Eva, just like Beatriz in *Beatriz y los cuerpos celestes*, comes of age during the period of *desmemoria* or the *pacto del olvido* that facilitated Spain's transitional government in the 1970s (Ramblado Minero "Conflictos generacionales"). Unlike Beatriz, however, who never reconciles with her mother, Eva changes course. When Eva reaches adulthood in the twenty-first century and becomes a mother herself, she becomes dissatisfied with the *desmemoria*.[12] Her personal quest to recover memory parallels that of current Spanish society.

Unlike many of the narrative works that Labanyi studies in her article, Eva recognizes that her mother's silence (due to sickness and then death) makes impossible any final or uncomplicated recovery of her mother's experience: "Mi madre ha muerto, ya está fuera de mi alcance, [. . .] y [. . .] se ha llevado dondequiera que haya ido todo lo que no se le pudo decir en vida, todo lo que no me pudo dar. Ya está fuera de mi alcance, ya no pertenece a otra que a sí y me he quedado sin saber la razón última de sus silencios y sus melancolías" (436). Eva Agulló comes to understand that Eva Benayas had a past that impacted her ability to mother, and that this past is connected to the national past. This allows Eva Agulló to recognize her mother as a real person, and not as a stereotype of women. It also alerts to her the need to establish open

communication with her own daughter in order to avoid repeating the same cycle of abuse that both she and her own mother endured.

There is a subtle shift in blame from the maternal to the paternal as the novel progresses. As soon as the second page, the reader learns of Agulló's dysfunctional family, yet the family abuse is connected to Agulló's critical mother, and her father is not mentioned. After Agulló's search for her mother's past, however, Agulló recollects several instances of her father's abusive behavior. While chronologically, these scenes should occur much earlier in the work, their placement at the end of the novel demonstrates how Agulló has learned from her mother's past. The episodes that demonstrate the father's emotional abuse resemble ones in *Primera memoria* and in *Julia*, where they are not by a father figure but by the tyrannical mothers.

The first of these memories—as with both Matia and Julia—regards an issue of food control. When a fight with her boyfriend makes Eva late for her family's weekly Sunday dinner, "lo primero que hicieron fue echarme en cara a gritos mi demora" (407). Eva connects this scene with her father, not her mother, because he precipitated the fight by uninviting the boyfriend to dinner: "Me dijo en su momento que solo le presentara a un novio si estaba segura de que la cosa iba a durar toda la vida porque, de lo contrario, prefería no enterarse de mis aventuras" (408). After this fight, Eva drinks a liter of vodka, has a seizure and is found unconscious on a park bench. At her hospital bedside, Eva's father says virtually the same thing as Julia's mother, after the former's suicide attempt: "¿Cómo has podido hacernos esto?" (406). By clarifying her mother's past situation, Eva shifts the blame for family abuse from her mother to her father, whom she calls "Leo, el Sol" in order to emphasize his previous dominance in the family (246). Eva rejects her father and forms a new Spanish family. At the very center of this new family is the mother-daughter dyad, represented by Eva and Amanda. It is further composed of Eva's

Romanian partner, Antón, a host of "tías postizas" who are Eva's supportive female friends, as well as several supportive gay men.[13] The new family that Eva creates contrasts with the Francoist family. Eva is the primary breadwinner in the family, while Antón plays a much reduced role. The new family demonstrates a decisive break with the Francoist ideals of *casticismo*, enforced heterosexuality and patriarchal dominance.

Both in Josefina Aldecoa's trilogy and in Etxebarria's *Un milagro en equilibrio*, a redefined concept of motherhood is key for undermining the long tradition of the tyrannical mother. Aldecoa's works utilize the arguments of difference feminism, which represents motherhood as a special status capable of breaking the dualistic tradition of the "two Spains." Aldecoa's simultaneous experience of both self and other during pregnancy prompts a rejection of political dualisms and of extremism, even as Gabriela works towards her progressive dream of universal lay education. In *Un milagro en equilibrio*, the experience of motherhood also helps Eva Agulló reject her early negative perceptions of her mother. In this case, it is not the special status of pregnancy or motherhood that causes Eva's about-face. Rather, by becoming a mother herself—one full of doubts and fears as well as hope—Eva realizes that she has been participating in society's objectification of her mother and of mothers in general. She sets out to correct this representation and to instead represent her mother as a nuanced human being. These different representations of motherhood, as well as each author's commitment to thwart the liberal/masculine and conservative/feminine gender coding of much progressive Spanish literature, goes a long way towards rendering the tyrannical mother figure obsolete.

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[1] The *Kronen* generation name comes from *Historias del Kronen*, a 1994 novel by José Ángel Mañas, which called attention to this youth generation.

[2] Both works, for example, have minor characters that conform to the role of the tyrannical mother. Since their own families are progressive and/or Republican, however, these are the mothers of potential love interests (from Nationalist families) who thwart the protagonists by impeding a romantic relationship with their sons. In *Mujeres de negro*, for example, Juana is crushed when her boyfriend Sergio acquiesces to maternal pressure and breaks with Juana (191-198). In *Un milagro en equilibrio*, Miguel's ultra-conservative and religious mother prevents him from

marrying Eva Benayas both because it is believed (erroneously) that Benayas cannot have children and because of her family's Republican associations (330).

[3] See Alexander Gerard's "Women and the Ballot Box: Voting in Spain's Two Democracies" for a convincing argument to the contrary.

[4] In an interview, Laura Freixas—one of the few Spanish women authors who do self-identify as feminist—suggests: "En cuanto a las escritoras que dicen no ser feministas, creo que lo dicen primero por el descrédito de la literatura de ideas (descrédito que no es más que una moda y una moda injusta si consideramos que la gran literatura está llena de ideas—la de Proust, la de Swift. . .—; la novela de tesis es otra cosa, más esquemática y maniquea) y sobre todo por la desvaloración del feminismo, dentro del ambiente general de "backlash," de reacción de neoconservadurismo. . . de estos últimos años" (48).

[5] Linda Alcoff, for example, defines "difference feminism"—which she calls "cultural feminism"—as "the ideology of a female nature or female essence reappropriated by feminists themselves in an effort to revalidate undervalued female attributes. For cultural feminists, the enemy of women is not merely a social system or economic institution or set of backward beliefs but masculinity itself and in some cases male biology" (427). Difference Feminist in Spain is influenced by Italian feminist philosophers, and especially by Luisa Muraro's work *El orden simbólico de la madre* (1991).

[6] In an interview Aldecoa comments on the importance of these schoolteachers. About the Second Republic she says: "Puede ser interesante porque es una época muy bonita para la educación en España. . . . una exaltación del maestro--pensando que puede salvar el país. [. . .] Todavía lo creo, que la educación es lo único que puede salvar un país." She also points out that during and after the war, schoolteachers were "uno de los grupos sociales que más represalias sufrió" (Interview with Talbot 247).

[7] A normal school is a school dedicated to the training of future teachers.

[8] Aldecoa's mother was a rural schoolteacher like the protagonist, Gabriela, and one of Aldecoa's favorite teachers is assassinated at the beginning of the Civil War much like the character Ezequiel.

[9] Aldecoa recognizes as much in an interview with Sarah Leggot. She comments that she wrote the trilogy at least partially to explore the underrepresented mother-daughter relationship. This relationship presupposes an imperfect knowledge of the other—both on the part of the mother and daughter. In spite of this imperfect knowledge, which can lead to tension and misunderstandings, the mother-daughter dyad "se vuelve a recuperar cuando la hija es verdaderamente madura y adulta ya. [. . .] ese acercamiento entre la madre y la hija se produce" (Interview with Leggot 93-94).

[10] This work was originally published in Catalán as *Temps de espera*.

[11] Etxebarria's own experience with motherhood may have contributed to this change in attitude and even in her desire to write a novel about maternity. This interest seems sustained since, in 2009, she and psychologist Goyo Bustos collaborated on a nonfiction parenting guide, *El club de las malas madres*. Etxebarria equivocates, however, during a June 2003 interview with Verónica Añover and Antonia Teresa Pérez Franco when they ask a pregnant Etxebarria if she will write about motherhood: "Para mí hay una mentira muy grande en torno al tema y un simbolismo inventado por una escritura patriarcal. No sé si me voy a atrever, porque tengo la idea de que todo el mundo me va a acusar a ser una bruja tremenda, una madre terrible, y de no tener instinto maternal" (192).

[12] In her study of Aldecoa's trilogy, Cinta Ramblado Minero argues that Gabriela's sickness, inability to speak, and death at the end of *La fuerza del destino* represent the silencing effect of *desmemoria* on the older generation of Spaniards who experienced the war. She says of Juana and Gabriela's relationship: "Gabriela es el epítome de la generación de los derrotados, marcados por el silencio y el luto; Juana representa a la nueva generación que jugará un papel activo en la Transición, para quien el recuerdo del pasado es, sin embargo, parte solamente de la vida cotidiana" (369). A similar situation occurs in *Un milagro en equilibrio*: Eva Benayas is also silenced by sickness and death, and her story has not been appreciated. Her daughter, Eva, writing twenty years after the PSOE victory in 1982, however, views the *desmemoria* much more negatively than Juana, who participated in the Transition. Eva is limited by her inability to access her mother's memories, since so much time has passed in silence between them.

[13] *Malena es un nombre de tango* ends on a similar note. Malena breaks with her conservative biological family as well, and begins a relationship with an undocumented Bulgarian immigrant—suggesting a new Spanish family and a new Spanish nation. The novel is unable to envision any real future for this relationship, however, and at the end the text suggests that Malena will begin a relationship with a successful (and Spanish and legal) psychiatrist, thereby undermining the more radical potential of the previous relationship.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The allegorical use of the female form is not a recent phenomenon, nor one limited to Spain or to the liberal vilification of conservative ideologies. In classical thought women represented good and evil: the Fates and the Furies, the Muses and Medusa. In more recent times, as Marina Warner points out, the female form represents Liberty, for example, in Delacroix's painting *Liberty Leading the People* and in the U.S. Statue of Liberty (*Monuments*). In a Spanish context, Álvaro-Junco shows how in the nineteenth-century, the newly-conceived Spanish nation is also pictorially represented as a woman and mother (32-33; 145); Sarah White shows how throughout the second part of the nineteenth-century the female form was allegorized on both sides of the "two Spains" divide to show both "one's own virtue and the moral inferiority of one's opponents" (233). As stated previously, Christine Arkinstall argues that the Franco regime used feminine imagery to represent itself as the *Madre patria* and the *Madre Iglesia* (48). The sheer quantity of allegorical representations of women is a testament to the power that the female form continues to wield over both men's and women's imaginations.

Yet allegorical representations of women—even in their most idealized forms—prove dangerous to real women because these representations rely on unrealistic and dualized understandings of femininity. Their meanings do not content themselves with the allegorical or metaphorical realm, but instead project onto real women as well as societal attitudes towards women. Joan Scott argues that when gender is used to represent phenomena otherwise unrelated to gender, the result is not only that the unrelated phenomena assume gender traits, but that

gender characteristics also assume the traits of the unrelated phenomena ("Deconstructing" 448). In this case, authors use gender traits associated with motherhood to represent political conflict. What results is not only the association of conservative political ideologies with a negative femininity, but also an association of feminity with negative political ideologies. When allegorical interpretations of women and politics are then taken literally, the result is to associate women with political conservatism and to justify liberal exclusions of women from politics.

In spite of the increasing critical attention being given to representations of mothers in literature, the tyrannical mother has not until now been labeled by critics as a political allegory. This is due not only to the preponderance of psychoanalytical interpretation regarding the mother-daughter relationship in literature, but also to the progressive political agenda of authors who utilize the tyrannical mother figure. In accordance with a "two Spains" division of Spanish politics, critics tend to accept that if Old Spain adopts a reactionary attitude towards women, then New Spain must necessarily adopt a liberatory stance. This dissertation has shown instead that progressive political agendas often adopt an ambivalent stance about women. The contradiction originates in Enlightenment liberalism itself and forms part of its core. Many modern representations of women adopt the ambivalence of the early reformers and perpetuate notions of women that originate in the early contract theorists' beliefs in women's natural lack of suitability for the new political climate being forged at that time. This explains why, even in works that ostensibly advocate for women's rights, negative representations of women continue to appear.

It may prove surprising to some that women authors also adopt the literary strategies that give rise to the tyrannical mother figure. Ana María Matute and Ana María Moix create tyrannical mother characters very much in line with their male forebearers and contemporaries. The mothers and grandmothers in these works represent Franco's National Catholicism and, at

times, Franco himself. The duplicity of idealized feminine qualities in these characters shows them to illegitimately wield political power and comments on the unnatural oppression of the individual under the regime. While Matute and Moix focus on motherhood only tangentially in their works—preferring to focus instead on the young female protagonist's struggle—one can see that works that direct their attention principally to motherhood can fall prey to the same negative stereotypes. *Malena es un nombre de tango* prioritizes maternity; yet even as Malena manages to create a new motherhood for the twenty-first century, the text continues to utilize the tyrannical mother figure in its representation of the three Reinas. The surprise ending of *El corazón helado* also participates in the historical phenomenon that vilifies mothers as political allegory. In spite of a sustained effort to validate both men and women's experiences in twentieth-century Spanish history, the tyrannical mother, Ángelica, alone is taken to task for her associations with Francoism.

Recent treatments of motherhood, however, begin to undermine and replace this enduring character. Gabriela's refusal to participate in dualistic separations of self and other, which is due at least partially to her own experience and understanding of motherhood, helps to make the tyrannical mother character obsolete. While Aldecoa would not use the label herself, the ideology of difference feminism espoused in the work serves to re-value traditional understandings of motherhood. The result, in Aldecoa's trilogy, is that political dualisms are eschewed and mother and daughter mutually recognize their subjecthood. The danger, as with much difference feminism, is that re-valuing traditional notions of femininity can lead to the reifying and naturalizing of these notions, as Rousseau's writings on women demonstrate. Etxebarria—among whom the term "feminist" is most appropriate—successfully manages to eschew both dualistic and naturalizing notions of motherhood and feminity. Through her

thorough interrogation of representation, Eva Agulló avoids allegorically representing her own mother as tyrannical and attempts instead to reconstruct the historical woman no longer available to her. Aldecoa and Etxebarria combat the tyrannical mother stereotype by focusing first on the representation of women and second on progressive political aims, thereby reversing the agenda of much progressive writing about women.

What this dissertation has shown is that one does not need to continue reading with the tyrannical mother figure reflections of real women and real mothers. While "real" women reacted to Francoist restrictions of women in a variety of ways, non-conformist authors have continued to represent only two possibilitites—young women who rebel against oppressive mores and older mothers who impose these mores. While undoubtedly some real mothers oppress their children, this study has shown that the prevalence of the tyrannical mother figure deals much less with the reality of women and children's lives, and much more with political expediency.

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