The Anti-Referential Novel: Ana María Moix and the *Gauche Divine*

by

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Abstract

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Ana María Moix wrote *Julia* and *Walter, ¿por qué te fuiste?* between 1968 and 1973, a unique historical period which gave rise to the unique cultural circle of Barcelona's *gauche divine*. The *gauche divine's* influence on Moix, and Moix's role of little sister in the group, inform the study of Moix's early novels. Additionally, members of the *gauche divine* served as a clear readership for Moix's first two novels. The aesthetic influence of the *gauche divine* contributed to Moix's ability to write a novel that broke clearly with the referent-oriented literature of her predecessors.

A reading of *Julia* informed by the context of the *gauche divine* illuminates possible messages about intellectual freedom and recognizes a reality that many would rather have kept silent--rape, infidelity, and child neglect in Franco's Spain. Moix also poignantly portrays the extreme loss that a girl trying to come of age has faced, and she asks how many losses one can endure. She suggests that these lessons, literal and figural, are often multiple. Given her innovative approach to female themes, *Julia* serves as a transitional novel between the novels of Carmen Laforet, Ana María Matute, Carmen Martín Gaite, and Mercè Rodoreda on the one hand, and Esther Tusquets and Montserrat Roig on the other.

Walter, while formally more connected to Tusquets's works and other postmodern novels than to the earlier writers, also plays a transitional role. The metafictional quality of the narration in *Walter* constitutes one factor that differentiates this novel from other Spanish post-war novels such as *Tiempo de Silencio* and *Señas de Identidad*. Moix examines the relativity of the differences between male and female, reality and fiction, and life and death, and argues that both the male and female characters in the novel are phantom-like. As with *Julia*, loss permeates *Walter*, which is a precursor to Tusquets's *El mismo mar de todos los veranos* and holds an important place among other novels of its time. *Walter* is ahead of its time thematically and formally. By eliminating the referent, Moix comes closest to accomplishing a formal renovation that others had talked about.

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Chapter One

Introduction: Moix and the *Gauche Divine*

Ana María Moix is an active writer who made important, but often overlooked, contributions to the Spanish novel of the late 1960s and early 1970s, an era marked with global political activism. Her experiences as a child and adolescent constitute the thematic backdrop for her fiction. Her social experiences, especially as part of the *gauche divine* cultural circle, inspired much of her aesthetic. Few critics have considered the *gauche divine's* contribution to Moix's artistic vision. Gabriel Ferrater, who played an aesthetic role within the *gauche divine* and whose views will be discussed in this chapter, believed that the writer "intenta traducir su experiencia" (*Infame* 326.) To the extent that he shaped the aesthetic of some members of the *gauche divine,* and therefore Moix's literary goals, the idea of "translating" one's own experiences is relevant. Thus, this introduction will begin with a short description of some of Moix's early experiences, and then discuss the *gauche divine* in light of the fact that it arose during a time that was politically unique.

Born in 1947 to a bourgeois, conservative family in Barcelona, Moix experienced childhood during a time when Franco's control over the country was at its height. By the time she published her first novels, *Julia* (1969 and reprinted in 1991) and *Walter ¿por qué te fuiste?* (1973 and reprinted in 1992), Franco had become somewhat less controlling; nevertheless, Moix grew up in an extremely conservative environment. She does not believe that her childhood was idyllic: "Es un asco la niñez. No se sabe nada. Sólo se mueve en un mundo de sombras e intuiciones y misterios," (qtd. in Jones, "Literary Structures" 105). The young characters in *Julia* and *Walter,* suffering from

overly restrictive parents who often do not support them, reflect Moix's outlook on childhood.

In "Poética," the introduction she wrote to her poems in *Nueve Novísimos*, Moix emphasizes the unhappiness of her childhood. She says that as she entered adolescence, she had already written her first book, which reflected her disillusionment with life: "'Todos eran unos Marranos', así titulé mi primer libro. Tenía doce años y la vaga sensación de que alguien me había estafado" ("Poética" 221). As the opening statement of "Poética," this idea is emblematic of the cynicism that is a persistent theme in her writing.

After making the above comment on her early adolescence, Moix says it might be better to begin with the "principio." One might expect the "beginning" to refer to her parents and place of birth; however, the beginning in "Poética" refers to her brothers: "Entonces, al principio, yo tenía dos hermanos: Miguel y Ramón. Cuando me peleaba con uno, el otro me llevaba al cine, y viceversa" (221). (Ramón would change his name to Terenci.) The brothers had an intellectual and creative influence over Moix that her parents did not share.

When they were not at the movies, Moix and her brothers entertained themselves. Miguel, says Moix, wrote poetry and wanted to be a composer ("Poética" 221). They mimicked singers from movies. Terenci secretly read Sartre and other books that their father would have prohibited. When Moix told Terenci she wanted to be a writer, he replied that she wasn't serious enough, and then secretly began to pass along to her books by Sartre. When she didn't read them, Terenci told her she would never be a serious writer ("Poética" 222). Moix, however, followed her instincts and read what she wanted.

By the time she wrote "Poética," which was published in 1970, Moix had already written two collections of poetry and the novel *Julia*. Thus, despite Terenci's doubts, it was clear that she was already a very serious writer.

Another important point in the presentation of her life in "Poética" is that she emphasizes the boys and men in her life. There is no mention of any female figures except for the brief comment about her mother's attitude: "Mi madre también aseguraba que estaba perdida: nada bueno podía esperarse de una chica que leía libros" (222). This position would not be surprising in the context of conservative Barcelona, in which girls were supposed to be feminine and prepare themselves to be housewives. Reading books was not considered feminine. When Moix grew older, she understood her mother differently. She told Antonio de Villena that her mother was cold and distant (like the one in *Julia*), but she adds that there was a reason for her mother's lack of warmth and closeness: "tal vez porque se sentía insatisfecha, como todas la mujeres inteligentes de una época llena de prejuicios," (Villena <http://www.xtec.es/~jducros/Ana%20Maria%20Moix.html>).

In "Poética" Moix describes her father minimally: "se llama Jesús, y es monárquico y sentimental" (221). What most interests Moix about her father in this text is his opinion of Sartre: "aseguraba que Sartre era la reencarnación del demonio y que sus lectores quedaban inmediatamente esclavizados al servicio de Satán" (221-222). Just as Moix's mother didn't approve of her daughter reading books at all, Moix's father would not have approved of her reading Sartre; therefore, says Moix, when Terenci loaned her Sartre's books, he wrapped them in comics so that their father "no advirtiera sus ansias de proselitismo a favor del poder de Satán" (222). It is interesting that of all

the things Moix could emphasize about her father, she highlights--ironically--his belief that Sartre represents Satan. This point underscores his conservative nature and the fact that his children did not respect him on this matter. In another ironic comment, Moix points out that instead of reading the books by Sartre her brother gave her, she read the comics that concealed them. She did not satirize Terenci, as she did her father, but neither did she take her brother's advice too seriously.

To add to Moix's already difficult childhood, Miguel died when he was seventeen and Ana María Moix was fifteen (Nichols, *Escribir* 123). When she comments on his death in "Poética" it is not to remark on the sadness, pain, and anger that are typical feelings after the loss of a loved one; rather, she says that since his death, she is afraid of him (221). Julia feels the same way about Rafael: "Tenía miedo del hermano muerto" (*Julia* 147). Fear of her dead sibling, however, does not prevent Moix from addressing the theme of death in fiction: in *Julia* and *Walter*, Julia's brother dies. When many years had passed since Miguel's death, Moix could speak more openly about the difficulty of her brother's early death. Moix told Antonio de Villena that his death "fue muy duro. Ahora la muerte se silencia, se oculta, como las enfermedades, cuando tendríamos que convivir con ella porque está en todas partes" (Villena <http://www.xtec.es/~jducros/Ana%20Maria%20 Moix.html>). In addition the first story of *De mi vida real nada sé* addresses Miguel's death.

Miguel and Moix were only two years apart in age, and, as stated, they were close. Usually when a sibling dies, the surviving siblings experience a double loss: they lose the sibling, but they also experience a loss of their parents, who are often so overwhelmed with grief that they are not able to be fully present for their other children.

Moix's parents had Miguel's illness to contend with before the death, which complicated matters. Moix moved from an unhappy childhood to an adolescence filled with the death of a brother and the grief of her parents. She may have been born into the financial comfort of a bourgeois family, but this factor was not enough to give her a happy childhood; on the contrary, her formative years were extremely difficult.

In "Poética" Moix points out that Miguel was never able to become a composer and that he died too soon to figure out if there was a difference between what is real and the "libros, tebeos, películas y canciones" that had taught the siblings what they knew about life (222). Moix decides to dedicate her poems in *Novísimos* to Miguel because in reference to the difference between text and media, and life, "estos poemas . . . vienen a demostrar que no la hay" (222). She also dedicates her poems to Terenci, who was able to live long enough to learn that "la diferencia es muy poca" (222). She explores the difference between reality and fiction in her own work, especially in *Walter*. She demonstrates the importance of her brothers to her by dedicating these poems to them. The fact that she dedicates the poems to them because of her belief in the similarity between reality and fiction reinforces a literary aesthetic (which will be discussed in subsequent chapters) in which reality and fiction are blurred.

When Moix was barely sixteen years old she wanted to talk about literature and writing with others. She had been reading established authors for several years at that point. Referring to Ana María Matute's books, for example, she told Geraldine Cleary Nichols, "cuando tenía trece o catorce años, devoraba todos sus libros" (*Escribir* 103). Moix soon began a correspondence with Matute. As Matute told Nichols, "La conocí (a Moix) cuando tenía dieciséis años; la primera carta que escribió (Moix) a un escritor fue

a mí" (*Escribir* 34). Moix says that in the first stories she wrote, she basically copied Matute. In addition to exchanging letters with Matute, when Moix was still a teenager she began a fifteen year correspondence with the novelist Rosa Chacel who was in exile. It is interesting that when Moix refers to the years in which she became interested in literature and writing, the authors she stresses are women. This point will be studied more elaborately in Chapter Three.

When Moix was seventeen and studying philosophy in college, Terenci introduced her to the poet Pere Gimferrer, and Moix began to take part in the conversations between Terenci and Gimferrer. In her interview with Campbell, Moix describes how in 1964 Gimferrer would come to her house daily to see Terenci. He met Moix, loaned her books, and read the stories she had written. Moix says that, "Un día Gimferrer me citó aparte y dijo que no era tonta como él pensaba y que escribía bastante bien, pero cuidado con parecerse a los escritores españoles, y nada de literatura social" (*Infame* 32). Gimferrer recognized Moix's potential and wanted to influence her by advising her to avoid Spanish writers. The only Spanish novelist Gimferrer approved of was Ana María Matute, which is an interesting point given that from an early age Moix had emulated Matute's writing.

While Gimferrer disliked Spanish writers, Terenci defended those novels that contained social messages (for which the Spanish writers were known), and Moix simply listened. As she told Campbell, "Terenci defendía la novela con mensaje y Gimferrer era partidario de las cosas bien hechas. Yo me divertía con esas discusiones y con el hecho de que se las tomara tan en serio. Porque la verdad es que escribía lo que me salía, como me salía, y no sabía por qué lo hacía . . ." (*Infame* 32). Thus, many years later Moix

remembers these conversations with Gimferrer and Terenci, and even though she was not yet aware of her own theories on the novel, these dialogues appear to have influenced her because her novels, while pointing in new directions, fit well into the the evolving tradition of the Spanish novel. While it would be difficult to argue that *Julia* and *Walter* contain no messages at all, it is clear that Moix, like Gimferrer, was most interested in producing works of high literary quality. The question of whether or not to convey a message would not intrude on Moix's creative purposes.

Moix readily conversed with Gimferrer and Terenci, but she did not allow these conversations to overshadow her own sense of what she was doing as a writer. For example, Gimferrer told her that she already understood what literature was about, but her own thoughts on the matter were that she didn't understand because she was not interested in the state of the novel as were Terenci and Gimferrer. However, only a few years later, the publication of *Walter* proved that she understdood the state of the novel as well as any other young Spanish writer and as well as some established writers also.

In interviews, Moix has described the conversations with Terenci and Gimferrer, but in "Poética" she speaks metaphorically of her own desires. After pointing out what Terenci, her mother and father thought she should read or not read, Moix says, "A mí, en realidad, lo que me gustaba era tocar la trompeta en una calle oscura." One could say that Moix has always marched to a different tune. The emphasis on the dark street metaphor might also shed light on Moix's attitude towards the readership of her poetry and fiction: she did not want to play the trumpet for someone else--she was playing for herself, which is why she wrote. Even then, she may have known that her works would not likely attain the readership that their quality deserved.

In addition, the trumpet metaphor emphasizes the desire for a certain simplicity: if the street is dark, there would be no distractions. The other aspect of the metaphor is the emphasis of hearing over sight. The street would be dark to the eyes, but the sound would be clear. Moix concludes the two-page "Poética" with more reflection on the trumpet metaphor: "Ya he dicho que lo que me gusta es tocar la trompeta en una calle oscura; por eso escribí *Baladas del Dulce Jim*, porque deseaba poder, algún día, tocar la trompeta en una calle oscura. Más tarde comprendí que siempre he tocado la trompeta en una calle oscura" (222). Despite all the literary discussions taking place around her and the advice given to her, Moix has always followed her own creative impulses, even at the expense of alienating a readership who may not have been ready for Moix's kind of novel.

Moix would pick up the trumpet theme again 20 years later in her interview with Campbell, but this time with a different twist. She looks back to 1964 when she listened to Terenci and Gimferrer discuss the state of the novel as genre, and she says that these discussions did not mean much to her because she simply wrote what she felt like writing, however she felt like doing it, and she did not know why she did so because "entonces aún no tenía trompeta" (*Infame*, 32). She did, however, believe she had the instruments she needed to write the way she really wanted.

Soon after the conversations with Terenci and Gimferrer became regular, Moix began to write novels. In the interview with Federico Campbell, Moix counts *El gran king* as her first novel, which she wrote when she was 18 (*Infame*, 40). No critics have published any literature about this early novel, and Moix claims copies of it no longer exist (personal interview); however, the fact that she corrected Campbell on his belief

that *Julia* was her first novel indicates that Moix believes *El gran king* to be important to her trajectory as a writer.

Moix's published fiction began to flourish in a unique cultural and historical context. The revolutionary spirit of 1968 was sweeping through the international and domestic fronts. In Barcelona a cultural circle arose which is referred to--often self-mockingly--as the *gauche divine*. They take their name from the French *gauche divine*, which was probably more authentically *gauche* or left than the Catalan group (members of the French *gauche divine* consisted of Yves Montand, Simone Signoret, and Juliette Greco, for example). Since the Catalan *gauche divine* probably served as a source of both inspiration and support for Moix, the group's importance to any study of Moix's work cannot be underestimated. While representing a progressive ideology, the *gauche divine* also had a reputation for snobbishness. The group consisted of young intellectuals--architects, writers, photographers, and other creative members of the Barcelona bourgeoisie. Writers of this group include Rosa Regás, Esther Tusquests, and Moix's brother, Terenci Moix.

I will study the *gauche divine* in light of the fact that this period was a special moment politically in Barcelona, as it was in other parts of the world. Because Spain had endured Franco's rule since 1939, the country lagged behind Europe intellectually and creatively. However, Spain eventually began to catch up. As Ramón Buckley explains, Franco's dictatorial regime went through great changes in the late 1950s (Buckley IX-XVIII). Importantly, Moix's early work arose in the context of a regime that was allowing more intellectual freedoms, and eventually even limited criticism of the

dictatorship. Some authors even published books on Marxism, which was virtually impossible before this period. Franco allowed these publications because he believed the readership of radical books to be small, and it was. At the same time, this policy allowed him to appear to the rest of Europe as if he were liberalizing the dictatorship to a greater extent than he actually was. This environment made it possible for writers who entertained other controversial themes such as feminism and sexuality to publish their works.

Franco's permissiveness provided a context for the birth of the *gauche divine*. This cultural circle came together during the late sixties and early seventies--towards the end of Franco's dictatorship. There were student protests, a sexual revolution, and intellectuals who were inventing new ways of thinking. Many Catalans gladly became swept up in a wave of intellectual, artistic, political, and social creativity.

Eugenio Trías, member of the *gauche divine*, and according to Moix "filósofo bigotón, poeta involuntario" "a quien más valoro," (qtd in Campbell*, Infame* 40) perceives the whole of Barcelona to be a counterculture: "Barcelona constituía de pronto una pequeña isla de experimentación vital, emocional y estética en medio del gran páramo hispano dominado por la interminable dictadura franquista," (Trías 322). In this small island, sexuality was as important as politics. Referring to Bocaccio, the bar which *gauche divine* members frequented, Trías summarizes the period:

> Era la época de Bocaccio, de la *gauche divine*, y de todo aquel festival de locura controlada e incontrolada que fue, para muchos, la Barcelona de esos últimos años de la década de los sesenta, y que se prolongó, de forma renqueante, hasta los primeros años de los setenta (322).

It was a time for carousing, but as we have seen, the good times did not inhibit literary creation; on the contrary, they nurtured it.

Trías remembers the *gauche divine* as part of a larger cultural revolution that rebelled against Franco:

> Barcelona era entonces una fiesta *a pesar* del franquismo; y lo era en gran medida *en contra* de él, y precisamente por serlo. Es más, nunca (con la excepción de los años de la transición) he vuelto a conocer a mi ciudad en una temperatura tan febril, y en un ritmo explosivo de creación tan constante. (312)

Franco, importantly, has inspired this "fiesta" to which Trías refers. They celebrate liberal and radical ideas in spite of him and against him, but, as noted earlier, they can do this only because he has decided to let them have their fun. When his reign is over in 1975, and people are officially free to express themselves intellectually and creatively, the revelry is already over. In the early seventies liberals and radicals lost their fear of Franco, as well as the enthusiasm for rebelling against him or escaping his world. Without Franco looming so heavily over Spain, the *gauche divine* and this particular wave of political and creative enthusiasm died out well before Franco's actual death. In *Walter*, Moix writes that when Ismael and Ricardo, approaching middle age, visit the bar where as students they used to discuss politics, "ningún estudiante discutía la situación de España" (248). As in the novel, student culture in Spain would lose its activist stance.

During a time when many authors took staunch leftist positions, the *gauche divine* was also leftist, but unlike many writers, members of this group wavered in their political allegiances. For this reason, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, who was a friend to many members of the *gauche divine*, has both defended and criticized the group. In a 1971

article in *Triunfo*, Vázquez Montalbán characterizes them as the rich who were just playing and lacked commitment to any real cause. Politically, Vázquez Montalbán is correct; the *gauche divine* did not represent an established cause. Vázquez Montalbán was loyal to the Marxist cause, and for this reason it was difficult for him to take the *gauche divine*, a group without political commitment, seriously. It could be said that the *gauche divine* had no cause but itself. This position was a radical one to take in an era of political protest.

The *guache divine* professed leftist ideals, but as Vázquez Montalbán saw it, its members lacked political commitment because, since they were rich, they had no need for political reform. They did indeed come from the bourgeois class, and they themselves would not have directly benefitted from economic reform, but their level of political commitment or noncommitment is not what concerned them. They were interested in creative innovation.

Outsiders had labeled the group as intellectually leftist, and in doing so they discredited the so-called *gauche divine* as lacking a sense of reality. Vázquez Montalbán debunks the myths and stereotypes of the *gauche divine.* The *gauche divine,* as Vázquez Montalbán sees it, seemed to consist of myths which, once dispelled, rendered the group virtually non-existent ("Informe"). He argues that the *gauche divine,* at least as it is understood by outsiders, does not exist--it is a "*fantasma*," ("Informe"). The choice of "*fantasma*" is interesting given the fact that the characters in *Walter* are often referred to as ghosts (see chapter four). In addition, the phantom motif would also appear in the works of Esther Tusquets (and later Antonio Múñoz Molina). Given Vázquez Montalbán's assessment and the phantasmagorical nature of Moix and Tusquets's

characters, one might ask to what extent Moix, Tusquets, and others of the *gauche divine* felt that they themselves were ghosts trapped in Franco's Spain.

Julia and *Walter* are significant for many reasons, one of them being that Moix wrote them under the influence of a particular historical period and a singular cultural circle. Because the *gauche divine* of Barcelona is unique, its influence on Moix and Moix's role in the group are important. Since the period of the late 1960s and early 1970s, Barcelona has seen no other group of creative thinkers quite like the *gauche divine*. Without any intellectual communities like the *gauche divine*, very few writers have been able to conceive of novels that are as thematically and formally innovative as *Julia* and *Walter*. The ability of the members of the group to engage in dialogue is one of its unique and influential aspects. Moix described the nature of the dialogue: "Lo que sí se daba, al encontrarse, era un intercambio de ideas. Tenga en cuenta que era un ambiente interdisciplinario. Las conversaciones y polémicas se producían entre escritores, arquitectos, pintores, fotógrafos, cineastas . . ." (<http://www.xtec.es/~ jducros/Ana%20Maria% 20Moix.html>).

Moix benefitted from the dialogue this group maintained during the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s. The *gauche divine* cannot be replicated today because few writers have developed the skill of engaging in dialogue with other writers as did the members of the Barcelona *gauche divine*. Moix would never again be part of a diverse group so interested in talking about literature and ideas. Asked if she thought such a group could exist today, she replied, "Hoy difícilmente podría surgir algo semejante. La gente está demasiado obsesionada con su propio ombligo, y el don de la conversación

(que no sólo consiste en hablar sino también --y sobre todo--en escuchar) se ha perdido" (<http://www.xtec.es/~ jducros/Ana%20Maria% 20Moix.html>).

For Moix, writing and thinking about literature was an end in itself, and the *gauche divine*, despite the criticism aimed against it for lacking political commitment, supported this goal. Because capitalism was becoming a more pervasive part of Western culture, and Franco was beginning to reach out more to the world market, commercialism has become a more influential aspect of the culture. For this reason, writers--like other creative professionals-- have come to believe that they must be concerned with efficiency and marketability. This means writers want to talk about the number of books sold, says Moix in *Avui*: "los editores-y la mayoría de los escritores-hablan de cifras de ventas." Young writers, says Moix in *Avui*, no longer want to talk about ideas with a more established writer: "Por lo general, los escritores no quieren hablar de literatura con un escritor sino que éste les haga una reseña de su último libro" (<http://www.xtec.es/~ jducros/Ana%20Maria% 20Moix.html>). When Moix wrote or conceived of her early novels, she was frequently talking about literature with members of the *gauche divine*. She was not looking for validation of her own work; rather, she wanted to know what other writers thought about literature. Moix did not write to make a living. She would support herself by translating and with journalism. If profit had been her goal, she most likely would not have written *Julia* and *Walter*, two novels which, even thirty years after publication, have not received the recognition or readership which they merit.

The cultural climate of the period during and a few years after 1968, with its revolutionary spirit, made it possible for the *gauche divine* to develop spontaneously. Moix doubts that a similar group could congeal today: "Aquello surgió de manera

espontánea; no se puede improvisar" (*Avui*). Today, writers are more concerned with end results, and this preoccupation makes it difficult for them to trust the open-ended process of dialogue of a creative group. According to today's culture, if writers spend time in unstructered conversation, they lose time doing something that does not directly result in a publication, and it is better to focus on the publication. This kind of culture makes it almost impossible for a group such as the *gauche divine* to emerge.

Having tired of living within the narrow parameters of Franco's Spain, the *gauche divine* created an alternative world that sought to escape Franco's dictatorship. Many Spanish writers and critics have tried to define or characterize the *gauche divine*. Rather than take the comomon satirical approach to the *gauche divine*, the poet and literary critic Luis Antonio de Villena, writing in *El Periódico de Cataluña*, has made a sincere attempt to describe the group: "Eran grandes solitarios, enfrascados en sus mundos interiores y en sus libros" (<http://www.xtec.es/~ jducros/Ana%20Maria%20Moix.html>). They were solitary and wrapped in their own worlds idealogically as well as socially. This ideological stance rejected the position of other writers who saw their role as one of protest. The *gauche divine* rejected the writings of objective realism, a genre which was closely connected to the social realities of the dictatorship and approximated as much as possible a literature of protest. On the contrary, Moix and the *gauche divine* did not consider sociopolitical messages a necessity. Nevertheless, their literary escapism itself was a statement of protest--the need to free oneself of prescriptive norms caused by the existence of the dictatorship. In some sense, they were escaping what often seemed like an impossible political struggle.

There is a parallel between what Moix was doing as a writer and member of the *gauche divine* and the way her characters respond to the bourgeois environment of Catalonia during Franco's reign. Interestingly, the theme of escape is prevalent in Moix's work. As a writer, Moix "escaped" Franco's Spain by helping create the world of the *gauche divine*, and the characters in Moix's novels attempted to escape Franco's Spain in their own manner. Julia, for example, eventually succeeds in killing herself, and Ismael flees to the circus.

The need to escape the rigid norms of conservative Catalonia brought the members of the *gauche divine* close together. Villena points out that even though the individuals liked solitude, they wanted to relate to each other: "entre todos inventaron una animosa sociedad de intensas complicidades, literarias y vitales . . ." (<http://www. xtec.es/~ jducros/Ana%20Maria% 20Moix.html>). The *gauche divine* wasn't just about ideology; rather, those who were a part of it were drawn towards one another as friends. Their friendships were intense, as was their creative production.

I have so far referred to the *gauche divine* in terms of liberal politics and intellectual ideas; however, these young Catalonian idealists embraced a sexual liberation that may have been more important to them than traditional political causes. According to Trías, "Se había proclamado la 'revolución sexual' como algo más importante y relevante que la propia 'revolución social y política'" (339). Franco, as they saw it, had imposed an extremely traditional and patriarchal sexual order in which sex took place only between a husband and wife. Trías explains that they rebelled against Franco sexually: "Toda la gente que yo entonces frecuentaba (incluyendo los de la *gauche divine*) . . . poseían idéntica obsesión por librarse de esa coraza de carcundia moral y

sexual que había determinado sus vidas durante los interminables años de aquel régimen casposo," (340). Franco had controlled their sexual lives, as well as their intellectual and political lives, and they had passed the limit of their tolerance. A dictator would no longer force them to be monogamous and heterosexual.

Within these groups of young liberals, gender and sexual roles began to change. "Se gestaba," says Trías, "un nuevo mundo de relaciones y sensibilidades que . . . acabó transformando plenamente el universo patriarcal y familiar que, desde siglos, había permanecido incólume en todas nuestras sociedades" (339). This transformation included a weakening of gender differences. Within the *gauche divine*, for example, women took on kinds of work, like journalism, that had been seen as inappropriate (Vázquez Montalbán 2). Sexual roles, notes Trías, changed also, and many engaged in alternatives to heterosexuality (339). Homosexuality, at least as an experimental stage, was therefore accepted and maybe even seen as necessary within groups of young liberals such as the *gauche divine*. *Julia* anticipates this transition and *Walter* reflects it, themes which will be addressed in subsequent chapters.

Trías and Vásquez Montalbán give insight into the nature of the *gauche divine*. Additionally it is important to understand the role of Gabriel Ferrater, who defined the goals of literature for the group, and was a key figure for Moix, as well as Juan Marsé and Vázquez Montalbán. One of the first readers of *Julia,* Ferrater recommended it for publication (*Infame* 40). Ferrater, older than other members of the *gauche divine*, stopped writing poetry in 1963, but in many ways Ferrater's ideas were forward-looking and the younger members of the circle would have coincided with his philosophies more than those of other older Spanish writers from outside Catalonia, whom they often

rejected. In an interview with Federico Campbell, Ferrater describes much of his approach to poetry. The poet, he says, should be able to write about her own experiences, whatever they may be. The poet should not have to rely on extraordinary political events to be able to write. If those events happen, it is fine to write about them, but if they do not, the poet should be able to translate her own experiences, whatever they may be, into poetry. For the writers of the *gauche divine*, this line of thinking would have reinforced the idea that writing well was more important than writing about politics.

Gimferrer, part of the *gauche divine* and one of the people with whom Moix shared a literary affinity in the years leading up to 1968 and later, has pointed out that Ferrater was able to overcome a major obstacle that poetry as a genre was facing. Gimferrer told Moix in an interview that poets have not been able to resolve the problem of the relationship between the "lengua culta" and the "lengua cotidiana" ("Pere"). Poets, says Gimferrer, have not learned how to use colloquial Catalan. Ferrater and Joan Brossa are the only ones who have been able to resolve this linguistic issue. In prose, says Ferrater, Mercé Rodoreda and Josep Pla resolved the problem. (Interstingly, Moix would later tell Nichols that Rodoreda was the only one able to open up the closed Catalonian society, (*Escribir* 106)). Moix, however, would take this problem one step further and write *Walter* with an apparent layer of colloquial Catalan underneath the Spanish.[1] As Masoliver Ródenas has pointed out, it is this catalanization of Spanish that creates "un lenguaje que resulta, como se quería, agresivo e insultante" ("Base sexta" 11). Ferrater's focus on linguistics and the colloquial helped form a theoretical basis for the *gauche divine*.

Ferrater, like the other members of the *gauche divine*, spoke Catalan. In Ferrater's case, Catalan was his first language, then French, with Spanish and English vying for third or fourth. For this reason, he did not identify himself with poets in Spain writing in Spanish. To some extent, all those of the *gauche divine* felt the same: they lived in Spain, but felt an allegiance to Catalonia and to the Catalonian language. Even those who chose to write in Spanish, like Moix, seemed to keep the Catalan language in their minds as they wrote. Juan Antonio Masoliver Ródenas says that Moix, instead of writing in the traditional Castilian, "catalanizes" her prose, ("Base Sexta" 11). Thus, even when writing in Spanish, those of the *gauche divine* feel they needed to maintain Catalonian discourse. In this sense, even though Moix writes in Spanish, she shares a common goal with Ferrater, who writes in Catalan. This recognition of the role of Catalan within the Spanish novel sets her apart from other writers she admired such as Luis Goytisolo and Ana María Matute.

In his later years Ferrater was most interested in linguistics, but this interest must have been brewing already during the time of the *gauche divine*. His ideas on language may have influenced Moix, as with *Walter* it appears that Moix was using Catalan to transform Spanish. Ferrater emphasized the differences between Catalan and "Castellano" (*Infame* 337) and their corresponding literatures. His interest in this difference contributed to the way in which the *gauche divine* writers (and other Catalonian writers as well) defined themselves as different from other writers of Spain. By "catalanizing" Spanish, Moix was able to develop this difference.

Ferrater helped define the function of Catalan for the *gauche divine* writers, but Ferrater's other ideas were important as well. He insisted that a country must have

"science" to develop culture: "Siempre he pensado, aunque yo sea literato, que la base de una cultura auténtica y respetable, es la ciencia," (*Infame* 327). His main concern here is that a country have scholarship: "En España, en el siglo XVI el clero prohibió la ciencia, por eso a la cultura española siempre le ha faltado la base. Es decir, sin personas serias el mundo no puede funcionar," (327). Ferrater's influence on the *gauche divine*, then, would have been a sobering one. There was much more to the group than carousing and rebellion. The serious side of the *gauche divine* is revealed in the works of Moix, which are based on rigorous scholarship. Moix was without doubt a serious scholar.

Ferrater, as an older member of the *gauche divine*, could have helped Moix understand the directions which the novel must take. Ferrater told Campbell that "el problema que tienen los novelistas es simplemente no seguir con el género tal y como se formó en el siglo pasado y buscarle otras posibilidades," (336). As evidenced by *Walter*, Moix understood this problem clearly. With *Walter*, Moix points towards the new direction the novel should take. This point leads back to one of the central arguments of this dissertation: that, by finding "otras posibilidades" *Walter* joins *Tiempo de Silencio* as one of the few novels of the period that were able to resolve the problem of the novel as a genre. The acheivement of *Walter* is due to Moix's extraordinary talent and scholarship, but Ferrater and the *gauche divine* helped in Moix's formation as a scholar.

Moix may turn out to be the member of the *gauche divine* with the most literary significance, especially in terms of the novel, but during the time that this cultural circle met, she was not necessarily seen as the leader or innovator. She was the youngest of the group and they often called her, with respect, affection, and even irony, "la nena." (Masoliver Ródenas *La Vanguardia*). While Moix sold very few books, especially in

comparison to others in or associated with the *gauche divine*, such as her older brother Terenci and Juan Marsé, other literary figures seemed to understand the importance of her work. Masoliver Ródenas says that Moix's poetry and prose "causó cierta sensación en el mundo de la literatura juvenil de los años setenta, en la que abría horizontes insospechados," (<http://www.xtec.es/~jducros/ Ana%20Maria%20 Moix.html>). Even though she was younger and arguably less experienced than the others, the *gauche divine* recognized Moix's talent. Thus her role in the group was not simply little sister, but that of someone whom the older ones could have done well to emulate.

Moix's role as "la nena" may be the inspiration for the character of Clara in *El Mismo mar de todos los veranos*. Many, including Ramón Buckley, have assumed that Moix is the real life model for Clara (personal interview). If Clara's character, who is meek and doll-like, is any indication of Tusquet's view of Moix, then it is no wonder Tusquets has denied the possibility that she was influenced by Moix.

Besides "la nena", other clichés about Moix include mascot for the *gauche divine,* feminist, and lesbian. As for "mascot," it is true that Moix wrote a book of portraits and interviews about the cultural circle, and that Moix's work is representative of the innovations that many writers of the *gauche divine*--at least theoretically--sought to embody; nevertheless, as has been shown by Moix's comments in "Poética" and in the cited published interviews, she followed her instincts and wrote what she liked. In fact, none of the other members of her cultural circle were writing anything like *Walter*. Interestingly, the works that come closest to Moix's are those of Juan Marsé, and Marsé, who was from the country and was not bourgeois, was not necessarily an integrated member of the *gauche divine*. Both writers, says Masoliver Ródenas, have chopped up

classic Spanish prose, ("Base Sexta" 11). On the whole, the *gauche divine* helped form Moix as a writer, but it did not define her, and she did not define it.

The other stereotypes about Moix--feminist and lesbian--must be taken quite seriously, as Moix wrote for a feminist journal and she is a proclaimed lesbian. Neverthelss, her works sometimes defy these stereotypes. For example, most critics have believed that the story "Virtudes Peligrosas" is about two women in love. Moix, however, has told Nichols that she reads it as one very narcissistic woman (*Escribir* 114), an interpretation that avoids the lesbian theme. Moreover, while Moix's journalism is undoubtedly feminist, her novels and short stories are not necessarily so. Julia, for example, is a character who wants to die, so it is difficult to argue that she embodies a feminist message. Avoiding a feminist message would be consistent with the ideas of the *gauche divine*, who rejected the need for sociopolitical content in the novel.

Moix has written in several genres--poetry, novel and short story, children's literature, essay, and journalism. She has published many translations as well. This dissertation focuses on her first two novels; however, I want to situate those novels within the context of the rest of her work and show how key themes and formal principles run through her poetry and fiction.

While most critics have focused on her fiction, Moix was first recognized for poetry. The poetry collections Moix has published are *Baladas del dulce Jim* (1969), *Call me Stone* (1969), and *No time for flowers y otras historias* (1971), which won the *Premio Vizcaya de Poesía del Ateneo de Bilbao*. These three poetry books later formed one collection: *A imagen y semejanza* (1983). Moix breaks form with her poetry and

writes in prose style, without verse, prompting Vázquez Montalbán to call the presentation of her poems "una estupenda lección de libertad," (1969). Moix's poetry reflects the yearning for freedom that many young writers felt in 1968. As will be seen, she takes a similar approach with her fiction.

In 1970, José María Castellet called attention to Moix's skills when he included her poetry in an anthology of new Spanish poets called *Nueve novísimos poetas españoles*. During the 1970s and 1980s, critics recognized Moix more often for her inclusion in the *novísimos* than for her novels. Moix was 21 when the *novísimos* anthology was published, making her one of the youngest of the poets; she was also the only woman. Castellet included Moix in his anthology largely because her poetry constituted a radical break with the writers of social realism and political protest. Andrew Bush defines the function of the poets in the *Novísimos* anthology: "The *novísimos* do not decline to debate with the poets of social realism so much as they refuse to write verse within the parameters of Franco's Spain," (137). They saw that more established writers wrote "against" Franco--promoting Marxism, for example. Moix's group did not feel that Franco's politics should dictate the terms of their poetry. They sought to create their own terms, and in some ways, their own world. This concept is an important one and will be addressed further on in this dissertation.

Critics have commented that thematically and formally, Moix's poetry and prose express similar literary innovations. Bush and Jones, for example, have shown how Moix employs shifting of narrative perspective and doubling of identity in her poetry as well as her fiction (Jones, "Literary Structures"). Thematically, love, death, pessimism and

alienation reappear throughout Moix's work. Stylistically, Moix repeatedly brings into play irony and parody, which complement her thematic and formal innovations.

Moix wrote her first published novel in 1968, when she was 21. This novel is *Julia*, the coming of age story of a bright girl, Julia, growing up in a bourgeois home with a mother who preferred sons, and an overbearing and conservative grandmother. Besides being a bildungsroman (or anti-bildungsroman, as I will discuss below), *Julia* is the chronicle of a family struggling to maintain the appearances of upholding the conservative Catholic tradition, as represented in Julia's grandmother. Moix presents Julia as a child and then as a young adult who tries to commit suicide. The novel takes place in Barcelona, a summer beach house, and in the mountains at Julia's anarchist grandfather's house. A friend of her mother's sexually assaults her when she's six. As no one responded to her with sympathy (except, to a certain degree, her brother Rafael: this point will be addressed in the second chapter), this traumatic event represents the neglect Julia endured and reflects the alienation she feels as an adult. Afterwards, Julia's mother continues to reject her, and later Julia's brother dies. One theme of the novel is the need to escape the confining, bourgeois Barcelona that provided only very limited alternatives for young women trying to grow into adulthood. This theme reappears in other works.

Julia lays the groundwork for Moix's second and more complex novel, *Walter, ¿por qué te fuiste?*. *Walter* overlaps with *Julia* in time, characters, and theme, but is more innovative formally. In *Walter*, Moix broadens the set of characters from *Julia* to include more cousins, aunts, and uncles, and lengthens the time span, so that the characters grow from childhood and adolescence to adulthood. In addition, Moix

expands her narrative techniques, employs metafiction and multiple points of view, and includes a surrealistic character. *Julia* is Moix's most popular novel, but critics agree that *Walter* is a more profound and technically complicated work (Bush, Masoliver Ródenas, "Base Sexta").

While neither of Moix's first two novels won broad recognition, a small circle of readers were impressed, and there were always a few critics who perceived the value of these novels. In an early review, the literary critic José Batlló argues that if the reader doesn't like *Julia*, it is not because the book is defective, but because the reader has been challenged to read in a different way. *Julia* competed with 160 other novels for the 1968 Nadal prize and was among the top six books before being eliminated (*Destino*). *Walter* was a finalist for the 1972 Barral Novel Award (Cachero, 283). The critic Masoliver Ródenas praised *Walter* early on, calling it an "auténtica comedia humana socio-psicológica . . . " and said it was one of the most important novels to be published in the last few years ("Base sexta" 12). While *Walter* received even less recognition than *Julia*, it managed to attract the attention of Julio Cortázar. As a juror of the1972 edition of the Barral prize, Cortázar said that *Walter* was one of the best manuscripts submitted that year (cited in Martínez Cachero 323). Since there are so few early reviews of *Walter*, and given the key role Cortázar has played in the history of twentieth-century Spanish literature, his comments are important. Additionally, it is interesting that a foreigner, rather than a Spaniard, recognizes *Walter*; as a reader, Cortázar may have been more receptive to *Walter* because he recongnized in the novel the direction that the contemporary Spanish novel should take. *Walter*, compared to the other novels of its time, is practically free of referents that are connected to the social context of the

moment, a factor which may have alienated Spanish readers who continued to value the point of reference. I will continue the discussion of how Moix's novels have been received in the chapters on each of these novels.

During the very early years, Moix also published a collection of short stories, *Ese chico pelirrojo a quien veo cada día*, 1971, which some have seen as a transition work between *Julia* and *Walter* (Bush 138, Masoliver Ródenas, "Base Sexta" 9). As in *Julia*, alienated adolescence and a return to the past are themes in this first collection of stories. *Ese Chico* anticipates many themes found in *Walter*. For example, unrequited love and first-time sexual experiences are important themes, as are homosexuality and bisexuality. The metamorphosis motif in *Ese Chico,* in which young people are frustrated in their attempts to mature, and become animalized, reappears in *Walter*, with the character of Albina. The theme of escape from reality (through suicide, insanity, metamorphosis, the circus, etc.) appears in *Ese Chico* as it does in *Julia* and *Walter*.

Moix's poetry and prose of the late 1960s and early 1970s are variations on several themes. Jones summarizes the works of this period: "Each book forms an independent unit, yet read as a whole, they stand together as a unified philosophy of existence" (107). Moix communicates the sense of loss, alienation, despair, and the need to escape. As has been seen, there are common formal threads that run through her works of this period as well, such as the shifting of narrative perspective.

In addition to her poetry and fiction, in the early 1970s Moix wrote a collection of satirical vignettes about and interviews with members of her social group, *24 horas con la gauche divine*, which became a published book in 2001. Many have welcomed this publication, which includes an array of photographs of the various members of this

community, because it serves as a reflection on the *gauche divine* by its own members. Some interviewees in the book take the questions literally and try to compose a serious answer when asked to define the *gauche divine*. Others answer evasively, satirically, or overly-abstractly. The style and range of the answers provide insight into the nature of the group: they were intellectually diverse, many relied on satire and parody, and others avoided the label "*gauche divine*." While *24 horas con la gauche divine* many constitute a departure from poetry and fiction, the book is important in that it presesnts Moix's self-mocking view of the very group that inspired her poetry and prose.

After the early 1970s, Moix dedicated herself to feminist journalism, writing in *Vindicación Feminista*. She didn't produce any more major fiction until 1985 when her highly regarded collection of short stories, *Las Virtudes Peligrosas*, was published, and won the Ciudad de Barcelona prize. The title story of this collection, frequently praised for its craftmanship, is about either a love affair between two women who communicate with each other only through their eyes, or one extremely narcissistic woman (critics differ). In other stories of *Las Virtudes Peligrosas*, such as "Érase una vez" and "Los Muertos," Moix exposes the myths of fairy tale and bourgeois lives. As in her early novels, the characters in these stories are static, with no hope for change.

Moix's last novel, *Vals Negro*, was published in 1994 and won the 1995 Ciudad de Barcelona prize. Moix originally intended this novel to be a biography of Elizabeth, empress of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but later turned the work into fiction. This historical novel reflects the painful life of this sad figure from the end of the ninteenth century. As in *Walter*, Moix employs several narrative voices and surreal techniques in *Vals Negro*. Not surprisingly, given her critiques in other fiction that describes

bourgeois, fairytale existence, in *Vals Negro* Moix rejects the notion of an idealized world supposedly exemplified by the protagonist's life.

Her second collection of short stories, *De mi vida real nada sé*, was published in 2002. As in her other works, silence, or what is not said constitutes a force unto itself. Metamorphosis comes into play as it did in *Walter* and *Ese chico*. The characters are vulnerable and weak, and they suffer greatly from insanity and suicide as they do elsewhere in her work. She continues to employ satire and parody.

Masoliver Ródenas writes that *Vida Real*, not Moix's earilier works, reflects Moix's maturity: She has arrived at "una reflexiva madurez que la enriquece de manera bastante total," (*La Vanguardia*). Critics are willing to call her mature in 2002, which was not the case in 1973. Masoliver Ródenas's conclusion reflects the view of other members of the *gauche divine* that when Moix wrote *Walter*, she and her works had not yet evolved. *Walter*, then, has been understood as the work of a writer who was too young to make an important contribution to the Spanish novel. It is the responsibility of the critic, however, to evaluate a novel on the basis of the novel itself, rather than on the age of the author or her relationship to her intellectual environment. This writer will argue that *Walter* is, in fact, a "mature" novel, and one that is still relavent for today's reader.

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1. This analysis does not imply that Moix's Spanish was grammatically incorrect when subtly reflecting Catalan.

Chapter Two

Julia: Loss and Freedom

The dominant theme of *Julia* is extreme loss. This chapter discusses the multiple losses of the title character that work to cause her inability to survive or her lack of interest in surviving. The theme of loss connects to form, determining the narrative voice. In addition, this chapter addresses the themes of sexuality, divided self, freedom, and the *gauche divine*.

The psychoanalytic literature about loss is abundant and includes writings by Anna Freud, Sigmund Freud, John Bowlby, and D.W. Winnicott. The theories about loss, which have practical implications, begin with the "loss" a child undergoes when s/he realizes s/he is a separate person from the mother and that, even in a healthy mother-child relationship, the mother leaves the child for varying lengths of time. When the mother leaves the child for short periods (to go to work, for example) and returns, the child experiences a loss which is necessary, for the child must learn that the mother has a life separate from his. However, when the child experiences too much loss of the mother too soon, the child has more difficulty accepting the loss and looks for a mother substitute, a search which is destined to fail.

Whether a child is able to accept her first loss or deny it and search for a mother substitute determines how the individual will deal with the inevitable losses that arise later in life, such as death and unrequited love. Examples of loss in various forms are prevalent in literature from the classics through the twentieth-century. Loss of the mother and father is a theme in the first Spanish novel, *Lazarillo de Tormes*. It is also heavily present in more recent works of Spanish literature, such as Camilo José Cela's *Familia de*

Pascual Duarte, Carmen Laforet's *Nada*, Mercé Rodoreda's *Plaza de los Diamantes*, and Ana María Matute's *Primera Memoria*. In *Julia*, however, loss is overbearing, as her painful childhood eventually leads to a suicide attempt.

There are two central losses that drive *Julia*. When she is raped at age six, she loses her childhood, and when she is fifteen, her brother dies. To complicate her grief, Julia's mother starts to neglect and partially abandon her by age five. By seven, Julia experiences her mother's physical as well as emotional absence when her mother decides to send Julia to live with her grandfather in the mountains. The theme of loss is interwoven with issues of arrested development and the motif of blurring fiction with reality. The theme of arrested development creates a major tension in the novel because Julia, like other characters, wants to move forward, but cannot.

Her mother's neglect and abandonment constitute an ongoing part of her life before the rape. Julia experiences loss of maternal love at a stage when she still needs a loving, dependable mother. From age four or five, Julia already knows that her mother's love was something that she would lose, find, and lose again: "Así era Mamá, pensaba Julia, imprevisible. Así se había sentido ella querida por Mamá: a ráfagas" (19). Julia could not trust her mother to love her consistently.

Rather than defend or comfort Julia when Ernesto and Rafael tease her, Julia's mother makes fun of her as well, aggravating Julia's feelings of inferiority, which sparks a vicious cycle in Julia's mind. "Mamá reía cuando Julita le contaba: Los chicos dicen que me venderás a un circo y allí me harán pasar el plato. Julia se enfadaba cuando Mamá se burlaba de ella . . ." (27). The joke that their mother will sell Julia to the circus represents the emotional abandonment that Julia has already begun to suffer. In the

brothers' game Julia is sent to a circus, a fantasy world where animals and people act like they are something they are not. In *Walter*, this world represents escape and death for Ismael, while in *Julia*, the circus stands for abandonment. Repeatedly, Julia's mother, rather than defend or comfort her when she has been taunted, heightens Julia's sense of inferiority and alienation.

Julia feels angry at her mother for making fun of her, but her anger is quickly overshadowed by the image of her mother dead. In a vicious cycle in which Julia shows anger, imagines her mother's death, and then feels an intense pain, grief over something imagined suppresses anger over something real: "Pensar en la muerte de Mamá le producía un dolor inmenso, apenas podía respirar" (27). Julia was raised in a very Catholic tradition in which thought as well as deed is a sin. Thus, by imagining her mother dead, Julia has committed a sin for something she did not do, which generates guilt as well as grief. The images Julia generates in her mind are not real, but the feelings that arise from those images are real. Thus, from her imagination she creates a reality.

Julia's imagination functions as part of Moix's overall novelistic form. In one layer of this form, Julia creates her own world of images that produce real feelings. The line between reality and imagination or fiction is blurred within the fiction of the novel, a fact which recalls Moix's comments in "Poética" about the difficulty of distinguishing reality from fiction. Multiple levels of narration exist in *Julia*: Moix creates a narrator who creates Julia who creates her own fictional world. As shall be seen, the levels of narration go even deeper in *Walter*.

Julia imagines her mother dying rather frequently throughout the novel; however, she does not express the anger--she does not stomp her feet, yell or cry; rather, anger is

expressed inwardly in the image of her mother dead. Julia is angry at her mother for mocking her and, perhaps also, for not being more dependable. Since Julia does not express herself outwardly, the feelings manifest themselves inwardly in the image of death. The visions of her mother dead are a way for Julia to control her mother's gradual abandonment and rejection; in her mind, if she can kill her mother first, then it is Julia who rejects her mother rather than the reverse. Julia has little control over her life or the lives of others, but by imagining people dead or alive, she gains control in her imagination.

In Julia's imagination she is powerful, while in reality, she is powerless. Julia experiences so many losses from such a young age that she must find ways to adapt. Her strategy is to create her own world in her mind. In this world, unlike the real one, she is in control. As a woman author writing in a male-centered dictatorship, Moix takes control in a similar way: she uses her pen to create a world through writing.[1]

Children naturally fantasize that their mothers are completely devoted to them, but in order to become adults, they must relinquish this fantasy. Julia, however, is never able to do so. Because of the unpredictability of her mother's love, Julia is never able to achieve the sense of stability and wholeness that would have enabled her to relinquish the fantasy that her mother was completely devoted only to her. She was, however, able to recognize that her mother's love was not dependable. Even at age twenty, however, Julia has not been able to accept the loss of mother; rather, she imagines other women playing this role. When Eva rejects her, for example, Julia experiences this rejection as a second abandonment and, rather than accept the loss, she attempts suicide. In the sense that Julia has latent sexual feelings towards Eva, Eva's rejection of Julia is twofold because it

constitutes loss of mother and loss of lover or at least potential lover. This double rejection is one of the many dualities, such as "Julia/Julita," that form the structure of the novel.[2]

As Julia matures physically, she becomes attracted to older women, but not, at least as she perceives it, as lovers; rather, she sees them as the unconditionally devoted mother she fantasized about, but never had. Considering Julia's strong desire to be with Eva and that Eva takes her seriously as an adult who has opinions, one can not rule out, of course, the possibility that Julia is sexually attracted to her and at the same time resists becoming aware of her own sexual feelings. As we shall see, however, Julia does not express sexual attraction. An asexual Julia is consistent with the manner in which Moix reads "Virtudes Peligrosas," whose protagonist Moix considers as two sides of one woman, rather than two women in love (Nichols, 114). In general, it is accepted that the reader is aware of a character's sexuality. Here, however, it is not made clear. The text asks itself if Julia is asexual or a lesbian who is unaware of her own condition.

She is asexual because she is "presexual:" due to the rape and the loss of her mother, she has been unable to grow into the next sexual stage. Only her intellectual development has not been arrested, while emotionally and sexually she has not progressed beyond the six-year-old Julita. A psychoanalytic explanation for this arrested development is rooted in Julia Kristeva's concept of abjection, generally defined as rejection of the mother. In order to understand Julia's psyche it is useful to consider Dale Knickerbocker's analysis of a theoretical structure based on abjection that explains the psyche of Pascual Duarte. The psyches of Julia and Pascual are alike because both experience an emotional absence of the mother (and the father as well), both are unable to

form meaningful relationships as adults, and both are violent--Pascual directs his violence outwardly while Julia directs her inwardly.

In *Powers of Horror* Kristeva describes abjection as a process of the psyche through which the subjective is constituted by excluding anything that threatens one's own borders. Since the main threat to the subject is dependence upon the maternal body, abjection is primarily related to the maternal function. The rejection of the mother in order to create a boundary between subject and object is abjection. Abjection is necessary in order for an individual to enter into the symbolic order.

In *Julia*, the process of abjection is manifested in the negative representation of the mother. Julia's mother only rarely exhibits loving and caring characteristics towards her. Julia experiences her mother's love as erratic, and as an adolescent, Julia rejects her mother. Because of Julia's mother's emotional absence and neglect, she is not able to serve as Julia's first object. As Knickerbocker explains

> La relación madre-hijo en la formación del primer objeto es de vital importancia para el desarrollo de la futura capacidad del niño para formular objetos simbólicos, y por consecuencia de su aptitud para mantener relaciones estables con el no-yo como adulto. Ya que la madre de Pascual no cumple con esta función, éste sufre una crisis en la demarcación entre el yo y el no-yo. Se ve obligado a encerrarse en sí mismo, y el resultado es un narcisismo que llega a ser psicosis. (413)

Like Pascual's mother, Julia's mother does not fulfill the function of the first object which would allow Julia to develop the capacity to formulate other objects and therefore

establish and maintain relationships as an adult. Julia is immersed in herself, especially in her own imagination, which has the power of reality for her.

Julia's attempts to find an "other" that will fulfill the role of object constitutes most of the novel. First she looks to Rafael (I will address Rafael's role towards the end of the chapter), then her aunt Elena, then Mabel, and finally, Eva. All of these characters fail to fulfill Julia's needs.

Without an object upon which to project her desire, Julia's desires become buried so deeply that she does not grow to the point of recognizing any sexual longing--not towards men or women. In the following passages it is clear why one must consider, as does Nichols, a side of Julia that is asexual ("Julia," 114) or suffering from arrested development. In the fifth paragraph of the novel, the narrator says, "A veces cuando pensaba en Eva, le asaltaba la imagen de Mamá" (15). Eva, potentially an object of romantic attraction, and Julia's mother are confused in her mind. Critics have varied in their treatment of the potential lesbian theme--some have ignored the issue altogether while others, such as Pérez-Sánchez, have argued for a strong, but censored, lesbian reading. In this writer's view, Julia's feelings towards older women are fiercely affectionate; nevertheless, the way that Julia describes the nature of this affection towards Eva and other older women is not sexual.

Because she suffers from arrested development, when she's sixteen, an age when many adolescents are transitioning to womanhood and are experimenting with sex, rather than an erotic fantasy, Julia imagines that the headmistress is a completely devoted mother to her. This type of relationship does not correspond to her age:

> En la cama, por las noches, antes de dormirse, pensaba que le gustaría vivir con la directora del colegio, dormir con ella, ir al colegio con ella por la mañana, permanecer en el despacho en lugar de estar encerrada en el aula con los demás alumnos, comer con la señorita Mabel, volver por la tarde al despacho de la señorita Mabel, vivir con la señorita Mabel. Se decía que era imposible. Deseaba que Mamá, Papá, y la abuela desaparecieran para que su sueño pudiera cumplirse. (158)

Julia wants señorita Mabel to replace her parents, and she is aware that she is imagining herself as a child and señorita Mabel as her mother.

The one detail in the above passage that suggests there may be more desired than a mother-child relationship is the fact that when she dreams about señorita Mabel, she's in bed at night--not walking to school, day-dreaming in class, or any other time. The bed suggests a sexual attraction even if Julia goes on to describe her desires as platonic. In this sense, her attraction toward señorita Mabel could constitute a break from childhood, even if the desire is blurred together with the wish for a mother. Despite her wish to grow out of childhood, she is unable to do so.

In a continuation of the above quote, Julia expresses the conflict between this mother-child wish, and what she thinks her desires should be:

> Pero, aun en caso de que desaparecieran, era demasiado mayor para que la señorita Mabel la tratara como a una niña, para que la consintiera y mimara. Le dolía saberse mayor por fuera y pequeña por dentro. Pronto cumpliría los dieciséis. Se desesperaba. Sus deseos no correspondían a su edad . . . . (158-159)

Julia wants Señorita Mabel to "mother" her in a way that is similar to that of an infant: the infant perceives that her mother is one with her and cannot endure the idea of separation. At the same time, however, Julia feels conflicted about her desires: she's almost sixteen, but instead of fantasizing about kissing, she dreams about being taken care of as if she were a young child. She feels disheartened because she believes her fantasies aren't appropriate for her age.

Señorita Mabel, in addition to representing the object of an ambiguous attraction, represents for Julia the opportunity to free herself from the regimentation of the classroom. After spending almost six consecutive years (she spends the first summer in Sitges) with Don Julio in the mountains, Julia has not experienced a regimented educational setting since early childhood. Moreover, she has never had friends her age, and does not appear to desire any. Thus, the regimented classroom full of girls her age is not a comfortable place for Julia. Señorita Mabel's office offers respite from the classroom and an unhappy home. With señorita Mabel, Julia is safe.

The idea that señorita Mabel provides refuge can be seen in the larger context of Franco's Spain. Mabel's office represents an escape from the dictatorship, a place where Julia does not have to worry about the conservative Catholicism of her grandmother or the narrow expectations of how girls should mature. When the ostracism by her peers makes it difficult for Julia to stay in school, however, señorita Mabel recommends that Julia leave, and Julia is once again left with no refuge. Moreover, she must endure the loss of señorita Mabel.

Several years later, at the university, she attaches herself to Eva, her professor, and, significantly, her father's former girlfriend. As with señorita Mabel, she continues

to believe that even though she longs for this older woman's presence, something is lacking in her desires:

> Anhelaba la presencia de Eva más que nada en el mundo; oír su voz, ver cómo movía las manos al hablar. Se daba cuenta de cuán pobres e insignificantes eran sus deseos: ver a Eva, escuchar palabras amables de sus labios y *nada más* . . . Aquel único deseo, absurdo a su edad, la desesperaba. Ponía en evidencia la natural soledad que la envolvía. (italics addeded 185)

Julia wished for Eva, and there was nothing else and no one else she wished for. At the same time, by saying "nada más" the narrator makes clear that Julia does not believe her desires go beyond seeing Eva and hearing her words. She does not even express a desire to touch her. Julia feels frustrated because she denies the possibility that her desires are sexual. If she is interested in other women, it is to replace her mother. As she slowly becomes aware of sexual feelings, she combines sexual desire with the wish for a mother. The mother love is a much safer one than sexual desire because the latter, in Julia's experience, is rape.

In addition to maternal love, love for a woman may also be seen as a response to rape. Julia is permanently, even if unconsciously, uncomfortable with men. She appears to be at the normal point of breaking with her mother, but not able to do so because her lesbian desire, caused by, or at least reinforced by, the rape, is latent and unrecognized. If the desire were recognized, she would transfer her love from her mother to another woman, rather than to a man. Since the desire is not acknowledged, her development is arrested.

She is suffering from arrested development, but this may be due to an inability to understand herself. She desperately wants to be with older women, but she is not capable of or willing to acknowledge that she has any sexual desires towards them. The sexual sentiment is redirected to a search for the mother. To a certain extent, sexual desire and desire for mother coexist, but for either to be fulfilled, the other must be sacrificed. Otherwise, Julia will continue to feel desperate.

Julia, like Natalia of Carmen Martín Gaite's *Entre Visillos*, is an adolescent in search of someone to meet her needs in a dictatorial society. Natalia looks towards her teacher Pablo for inspiration and guidance. Pablo is an outsider and his teaching style is non-regimented: at the high school he doesn't want to take attendance, and at first he avoids the traditional classroom setting in favor of walks. He encourages Natalia to pursue her studies. Like Julia, Natalia is not interested in spending time with girls her own age; rather, she prefers an older, teacher figure. Pablo does not want Natalia to be like the other girls, who are primarily concerned with getting married. Natalia finds Pablo's plans for her exciting and she seeks him out; however, Pablo abandons the school and Natalia with it. It is never clear that Natalia is interested in Pablo sexually. He is exciting to her because as a progressive outsider he represents choices that young women living in the dictatorship do not usually know they have.

Julia seeks out señorita Mabel and Eva in the same way Natalia looks to Pablo. They represent liberation from the regimented classroom or from the bourgeois family that places very narrow expectations on young women. Eva takes Julia's ideas seriously. As Pablo does to Natalia, señorita Mabel abandons Julia by recommending that she leave the school. By attempting suicide, Julia tries to prevent Eva from abandoning her as well.

Eva and señorita Mabel represent alternatives to the regimented classroom and conservative culture in which Julia grows up, which is one reason she is attracted to them. They appeal to her for other reasons, but it is difficult to categorize her feelings. The question is not whether Julia is attracted to men or women (she has been sickened by both in the instances of Víctor, Carlos [155] and Lidia [126]). Rather, the nature of her feelings towards those to whom she feels most attached in young adulthood is ambiguous. She wants Eva and Señorita Mabel to belong only to her, but not--at least as she understands herself--sexually, and the belief that her desire is not age-appropriate drives her to despair and depression. These feelings of despair come from the fact that she is not growing inside, while her inability to grow comes from her early losses. One of these is loss of the nurturing mother-daughter relationship that she needed as a child. The other is the rape which understandably made it difficult for her to acknowledge sexual desires. Since she had no help in sorting out how she was raped and how she felt about it, she has no way of overcoming the confusion in her mind between violent predators and people with loving sexual desire.

The adult Julia experiences the memory of her rape as something which is forced upon her by her six-year-old self, "Julita," who repeatedly appears in a state of shock, sitting in the doorway of their summer home wearing a navy blue shirt with an anchor on it and is pounding stones together. The narrator, who represents the voice of the twenty-year-old Julia, refers to this vision of "Julita" as if she were a person separate from Julia.

Before analyzing the rape narration, it should be acknowledged that some critics have referred to the event as sexual abuse, which occurs without a doubt, but I, like many others, have chosen to call the abuse "rape." I do so because the intent is clear, the pain

is overwhelming, Julia experiences it as rape, she suffers a state of shock immediately afterwards, and fifteen years later she continues to be haunted by a memory of something that was at least as traumatic as a rape.

The fact that the adult Julia conjures up the memory of a childhood event that she was not able to thoroughly understand when it happened dictates to some extent the style of the narration, which is metaphorical as a result of the clouded nature of the memory. In the 1950s a six-year-old girl generally does not have the awareness that she has a personal, private place that could be penetrated and that this penetration is rape. Without this awareness, Julia articulates what she is able to, which is the pain. The third-person narration expresses Julia's point of view, which is limited to her ability to articulate the event. Secondly, Moix writes the character's story in a manner that faithfully represents the muddled way the twenty-year-old Julia's remembers the rape:

> La presencia de Julita en la mente arrastraba a Julia hacia un recuerdo que al principio aparecía claro, completo, con una fuerza irrefrenable y cuya nitidez se desvanecía luego con la misma brusquedad con que había renacido en su memoria dejándola dolida, llena de rencor. (62)

Since Julia's memory is muddled, to narrate the event in a more objective style would allow the third-person narrator's voice to overshadow Julia's voice. Julia loses herself, and therefore cannot narrate her story in first person. However, with the third-person narration, Julia can "watch" the story as she would a movie, which is consistent with the way she understands her life after Rafael's death--as if it were not her own but belonged to a character in a film.

Moix's choice of third-person, indirect discourse narration does not silence or overshadow Julia's voice as some have argued (see Kingery, "Feminist Subversions" and Soufas, "Narrative Form"). On the contrary, it faithfully allows Julia to render her own experience. Moix's voice, on the other hand, has been silenced and overshadowed, but Julia returns to "de-silence" it. Women have had little voice in Spain. Moreover, in literature, until recently women have been described mainly in terms of their bodies--their clothing, hair, and facial features. Literature is dominated by male writers. Even Moix had commented on the lack of tradition of Spanish women writers (in Nichols, Escribir, 103). Moix has nothing but her pen. To give herself voice, she creates Julia and writes an intimate psychological novel. By contrast, men, such as Marsé and Delibes, were writing social novels about political problems such as the Franco dictatorship. Moix chooses her themes in order to give herself a voice. More will be said about Moix's choice of narrative voice in Chapter Three.

Rather than a "silencing," as some critics have interpreted *Julia*, Julia "de-silences" Moix because she enables Moix to tell the story that no one was writing at the time--that of rape. When the young Julia was raped by Víctor (in what Julia acknowledges may be an inaccurate memory, she remembers him as being about thirty), the narrator points out that Julia's father knew that Víctor was not an appropriate person to chaperone his children. Julia's father's opinion serves as an indirect warning: if his children spend time with Víctor, something undesirable is in the offing.

By including the father's opinion of Víctor, the narrator makes clear beforehand that Julia's family could have prevented the rape had they watched over her more carefully and made sure she was not with Víctor. There is an implicit judgment of her

family for neglecting to protect her. Her father is guilty for only stating his will, but not enforcing it, and her mother is guilty, as shall be seen, of encouraging Víctor's presence in the house and neglecting to protect Julia from him.

Julia concurred with her father in her opinion of Víctor. Julia's mother, by contrast, liked the young man. By lounging in the yard with Víctor, Julia's mother related to him as her own friend, not her nephew's. She was blind to any faults that Julia's father saw, and this caused tension, which extended to the children who overheard the conversation: "A Mamá le gustaba Víctor, su presencia en la casa. Es un chico fino, educado, simpático y distinguido. Otra cosa que me callo, decía Papá. Para ti un hombre atento, elegante y sensible ya es un . . . le respondía Mamá exitada" (62). As the narrator frequently does with the dialogue between Julia's mother and father, she omits something here. As in the rape scene, what is left unsaid may be more important than what is said.

Many critics have commented on the silences of the text in Moix's writings (Bush, Perriam, Pérez Sánchez, Kingery). When something is clearly left unsaid it constitutes a very postmodern "absence is presence" construction. The text asks what Víctor is if he is not a polite, agreeable, and distinguished man. Homosexual is the unspoken word here. In any case, doubt is cast on Víctor's character, and Julia's mother's judgment of his character will be proven wrong.

Julia's mother implies that she believes Julia's father thinks Víctor is a homosexual. Clearly Víctor does not feel sufficiently masculine to advance upon a grown woman. Víctor is not emotionally or sexually capable of approaching someone more powerful than Julia. As with many of the characters in Moix's work, his sexual desire does not conform to the rigid expectations of the conservative Barcelona of the

time. Far worse than the inability to conform, however, is the fact that, rather than establish a mutual relationship with someone his own age, he hurts someone less powerful than he. Within Moix's small group of the *gauche divine* during the late sixties and early seventies, homosexuality was accepted. However, during the fifties, the years of Moix's early childhood when the novel takes place, homosexuality was not tolerated. Víctor, therefore, was left with few or no options for sexually approaching a man his own age. Like Julia, his homosexuality may be either latent or denied because it was not an acceptable sexual identity in Franco's Spain. There may be a subtle criticism here: men must feel free to romantically engage other men, for if they feel they are not allowed to do so, there will be problems, such as Víctor's abuse of Julia.

If Víctor is a homosexual, as the text implies (and some critics, such as Nichols ["World Ends," 121], take for granted), there are no pro-gay politics here. The pro-gay movement comes after the novel is written; however, the text seems to anticipate the movement.

Víctor is the villain of the novel. He fits the false cliché that homosexuals are more likely to be child molesters than heterosexuals. Moix, as a lesbian and the sister of a homosexual, vilifies a homosexual in order to prevent readers from categorizing her and her work. While this is not a pro-gay novel, one cannot make an argument that the novel is anti-gay, as Ernesto, a homosexual, does not play a negative role in the book. Because homosexuality was controversial in the Spain of 1968, it is extremely difficult to include homosexuals in a novel without sending some sort of message. By portraying homosexuals in different ways (in the characters of Víctor and Ernesto) and by alluding

to Julia's ambiguous lesbian feelings, Moix avoids sending any clear message about homosexuality.

To refrain from promoting an expected political message is consistent with the aesthetic philosophy of the *gauche divine*. As Vásquez Montalbán points out, the members of the *gauche divine* were known for practicing a variety of types of sexuality--including homosexuality--that did not conform to mainstream expectations. The reader of the late 1960s and early 1970s might expect to find a political message in a novel that contains homosexual characters and a potentially lesbian character. Moix, however, remains consistent with the aesthetic of the *gauche divine* by making it virtually impossible to classify the novel politically. The only potential message is not so much a message as an admission and recognition that the true sexual and emotional lives of the bourgeois stand in great contrast to the rigid expectations of conservative Spain. The contrast is so great that none of the characters in *Julia* come close to fulfilling the social expectations that Franco actively promoted--heterosexual monogamy within marriage.

In addition to Víctor, Julia's parents hypocritically stand in contrast to the rigid expectations of Franco's Spain because they must remain in the marriage despite the fact that they do not love each other. Even though Julia's mother has a lover, divorce is not an option. Thus, for the sake of the reputation of the family, they try to maintain the appearances of a faithful commitment, while the reality is that they are mired in a marriage they would rather terminate. Because Julia's father deals with the state of their marriage with absence, he is gone when Víctor harasses Julia.

Julia continues throughout the novel to seek the comfort that her mother denies her. Instead of showing gratitude to Rafael when he defends her, Julia runs to her mother

for comfort. Despite doubts cast on Víctor's character, Julia's mother lets Víctor do as he pleases while only Rafael defends Julia. In a scene which is representative of the dynamic between Víctor, Julia, and her mother, when Víctor harasses Julia during his visits to her home, and Julia's mother ignores Julia's pleas for help, Rafael takes the place of Julia's mother and stands up to Víctor: "No le metas miedo, grandullón. Julita es pequeña y miedosa" (62).

Later, when Julia remembers that she once loved and was loved, she thinks of Rafael, not her mother.[3] Rafael is a better maternal figure than Julia's mother because he makes Julia feel loved. Julia, however, does not recognize this love until after his death. Julia's mother abandons her, Rafael takes her place, but then he deserts her with his death. During the course of the novel Julia suffers other abandonment, that of her aunt, her father, and her teachers. Julia even deserts herself: first she abandons the six-year-old Julita and later she tries to "abandon" herself by attempting suicide. These various forms of abandonment are a particularly difficult form of loss because Julia has no resources to deal with them.

Julia's repeated experiences of abandon do not alone constitute the loss from which she is unable to recover. Rather, she is not able to heal from the loss of childhood through rape. The details that the narrator includes of Julia's memory of the event may imply that Julia feels she brought it on herself, a psychological reaction that is all too common among victims of rape (Madigan, 75, 102-105).

Before the rape, Julia expresses pleasure in relation to her body: "Le agradaba permanecer dentro del agua, mirar hacia el fondo y ver su cuerpo mucho más largo de lo que era en realidad" (63). The ability to feel pleasure is one of the many losses that Julia

endures. Because Julia feels whole here, she is still able to distinguish between reality and illusion. As she feels more divided as the story progresses, she loses her certainty of the difference between reality and fiction.

The pleasure she feels in the water stands in sharp contrast with the intense pain that Víctor inflicts. Because this pain feels like death, it is symbolic of the penetration of a rape. Little Julia did not have the words to recognize what was happening to her. Thus, the text does not say she was raped because Julia had no awareness of rape and the narrator is limited to Julia's ability to articulate her experience. She is, however, capable of articulating pain, and the narrator conveys this pain through the metaphors of death and the unbearable sun hiding inside her.

The pain doesn't prevent Julia from defending herself. When Julia pierces Víctor with the sea urchin, she reappropriates the weapon with which Víctor had threatened her and turns it against him, incapacitating him, but too late to prevent her own pain. While critics have often concluded that Julia is a passive character, she uses all her power to defend herself against Víctor. However, since most of the damage has already been done, the act of stinging Víctor with the sea urchin amounts to revenge rather than defense.

The fact that she injures Víctor with a "quill" allows one to make the allusion to the metaphor of quill-pen, and thus understand Julia's revenge in a manner similar to what Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar describe in *The Mad Woman in the Attic*. Women, who have been silenced, take up the pen, which represents the penis, here also represented by a quill, which is a foreshadowing of Moix's quill/pen. To write, then, is to undertake the revenge that in other ways women have been powerless to execute.

In order to honor the ambiguous style with which Moix writes, it must be recognized that the narration leaves open the possibility that by sticking the sea urchin in Víctor's back, she prevented him from penetrating her; but this interpretation seems unlikely since she had already mentioned the great pain she felt and the fact that he was breathing heavily. However, since the text reflects a cloudy memory, one could also conclude that the intense pain resulted from Víctor holding her down on top of the rocks and trying to penetrate her. This second possibility does not seem to correspond as well to the way she describes the pain, but it is nevertheless a possibility, and one that would have been very distressing, if not quite as traumatic as an actual rape. She describes the pain as so intense that even if her defense with the sea urchin had prevented the rape, her body hurts as if she had been raped.

Moix makes the severity of the situation clear by demonstrating that the pain of the assault blots out all of Julia's thoughts and feelings. After being stung, Víctor hits her, but she is so overcome with pain that she does not say that Víctor's blows hurt. The pain of rape takes over: "A Julia le era imposible recordar cuánto tiempo pasó allí, doblada de dolor sobre sí misma" (64). The narrator makes a point to refer to the inside of Julia's body: "Tenía calor, mucho calor, como si el sol se hubiera escondido en el interior de su cuerpo" (64). This sentence illuminates what is meant when Julia thinks she would die of pain. She feels as if she is burning up inside because she has just been raped. When Arturo finds her she is in a state of shock that corresponds to rape--she gets up but cannot walk nor understand what Arturo says to her. This state of shock, ironically, helps protect her from her family's reproachful reaction.

The rape itself constitutes a great loss, but the response of Julia's mother determines how Julia would survive emotionally. As in an earlier passage when Víctor forces Julia to play "the bear game" against her will, and Julia receives no subsequent comfort but rather punishment from her mother, after the rape Julia's mother's reaction is even less sympathetic. Julia obviously needs care, comfort, and understanding rather than the reproaches and physical blows she receives from her mother. She has no resources for coping with the rape. Moreover, no one exists to whom she can turn to help ease the outer pain visible from the blows Víctor has dealt her.

Julia's mother and Aurelia deny and conceal the possibility of rape. They do not ask what happened and they quickly draw conclusions as if to rule out the possibility that Víctor was at fault. Her mother reproaches her, saying she shouldn't be alone on the rocky beach again, while Aurelia says, "Dios Santo, qué caída, como para romperse la cabeza" (64). They quickly assume she fell, but they do not ask her how. Their rush to make an assumption is a way to cover up what they are able to know--that someone has raped her. Despite Julia's obviously serious injuries, they do not take her to the hospital, a decision that would cause them to run the risk of confirming what they resist admitting has happened. Not only would a hospital visit authenticate the rape, it would allow other people to know Julia was raped.

In a conservative, Catholic, dictatorial society, the rape of a daughter would reflect badly on her family. The cover-up of Víctor's abuse stands in sharp contrast to rape as treated in the renaissance literary tradition of honor. In this literary tradition, the rape of a daughter or sister was an affront to the honor of an entire family and required acknowledgement and revenge. Marcia Welles has acknowledged *Julia* as the first

treatment of rape in peninsular fiction since the renaissance. As a twentieth-century writer, Moix, of course, does not seek to portray a literary motif that belongs to the renaissance; however, she has nothing with which to replace the golden age code of honor except denial and a blame-the-victim stance, an attitude which is common in many courts and societies as documented by sociologists (Brownmiller, Madigan). Ironically, Julia has much less recourse than a character raped in Golden Age literature.

Moix's treatment of the rape subtley conveys a unique and powerful social criticism and an anticipation of future political issues. Even though the goal of the narrative may be to avoid sending a particular message, it may be impossible to tell Julia's story without such a message. Since rape had not been a theme in the literature for two centuries, simply to tell the story, especially from the victim's perspective, is to send the message that rape exists and is a problem. In addition, Moix makes it clear that the victim's lack of recourse is also a problem. Moix was not writing about the greater political issues which many contemporary male writers addressed. Her treatment of rape, however, anticipates an era in which crime against women has become a political issue. As we have seen, Moix also anticipates the politics of sexual identity that would soon arise.

The subtle anticipation of future political issues is secondary to Julia's personal experience. The loss of her childhood through rape is compounded by the fact that no one is able or willing to treat her like a child by comforting her. Her mother had already pushed her away as if Julia, at the age of six, did not need further nurturing. Aurelia cares for her like a child only when ordered to. And her father, potentially the most protective and empathetic of the adults in her life, is absent from the summer home

except on weekends and therefore unable to prevent Víctor's agression, sexual or quasi sexual.

Some critics have commented that Julia's character is unlikable or difficult to endure (Nichols,1983, 113, Batlló, 1970, 685), and this writer agrees. However, it is precisely Moix's objective to create a situation that is equally unendurable for both character and reader. Moix faithfully describes the nature of Julia's character, which is marked by depression, pessimism, and lack of hope. If this story of childhood rape and neglect is to be told, the reader must be willing to follow a protagonist who simply does not have the resources to grow and hope in the future.

Much has been said about the fact that Julia is silent about the rape, as if this factor were a sign of the protagonist's weakness or inability to speak up for herself. Remaining silent about a rape, however, has been a common response, especially for a child in Julia's situation. Susan Brownmiller is one of the first to recognize this propensity for silence in her 1975 classic, *Against our Will*. Many factors work against Julia: she has no reason to think that her mother would believe her story, and Víctor has intimidated her on various occasions and (he) frightens her. She threatens to tell her mother, but she knows from past experiences that her mother is indifferent to her pleas to save her from Víctor's harassment. Moreover, she knows that her mother likes Víctor and is blind to his faults. The theory of blaming the victim proposes that Julia is at fault for being on the rocks alone. If she had not been in the wrong place at the wrong time, it would not have happened, so she is responsible. Blaming the victim has been, and continues to be, a common response to rape.

Rather than understanding her silence as an inability to speak out, one could read it as a way of protecting herself from further derision and punishment. As documented in the classic and current literature on rape (Brownmiller and Madigan, for example) this response has been a common one for adult as well as child rape victims, and should not convey a weakness in Julia's character. When a rape victim has no recourse to deal with the trauma, the best strategy may be silence. For this reason, Julia stands in contrast to the Golden Age character who did have recourse and was not forced to be silent. The current professional approach, of course, consists of treating the rape as a crime and the victim as a victim, but Julia's family does not consider this option. Her family is "stuck" between the traditional response and the modern one. Being "stuck," as we have seen, is one of the themes of *Julia*. This theme can also be extended to the state of the country, which, in many respects was ready to move on from the Franco Dictatorship, but could not quite do so.

The fact that Julia's family makes it extremely difficult for her to speak out suggests a critique of bourgeois society rather than a critique of Julia as being too weak to survive. Nevertheless, critics have focused on Julia's weakness. Christofer Soufas, for example, has said that Julia is "essentially passive, weak, acquiescing, conforming" (Narrative Form, 155). However, if one considers the losses Julia endures at an early age, and the absence of outside support in the face of these losses, one could argue that she is, in fact, a strong character in that for as long as she survives, she relies entirely on herself to do so. While Julia is definitely a weak and vulnerable character as a suicidal twenty-year-old, as a child she shows an exceptional ability to adapt to, and in the case of being abandoned at Don Julio's house even thrive in, difficult situations.

While childhood rape and the accompanying rejection by her mother hinder Julia's attempts to mature into an adult, the loss of her brother Rafael robbed her of her closest and only friend, a substitute mother figure, and of hope. Ironically he is dying physically. Since Julia could not count on her mother and father to be present and supportive, Rafael's support acquired greater importance. As previously shown, Rafael is the only character who defends Julia when Víctor harasses her. Of all the difficult childhood memories that come to the surface, only one comes to mind that offers her hope. This memory is associated with Rafael:

> Julia encontraba un resquicio de luz, una pequeña llanura en donde soplaba un aire tranquilo, puro, la sensación consoladora de haber al menos querido a alguien y de saber que alguien la había querido a ella. Era un descanso en el agotador camino a que Julita la sometía. Un recuerdo, una tristeza desgarradora que sin embargo no dolía. Un recuerdo que en otro tiempo se llamó Rafael. (79-80)

This love gives Julia hope during her adolescence. Later, without Rafael, it is even more difficult for Julia to move forward with her life. His death, like the rape and absence of support in its aftermath, anchors Julia in the past.

Rafael's role should not be underestimated. Although Julia has moments of wishing her brother dead, she often admires him. At times, Rafael takes the place of Julia's mother, such as when Rafael and Julia believe their mother is dead and Rafael comforts Julia.

Rafael's ability to take the place of Julia's mother was limited--not only because he was a boy, but also because he was a competitor as much as a friend. When he is sick, Julia tries to attract her mother's attention, but her mother ignores Julia or becomes angry

with her, which causes Julia to wish that Rafael would die once and for all (85). Julia is almost completely marginalized, and none of the adults in her life have any sympathy for the fact that her emotional needs are second to Rafael's illness. Julia's mother is not able to understand Julia, and in Julia's experience there are no exceptions.

At age seven, after spending several months with her grandfather in the mountains, she spends the summer in Sitges. There she relies on Rafael for an escape from monotony. Ironically, she believes that Rafael, her competitor, treats her better than anyone else:

> No le divertía pasar las tardes con Rafael, pero él o Aurelia eran la solución. A pesar de que las relaciones con su hermano se habían enfriado a raíz de la enfermedad y de la clara preferencia demostrada por Mamá hacia él, Julita hubo de reconocer que Rafael la trataba mejor que nadie. (106)

Since Rafael continues to be a bright spot in Julia's memory, she believes she could rely on him to treat her well. This fact makes the loss of Rafael particularly painful.

The memory of Rafael makes it possible for Julia to feel that there was a time when she felt whole. For most of her life, however, Julia's character is split into two: the young adult Julia and the child (see Bellver and Schumm on the themes of division and doubling). After Rafael's death, Julia herself understands Julita as if the latter were a separate person (65) and she is unable to view her own life as her own:

> El recuerdo de Rafael la ligaba a un tiempo pasado que sentía como suyo, vivido por ella. Todo lo demás quedó como una película vista entre sueños, cuya protagonista se llamaba Julia y tenía su mismo rostro, pero no era ella en realidad. El recuerdo de Rafael la llenaba de paz, una tristeza muy dulce la envolvía. (147)

Before Rafael dies Julia is strong. She copes with many hardships, endures much loss, and is still able to feel "whole." After his death, her sense of wholeness gradually disintegrates until she feels that her life is not her own, but that of someone in a film. Raphael's death, then, marks the point at which Julia begins to splinter. First she feels cut off from herself and her feelings, then she creates a Julita in her mind, who is like another person who keeps Julia from growing and maturing.

When Rafael dies, Julia knows he is dead, but he remains present to her: "Rafael se había convertido en un muerto, una presencia extraña que no se podía ver ni tocar, pero que se evidenciaba" (151). Her idea of a dead person is something that has no physical manifestations, but that makes its presence known in a sensual, almost mystical way: "El aire era Rafael, y al respirar creía introducir un fantasma dentro de su cuerpo. Cualquier ruido eran los pasos de Rafael, señales de Rafael. Un fantasma la seguía a todas partes, a todas horas" (151). The image of Rafael being the air that she breathes into her body is a very intimate one and evokes the language of the Catholic mystics who said God was the air they breathed. As he enters and leaves her body in the form of breath, they are closer now than before he died. As a ghost Rafael does not just wander through the house; rather, he follows Julia everywhere, all the time. Through his death, he is transformed into Julia's constant companion.

After Rafael's death, Julia is cut off from her mother, her classmantes, her own grief, and herself. She believes that she refrains from crying so as not to draw the attention of her classmates, not because she has become so numb from the grief that she doesn't cry at all. It is difficult for her to accept the sympathy of her classmantes: she has never received sympathy from girls her age, so she is not comfortable with it,

especially since she does not know them. Moreover, as already stated, she feels as if her life were not her own, that it were lived by someone else, as if she were watching herself in a movie. The third-person narration aptly portrays the divisions within Julia.

The feelings of guilt that arise as a result of the negative feelings she had toward Rafael complicate her ability to grieve. As with her mother, she creates an imaginary world in which she is powerful enough to cause someone else's death. In her imagination, there are benefits to causing Rafael's death: if she can cause it, then she can also make him come alive again, as she does by creating his ghost. More importantly, however, by believing she caused his death, she is plagued by a sense of guilt that makes it extremely difficult to bear her own life. Since Julia has never known an adult who she felt comfortable confiding in, there is no one she can talk to about her feelings, and no one to tell her that she did not, in fact, cause Rafael to die, or cause herself to be raped.

Rafael's death robbed Julia of any remaining strength she had to cope with the rape that resulted in the loss of childhood when it had hardly begun. Any chance of salvaging her childhood is lost when the adults in her life do not treat her with love, encouragement, and care. Thus, the rape alone does not doom Julia; rather, the atmosphere of neglect coupled with her brother's death does. Neglect hinders her ability to be healed from the rape which that same neglect has indirectly caused.

In addition to the loss of childhood, Julia suffers a loss of innocence, which can be contrasted with Matia's experience in Matute's *Primera Memoria*. Matute treated the subject of innocence as a necessary loss--a rite of passage--that the adolescent protagonist, Matia, experiences in order to grow into adulthood. As Matia passes through adolescence, she becomes increasingly aware of what she calls the ugly things of men

and women. There is something ugly about becoming a woman that disconcerts Matia. Matia is conscious of becoming aware of this ugliness, and that this awareness is what makes her no longer a child.

Unlike Julia's, Matia's initiation into the sexual world of adults is cognitive, rather than physical. For Matia, the loss of innocence comes from an awareness that the reason children are born is because their parents have sex. Even though the loss of innocence is not physical, it is mildly traumatic. Julia's initiation into the world of adults is physical and direct. She knows about the "ugly things" of men and women because it's been forced upon her. Her knowledge, however, may be at the level of a cloudy memory that is buried in her subconscious. The only time she recalls the memory in the text is when she is twenty: there is no indication that she recalls it during her childhood and adolescence. She has already been initiated into the sexual world of adults; however, she resists any reminders of this fact and, as shall be seen, resists any knowledge of the "ugly things of men and women" as it might apply to her personally.

Julia resists acknowledging her forced, but direct, experience with sex, but Julita is trying to make her remember. Interestingly, Julia describes the memory of the assumed rape, not yet stated in the text, in a way that evokes a similar image in *Primera Memoria*:

> Julita la conducía a través de túneles oscuros, puentes ruinosos, cuyas viejas maderas amenazaban con resquebrajarse bajo sus pies, con hundirse para siempre consiguiendo que ella pereciera devorada por los repugnantes reptiles que se debatían bajo el puente, en espera de una presa. (57)

The reptiles in Julia's memory are a terrifying version of a small lizard that makes Matia think about sex. For Matia, a lizard represents the ugly things of men and women. In Julia's imagination, however, the reptile is not one small lizard, but several large creatures that devour her. They are predators, as is Víctor. She would later perceive Carlos and Lidia in a similar way.

Even though Julia has had the "cosas feas" forced upon her and is no longer innocent in a physical sense, she has repressed and denied this reality. She resists any thoughts about the potential physical nature of her relationship with people her age. In fact, she is never comfortable with people her own age. When Julia's Grandmother interrogates her about her relationship with a boy, Julia responds with a rebellious lie, begins to feel so sick that she cannot sustain the lie, and then, in order to stop the interrogation and get her breath back, confesses that she had lied.

Julia's grandmother's questions can be understood within two different plots of the book. First is the intimate psychological plot of a girl who having suffered a rape feels sick at the thought of physical intimacy with a boy. Any suggestion of intimacy between Julia and Carlos conjures up feelings of disgust that arise because of the rape, and continue because Julia has no way of healing emotionally. Julia's resistance to growing up, which is based on the emotional loss of her mother, reinforces her tendency to feel disgust.

There is also a subtle protest plot. Because Julia's rebellion against her grandmother backfires and makes her feel humiliated, this exchange symbolizes a failed attempt to contest the Franco regime. The message is if you work from within the regime, on its own terms, you are only left with the option of rebellion, which you will

not be able to successfully execute. The alternative is to escape--by living in the mountains, committing suicide, or creating your own world with or without others. The *gauche divine* escaped by creating a circle of people that did not feel obligated to respond to the social problems they believed Franco had created. Moix escapes by writing a novel with an intimate psychological plot, rather than the social plots of Marsé and his contemporaries. In the context of other writers who were writing social novels, Moix, by writing about the personal losses of a child, runs the risk of being received as trivial, even as she includes some subtle possible references to Franco's regime and, as shall be seen in the person of Don Julio, the resistance against him.

An essential tension in the novel results from the fact that she could prematurely lose her childhood and then as an adult find herself controlled by it. Julia, as has been seen, loses her childhood through the rape and the lack of anyone to treat her like a child in the aftermath of the violation. At the same time, however, as she grew older she was never able to lose "Julita," the six-year-old Julia.

While the entire novel can be read in terms of loss, Julia contains many sub-themes, one of these being freedom. The freedom theme becomes apparent when one takes into account the *gauche divine*. A reading of *Julia* which is rooted in its particular cultural context must consider the fact that Moix was a part of the *gauche divine* and that the latter had its own aesthetic and literary goals. This kind of reading, of course, is not a strictly textual interpretation. Cultural theorist Pierre Bourdieu, however, argues that literary critics must broaden their criteria for analysis to include many factors outside the text. Bourdieu says that a study of the "field" or social conditions in which the work is created is not simply acceptable, but is necessary in order to fully appreciate the text.

According to Bourdieu:

> Renouncing the angelic belief in a pure interest in pure form is the price we must pay for understanding the logic of those social universes which, through the social alchemy of the historical laws of functioning, succeed in extracting from the often merciless clash of passions and selfish interests the sublimated essence of the universal. It is to offer a vision more true and, ultimately, more reassuring, because less superhuman, of the highest achievements of the human enterprise (Rules, XX).

A study of social context, then, demystifies the author and the process of writing. Since authors do not write in a vacuum, Moix is influenced by many factors, the *gauche divine* being one of them.

To apply Bourdieu's theory to Moix's early writings, one must consider her cultural context, which includes the *gauche divine*. Bourdieu deemphasizes the individual author:

> Analysis of the social conditions of the production and reception of a work of art, far from reducing or destroying it, in fact intensifies the literary experience . . . . Such analysis seems to abolish the singularity of the "creator" in favour of the relations which made the work intelligible, only better to rediscover it at the end of the task of reconstructing the space in which the author finds himself encompassed and included as a point. (Rules, xix)

The social conditions of the production of *Julia* include a history of civil war that led to a dictatorship, the bourgeois Barcelona of the late Franco regime, and the *gauche divine*. Moix is the author of *Julia*, but the social conditions in which she write influence the

themes and forms she chooses. As shown, Moix moved within a group of intellectuals who formed the *gauche divine* largely as a reaction to the social and political conditions of the country. While *Julia* narrates the inner struggle of a girl unable to grow, the larger historical conditions that give rise to the protagonist's life are also at play.

With this in mind, one might interpret Don Julio as a symbol of the *gauche divine*. Living on a hill, Don Julio sees everything; therefore, his voice in the novel, which speaks for freedom, is important. Soon after Julita arrives at his mountain home, Don Julio tells her, "Tú por ahora trata de aprender una sola cosa: eres libre, nada más" (98). Don Julio was an active anarchist during the civil war, and Barcelona was a center of anarchist activism. In some parts of the world, anarchism has promoted killing its opponents (often the rich and powerful). In Spain, however, the anarchist movement, especially the one to which Don Julio belonged, promoted democracy and collaboration with other movements. Don Julio practiced anarcho-syndicalism, which the historian Gabriel Jackson describes in the following manner:

> Anarcho-syndicalists . . . considered parliamentary activity a waste of time, opposed centralized direction of the labor movement, and expected to accomplish the revolution largely by means of the general strike--a total, politically motivated stoppage of work which would demonstrate the power of the proletariat and paralyze the capitalist class and its government. (18)

Terrorism was not part the anarcho-syndicalist philosophy. There was a more violent line of anarchism which undercut anarcho-syndicalism, the FAI, but Don Julio did not belong to this line (Casanova, 21-22). According to Jackson, Barcelona was the center of anarchist activity because many of the industrial workers in the city originated in the

countryside of Catalonia and had come from a long tradition of anarchist ideology. The anarcho-syndicalists were by no means bourgeois; however, some of them, like Don Julio, came from wealthy families.

While the *gauche divine* did not take an actively radical political stance, freedom was a central theme to the group's aesthetic and philosophy. Vásquez Montalbán, for example, described Moix's poetry as an exercise of freedom ("Prólogo"). Moreover, members of the *gauche divine* exhibited their desire for freedom in the creation of their own, separate creative group. The *gauche divine* was an oasis of freedom within the restrictions of Franco's Spain. Intellectual freedom may have been the only cause they stood for as a group. In the sense of traditional ideology, they were non ideological.

Like the *gauche divine*, Don Julio represents freedom, and he applies his opinion about freedom directly to the writing profession. When Rafael tells him that he wants to be a writer, Don Julio replies skeptically that one must be free to be a writer: "¡Bah!, El verdadero artista ha de ser libre, y pocos hombres lo son en medio de tanta estupidez" (117). This statement is consistent with the *gauche divine's* attempt to isolate itself in an effort to escape the constraining norms of Franco's dictatorship. Although Don Julio represents an ideologically-charged moment of Spanish history and takes an active part in that moment, as opposed to the more rebellious, nihilistic, *gauche divine*, the two stand for a similar aesthetic.

Don Julio and the *gauche divine* represent two modes of turning one's back on society. They share the idea that one cannot be free in the middle of Franco's Spain, and therefore cannot write. If one can create an escape, however, there is hope. As Don Julio says to Rafael in reference to whether or not the latter could be a writer, "Si te quedaras

aquí . . . tal vez llegarías a comprenderlo" (117). Don Julio's mountain village is representative of the *gauche divine* in the sense of being isolated from the rest of Spain. His home stands for a place where one can be free, and Julia enjoys a freedom there that is denied her in Barcelona.

Don Julio often serves as a voice for the *gauche divine*; however, the two are not consistently similar. The latter derived from a bourgeoisie that Don Julio despised and criticized. The epitome of his hatred towards the bourgeois is expressed towards Julia's grandmother, Lucía. Speaking of the war, Don Julio says, "Cada vez que mataba a alguien imaginaba retorcer el pescuezo de la asquerosa ricachona de tu abuela" (117). Don Julio hates Lucía because she and her money stand for the conservative values of the dictatorship.

Since Don Julio and Doña Lucia represent two sides of the civil war, *Julia* evokes the civil war without making it central to the text. Here Moix writes about freedom in a personal sense, without completely isolating it from the topic of the social and political reality of her country. By contrast, *Walter*, as shall be seen, is less specific to Spain.

In addition to the political and creative freedom that the voice of Don Julio represents and the *gauche divine* sought, there is another kind of freedom that is yearned for in *Julia*: an inner psychological freedom. There is an inconsistency between the ideal of freedom that Don Julio promotes, and Julia's feelings about herself. Soon after Don Julio says that the true artist must be free, Julia thinks to herself that she has no control over her life. From the window of Don Julio's library, she watches her father take Rafael back to Barcelona and thinks of herself (and others) as a puppet that would never be free of strings: "todos actuaban movidos por hilos misteriosos, y nunca se sentiría libre de

ellos" (118). She feels as if someone else controlled her actions and that she were not free to make her own decisions and act on them. Julia's feelings about herself could serve as a potential metaphor for the Franco regime.

The perception that she is not in control of her own life is important to Julia's development as a character. To become an adult, she would have to first let go of the perception that others control her and then accept responsibility for making decisions. As one understands more fully at the end of the novel, Julita, the six-year-old Julia that was never able to evolve after the rape, is the one who controls the strings of Julia's life.

Overall, a reading of *Julia* informed by the context of the *gauche divine* sheds light onto a possible message about intellectual freedom. The other "messages" in the novel are recognitions of a reality that many would rather have kept silent--rape, infidelity, and insincerity of the bourgeois class in Franco's Spain. In *Julia*, Moix also vividly portrays the multiple experiences of loss that a girl trying to come of age has faced and she asks how many losses one person can endure. Julia endured many, but the death of her brother made it unbearable for her to sustain any further losses.

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1. In the classic text on women writers, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar elaborate on the role of the pen for the woman writer. More will be said about this text later in the chapter.

2. For more on the theme of doubles see Bellver.

3. Because Julia loved (79-80) and was loved she has an advantage over Matute's Matia who felt that no one loved her.

Chapter Three

Julia and *Walter* as Transitional Novels

Moix's early novels stand at a pivotal point in the tradition of Spanish women writers. *Julia* constitutes a transition between the novels of Carmen Laforet, Ana María Matute, Carmen Martín Gaite, and Mercé Rodoreda on the one hand, and Esther Tusquets and Montserrat Roig on the other. I have included Rodoreda in this tradition of Spanish women writers for several reasons: she is widely read in Spanish; linguistically and thematically she sets a precedent for Moix, and having translated several of Rodoreda's works, Moix has an intimate understanding of them. I will explore *Julia* as a thematic continuation of Laforet's *Nada* (1945), Martín Gaite's *Entre Visillos* (1958), Ana María Matute's *Primera Memoria* (1960), and Rodoreda's *La Plaza del Diamante* (1962). Moix builds on the themes of her predecessors in this tradition, often taking their themes to an extreme, or reversing them. In turn, *Julia* and *Walter* prepare the way for Tusquet's *El mismo mar de todos los veranos* (1978).

In this chapter I will study how Moix preserves connections with more established writers and how she sets herself apart from them. Moix practically rejects the established authors and searches for her own voice. She seems interested in maintaining some connection with the aesthetic of Laforet, Matute, Martín Gaite and Rodoreda, and out of these four, she most rejects Martín Gaite, the only one who is not Catalan. I will also examine the possible influence of the works of Mercé Rodoreda, whom Moix considers the best Catalan novelist of the century (Nichols, 1989, 104). Older writers wanted to write more like Moix, but couldn't because of limits created by the dictatorship.

Moix rejected the writings of objective and social realism, a genre which was closely connected to the social realities of the dictatorship and approximated as much as possible a literature of protest. Instead, Moix and the *gauche divine* did not consider sociopolitical messages a necessity. In this sense, Moix breaks away from established writers, but, as in the case of Martín Gaite, she doesn't completely reject them.

The idea of a literary tradition of women writers has at least as many critics as supporters. Nichols, for example, argues in favor of this tradition (*Escribir*); however, the opinions of those who deny such a tradition are important because they emphasize the fact that Spanish women writers are influenced by authors of various nationalities, languages, and genders. Moix has maintained that the tradition of Spanish women writers is very small, and when she lists her favorite authors, only a small percentage are women; however, as shown in the introduction and as Moix has said, these women are very important to her development as a writer (*Infame* 32-33, *Escribir* 103). Tusquets takes a more extreme position. When asked about a tradition of literature by Spanish women, she has said that gender is not an acceptable way to categorize any fiction (interview with this writer), a statement which implies that there is a tradition of writers, but not "female" or "male" writers. Joan L. Brown maintains a similar argument, but also argues that the female characters created by women writers are motivated by feminist concerns while those created by men are not.[1]

Arguing against a tradition of Spanish women writers, Kingery concludes from the interviews that Moix has given to Nichols and Campbell that "Moix has, understandably, assimilated the nearly exclusively-male canon; her female antecedents have effectively been silenced," (189). If, however, one reads *Julia* in the context of

Nada, Entre Visillos, *Primera Memoria,* and *La Plaza del Diamante* it becomes clear that these authors have provided the context for *Julia*, and that Moix uses them as a basis from which to build, respond, and react. Therefore, far from silencing these more established women writers, Moix picks up the thematic threads that they had previously sewn. She may "unravel" these threads, but she doesn't discard them. *Nada* must also be mentioned here--its influence is less direct than the others, but thematically it is the first novel of the tradition.

It is not a mere coincidence that five novels written by Spanish women between 1945 and 1968 are so closely linked thematically. The tradition that begins with *Nada* and continues until *Julia* is obvious: all of these novels present female protagonists faced with the difficulty of growing up (or "growing down" in the case of *Julia)* in the absence (physical and/or emotional) of the mother during a highly conservative and controlling dictatorship. The setting for *La Plaza del Diamante* is a bit different as it covers a period from before the war until afterwards, but the protagonist experiences a "coming of age" and struggles with self-realization as a woman, wife, and mother in postwar Spain.

In the four novels mentioned that belong to this tradition before *Julia*, the female protagonists manage to resolve the conflict of growing up. For this reason many have referred to them as bildungsromans. *Julia* is a bildungsroman in the sense that the protagonist is expected to grow; however, when her development is arrested and she regresses, the novel becomes an anti-bildungsroman. Here, then, is an example of the way Moix unravels the threads of the tradition without discarding them. Moix responds differently to each of the more established writers. Her response to Matute, for example, is to develop the themes: Moix takes some of the themes that Matute hints at--escape,

alienation, loss of innocence-- and either develops them more fully or fuels them with the irony and pessimism that is characteristic of Moix's work. Moix's response to Martín Gaite, by contrast, is to reject the idea that a girl can grow up in Franco's Spain. Moix also rejects the emphasis on social realism that Martín Gaite employed. However, by maintaining the theme of growth (whether it be forward or backwards) Moix does not completely reject *Entre Visillos*.

Moix has told Nichols that she writes thinking of Matute (*Escribir*, 103). In contrast to Martín Gaite, Matute is Catalan, which contributes to the fact that Moix identifies herself with her writing more than with that of Martín Gaite. Thematically Matute's influence is clear, but formally, Moix writes quite differently than her female predecessors. Thematically, there are certain parallels between *Primera Memoria* and *Julia* and even *Walter*. For example, the tyrannical grandmother, the pressure to be feminine, the insomnia of the protagonists, the interest in death, the allusions to homosexuality, the need for escape, and the bildungsroman or "anti" bildungsroman theme.

The grandmother in *Primera Memoria*, like the one in the early Moix novels, is overbearing. In *Primera Memoria,* Matia anticipates the grandmother's presence as all-powerful: "Allí estaría, como un dios . . . como un enorme y glotón muñecazo, moviendo los hilos de sus marionetas" (55). The presence of the grandmother in *Julia* and *Walter* does not loom so closely over Julia, yet the grandmother's domineering nature is clear. Moreover, the puppet on strings motif that Matia uses to refer to her grandmother reappears in *Julia*, but in the latter, something mysterious controls the strings (118). Both Matia and Julia imagine that they are not in control of their own lives.

The pressure to look and act feminine constitutes an ongoing theme in this tradition of novels. Matia's grandmother criticizes her for not looking feminine enough: "Una de las cosas más humillantes de aquel tiempo, recuerdo, era la preocupación constante de mi abuela por mi posible futura belleza. Por una supuesta belleza que debía adquirir, fuese como fuese," (104). The grandmother scrutinizes Matia's appearance and the latter hates it. Julia endures a similar scrutiny: her mother comments on the non-feminine way Julia dresses and wears her hair. Natalia of *Entre Visillos* must also suffer comments about her immature way of dressing.

Insomnia is a theme that appears in *Primera Memoria* and *Julia*. Matia, as will later Julia, wakes up at night haunted by her childhood: "A veces me despertaba de noche, y me sentaba bruscamente en la cama. Sentía entonces una sensación olvidada de cuando era muy pequeña y me angustiaba el atardecer," (156). In *Julia* Moix takes insomnia and the memory of childhood to an extreme. When Julia wakes up at night, she's too terrified to sit up, she sees monsters, and the memory of the little Julia of her childhood is so strong that it paralyzes her.

The theme of escape in *Primera Memoria* is one that Moix takes up again in *Julia* and *Walter* with Julia's attempted suicide and Ismael's travels as a circus clown. Matia is conscious of an inward need for escape: when she suffers from insomnia she has a confusing yearning that when she wakes up, "no hallará solamente el día y la noche, sino algo nuevo, deslumbrante y doloroso. Algo como un agujero por donde escapar de la vida," (156). Matia's desire to escape is clear, but she does not act on this desire. Julia's desire to flee, by contrast, is expressed indirectly, but she acts on that wish.

Death is a form of escape and a source of grief that runs through most of Moix's work. The theme of the adolescent fixating on death has its possible precedent in *Primera Memoria*. Thoughts of death creep into Matia's mind:

> Pero me acordé de Fermintín (un niño que murió hace poco en el pueblo. No le hablé nunca, pero la noticia de su muerte me inquietó. Deseaba ardientemente que no muriera nadie en el mundo, que todo lo de la muerte fuera otra de las tantas patrañas que cuentan los hombres a los muchachos). (154)

Matia doesn't want anyone to die or to validate the reality and inevitability of death; however, she can't help but think about it. In *Julia* and *Walter*, however, death is more of a reality and, in the form of suicide, constitutes escape. While the death of others signifies unbearable loss, as with Rafael's death, one's own death represents escape.

In addition to death, homosexuality is a theme that Matute subtly addresses, while Moix develops it in a more deliberate way. When wandering through an orange orchard with her cousin Borja and their tutor, el Chino, Matia closes her eyes, and when she opens them she says, "vi cómo el Chino alargaba su mano y la ponía sobre la pierna de Borja. Medio adormecida, como en sueños, vi cómo se deslizaba despacio, casi con temor. Borja seguía quieto, hasta que bruscamente la apartó . . ." (152). This detail hints at the possible sexual relations between Borja and el Chino. In addition, the reader knows that Borja has an important secret, apparently el Chino's homosexuality, which he uses repeatedly to blackmail el Chino.

What Matute does not or cannot say about homosexuality in 1960, Moix says explicitly in the 1973 publication of *Walter*. The homosexuality between boys in *Julia* and *Walter* is not subtle, and Moix makes it clear that boys are engaging in homosexual

acts. In *Julia*, the title character's homosexual feelings are ambiguous but constitute a central theme of the novel. *Walter* is more direct in addressing sexual orientation: Julia is initiated into the pleasures of sex through her older cousin Lea. Moreover, at the end of the novel, it is revealed that Julia and Lea had become in some ways soul mates, as each was the most important person in the other's life.

A bildungsroman motif has characterized the novels of this tradition because the female protagonists face the prospect of becoming women. Many critics, Ciplijauskaité, Kingery, Nichols, and Lee-Bonanno for example, have written about the bildungsroman, (or anti-bildungsroman) theme in Julia. The critics have not, however, considered that Moix writes the antibildungsroman as a reaction to the more established writers. They have not examined Julia's downward growth in the context of the protagonists in the novels written by Moix's predecessors in this tradition.

Several factors contribute to Julia's inability to become an adult. First Julita keeps pulling her back. In addition she'd rather kill herself than become an adult. Matute, as shown in Chapter Two, develops the bildungsroman theme through the motif of loss of innocence. Moix does not take this approach: Julia lost her innocence when she was still a young child and sexually assaulted by her mother's friend. Having already lost her innocence and been initiated into what Matia called the ugly things of men and women, Julia's attempted journey into adulthood could not parallel that of Matia, who has been able to maintain a sense of childhood innocence until the time during which the novel takes place.

There is one other theme in *Primera Memoria* that may demonstrate an affinity between Moix and Matute: the girl who is more at home with boys. Neither Matia nor

Julia plays with other girls. Matia socializes with Borja and Julia with Ernesto and Rafael (and Ismael in *Walter*). When Matia and Julia are not with boys, they are alone. Interestingly, neither Matia nor Julia ever comments that she feels lonely or left-out because she has no female friends.

While Matia is able to develop psychologically, Julia is not. Not only is Julia prevented from growing up, she grows "down" as her six-year-old self pulls her backwards. The contrast between the optimism of growing up and the pessimism of growing down is greatest between *Julia* and *Entre visillos*. A tone of optimism marks *Entre visillos*, while Moix chooses a pessimistic tone for *Julia*. Moreover, when her character reappears in *Walter*, Julia has an opportunity to survive, but she chooses death instead.

Moix rejects the hopeful tone of *Entre visillos*, but she does not reject this novel completely. *Julia* appears ten years after *Entre visillos*, and the female protagonists of each novel share important characteristics. Both hide in bed all morning. Neither is interested in boys or dressing up. As discussed in Chapter Two, both express an ambiguous attraction to an older teacher. Both are unconcerned about appearing feminine.

Most of the young women (certainly not girls as they are largely in their twenties) in *Entre visillos* stand in great contrast to Moix's characters: they meet to go to the movies and the casino and are primarily occupied with attracting young men. They have few other interests. Natalia, by contrast, is not interested in these outings and sees herself as too young to participate in them.

Martín Gaite shows that under Franco, marriage was not always based on love, and while that may have suited men, who were relatively free to have affairs, it certainly did not benefit women, who were expected to be faithful. The boyfriends of the female characters don't think that marriage has anything to do with a committed, loving relationship; rather, as with Angel, it is a financial arrangement. Moix's reversal on this theme is that Julia's mother, rather than father, has the affair. Moix doesn't distort the theme of the faithful marriage; rather, she distorts the paradigm of the marriages that Matute and Martín Gaite present, the one in which the husband is unfaithful.

In *Entre Visillos*, Natalia's sister Julia experiences a positive self-realization when she finally stands up for herself. Through most of the novel she is melancholic and obsessed with marrying Miguel. However, before this story's end, Julia defends herself against her father and decides to go to Madrid to be with Miguel. In *Julia* there is no such inner transformation. The characters are stagnated. As illustrated especially well in the scene in which Julia's Grandmother interrogates her, beyond age six Moix's Julia is unable to stand up for herself against anyone.

Whereas Moix inverts the bildungsroman motif, she takes other themes in these novels, such as noncomformity, to an extreme. In *Entre Visillos*, for example, Martín Gaite describes a painter's studio that many of the characters frequent for parties and sexual encounters. The descriptions of the painter's studio present a small side of the characters' lives that did not conform to the rigid expectations of Franco's Spain. In *Julia* and *Walter* Moix takes nonconformity and makes it an issue in itself: by studying and writing, Julia defies the expectations of a young woman, Ernesto is a homosexual, Víctor is an adult homosexual preying on a young girl, Julia's parents become separated

and her mother has a boyfriend, and, perhaps in one of the most blatant signs of nonconformity against Franco, Julia's grandfather is an anarchist. The characters in *Walter*, especially Lea, show no significant signs of conformity: they rebel, are disrespectful, and, in Ismael's case, go off to the circus, an alternative world. One of the few conformist characters, Ricardo, conforms by leaving María Antonia, the cousin he loved. He pays for this act with eventual feelings of regret, which are intensified when he finds out María Antonia died soon after he left her. Previous authors in this particular tradition had hinted at nonconformity, but Moix raises the limits of this theme.

Interestingly, Moix's characters who display no respect for Franco's norms were growing up in the 1950s and early 1960s, a period that was still very conservative, especially in comparison to the era beginning in 1968 when Moix was creating these characters in writing. The contradiction between the expected behavior and the way the characters conducted themselves in *Julia* is much greater than the similar contradiction in the other novels mentioned. Two factors contribute to this fact. As mentioned in Chapter One, Moix writes during a time when Franco was allowing controversial books to be published. Despite continued censorship, Moix was able to publish what her predecessors would not have been able to. In addition, Moix began to write at a point in the literary tradition when much had already been written about girls coming of age. In order to avoid repetition, she had to address unexplored themes, such as sexuality and sexual abuse. Lastly, in contrast to her predecessors, Moix shows how the contradiction between what is expected and the way people actually behave creates an extremely difficult way to live: it allowed to novelize homosexuality, rape and suicide. In the context of *Julia*, the other novels mentioned here can be understood as expressing the

development of tension in Franco's Spain, while *Julia* expresses a muted explosion of the tension that has become unbearable.

The rebelliousness of Moix's characters constitutes only one of the factors that distinguish Moix from her predecessors. Her choice of narrative voice also sets her apart. Critics have differed in their analysis of the third-person narration in *Julia*. As mentioned, Kingery, argues that the choice of third-person narration, rather than first-person, functions to silence the protagonist's voice. While many critics have commented on the motif of silence that runs through Moix's work, the third-person narration in *Julia* is not necessarily a contributing factor to this motif. Biruté Ciplijauskaité, in *La novela femenina contemporánea (1970-1985): hacia una tipología de la narración en primera persona,* sustains that the mostly third-person narration of *Julia* "es tan íntima que raya en estilo indirecto libre y permite captar el mundo interior de la niña que va convirtiéndose en adolescente" (44). Rather than act as a silencer, the third-person narration gives voice to Julia's interior world.

Some critics have asked why Julia does not tell her own story in first person. To answer this question one must consider Moix's response to the women's literary tradition. *Nada, Entre Visillos*, *Primera Memoria,* and *La Plaza* are all written in first-person. By switching points of view, Moix was bringing the novel by women into the next era. She rejects the narrative choice of more traditional writers. To choose third-person narration, then, is to break with tradition and anticipate the aesthetic of a more modern novel. However, given that third-person narration faithfully represents and is limited to Julia's voice, as did the first-person point of view that the more established writers chose, Moix's choice of point of view does not constitute a complete rejection of

her predecessors. Thematically, Moix's response to tradition is similar: she expands on or inverts previous themes, but does not totally reject them.

Ciplijauskaité shows that traditional Spanish women writers of the twentieth-century have employed first-person narration to heighten the sense of inner, psychological exploration. Moix enters into the tradition of psychological exploration, but she does so differently. The third-person narration allows Moix to emphasize the extent to which Julia is cut off from herself, as in the passages quoted in Chapter Two where she feels as if her life were someone else's that she is watching in a film. Ellen Mayock, in her study of family dynamics in *Julia*, says that "The third-person narration emphasizes the dual and decentered, and yet suffocatingly narcissistic 'I' . . . (46). Third-person narration more aptly represents both Julia and Julita in a way that the first-person could not. The dual and decentered Julia contrasts with the female protagonists before her who were coming of age.

None of the female protagonists in the works mentioned in the tradition of twentieth-century Spanish female bildungsroman novels is as cut off from herself and her feelings as is Julia. The third-person narration accentuates the difference between Julia and the characters from the other novels: psychologically unable to tell her own story, she is a more troubled, and arguably more complex, character. In comparison to Julia, for example, the melancholic Matia is well-adjusted.

The third-person narrator tells Julia's story with such candor that in comparison, the first-person narrators in the novels of Moix's female predecessors seem to have censored themselves. As women of a conservative Spain, Laforet, Martín Gaite, Matute, and Rodoreda may have voluntarily held something back in their writings. These women

were more progressive than the average Spanish woman; nonetheless, they came of age in an era even more conservative than Moix's. It was not yet socially acceptable--even in more progressive circles--for a woman to write about childhood sexual abuse until Moix wrote *Julia*. Even then, in 1968, it is not clear that the larger public was ready to read a woman's writing on this topic.

José Batlló's early review of *Julia* (1970) reinforces the idea that Moix writes very differently from more established authors. The reader, he says, must switch gears. Batlló says that *Julia* "exhala un perfume extraño, desazonante, que obliga a un esfuerzo de percepción e identificación por parte de nuestro olfato," (684). By saying that the reader must use her nose to read this novel, when what one usually uses to read is one's eyes, Batlló calls attention to the singular quality of *Julia*. One cannot approach this novel as one has other recent novels. The novel itself forces you to use your sense of smell, metaphorically speaking.

Perhaps Batlló used this metaphor because the olfactory is a mysterious sense. It is, for example, very connected to memory, and therefore to one's psychology. If one is aware of subtle smells, then one is a sensitive person. The reader must read *Julia* with the sense of smell in order to perceive the nuances of the character's vulnerability.

Batlló argues that *Julia* requires something new of its readers. As a confessional piece, *Julia* is rare in its sincerity, but the confessional quality of the novel is not what sets it apart. As Batlló insists, the discomfort that a reading of *Julia* provokes comes from something deeper than the frank quality of its confession. Instead, he says we must ask: "hasta qué punto estamos capacitados y preparados para asimilar, para integrar en nuestra estrechez mental, en nuestro subdesarrollo cultural, una personalidad tan

avasalladoramente humana como la que *Julia* pone en evidencia?" (685). In 1970, then, the Spanish reader could read *Julia*, but did not fully appreciate the protagonist or the novel. Tusquets, Regás, and Marsé (all associated with Moix during the *gauche divine* years) disagree with Batlló's implied suggestion that the reader was not ready for *Julia*, but these authors are more intellectually advanced than the rest of society (Tusquets, personal interview; Regás, personal interview; Marsé, personal interview). To what extent is anyone in any society ready for the first novel about childhood rape and a young woman's attampted suicide?

The Spanish reader, says Batlló, has the ability to read the novels of Luís Martín-Santos and the Goytisolos, but not Moix's work. The most practical thing we can do with *Julia*, says Batlló, is

> pasar un tupido velo sobre el asunto y aguardar a que llegue una <hora del lector> más propicia para enfrentarse a esta prosa aparentemente descuidada y frágil, tan vulnerable en su apariencia que al menor ataque por nuestra parte nos hace sentirnos inmediatamente culpables de un delito de homicidio. (685)

In 1970, the reader was not ready for *Julia*. When did, if ever, the "hora del lector" (outside of a small group of intellectuals) arrive? Was it in 1991 when the book came out in its second printing? Was it in 2004 when the first translation of *Julia* into another language was published? Does misogyny play a role in the Spanish public's readiness for *Julia*?

Misogyny is still a problem in Spain. Moix told Char Prieto that "el crimen y la violencia doméstica es muy predominante en España. Las mujeres hoy día pueden ir a denunciar un abuso doméstico, pero sin embargo no tienen mucha protección" (167).

The frequent violence against women is reported almost daily in the newspapers. Given this misogyny, maybe the hour of the reader for *Julia* still has not arrived. Because the dictatorship did not end until 1975, Spain lagged behind other Western nations in advancing women's rights. Many argue that women of Spain have never enjoyed the level of respect and equality that women of other Western nations do. One must also ask whether the hour of the reader of *Walter* has arrived as well.

If the reader was not ready for *Julia* until at least several years after its first publication, what is it about the portrayal of the novel's protagonist that is so hard to accept? Moix deals frankly with childhood neglect and sexual abuse and she does it in ways that expose the character's vulnerability. Moix portrays Julia's traumatized and vulnerable state quite starkly.

Moix creates the tone of vulnerability from the outset. It is this tone that makes it hard for Batlló to criticize the novel, and for readers to accept the works of Martín Santos and the Goytisolos more easily. The first sentence of the novel portrays the adult Julia moving into a fetal position and covering herself up: "Se cubrió la cabeza con el embozo de la sábana y se acurrucó bajo las mantas apretando las rodillas contra el pecho hasta quedar hecha un ovillo" (11). She not only positions her body fetally--she covers herself up as if she were in her mother's womb. Julia imagines herself as so vulnerable that she cannot survive unless she is in a fetal position inside her mother. In the opening sentence, Julia metaphorically returns to the womb because she is scared, but as the narration develops, Julia quickly reveals that her motivation to return to the womb is not caused by fear alone: she has a wish to be very close to her mother again, or at least to someone like her mother, her mentor, Eva (14). Julia imagines Eva saving her from the

monsters she fears are in her room. Eva makes the monsters disappear by staring at them. Eva, in Julia's imagination, plays the role of a mother who comforts a scared child, except that Julia is not a child and her "monsters" are not the typical fears of a child; rather, they represent past events that continue to haunt the protagonist.

One perceives immediately that this novel does not address the usual conflicts of Spanish culture and politics. Julia is not afraid of poverty, Franco, capitalism or priests. Marxism and democracy, frequent topics that novelists at least hinted at, would not solve Julia's problems. Even feminism would fall short of solving Julia's problems. For this reason, Julia is different from Carmen Martín Gaite's characters in *Entre visillos*, which is about the lack of choices young women entertained, and how they felt conflicted about choosing something that was not traditional. Although the lack of choices is clearly a problem for the protagonist, *Julia* is not principally concerned with the lack of choices for women.

One could argue that Julia and Natalia in Mercé Rodoreda's *La Plaza del Diamante*, are both characters that are very sensitively constructed and that Natalia should have paved the way for Julia. However, Rodoreda wrote about a woman's physical survival during the Civil War and the extreme choices she had to make to save her family from starving. It seems that even many years after the Civil War, Spaniards were much more willing to identify themselves with a sensitive, fragile character who struggled with physical survival than with the bourgeois Julia who never experienced physical hunger.

It is easier to identify oneself with physical rather than psychological survival. Many critics (Soufas, Nichols "Julia") see Julia as weak because she can not overcome

the overwhelming losses she has suffered. Soufas, for example, has said that Julia is passive, weak, and conforming (2003, 155). Few have entertained the idea that emotional and psychological loss are just as or more difficult to endure as the loss of food and home.

It is much easier for readers to understand Rodoreda's Natalia's need to commit suicide since she is already dying of hunger and her suffering is more physically evident than Julia's need to do so since she has never lacked any physical comfort. Julia, it would seem, has every advantage that a girl needs in Spain: a bourgeois social class, Catholic parents, a summer home on the beach, a Catholic school. All Julia has to do, as much of the thinking about female maturation has been in the past and often still is, is accept her role in society as a feminine person who does not need anything but girlfriends and potential boyfriends. She does not, of course, need to study or write. With Natalia, however, there is no such contradiction between what the she wants and what society expects of her. Natalia wants a home and a respectful husband, so her wishes are in line with the conservative norms of Franco's dictatorship.

One of the factors that makes *Julia* a transition novel is its intended readership, which is shifting from the more traditional and defined readership that read the works of Laforet, etc. to a less well-defined and more select group of readers. In his 1948 article "¿Para quién escribimos nosotros?" Francisco Ayala discusses the challenges that the post-civil-war writer faces in regard to her reader. At that time the reading public is undefined. Authors write for everyone and no one, and hope that some of what they say

doesn't get lost. Ayala emphasizes the importance of the reading public because an author cannot write without a reader in mind. The post-war Spanish reading public is an undefined group for several reasons, says Ayala. After the war, some writers left to write in exile, and those that stayed suffered such restrictions to their freedom of expression that they wrote as if they were also in exile. They had been silenced (Ayala, 197). Those in exile were not in contact with the daily life and ideas of Spaniards. Because literary production in Spain takes place within a small, almost private group of colleagues (certainly the case with the *gauche divine*), those who remained were also out of touch with daily life. As critics have remarked, however, Moix is an exception--her prose belies the argument that she was out of touch with daily life. In addition to being somewhat isolated, since the writer in Spain saw herself as forced to write in code, she alienated much of her potential reading public for whom her writing appeared difficult, abstract, and too intellectual.

From Argentina Ayala discussed the problems that the Spanish writer encounters when imagining a reader in the relatively immediate post-war period. Twenty years later, when Moix began to write, the problem remained, and much of what Ayala says was still true. The censorship is most obvious: even when she published *Walter* in 1973, a time when writers had already begun to enjoy new freedoms, the government made over 45 cuts to the text and required her to revise it three times (Kingery, "Subversions" 225). She had to take out almost all of section three and much of the love scenes between Albina and Ismael (Nichols, "Escribir" 110). While *Julia* did not undergo such censorship, some have argued that Moix had anticipated censorship and therefore wrote in a coded way that would avoid it (Pérez-Sánchez, Levine "Censored"). This writer

doesn't not deny the possibility that Moix addresses the lesbian theme in code; however, one must keep in mind that ambiguity (as discussed in Chapter One and Chapter Two) is a central part of Moix's style that marks her work both before and after 1975. Aesthetic philosophy, as well as the restrictions of the dictatorship, are the cause of her ambiguous or "codified" style. In any case, when she wrote *Julia* and *Walter*, even if she had wanted to write less ambiguously, or in a way that would have been more accessible to a reading public, she did not have that option if she intended to continue to publish in Spain.

Forced to write in clouded, ambiguous ways before 1975, once the dictatorship ended, she had become skilled in subtlety and ambiguity. While Moix's ambiguous style is considered one of the most evolved aspects of her work (as seen, for example, in the "rape" scene in *Julia* or in the question of whether "Virtudes Peligrosas" is about one or two women), the restrictive circumstances in which she wrote may have had a positive effect in that they forced her to write even more ambiguously. She wanted to reveal more than her predecessors had, but the only way she could do so, ironically, was to introduce her themes, such as childhood rape and lesbianism, in clouded, ambiguous ways.

Because the reader is forced to read actively and decide for herself/himself how to read the text, s/he plays an important role in Moix's ambiguous style. In *Julia*, for example, the reader must decide how to interpret Julia's feelings for Eva and how to read the sexual assault scene. The important role of the reader in Moix's work, therefore, reinforces Ayala's argument that in order to write, the author must have a reader. Who, then, forms Moix's reading public?

To answer the above question, one must consider to what extent Moix is exiled in her own county. To silence a writer, as Ayala says, is to put her at a disadvantage equal

to that of exile. Moix, like the writers in Spain in 1948, is to a great extent silenced by censorship and an overall repressive society. As Ayala says, the effect of the dictatorship was to "torcer la más lúcida mente o silenciarla," (197). Women, as Mulvey and other critics have argued, were doubly silenced. When Moix writes in 1968, however, her mind is lucid enough to indirectly critique the government's silencing of its writers: as a response to a government that has been silencing her, Moix transforms the restriction of silence into a literary theme and motif. Julia, for example, is silenced by Víctor who tells her not to speak of the rape, and by her mother who makes sure Julia does not have a chance to describe what has obviously happened. In *Walter*, silence is a metafictional motif.

Even though Moix is able to take the government's weapon of silence and reappropriate it for her own literary purposes, thus transcending these restrictions, the problem of readership remains. According to Ayala, the mind of the most lucid reader had become skewed (197). The reader had lost her/his writer just as much as the writer had lost her/his reader (196). "Nuestras palabras," says Ayala "van al viento: confiemos en que algunas de ellas no se pierdan" (195). Who, then, has "caught Moix's words?"

Clearly, members of the *gauche divine* read her work. Many of them did so even before she published her novels. When Char Prieto asked Moix if the latter had an ideal reader, Moix referred to the *gauche divine*:

> Hace años que tenía un grupo de amigos algunos de ellos formaban parte de una antología de los nueve novísimios y entre nosotros nos leíamos nuestros trabajos. Después ya no. Sigo teniendo mucho contacto con el poeta Pedro Gimferrer, que además es un gran lector. (Prieto 157)

After denying that anyone as young as twenty could write a novel, Gabriel Ferrater (who played an aesthetic, if not social role in the *gauche divine*), read *Julia*, and, amazed that someone so young was capable of writing such a novel, recommended it be published (Moix, personal interview). Moreover, when Moix and other writers (Marsé, Tusquets, and Regás, for example, in interviews with this writer) say that Moix's early novels were well-received, it is understood that only a small group of people were reading the novels. Thus, Moix wrote for members of the *gauche divine* and people with connections to the *gauche divine*. This reading public is the only one that is defined. In addition, there may be an abstract reading public like the one to which Ayala refers. Maybe some readers not connected with the *gauche divine* or the literary circles would take an interest. This is clearly the case in 1991, when *Julia* is re-issued, but this point is relevant only if Moix wrote thinking of future potential readers, which is an abstract readership.

Thus, Moix's defined readership was very small. She had an advantage over more established writers in that she had any defined group of readers, at all, however small and closed the circle was. Since the *gauche divine*--a group known for snobbery and perhaps elitism-- was her defined readership, it would appear that she was unconnected to the daily lives of the mainstream. In her prose, however, Moix has been able to capture the language of the streets (Masoliver Ródenas, 10), which leads one to conclude that despite her role in the *gauche divine*, she was in tune with the discourse that belonged to the broader culture. In an interview with this writer, Juan Marsé affirmed Masoliver Ródenas' conclusion that Moix has been able to capture this language (Marsé, personal interview). Coming from Marsé, this affirmation is significant, as he

was not a member of the bourgeois class as did most of the *gauche divine*. Linguistically, then, Moix writes for the average Spaniard as much as she does for the *gauche divine*.

While some of Moix's reading public is the *gauche divine* and some of it is undefined, there is another reading public for whom Moix clearly does not write. When this writer asked Moix if there was anyone that she knew of that did not receive *Julia* well, Moix said yes, her mother, who started the book, but never finished it (personal interview). The most obvious reason that Moix's mother would abandon the book is that it does not picture her family favorably. There may, however, be more than personal issues at stake here. Moix's mother may represent a generation of women whose minds, in Ayala's words, have been twisted and silenced by Franco's regime. As Moix has said in interviews and in *Poética*, her mother did not think a girl should read and write. This belief was not unusual--girls and women should remain silent. It is clear, then, that when Moix wrote *Julia* she did not the more staid and conservative woman of the previous generation in mind as readers.

While women of Moix's mother's generation did not serve as readers, some of the women authors of the same generation did serve as models in one way or another. Moix has maintained threads of connection with these women authors that came before her. She responds to the themes of these authors by reversing them or carrying them to new extremes. Her characters are less innocent and more rebellious. Formally, she breaks with these writers, as evinced most obviously in her use of third-person narration instead of the traditional first-person. Overall, her works play an important role in the small tradition of Spanish women novelists of the 20th century.

1. It is worth noting the somewhat contradictory statement in Brown's study of *Ritmo Lento*, where she maintains that had Martín Gaite been a man, the novel would have rivaled *Tiempo de Silencio* in importance ("*Tiempo"*).

Chapter Four

Walter: Complexity and Non-referentiality

Julia should not be read alone, but with *Walter*. When *Julia* is read by itself its value is easily reduced to only historical and sociological importance. Because it is one of the first novels to directly address childhood sexual abuse (probably the first in Spain and among the first world-wide), *Julia* is historically valuable, but it is dependent on *Walter* if it is to have lasting literary value. Interestingly, most critics have written about *Julia* and few have written on *Walter*. Despite the many acknowledgements that *Walter* is a metafictional work, few, if any have read the two novels as connected (Bush is an exception). The same superficial splitting that occurs within the protagonists of Moix's first two published novels could also be said to occur between the novels themselves: the idea that they are two completely independent works is as false as the idea that Julia and Julita are two different characters, or that Ismael and the "removed" narrator are separate (for analysis of the narration see a subsequent section of this chapter). Moix herself has emphasized the fact that the original version of *Walter* contains a scene in which Ernesto's father beats him because Ernesto does not want to go to Rafael's burial, and this scene is copied word-for-word from *Julia*,[1] (*Julia*, 150 [Moix, personal interview]). The repetition of the time period, characters, settings and motifs from *Julia* to *Walter* unites the two novels.

Critics have not yet examined the extent to which the two novels are different sides of the same coin, or to use a more literary metaphor, they are like different sides of the same tapestry. Jones has said that *Walter* picks up "threads" from *Julia*, ("Literary Structures," 110) and this writer agrees, but to expand on the textile metaphor, with

Walter Moix picks up the threads of *Julia* and then adds many more threads. *Walter* could be considered the finished side of the tapestry, while *Julia* is the backing. The reverse side reveals some color and pattern, but to be able to see the full potential of the tapestry, one must turn it over. Cervantes made a similar observation about reading literature in translation, which he linked to looking at the back-side of a tapestry: one may appreciate literature in translation, but not be able to capture the essential subtleties of the work unless reading in the intended language.[2]

The back side of a tapestry, however, may hint at or "foreshadow" the front side, as *Julia* anticipates *Walter*. The divided protagonist in *Julia*, for example, could point towards a divided narrator/protagonist in *Walter*. The role of memory in *Julia* could point towards the structure in *Walter* in which Ismael actually "visits" his memory as if it were real. Moix has said that this aspect of Ismael going back in time to the place where the cousins convened is what she likes most in *Walter* (personal interview).

The tapestry metaphor is particularly fitting given that in the context of Moix's complete trajectory, she wrote these two novels in a short period, in back to back fashion. The short stories that she wrote in between (*Ese chico pelirrojo a quien veo cada día*) serve to connect the two novels. In "Ella comía cardos," for example, Moix expands on the rape theme of *Julia*, but then constructs a dynamic between the two major characters that would be fully developed in the characters of Lea and Ismael in *Walter*.

While *Walter* is the more brilliant and complicated side of the tapestry, it is also a response to *Julia*. As Bush says:

> The opening pages of the second novel may be read as a pointed critique of the first: "¿Acaso puede una frase arrastrarme a algo? Antes sí . . . ."

> (15); before, in Julia, sentences had exactly this power . . . But in *Walter* the pull of the narrative is frequently arrested by . . . Ismael, who calls into question the validity of his own experiences and the authority of his memory. (144)

In *Julia* the protagonist doesn't comprehend herself: she doesn't, for example, understand the nature of her feelings for Eva and she is not aware of her lack of understanding. When Moix writes *Walter* a few years later, however, she endows her protagonist with the ability for self-understanding.

An interesting progression in technique from *Julia* to *Walter* is that the former is an anti-bildungsroman in terms of the title character. The latter, however, can be understood as an anti-bildungsroman in metafictional terms. According to Melissa Stewart, Ismael

> is prevented from moving forward in constructing a sense of himself, which is necessary if he is ever to write a different narrative. In many ways then, instead of recording the construction of a self-begetting protagonist and work, *Walter* recounts the reverse--the deconstruction of both. (32)

While Julia was prevented from moving forward in the sense of growing and becoming an adult, Ismael is impeded from evolving a self-understanding and self-narration. While *Julia* portrays the "growing down" of a character, *Walter* portrays a kind of "growing down" of the novel, the narrator, and the protagonist. In the context of Moix's trajectory as a writer, one can understand *Julia* as an introduction to *Walter*. The anti-bildungsroman, then, becomes a preface to a deconstructionist novel. The anti-

bildungsroman/deconstructionist correlation is yet another way in which *Julia* and *Walter* may be seen as different sides of the same tapestry.

Content also links the two novels. *Julia* is more of a traditional story than is *Walter*, but the latter, despite its experimental form, contains a rich story. In the first novel, Moix focuses on Julia's experience. In the second novel Moix once again focuses on the experience of the protagonist (Ismael), but expands the content of the narrative to include the experiences of other characters, mainly Ricardo and María Antonia. In content, as well as in form, *Walter*, is a more complex novel.

The protagonists also link the two novels. In *Walter*, Julia is the first character to be described in detail (1992, 23). The protagonist of *Julia* can be understood to serve as the basis for the character of Ismael. In *Walter*, Julia and Ismael are accomplices (1992, 22) and Lea calls them "igualitos." For both characters, the clothes are important symbols. Whereas Julia is repeatedly described in both novels by her clothes ("un jersey azul marino con un ancla dibujada en el pecho" [*Julia*, 65, also see *Walter*, 21, 22, 65, 107]), Ismael is repeatedly described as a man with "una maleta roja" (*Walter*, 40, 184). The anchor on Julia's shirt, for example, represents her incapability to advance. Ismael's red suitcase from the circus serves as a reminder of his status as clown and nomad. Both characters are fixed in time with these "clothes." The navy blue jersey with the anchor indicates the Julita who is stuck in time. The red suitcase indicates the Ismael who can repeat himself, but can't progress.

The theme of loss in *Julia*, which this writer has addressed in Chapter Two, is expanded in *Walter*. Whereas Julia experiences the death of two loved ones, her brother and her grandfather, Ismael witnesses the deaths of Albina, Julia, Rafael, and Maria

Antonia. These first two losses are particularly acute for Ismael: Albina had given him a sense of purpose and love, and Julia was a part of him. Whereas Julia has lost her mother's affection and protection, Ismael has lost his father. While Julia has lost her "innocence" through rape, Lea has forced Ismael to give up the idea of innocence (Bush, 148). Ernesto and Luisín also rob Ismael of his innocence when they compel him to join them in their sexual play. In addition, Ismael must suffer the loss of the fantasy of Walter, who represented an escape from the harsh reality of the cousins' lives. Ismael experiences loss when he steps out of himself to become a clown. As he describes himself as dead, Ismael has literally lost his life. The general setting of loss in both novels must also be acknowledged: to write during post-war Spain is to do so during a period of grief because, in addition to the inevitable losses of life and valuables that accompany war, Spaniards lost many freedoms.

Anarchy is another theme that appears on both sides of the tapestry that is formed by the two novels. As examined in chapter two, Julia's grandfather was an anarchist, and his ideals may be linked to the aesthetic of the *gauche divine*. In *Walter*, the cousins have a discussion about the grandfather and his anarchism (132, 134, 160-162). Julia, in a rare moment of verbal expression in *Walter*, corrects her cousins by insisting that her grandfather was an anarchist, not a communist (132), but the more developed representative for anarchy in the second novel is Lea, who refuses to be controlled by anyone. Lea achieves her freedom at the cost of any long-lasting relationship. She may have had an enduring relationship with Julia (as indicated by her perceived presence at the grave site and the possibility that she paid for Julia's burial), but Julia is now dead. There could be an implied self-criticism of the *gauche divine* here: when freedom is the

highest value, other values--such as love and compassion--may be lost. Moix's own political stance against violence against women (which is clearly revealed in non-fictional sources) supports the thesis that an author need not completely avoid political commentary (Prieto, 167).

The time sequence of the novels is another factor which unites the two. Both novels' present action takes place during one night. In *Julia* it is a night of insomnia, while in *Walter* the only action that takes place in the present is Ismael standing at the iron grating and then finally passing through. Ismael and the protagonist of *Julia* both experience a sleepless night.

Some of the ideas set forth in *Julia* are not fully elaborated until they are developed in *Walter*. For example, in *Julia* the protagonists' mother says, "Una chica debe ser coqueta y presumida, de lo contrario parece un hombre" (145). In the second novel, Moix toys with that stereotype. Maria Antonia fulfills the stereotype of the girl who is flirtatious and vain, while Lea embodies the opposite. Lea does not flirt as much as seduce, and she is never described as being preoccupied with her appearance. In additionally, in *Walter*, Moix fully questions the notion that a "chica" should be the opposite of an "hombre." The relativity of gender and gender reversals will be discussed in a subsequent section of this chapter.

Moix shows an improvement in her literary skills when she writes her second novel. The progression from the first to second novel parallels the progression of Spanish literature in general: most post-war literature espoused the ideas of social realism until the late 1960s when authors began to focus more on complicated formal

structures. *Julia*, while differentiating itself from the more established novels, is a more traditional story formally while *Walter* is more easily classified as postmodern.

Walter's Narrator

Critics have approached the identity of the primary narrator of *Walter* in different ways. Some have simply taken for granted that Ismael is the narrator. Bush, for example, calls Ismael the narrator of the novel and he describes Ismael's voice as "sharply ironic and skeptical" (144). In her article on *Walter*, Noël Valis does not address the question of the identity of the narrator. She refers to the voice that opens the novel as "the narrator" (50), but then a few pages later assumes Ismael is the narrator (51). Valis acknowledges the multiple narrative voices and the unidentified narrative voice that addresses Ismael. She does not, however, address how the narrator can be both unidentified and identified as Ismael.

Melissa Stewart reads *Walter* as consisting of two narrators, one of the primary story and one of the embedded story, who are ultimately revealed to be identical. This writer suggests a slightly different reading that does not contradict Stewart's, but is complementary to it. In this reading, there is one narrator, Ismael, who continually splits off from himself and then becomes "whole" again in a pendular movement.

This reading is based on the above mentioned premise that *Walter* and *Julia* are different sides of the same tapestry. In *Julia* Moix employs the third-person to portray a divided protagonist. At the time of writing *Julia*, Moix was barely twenty and may not have been ready to address such problems as how to employ a first-person narrator to depict division within a non-self-conscious protagonist. By the time she writes *Walter*,

however, she is prepared to address formal questions not addressed in *Julia*. Thus, in *Walter* Moix raises the question of how to portray division within the narrator/protagonist without the exclusive use of third-person narration. *Walter* increases the formal complexity of *Julia* because in *Walter*, the narrator is divided while in the first novel, only the protagonist is divided.

The narrator of *Walter* sometimes speaks of himself as if he were himself, and other times speaks as if he were removed from himself. The "narrator" has several ways of temporarily distancing himself from Ismael. For example, he speaks of Ismael in the third person, criticizes him, and categorizes him: he repeatedly says Ismael belongs to a certain "clase de personas" composed of individuals who feel they must remember old personal stories. The narrator distances himself from Ismael and tries to maintain that difference by classifying Ismael as a certain type of person.

A close reading of the first section of the novel attempts to clarify the circuitous and ambiguous nature of the narrative voice, but ultimately, the narration defies complete clarification. The "distant" narrator speaks of Ismael's struggle with words and says that Ismael will soon tell us his story (1992, 34). The "Chinese-box-like" structure of Walter, which is complemented by Julia's actions of nesting boxes and burying them, facilitates and complements the narrative ambiguity. There is a first-person narrator who attempts to remove himself from telling the story of the past. The first story is about this narrator's struggle to refrain from writing. The story inside this one is the story that the narrator has vowed not to write--that of Ismael and his cousins. This narrator speaks in first and third-person-- sometimes reflecting on his own inner struggle with words and sometimes commenting on his own actions and struggles with words as if they were

someone else's. For example, the narrator says in first-person, "Por fin me he instalado en el silencio" and continues to reflect for half a page on what the struggle with words is like, but then he speaks of himself in third person: "El no deseaba acceptar el juego" (13). This "él" is presumably Ismael, who finally does accept the challenge to compete. Since both engage in the struggle with words, Ismael's actions either parallel or are the same as those of the first narrator, a fact which supports the argument that the two are one.

An analysis of the first several pages of the novel reveals the conflict, division, and distancing within the narrator. *Walter* begins with an unidentified narrator speaking in first person: "Anoche soñé que había regresado a T" (9). Critics have used this phrase, which alludes to Daphne Du Maurier's *Rebecca*, as the basis from which to argue the metafictional nature of *Walter* (see, for example, Valis). This phrase should also serve as a starting point from which to discuss the narrative divisions and conflicts.

After repeating this introductory phrase two times, the as yet unidentified first-person narrator contradicts himself and says he didn't dream it. Like much of what Moix writes, this, "no, no lo soñé" (9) is ambiguous. It could be read to take into account the phrase that immediately follows: "pero, ¿cuántas veces, y con qué frecuencia, palabras, frases o imágenes no reinciden, falsas e incansasbles, en el fondo de una cabeza hueca que las acoge como ciertas o, al menos, sin preocuparse, y ni siquiera reflexionar sobre su autenticidad?" (9). Here he speaks of words passing though "una cabeza hueca" as if it weren't his own head, but anyone's head. This phrase could reflect a different narrative voice slipping in--a narrative voice that generalizes about the way words appear in the minds of human beings. There is a distancing and depersonalization here. The narrator

distances himself from his own mind. However, before one can become accustomed to this distancing voice, the clearly first-person voice slips back in and continues to second-guess itself: "Hueca: así está, por fin, mi cabeza. ¿Está? o estaba, . . . " (9). In this introduction, the narrator continues to vacillate between what he describes as "una" *mente* and "mi" *mente* as if he were he were wavering between representing himself and commenting on life in general.

Another way to read the "no lo soñé" of the first page is "I didn't dream it, but someone else did" as he says further on: "anoche no soñé que había regresado a T. Pero él, probablemente, sí lo habrá soñado" (18). Here the narrator creates a clear distinction between himself and the protagonist. This distinction, however, is a construct within the novel, for the narrator and Ismael are one and the same. They appear different when Ismael speaks of himself as if he were removed from himself. He removes himself from himself in order not to be held accountable for writing the story. He has said he does not want to write and that silence is better; however, he cannot resist the temptation to narrate. By creating another voice that he believes is outside of himself he can have it both ways: he can narrate without holding himself accountable for doing so.

While he conveys an inner-conflict by second-guessing himself twice (through saying he dreamed it and then that he didn't), on the first page he introduces another conflict: between himself and "una frase." "Una frase" is a linguistic figure that is personified in a way that anticipates the linguistic "characters" in Moix's "Érase una vez" (published in *Virtudes Peligrosas*).

As a linguistic figure a "phrase" is an emotionally empty form, but the narrator feels compelled to defend himself against it and resist its force and temptation. He says,

for example, “La frase puede repetirse una y mil veces en mi mente, pero no permitiré que mis pensamientos la persigan, no consentiré siquiera que nazcan ni huyan, veloces, formando un descarriado cortejo en pos de la realidad, esa puta descocada que sólo busca mi destrucción” (10). This conflict between narrator and “frase” or “palabra” soon evolves into a conflict with “realidad” that overshadows the first section of the novel. He sees reality as “burlona” (10). The fact that he would view anyone or anything as making fun of him is consistent with Ismael’s childhood character--who often felt humiliated, but did not mock or criticize others. The narrator says, in reference to “realidad,” “Por muchas trampas que me tienda, a pesar de los más bajos presentes que me ofrezca, no le procuraré el placer de presidir, triunfal, mi nueva rendición” (11). Nevertheless, the narrator recalls, to the best of his ability, many details of his own life and that of his cousins.

The personification of “la palabra” does not end with the narrator simply struggling with it. “She” (*ella*, 10, 11) is equated with reality and has the power to pursue him. Like a rejected lover who won’t accept an affair’s end (“Una amante histriona, orgullosa, incapaz de resignarse, dignamente, a perderme” [11]), she is such a strong force in the narrator’s mind that she has the power to bring him back from the dead: “planea su venganza: mi humillación, mi vuelta al redil, a la vida” (11). With this resurrectionist power, she is like the Catholic god that had been indoctrinated into the characters’ lives when they were young. The sheep metaphor reinforces the Christian image.

This narrator refers to himself as if he were dead. In addition to writing that “Palabra/realidad” wants to bring him back to life, he speaks of how *now*, reality doesn’t

matter and how his mind has finally attained the calm and stillness for which he has always yearned (11). The reader, however, might point out that he is contradicting himself, for as the narrator has said, narrating and calmness are mutually exclusive. He is presumed to be one of her "resignados amantes" who has died and been devoured by worms (12). Even though he is "dead," "she" wants to awaken words in him.

While words, as signifiers, are more abstract than the objects they signify, the narrator speaks of his struggle with "palabra/realidad" as if it were concrete: "Y era grande nuestra lucha, y noble y pura, porque era cuerpo a cuerpo y hasta morir" (12). As his combat with words/reality is bodily, it is similar to Ismael's experiences of lovemaking with Albina: if the body of a horse-woman can be real, then words can be bodily. As Valis says, "Ultimately we come to the conclusion that . . . the linguistic and ontological poles of being are identical, that in a word, language and reality are one and the same" (48).

After the narrator resolves in first person that he will no longer engage in the struggle with words/reality, and then comments on the absurd nature of the struggle, Moix writes a two-page passage that takes the narrator through a series of distancing, reflections, uniting and splitting of the protagonist, and story-telling, and then brings the narrator back to the point of declaring again that he will not give in to words. As the clearly first-person Ismael morphs into the narration with his commentary on the past, this "ella" of the game transforms herself into a human being at the pool where Ismael used to see Lea. In Moix's fiction, characters can transform themselves into narrators, and words can transform themselves into humans.

The narrator who is constantly losing and regaining control is the one that speaks as if he were removed from the character Ismael, who, it appears, has no reservations about telling the story. Ismael and the narrator represent two levels of one self. Ismael's experience and narrating is immediate while the narrator who tries to remove himself from Ismael experiences the events on the level of self-understanding. "Ismael" is more like the protagonist of *Julia*, while the narrator who tries to remove himself from Ismael has acquired the ability for self-understanding that Julia of the first novel did not have and that Ismael, as much as he can be separated from the removed narrator, does not have either.

The narrator believes himself to have achieved a state of silence that is spoken of as if it were death. Indeed, he appears to be teetering between life and death, as he is described as being cadaverous-like. The state of one foot in the grave and one above is like having one Ismael who narrates and one who doesn't. It is an impossible state to maintain. The narrator continues his struggle until another voice enters that is comfortable with its role of describing Ismael. This voice is distanced from Ismael in that it watches Ismael and comments on the scene and on Ismael's thoughts.

There is only a very subtle separation between the two voices. In fact, they flow into one another and are connected: "Anoche soñé que había regresado a T. Envuelta en la oscuridad, y rodeada de verducos, la casa . . ." (16) The second sentence of this quote could be the first-person Ismael commenting on what he sees when he returns to "T," or it could be, as it appear several lines below (16), the third-person narrator commenting on what he/she sees from afar. This narrator with ambiguous identity soon refers to Ismael in the third person: "Y el hombre pensó que jamás, hasta

aquel instante, había experimentado el frío estremecimiento . . .” (16-17). The order of the narrative voices on pages 16 and 17 is then the following: Ismael, Ismael and/or unidentified “distancing” narrator, and then only the “distancing” narrator. There is definitely an overlapping of the two voices--phrases and sentences where the two voices are united. This overlapping occurs so often that, as Stewart says, “they result in a collapsing of the distance between Ismael and the narrator” (28). This distance was a fragile construction to begin with and it is not sustainable.

It is as if the “unidentified” narrator were watching a movie with Ismael in it. This cinematic device recalls the comments in *Julia* that Julia felt as if she were watching her life on screen. A side of Ismael removes himself to watch himself from afar; however, since there is really only one narrator, the “removed” narrator can sustain the distance only for short periods. At the end of the novel it appears that the removed narrator might maintain his distance until the last phrase, “anoche soñ . . .?” (259), which brings the reader back to the beginning of the novel and the first-person verb ending: “soñé.”

Critics have emphasized the silence in Moix’s work and have argued that in *Julia*, since Julia does not tell her own story, the female voice is silenced. Laura Mulvey has argued that “The mythology of the feminine under patriarchy set up a series of problems in which the woman became a phantasm and a symptom” (xii). As a phantasm, woman is silenced and thinned out. As Olga López-Valero Colbert has said, in contemporary Spanish novels women’s silenced voices are a thin presence like film: "Women constitute a collective of silenced voices that can barely be seen, that then come

back as ghosts" (6). Women's voices have been physically silenced, but refuse to disappear completely. López-Valero Colbert goes on to name Múñoz Molina as a leading Spanish author who has silenced women characters: "these women's weak materiality may be a result of the fact that, although Múñoz Molina attempts to give voice to a voiceless collective (women), he has not really let women talk for themselves, tell their own stories, as they are mediated by male narrators" (6). If Múñoz Molina does not let women speak for themselves, to what extent might Moix do the same? It would be interesting to elaborate on this idea; however, an important distinction must be made: in *Walter*, what is silenced may be the *feminine*, rather than the *female*. In this sense, one must ask to what extent Moix allows any of her characters to speak for themselves.

Whereas Mulvey and López-Valero Colbert have argued that under patriarchy women's voices are silenced, Moix examines the extent to which a patriarchal system silences everyone. Women's voices have been relegated to film-like ghosts. In *Walter*, however, all of the characters and narrators (with the arguable exception being the principal narrator who is sometimes able to distinguish him/herself from Ismael) are ghosts. The principal narrator says "me importa una mierda la sucesión de fantasmas que, de un momento a otro, en cuanto se aproxime o entre en la casa, cruzarán por su mente" (33).

While the patriarchal nature of the Franco dictatorship contributes to the phantasmal status of Ismael and the other characters, grief caused by loss is another contributing factor. Julia of the 1970 novel and Ismael are like the contemporary Joan Didion who recently wrote in reference to her husband's death: "These people who have lost someone look naked because they think themselves invisible. I myself felt invisible

for a period of time . . .” (75). To experience loss, then, is to make one feel like a ghost. The losses that Ismael experiences (many of the characters in the book are dead at the time of narration) are not of loved ones only: the entire setting of the novel, post-war Spain, is based on loss in the sense that through the war Spaniards lost creative and political freedoms.

Under a patriarchal setting it is not possible to endow any character, male or female, with a voice that is real or non phantom-like. A non-phantom-like voice would be grounded in a reality from which the adolescents (and then adults) in *Walter* are alienated. Julia’s wish for this reality is represented by her playing with dirt and burying her boxes, *crometes* and other objects with which she plays. She is trying to “root” herself in something tangible; she could hardly have a more “real” experience than dirtying her hands in the earth. The dirt in the ground may be the only aspect of reality that is not relative. Under patriarchy, by contrast, everyone’s lives are thinned-out into ghosts and they all take on a film-like quality.

While López-Valero Colbert and Mulvey have argued that under patriarchy women are represented in a phantom and film-like way, in *Walter* it is principally a man, the adult Ismael, that is the thin presence-- he is a ghost to the rest and even to himself and his voice is silenced when he’s with this group of adolescent cousins.

Before examining how the silencing of the male voice fits into the literary tradition, it is important to point out that when Ismael tries to communicate with his adolescent cousins he does not completely succumb to silence. His opportunity to “interact” verbally with the young cousins comes when he addresses the adolescent María Antonia in second-person (98 to 105 and from 126 to 129). Ismael is able to break

through the barrier of the past only with María Antonia because, as is revealed in a brief passage at the end of the novel, María Antonia is dead. Ricardo tells Ismael how he found out about María Antonia's death: "ella, Lea, me contaba mirándome fijamente a los ojos, sin dejar de sonreír, con desprecio: murió, al cabo de dos días de ir yo a visitarla . . . murió en el hospital . . . aquella enfermedad que contrajo en el Hospital de Infecciosos, donde regresó cuando tú Ricardo marchaste a Oxford . . ." (251). Ismael the narrator, then is able to communicate with the dead, but not with the living. Ismael the character, however, communicates with others. Ricardo, for example, tells Ismael about María Antonia's death, but this conversation takes place in the very recent past which Ismael lived--not in the past full of adolescent ghosts which Ismael "visits."

Ismael the character is able to address the adult María Antonia, but only Ismael the narrator is able to address the adolescent María Antonia. This third person narrator, who in a moment of succeeding in separating himself from Ismael the character, addresses her and tells her Ismael is talking to her: "¿lo recuerdas, María Antonia?, querías ser una Margarita Gautier. Te lo pregunta, esta noche, en el jardín oscuro, un hombre, en pie, una maleta roja en una mano, la mirada fija en una ventana abierta, por donde asoma tu voz . . ." (184). In this scene, the removed narrator describes both the present and the past; Ismael's presence in the garden is present time, but María Antonia's voice is coming out of a window of the past.

Despite his ability to address the dead María Antonia as if she were listening, Ismael is silenced when he visits people and places of his memory. In addition, he often tries to silence himself. If the feminine by definition is silenced, then by silencing Ismael's voice, Moix is "feminizing" him, meaning that it is not the female element of a

person that is silenced, but the feminine. These distinctions between female and feminine tend to be blurred because in traditional roles, cultural perception, and in literature, females are feminine and males are masculine. Albina's existence relies on Ismael's feminization. Her "horseness" corresponds to his feminization. To the extent that she is less feminine and more equine, he is less masculine. In *Walter* gender characteristics repeatedly do not correspond to their traditional sex. Similarly, human characteristics are given to animals and words, and animal characteristics are given to humans.

When Moix endows her characters with voices, she reverses traditional gender characteristics. Lea, the masculine woman, speaks with most conviction and lack of self-censorship. The most feminine man--Ernesto--is relegated to a "background" character with little voice in much the same way authors have relegated female characters to the background in many contemporary Spanish novels. Gender is relative in a way that is reminiscent of Margaret Jones' early commentary of Moix's work: "empirical facts are unreliable because of their constant modifications, ultimately confirming the perplexing relativity of all things: objects, characters, events" (Literary Structures, 112). Gender, like reality and narration, is relative: male and female characters can be more like characters of the other sex than the traditional characters of their own.

Traditionally characters with the most in-depth and fully-developed voices are overwhelmingly male and masculine. In *Walter*, however, there is no such correspondence: a masculine woman, Lea, and a feminine man, Ismael, are given ample voice. In fact, both are given the authority to narrate. Lea has one of the most direct and clearest voices of the novel, and she functions like a man. For example, by engaging in sexual relations with endless partners she breaks with the traditional and evolutionary

role of women, which is to be selective in choosing mates. She is not at all submissive, as is the image of the traditional woman, and even in her forties she travels by herself with no intention of attaching herself to a partner.

A man, even a heterosexual man like Ismael, can be feminine. As Albina repeatedly rescues him, he is like the damsel who is rescued by her "knight in shining armor." She is, in fact, the horse minus the knight. He has no interest in raising offspring and supporting them with "respectable" jobs as does Carlos. He undergoes none of the "tests" of manhood that have defined the transition from boy to man in Spain (see David Gilmore's *Manhood in the making : cultural concepts of masculinity*).

Ismael is an empty person without Lea. He has a low self-conception of himself when he is not attached to her. Interestingly, much of feminist psychoanalytic theory (for example, see Jessica Benjamin, Dana Crowley Jack, and Jean Baker Miller) has made a corresponding observation about women: they perceive themselves as empty and believe that they need a man to make themselves feel "full." This has been a problem because it is impossible to obtain a sense of wholeness in oneself from an exterior source. The sense of wholeness must come from within, but because of childrearing patterns and other cultural factors, it is extremely difficult for women to rely on themselves. Ismael's psyche is like that of a woman in the sense that he is "empty" and is seeking someone else--Lea--to make him feel full: "El se recuerda, desde siempre, pendiente de Lea quien vaciaba la casa con su ausencia" (24). To be empty and lacking in depth and roundness is to be one-dimensional.

Ismael desperately wants to attach himself to Lea. It is not simply a matter of an obsession with a beautiful woman. Ismael is attracted to Lea's dominating style of

relating to others. According to feminist psychoanalytic theory, usually the domineering half of the relationship is male and the submissive one is female (Benjamin). Here, however, Lea performs like a man and Ismael like a woman. Lea calls him, she takes him in her car, and she initiates sexual interaction. Ismael is devoted only to her, while she sleeps with many.

Thus, Ismael, even though he is a heterosexual man, performs like a woman. As a woman, he represents an alter ego of Julia. In the 1970 novel, the brothers threatened to send Julia to the circus, but in *Walter*, it's Ismael who actually enters the circus. Ismael is a "continuation" or a different side of Julia. When Lea narrates, she often addresses Julia and Walter as if they were one: " . . . cómo es posible seguís igualitos los dos, mis mensajeros, . . ." (224).

Julia and Ismael are both phantasms, but in different ways. In *Walter* the child Julia is a thin presence. She is relegated to a status that is similar to the way women are traditionally portrayed under patriarchy in the sense that she does not narrate and she almost never speaks (she has, however, left letters, but the reader knows nothing of their contents). Ismael, as the character who functions as Julia's alter-ego, is also a ghost. The descriptions of him, however, are in-depth. Julia is a thin presence in the sense that the reader is not permitted a well-rounded description of her character or an in-depth look into her psyche as the reader was in *Julia*. Ismael is film in a different way than is Julia--mainly in the scenes in which he watches the other cousins at "T," but cannot interact with them or be heard by them.

The entire premise of the novel is based on the dead (or semi-dead) communicating with the living. Even Ismael himself is repeatedly referred to as if he

were dead: "su mundo ha acabado" (36 and 37) and "Las últimas horas por él vividas" (repeated twice, 40). Valis says that "Ismael is scarcely alive to begin with," (53). Moreover, says Valis, to submerge oneself in silence, as Ismael does, is "equivalent to not living" (54). This same voice which refers to Ismael as if he were dead repeatedly transforms itself into unity with Ismael. For the last seven year he has understood that his only purpose is to fulfill the wishes of Julia that he deliver the letters to Lea. It is worth recalling that when Ismael goes to visit Julia at the institution, he finds out she is dead and is handed a package of letters (addressed to Walter) which contains a note inside addressed to Ismael. In the note the now dead Julia asks Ismael to deliver the letters to Lea. This theme of ghosts communicating and intermingling with characters in *Walter* is consistent with *Julia*, where the title character experiences Raphael as a ghost.

In addition, the digging of holes and the Chinese box motif emphasize the dead aspect of the narration. In both novels, Julia nests her boxes and then buries them and other objects. When she prepares the letters for Lea, she "buries" these letters underneath the letter to Ismael asking him to deliver the letters. This letter to Ismael is "buried" underneath Julia's verbal instructions to the nuns to give the packet to "Walter," a "character" who "died" when Julia and Ismael found out he did not exist, except in the form of their very boring cousin, a seminarian. Moix has shrouded all of these messages and messengers, an act that endows them with a phantom-like quality. Most of the characters either become ghosts through death or function as ghosts while they are alive. Even Lea has the elusive quality of a ghost as Ismael searches for her: when Ismael visits Julia's burial site, he thinks he sees her, but then she is gone without a trace. In addition,

Ismael refers to her as an "apparition" after espying her walking in the garden in the middle of the night (33).

In addition to Ismael being a ghost, his body is like that of a dead person. The descriptions of him outside "T" are similar to those of someone rising out of the grave in a horror movie: he has dark circles under his eyes, he smells bad, and he's hung over. In an early section of the novel he describes himself as if he were dead: "Pero ahora nada temo. Nada. Ninguna sensación impuesta en mí por esa mano negra puede despertar otras, porque nada puede ya despertarse en mí" (16). In addition, "T," the setting of Ismael's story, is personified as if it were a dead person: "y a la luz del día aparecerá blanca, más cadavérica que entre la oscuridad nocturna" (19). Ismael is either dead or living as if he were dead. He has no goals for himself, and his only purpose in the last seven years is to relate the messages from Julia to Lea who has also acquired ghostly characteristics.

Just as Moix has blurred distinctions of gender and reality, here she blurs the distinctions between the living and the dead. The living can go about as if they were dead, and the dead can haunt the living as if they were alive. This blurring of the boundary between life and death can be caused by extreme loss. As previously discussed, Ismael has suffered multiple losses, including the very recent discoveries that Julia and María Antonia are dead. Having learned that these two loved ones are dead, Ismael feels that he himself is neither alive nor dead. He is like Joan Didion who writes that during extreme grief she felt she was neither alive nor dead (75). Similarly, Ismael

has crossed over into a place where he is not seen. The only one who sees him is the narrator, who is really Ismael himself.

As "dead" Ismael has two perspectives: he lived the years at the grandmother's house and therefore has a memory of it, and as a ghost he could now be said to possess an omniscient point of view. He can be himself and watch himself. His narrative first-person voice can slip in and out of the voice of the third-person narrator.

Of course, as pointed out, one of Moix's hallmarks is her gift for writing with ambiguity. Because of this ambiguous nature, one cannot discern exactly who the un-identified narrator is or to what extent, if any, this narrator is Ismael. At the same time, however, the unidentified principal narrator is not a neutral, unbiased voice. In fact, the first section of the novel is based on the narrator's unsuccessful attempt to criticize and distance himself (or, possibly herself) from Ismael.

Moix calls into question the very notion of a narrator. Traditionally, the reader has a clearer understanding of who the narrator is, what her/his role is, and how much s/he knows. She blurs the distinction between narrator and characters. Narrators, when they assume critical voices that speak directly about the characters, are often unnamed characters. By writing dialogue without quotation marks, the characters become temporary narrators. The narrative voices and the characters intermingle. At one point, Ismael is a character who watches and interacts with the older cousins, such as Lea, María Antonia, and Ricardo. At another point, he or his ghost may be a narrator who knows María Antonia's most personal and private thoughts and her dreams (208). Interestingly, the voice that narrates María Antonia's past directly to her does not forget

to recall "el sueño intranquilo, las visiones, figuras sin rostro, al pie de la cama al despertar sobresaltada" (208). This passage is reminiscent of the opening pages of *Julia*, in which Julia, while suffering insomnia, sees or imagines shapes without form at the foot of her bed.

The narrative "voices" in *Walter* speak to and about the characters, and sometimes to the reader or possibly to a narrator. One of these voices takes the form of a diary. Ricardo's diary, in contrast to the narrative voice that criticizes Ismael, directly criticizes the parents and the priests who run the school (and therefore criticizes the church). Ricardo's diary is potentially Moix's clearest and most direct criticism of the cousins' parents' generation. The diary is yet another reversal of gender stereotypes, as traditionally girls, not boys, are encouraged to keep them. Stereotypically, one would expect María Antonia, rather than Ricardo, to keep a diary. The diary also endows Ricardo with a voice that is less ambiguous than the other narrative voices. There are no doubts that the contents of the diary represent Ricardo's thoughts. Since these thoughts are written, they are not vulnerable to distortion. While Ismael often tries to deny his role as narrator, Ricardo cannot deny his authorship of this part of the narration. There is a concreteness in the diary that contrasts with the rest of the forms of narration.

While Ismael, and by extension Julia (since Ismael is Julia's alter ego) struggle with the tension between words and silence, Lea does not. Given Lea's central role as character and possibly temporary narrator, it must be acknowledged that *Walter* is just as much about giving a voice to those who have been silenced (women and adolescents in this case) as it is about silencing those voices. There is then, a tension between

representing silence, and telling untold stories. At the same time that Moix brings silence to the forefront, she also tells stories that previously have not been told --that of childhood sexual abuse and that of adolescents struggling to realize themselves in an extremely conservative and controlling adult world that espouses the values of the dictatorship and that is concerned more about appearances than "reality."

Because the *gauche divine* had espoused an aesthetic that set itself apart from the writers of social realism, through Ismael Moix may have tried to portray the conflict that exists between the desire to both reject social realism and to tell a story. Ismael, as does Moix, unsuccessfully resists the temptation to narrate a social reality. Ismael struggles against referents, and, in the context of the social realists, practically avoids referents alltogether. Nevertheless, there is a story both told and untold. Interestingly, just as the protagonist of *Julia* is autobiographically connected to Moix, Ismael is also connected to his author. As the alter ego of the Julia of both novels (Lea, it should be recalled, calls Ismael and Julia "igualitos") Ismael is linked to Moix through Julia. In addition, Ismael has direct links with Moix: they are both writers. Moix, like Ismael, has sustained long periods of silence in which she does not write fiction, such as the one that begins directly after the publication of *Walter*. At the end of *Walter*, Ismael also enters into silence, for fear of repeating himself.

Additionally, Moix links herself to her protagonists through the role of messenger. The writer is a messenger of ideas and thoughts. Julia and Ismael are Lea's messengers. With Julia's letters to Lea in his pocket, Ismael is also a message carrier. He is never able, however, to convey his messages to Lea. This fact may serve as a metaphor for the futility an author writing in the late Franco period might feel: there is

no one to receive the message, for the readership, as discussed in chapter two, is vague and elusive, like a ghost. Lea scorns him for carrying messages. Ismael, despite himself, is also a messenger when he narrates; however, he does not want to be this kind of messenger; he resists putting words together, and resists "reality," much as the *gauche divine* resisted social realism.

While critics have been drawn to the formal problems of *Walter*, it should also be acknowledged that the author approaches a "social realism" even as she casts doubt on the entire notion of reality. It may be impossible to refrain from portraying and commenting upon Spanish culture. Because of the silence motif and the deconstructionist form, it is easy to overlook the fact that *Walter* really does tell a story. The reader plays a central role in reconstructing it, but it is nevertheless a story. As a narration about adolescent angst under Franco, *Walter* does not so neatly accomplish the rejection of social realism that the *gauche divine* often espoused: the narration itself can be understood as a political act because the story conflicts with the images and ideals that constituted official "reality" during the Franco dictatorship.

At the same time, one cannot reduce *Walter* to a criticism of bourgeois Catalan urban society under Franco. In *Walter*, Moix is just as interested in form as she is in content. As David Herzberger points out in reference to the group of novels to which *Walter* belonged, "The complexity of content is rooted unequivocally in complexity of form; the two are interwoven so as to be inseparable" (150). *Walter*, despite its experimental nature, does not constitute a complete rejection of "social realism." As Herzberger says, " . . . contemporary Spanish society continues to form the backdrop for

much of this fiction . . ." (148). María Antonia and Ricardo, for example, directly respond to their specific cultural setting, the former with her political leadership and the latter with his diary. *Walter*, then, is not like *Julia* or Tusquet's *El mismo mar de todos los veranos*, which are novels that could arguably take place in any setting. In *Julia*, for example, the protagonist's inner struggle with sexual abuse and her mother's abandonment is a universal theme. A similar case could by made for Tusquet's novel, where discourse on gender relations is equally universal.

Like the narrative voice, death, and gender, reality is also relative. *Walter* contains many different versions of reality. The grandmother, Uncle Pedro, and Aunt Emilia portray an expectation of what they believe reality should be. The cousins, by contrast, more truly reflect Spanish reality of the 1950s. Through the cousins, as Luis Costa says, "va a quedar reflejada la realidad social de la España de la posguerra" (17). In addition to that of the grandmother and that of the cousins, *Walter* presents yet another "reality," Hollywood, which comes into the novel largely through its association with the mysterious Walter. It appears contradictory to say that Hollywood represents reality, but in the context of the grandmother's post-war beliefs, which the Grandmother, Pedro, and Emilia seemed to have convinced themselves represent reality, who is to say that the grandmother's expectations are more realistic than the fantasy of Hollywood? At least Hollywood's version gives rise to hope, even if that hope is destroyed when the young Ismael realizes Walter does not exist.[3]

If the grandmother's expectation and Walter can be understood as realities, then Albina, half woman, half horse, must also be considered in this light. The passages about her are narrated factually. At no time does the narrator imply that Albina is not real.

Reality, however, is influenced by memory. It must also be acknowledged that the story of Albina is a memory, and that memories are by nature not necessarily accurate. As in *Julia*, memories are often clouded and ambiguous. The Albina memory, however, is more complicated than the memory of rape in *Julia* because the scenes with Albina are not written in an ambiguous manner. Nevertheless, the reader must keep in mind that the narrator is describing a past event, and that in Moix's work, the descriptions of past events do not necessarily adhere to the same facts of reality that a narrator may have described had he described them in the moment the events took place. In light of the fact that Moix has emphasized the role of memory in her work, and much of *Walter* is about Ismael visiting his own memories, one could interpret Albina as a woman who is remembered as a horse. The fact that Ismael was often drunk when he made love with Albina could also have influenced his memory of her.

The other interpretation of the Albina narrative is that it is not memory, but pure invention. As Valis says,

> One may well ask whether Ismael is truly remembering what he tells us, through Faulknerian lapses and Joycian leaps in time and space, or whether he is actually inventing, deforming what he is witnessing. What we can say is that as in a game of ping-pong, in a continual dialectical movement, the narration will vacillate between the past remembered as something absurd and unreal and the past remembered as a real and oppressive entity" (54).

The story of Albina is the former--the past remembered as something absurd and unreal.

The metaphor of film can also be understood as a factor that filters the way the past is narrated. There is a superficiality to the lives of the characters that is like a screen or like film in the sense that film is a thin layer. The adults in the novel are more concerned with appearances than actions. In the context of the metaphor of film, the adults want to keep reality at the level of a thin screen that has nothing behind it. Ricardo's father and the priests, for example, are not interested in Ricardo's inner growth and development as a human being as much as they are in his maintaining the appearance of conformity. The fact that Ricardo's father and the priest engage in stealthy and illegal negotiations demonstrates the extent to which appearances triumph over reality.

Moix counterpoises the film motif with the motif of depth as portrayed by the burial of the Chinese box. The adolescents perceive the adults as concerned only about appearances. As the cousins perceive the hypocrisy of their parents, they are easily swept away from reality and seduced by the fantasy of who they imagine Walter could be. It is extremely difficult for the characters to perceive and acknowledge reality. Julia pursues her quest for reality by digging holes and burying boxes and other trinkets. The act of digging deep into the earth may be understood as her quest for deeper meaning.

Julia's act of digging is related metaphorically to burying the dead. María Antonia is one of the dead at the time of the narration of *Walter*. On a certain level Ismael is also. Even though Maria Antonia is dead at the time of narration, she speaks in first-person (186-187, for example). María Antonia's and Ismael's ghosts, then, are character/narrators, a fact that supports the theme that the difference between life and death is relative, a powerful metaphor of life in dictatorial Spain.

In *Walter*, Moix blurs traditional boundaries between death and life, male and female, silence and words, reality and imagination, and narrator and character. Thematically, the political theme of anarchy (seen through the anarchist grandfather in *Julia*) reveals itself in the form of Lea. In addition, loss permeates this novel: loss of others through death, of self through grief, of fantasy, of humanity, and of presumed innocence.

When studied in the context of *Tiempo de silencio* (1962), *Ritmo lento* (1962), and *Señas de identidad* (1966), it becomes apparent that in terms of style and structure *Walter* is Moix's contribution to the metafictional or self reflexive novel that was developing through the sixties. These novels present a formal, if not thematic, renovation. This section will compare and contrast *Walter* to novels of the 1960s and examine the extent to which Moix has been excluded from literary histories of the period.

Tiempo de silencio, and Carmen Martín Gaite's *Ritmo lento*, as well, moved away from social realism and towards the novel that was more similar to *Walter*. *Tiempo de silencio*'s dialectic structure, multiple narrators, and different points of view represent a break with the social realism of the 1950s and lay the groundwork for Moix's more complicated use of the same in *Walter*. *Walter* contains many more narrators than *Tiempo de silencio*, and Moix's style of transitioning from one narrator to the next is ambiguous so that it is not always clear who is narrating. Moix's style and structure in *Walter* is more experimental, while Martín-Santos's work can be viewed as transitional between social realism and the styles that Juan Goytisolo and Moix later brought to the novel.

In terms of realism, Martín-Santos and Moix differentiate themselves from their literary antecedents. Moix does not discard the dialectical novel, but she does reject the dialectical realism of Martín-Santos, while the latter rejected objective realism. Martín Santos, for example, satirizes objective realism, while Moix emphasizes relativity and the absence of a referent. Moix does not completely reject the goal of portraying reality; rather, she insists on presenting different sides of reality and, through the use of ambiguity and deceitful "reality," questioning the idea of portraying reality while she presents it. In *Walter*, reality is relative-- the difference between life and death, male and female, and fiction and reality itself is relative. Valis emphasizes the questioning of reality: referring to the phrase "Anoche soñé que había regresado a T" in the introductory section of Walter, she says, "the point of view determines whether we judge "real" or not a state of being which, paradoxically, if it is real is a dream" (51). Valis notes that later "the narrator seems even less sure of what he has experienced, as he questions himself about the reality of those seven words" (51).

Reality is so relative in *Walte,* that the term dialectical realism that Ramón Buckley invented to describe *Tiempo de Silencio*, is insufficient to describe it (*Doble Transición*). Still, *Walter* is definitely dialectical (Valis calls it "extraordinarily dialectical" (53)), and it is not without its "realism," the characters in *Walter* struggle with real issues of growing up in a conservative era. Importantly, the feelings of alienation, desperation, anger and hopelessness that her characters experience are based on reality. Formally, *Walter* is an experimental and metafictional novel, and in no way falls into the category of social realism of the 1950s. Nevertheless, thematically, Moix set out to accurately represent her characters and their bourgeois setting. In addition,

Walter leaves open the possibility for the reader to intuit much criticism of Spain and its government. Moix's prose, however experimental, is not free of potential political interpretations, and for this reason her work does not constitute a complete rejection of the ideas of the social realists, who stressed the writer's political role. It must be kept in mind, however, that while the reader may uncover criticism of the Spanish government in *Walter*, to make a political critique was not in any way the purpose of Moix's works as it was the purpose for Martín-Santos and Juan Goytisolo in the novels they wrote between 1962 and 1973.

Tiempo de Silencio and *Ritmo Lento* mark a departure from social realism. Like *Tiempo de Silencio*, in *Ritmo Lento* the references, both to the city of Madrid and to the civil war, are clear. David, the protagonist of *Ritmo Lento*, however, is more introspective than the Pedro of *Tiempo de Silencio*.

David could be seen as one of the more appropriate predecessors to Ismael because he is an outcast and deemed insane for not conforming to bourgeois expectations. Furthermore, like Ismael, he tells his story with the use of letters and flashbacks and without reference to chronological order, he reflects on the nature of story telling, and he is not career-oriented. Moreover, Martín Gaite likens a part of David's house (David's father's room) to something in a Daphne du Maurier novel (*Ritmo*, 74), while Moix connects the house of the entire present-time setting to du Maurier's *Rebecca*.

It should be recalled that in general the *gauche divine* often rejected the styles of Martín-Santos and other non-Catalan writers. Gimferrer, recalls Moix, did not like the Spanish post-war writers (Campbell, 32), and Moix found most of the post-war writers, with the exception of Benet, boring (Campbell, 34). It is not clear whether or not Moix

includes Martín Gaite and Martín-Santos in the group of post-war writers. Gimferrer and Moix mention Matute as the one Spanish post-war writer worthy of reading, but they may have held this view because Matute is Catalan.

Moix does not criticize the realism of post-war novels for being social, but for failing to offer an accurate picture of reality. Speaking of what she termed"*realismo crítico*," she says,

> Esa novela no fue en general mala por ser social, sino porque la mayor parte no logró ofrecer un retrato fiel de la realidad, para lo cual se require mucha imaginación. Pero para juzgarla hay que tener en cuenta las *circunstancias*, y ante eso, yo me callo. (Campbell, 39)

In this quote Moix indirectly states an appreciation for the idea of accurately representing reality: to do so requires exceptional imagination. If the realists were not able to represent reality accurately, who would be able to do so and how? Perhaps the experimental novel would be more appropriate. The other aspect of the previous quote that should be emphasized is the fact that Moix does not reject the idea of a novel's being "social," an idea that is important because it demonstrates that Moix did not believe that the novel had to espouse an art for art's sake ideal, an ideal to which the *gauche divine*, Benet, and others who rejected social realism often aspired. Thematically, Moix maintains many social aspects in her novels, but she couches them in an experimental and non-referential format that the social novel had not yet practiced.

While Moix did not praise the Spanish post-war writers, and Martín-Santos and Martín Gaite are assumed to be included in this group,[4] Moix did not completely reject the ideas of the post-war writers. When Campbell asked her what she learned from the

novelists of critical realism, Moix answered that she learned quite a bit from the lives of the authors of that generation, but not from the literary works they produced (39). In addition, Moix and Martín-Santos share a certain distaste for Galdós. Martín-Santos satirizes Galdós' realism while for Moix, Galdós (and Pardo Bazán) is "*lejano*" (Nichols, Escribir, 104).

Moix does not mention Martín-Santos or Martín Gaite in her interview with Nichols or Campbell; however, she does name some of the authors for whom Martín-Santos had opened the door for a new novelistic style when he published *Tiempo de Silencio*. These authors that Moix mentions in her 1989 interview with Nichols are Juan Benet, in her opinion, the foremost Spanish prose writer, Luis Goytisolo, and Juan Marsé (Nichols, "Escribir" 105). These authors follow Martín-Santos' break with social realism. It is curious that she does not mention Juan Goytisolo; perhaps she saw him as having removed himself from the category of writers she was discussing. It is interesting that given that Benet is from Madrid, Moix esteems him so highly. In her interview with Campbell, she also mentions Guelbenzu, another novelist from Madrid, who published *El Mercurio* at the same time that Moix published *Julia*. ("Infame" 39).[5] If, during the *gauche divine* years, Moix held a particular prejudice against Spanish writers from outside of Catalonia (Gimferrer had cautioned her against Spanish writers), her interviews from the late 1980s and 1990s indicate that she no longer held this prejudice.

Even though Juan Goytisolo is Catalan, Moix does not mention him in her interviews with Campbell and Nichols. Goytisolo had a reputation for writing the social realist novels; however, beginning with *Señas de identidad* his style became closer to the type of novel Moix would write with *Walter*. While *Señas de identidad* is clearly a study

and commentary on history and politics, it's stylistic separation from social realism and connection to a more postmodern novel is clear. *Señas* can be read as a bildungsroman novel; however, Goytisolo strips the identity of his protagonist (Sobejano, "Teoría," 22) in a way that could be understood, if not thematically then formally, as an antibildungsroman, like *Walter*. The antibildungsroman motif, when applied formally, is part of the transition from the social novel to the metafictional novel or, as Gonzalo Sobejano calls it, the "escriptiva" novel that begins about 1973 (Sobejano, 353).

The ideals of the writers of the *gauche divine* and those of Goytisolo often intersected. Bradley Epps says that Goytisolo, especially in his later works, privileges the idea that writing should constitute freedom (202). As studied in chapters one and two, the *gauche divine* often placed emphasis on freedom as well, and the theme appears in Moix's first two novels. One might recall Don Julio's exclamation that the writer must be free. *Gauche divine* leader Gimferrer called Goytisolo's *Reivindicación del conde don Julián* "the most radically subversive masterpiece" of Spanish literature (Gimferrer, 22). Thus, while Moix does not mention Juan Goytisolo in her interviews with Nichols and Campbell, his works, especially beginning with *Señas de identidad*, can not have been far from her mind: he explored questions of freedom and was admired by Gimferrer, who, in the early years, introduced Moix to much of the literature she read.

In *Señas de identidad*, Goytisolo employs many of the formal techniques that Moix would soon use in *Walter*: various points of view, interior monologue, the absence of linear progression, flashbacks, stream of consciousness, and shifts in place as well as time. As Gonzalo Sobejano acknowledges, Goytisolo employs "autodialogue" when the protagonist Álvaro addresses himself ("Novela," 358). Moix constructs a more complex

"autodialogue:" the narrator separates himself from Ismael, as if he were a different character and speaks of Ismael in the third person. While *Señas's* Álvaro addresses himself, Ismael, as argued earlier in this chapter, splits off from himself and then speaks about and to himself as if he were speaking to and about a separate person.

Extremely long paragraphs in *Walter* and *Señas* also distinguish these novels from more traditional ones. In its entirety, in fact, *Walter* consists of only a few paragraphs. The introductory paragraph to *Señas de identidad* consists of about two pages of one long quote in first-person plural with no periods or other punctuation. The following paragraph informs us that-- in spite of the fact that this introduction is only one quote-- it contains many voices. In *Walter*, Moix experiments with punctuation in a similar way in that she does not use quotation marks to demarcate quotes and she does not specify which character is speaking. In *Walter*, the absence of quotation marks serves to blur the difference between the narrator and the characters in dialogue, as well as to question the traditional form of the text. In *Señas de identidad*, the absence of punctuation serves to confuse the voices that talk about Álvaro in the opening paragraph. The absence of punctuation immediately signals to the reader that the author is experimenting with style, and therefore attempting a clear break with social realism.

In a style that links *Señas de Identidad* to the social realist novel, Goytisolo includes many geographical details of Barcelona and the surrounding area, a trait that is virtually absent in *Walter*. Moix may have eliminated physical descriptions of the city in order to differentiate herself more clearly from Goytisolo and others who, at least thematically, had not fully differentiated themselves from the social realists. She

eliminates virtually all references to geographical, political, and economic details, while Goytisolo, in his much more politically committed approach, emphasizes them.

The idea of writing non-referential novels was becoming increasingly appealing to authors writing after the publication of *Tiempo de Silencio*, but Moix is the first to fully accomplish this goal. She is able to eliminate references without writing a purely apolitical or asocial novel. *Señas de identidad* is clearly a political critique, while *Walter*'s potential political and social critiques are indirect, require the reader's interpretation, and are secondary to form. In Moix's work, to use Hayden White's terminology, form is content in itself.

Despite the fact that Moix appears to have understood herself as doing something quite different from what Goytisolo did in *Señas*, thematically, Moix's novels do not fully differentiate themselves from the kind of novel Goytisolo was writing. Goytisolo's and Moix's characters, for example, come from the same background--they are bourgeois and Catalan. Álvaro, Ismael, and Julia, suffer a night of insomnia, which constitutes the real time of each novel, while the other periods of time are covered with flashbacks. Both criticize the stagnation of Spain and its inability to move forward. Moix, by writing an anti-bildungsroman and a deconstructionist novel, leaves open the idea that the country is actually moving backwards.

Walter tends to be excluded from the literary histories of the period to which it belongs. Bradley Epps, Gonzalo Sobejano, and David Herzberger have characterized and summarized the evolution of the novel in Spain during the period that starts with *Tiempo de Silencio* and (though usually not recognized) *Ritmo Lento* and ends with the novels of

the mid to late 1970s. In his 1983 article, "Teoría de la novela en la novela española última," Sobejano analyzes the way the novels of Juan Goytisolo, Martín-Santos, Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio and Benet contain theory on the novel. Sobejano then makes a list of other novelists who write about theory within the novel. This list spans from 1972 to 1982 and includes Torrente Ballestar, Carmen Martín Gaite, José María Vaz de Soto, Germán Sánchez Espeso, Carlos Rojas and Juan García Hortelano (29).

Moix, not surprisingly given her limited readership, is not mentioned in Sobejano's list. Nevertheless, the introductory section to *Walter* is equally concerned with the theory of the novel. Reality is personified as deceitful, and the narrator vows not to succumb to the temptations of describing it. "No habrá historia," says the narrator (9). In addition, the narrator likens the relationship between reality and the narrator to a game that is not winnable (12). The purpose of this first section of *Walter*, which details the narrator's struggle against the temptation to write, can be understood as a section on theory, for there are not yet any identifiable characters or places introduced. This section is about what it means or does not mean to write a story and about the role of reality in the story. *Walter* is omitted from Sobejano's article because *Walter*, despite being well received, was never widely read or discussed. This is so probably because Moix was young and a woman when she published the novel, because of it's non-referentiality, and because *Walter* is not easily categorized.

Again in 1986 Sobejano omits Moix from his discussion of the contemporary novel that is "un texto creativo autónomo" (352). Sobejano specifically names at least 16 authors who have aspired in some way towards a more creatively autonomous text, but Moix, who is arguably the first to fully achieve this goal, is not mentioned by name. In

this article Sobejano focuses on the novels of "renovación formal" from 1962 to 1973 (353). These novels, he says, contain the roots of the "metanovela en España" (353). *Walter* could be said to mark the end of the formal renovation or the beginning of the metanovel. In either case, however, the inclusion of *Walter* would have made Sobejano's discussion of this period more complete.

Many of the descriptions that Sobejano makes of the novels during this period can be readily applied to *Walter*. For example, he says of the protagonists, "el individuo lucha con su identidad insuficiente, residual o cambiante, en un vaivén de afuera" (354), which describes Ismael perfectly. In addition, says Sobejano, the protagonists are complex and they experience inner trauma (like Ismael). The passion for language, says Sobejano, brings with it a criticism of Spanish and literary clichés. Moix's reference to *Rebecca* fits this description. As mentioned, Masoliver Ródenas and Marsé have praised Moix's innovative use of the Spanish language. Sobejano also says that the authors of this period express "una crítica irónica de la capacidad de engaño del lenguaje," (354) a topic which Moix addresses directly in *Walter*. Fragmented time and searches without progress, says Sobejano, are also characteristics that mark these novels, and these qualities mark *Walter* as well. In spite of the fact that the novel in general was moving away from social realism, Moix in achieving the goal had, ironically, achieved too much, too quickly, for contemporary critics.

Sobejano observes that these are novels of disillusion ("Novela" 355), which describes *Walter* perfectly. Ismael, for example, is disillusioned on several levels. Metafictionally, he is disillusioned because he has not refrained from story telling as he had vowed; moreover, he is doomed to repeat himself. In addition, Sobejano mentions

the tension between the self and the world that is never resolved, or resolved only by failure, escape, or insanity (355), a key characteristic of all of Moix's works.

Although Sobejano doesn't mention Moix or the other novelists of the *gauche divine* in his 1986 article, he does refer to the *novísimos*, the poetic group to which Moix belonged. Formal renovation aspired to a novel that was in some ways like the poetry of the *novísimos*, in the sense of being "*culturalista*" (Sobejano "Novela" 355). For example, says Sobejano, the authors of formal renovation exhibit a "claro menosprecio de los ingenios legos y las plumas espontáneas," ("Novela" 355) terms that are applicable to the phrase Moix uses to begin *Walter*, "anoche soñé que había regresado a T," a mocking reference that Moix makes to *Rebecca*. Interestingly Martín Gaite also refers to the novels of du Maurier in *Ritmo Lento* (74), a novel that Sobejano acknowledges plays a key role in anticipating the transition from the novel of social realism to the metanovel that begins, he says, in 1973 ("Novela" 360).

As well as representing the kind of novel Sobejano discusses, *Walter* would enter well into Epps' discussion of the novel that begins with *Tiempo de Silencio* and ends in the mid 1970s. These novels "wreak havoc on the reality, idea, and ideal of realism." In addition, to different degrees, each of these novels "twists, blurs, stretches, smashes, or scoffs at mimetic representation, communicability, and preferentiality. Language, turned into its own object becomes opaque, restive, polyvalent, and at times even purposeless" (193). Although this description is eminently applicable to *Walter*, once again, as in the case of Sobejano, Moix's novel is not contained in the critic's selection of exemplary works.

Referring to Juan Goytisolo, Torrente Ballester, Benet, and Sánchez Ferlosio, Epps says that the novels of this period do not value clarity. This writer has shown that lack of clarity, or ambiguity, is a hallmark of *Julia* and *Walter*. What, for example, really happens when the title character of *Julia* is sexually assaulted? What is the nature of Albina's "horseness?" How does Moix expect the reader to understand the role of a personified equine character in a novel in which all the other characters are human? Does Ismael narrate *Walter*?

Epps' metaphor for reality is the mirror, which, he says, was never perfect, but is consciously broken by several of the novelists writing after *Tiempo de Silencio* and *Ritmo Lento* and even by Sánchez Ferlosio in the 1950s:

> Mirroring Spanish society in the ever-receding wake of the Civil War, Sánchez Ferlosio shows how partial and inadequate the mirror is--and how poetic, and critically appealing, partiality and inadequacy can be. If there were no trouble with the mirror, there might be very little to see. (199)

Mercé Rodoreda and Valle-Inclán also directly refer to mirrors that are broken or distorted. Epps points out that the title of Rodoreda's *Mirall trencat* is appropriate because "the modern doctrine of realist reflection has been wedded to the bourgeoisie."

Moix, as well, is aware of the "mirror" as a metaphor for realism. In the introductory section to *Walter* she says that reality "quiere que le cuente, que le describa a esa misteriosa y supuesta sustituta para poder establecer comparaciones y seguir diciéndose a sí misma, como contemplándose en el *espejo* de su verdad: soy la más perfecta, la más completa, la más poderosa e irresistible" (11, italics added). Here Moix makes a reference to the wicked queen in the fairy tale "Snow White" who seeks to be

reassured by her mirror that she, not her rival, is the most beautiful. With *Walter*, Moix seems to suggest that no such faithful and perfect mirror exists for the novelist, but that the novelist cannot completely reject reality, because "she" is imposing and insists on being reckoned with. Thus, some kind of mirror will have to do, even if it is merely a wicked accomplice to the writer's desires.

While Epps fails to mention Moix, he also indirectly answers why: she is a woman. Men, he says, dominated the dialogue about the novel. The few Spanish women, he says,

> who did manage to figure in critical overviews and editorial promotions--Carmen Laforet, Ana María Matute, Carmen Martín Gaite--were generally relegated to particular positions that figure only fitfully, if at all, in the male-dominated cultural debates of the day. For the questioning of the text in Spain is carried out most resoundingly by such men as Juan Goytisolo, Torrente Ballester, and Benet. (201)

Joan Lippman Brown has also commented that had it not been written by a woman, *Ritmo Lento* would have been consistently recognized as equally important as *Tiempo de Silencio* (*Secrets*, 102). If the well established Martín Gaite has not been recognized for her role in questioning the text, then one would expect Moix, who was considered extremely young when she published *Walter*, to receive even less attention for the same reason.

In his analysis of he authors who include novelistic theory in the novel itself, Sobejano analyzes works by Martín-Santos, Juan and Luis Goytisolo, and Juan Benet

("Teoría"). He also mentions other authors who use theoretical thinking in their novels: Gonzalo Torrente Ballester, Carmen Martín Gaite, José María Vaz de Soto, Germán Sánchez Espeso, Carlos Rojas, and Juan García Hortelano ("Teoría" 29). Moix published *Walter* during the same years that the aforementioned authors published their novels, but, despite the fact that the introductory section of *Walter* is about the theory of the novel, Moix is not mentioned in Sobejano's list. Sometimes the narrator appears to comment specifically on the theory of the novel: the narrator says "Es bella a veces la voz, pretende estar en posesión de la verdad, de la justicia, de la belleza, y algunos no resisten la tenptación de expresarla por escrito, o de palabra" (38). Moix could be commenting on the writers of social realism who, she implies, believed that their works should possess and impart truth and justice.

In general, the novels of the 1960 and 1970s, as Gonzalo Sobejano and other have noted, question the relationship between fiction and reality ("Novela*"* 353). The narrator of *Walter* comments directly on this idea: "la representación alcanza una tal calidad que uno llega a creérsela y la confunde con la realidad, a la que a veces incluso supera" (39). The realists had believed it was possible to accurately represent reality, but Moix seems to say that that is not possible and that the novelist and reader are prone to confusing the two. Ismael criticizes himself for wanting to represent reality, "Yo no era esa voz, esa perra caliente que necesita acercarse a la realidad, frotarse contra el mundo . . ." (40). One of Moix's major motifs has been an analysis of the difference, or lack thereof, between fiction and reality; however, when analyzing this group of novels, Sobejano, as well as Bradley Epps, omits Moix entirely.

Critics who focus on Moix's work have commented on the latter's ability to analyze the similarity and difference between reality and language. Valis, for example, uses this topic in the title of her article on *Walter*: "Reality and Language in Ana María Moix's *Walter, ¿por qué te fuiste?*" Moreover, the entire introductory section of *Walter* is dedicated to the narrator's monologue about deceptive "reality," which has been personified to the status of a character. While many authors may have emphasized the difference between reality and fiction, Moix sometimes emphasizes the difficulty in distinguishing between the two. For example, the narrator says that either Ismael has returned to "T" or he has only dreamed he has done so (37). Moreover, as Valis points out, Moix seems to be saying that "language, like reality itself, is a trap" (55) because it brings no relief to the writer. Thus, according to Moix, reality and language may be the same, but not because language can objectively express reality in narrative portrait, as the writers of objective realism believed, but because language and reality share inherent common characteristics and because reality is shaped by language. Reality is, in effect, dependent upon, or a function of, language, as opposed to the reverse.

Moix, in interviews, in the preface to "Poética," and in her first two novels, questions the difference between fiction and reality. Juan Goytisolo (and others such as Benet and Torrente) also explores the relationship between fiction and reality. Epps analyzes how the written word is and is not real and then goes on to say that literature may have the effect of commenting upon reality even when that is not its goal:

> Torrente and Goytisolo recognize that the transformative potential of the word is central to literature and that if it does not quite translate into the

> transformation of the world, that does not mean that the world is in no way implicated. The recognition that the world resists transformation or that rhetorical transformation is not *real*, or that the reality of rhetorical transformation is never the only reality, that there is a gap, a difference, may be the most worldly thing that these wordy endeavors accomplish. (210)

Epps does not mention Moix in his article, but the latter presents a similar attitude in *Walter*: the purpose of the novel is patently artistic, but at the same time, fiction informs our understanding of reality, and even when the novel emphasizes the artistic, the literary over the referential, the world (or reality) may be implicated. The *gauche divine* did not generally endorse the idea that literature should have transformative potential; nevertheless, *Walter* is not without its commentary on the social context. Moix was definitely interested in testing the difference between reality and fiction. Moreover, she explores the idea of rhetorical transformation, even if she seems to conclude in *Walter* that there is not one, that the writer is doomed to repeat himself/herself.

Sobejano and Epps focus largely on the novels before 1974 or the novels that have followed upon the heels of social realism, but not quite yet become metafictional. Since Sobejano and Epps do not mention Moix's works, one would expect critics writing about the novel after 1973 to include her, but again, she is overlooked. In his article on metafiction and the contemporary Spanish novel, David Herzberger mentions Luis Goytisolo, Terenci Moix, Jesús Torbado, José María Guelbenzu and Esther Tusquets, but not Ana María Moix.

Herzberger, nonetheless, repeatedly describes characteristics of the metafictional novel that apply to *Walter*. For example, he says "In its most common form in contemporary Spain, the metafictional novel is structured around a character who is a novelist in the process of writing a novel" (149). Ismael is the "novelist" of *Walter*. Of course, one could argue that Ismael is a novelist who is trying *not* to write a novel, but this factor only enhances *Walter's* metafictional quality: the character who tells a story even though he has vowed and continues to vow not to do so is representative of the author who is commenting on the formal aspects of constructing a novel. Moix attempts an "un-writing" of the novel, for her protagonist does not develop or progress as he tries in vain not to write.

Herzberger further describes the metafictional novel: "Also open to the probing self-awareness of the narrative are a panoply of technical and stylistic elements that range from novelistic structure, to the text within the text" (149). *Walter*'s non-chronological structure composed largely of flashbacks is one of its stylistic elements. There are also texts within the text, as the frame story is Ismael's struggle with words, while the inner stories consists of Ismael's long pause at the gate of "T" and flashbacks. Representative of the text's circularity is Ismael's story within a story within a story that he tells Lea:

> la de un escritor que cuenta a su amante una historia que va a escribir: la de un escritor que cuenta a su amante una historia por escribir en la que un escritor abandona a la amante porque ella le dice que es él incapaz de escribirla porque es incapaz de abandonarla aunque le diga que es incapaz de escribir la historia en la que lo abandona. (241)

The above story within a story is further enclosed within the story of Ismael and Lea, who, at the time of the telling of the story, have been acting as lovers.

Herzberger, lastly, includes "the role of the reader" in his list of technical and stylistic elements that make up the metafictional novel (149). The role of the reader in Moix's works is central: the reader must decide what to make of the many ambiguous passages and the reader must help piece together the story, which is not told chronologically.

Herzberger goes on to say that "in order for contemporary metafiction to be recognized as more than a literary sport and to survive the charges of trendiness, it must transcend mere formal experimentation" (149). In other words, content is important, and *Walter*, again, fits the description of the metafictional novel that is more than trendy, for *Walter*'s content is as complex as its form. The stories of María Antonia and Ricardo, for example, are essential content. María Antonia renounces the religion of her grandmother and becomes a politically active liberal while Ricardo rebels against the priests that run his school.

Given the fact that *Walter* clearly fits the descriptions of the metafictional novel that Herzberger puts forth, one may ask again why his article does not mention Moix. Certainly the previous answers apply: because she was young and a woman at a time when males dominated the discussion of the evolution of the novel. In addition, Herzberger indirectly answers the question: "the kind of theoretical speculation that emerges from these works defies categorization, and lends support to the notion of a so-called new novel only to the extent that there is unity in diversity" (151). *Walter*, then, is difficult to categorize and thus may not fit neatly into the literary histories.

Another reasons exists as to why Epps, Sobejano, and Herzberger, among others, have overlooked Moix. She was not widely read and studied specifically because she wrote the novel practically without a referent. While novelists talked about eliminating references, Moix was the one to actually accomplish this goal, but possibly at the expense of alienating readers who still desired a referent. Overall, there are various reasons that the quantity of Moix's readership doesn't correspond to the quality of her work, but the lack of immediate referents made be one of them.

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1. The 1973 edition of *Walter*, which has been heavily edited, contains this scene from Julia, but as published it is not word-for-word.

2. "...Pero con todo esto, me parece que el traducir de una lengua en otra, como no sea de las reinas de las lenguas, griega y latina, es como quien mira los tapices flamencos por el revés; ..." Quijote, II, chapter 62.

3. To the extent that film gave cause for hope, or at least fantasy, it was important to writers of the fifties and sixties. To readers and the general public, film was an escape from the strictures of the dictatorship.

4. In *Infame turba* and Nichols's *Escribir*, Moix does not mention Martín Santos. She does, however, mention "critical realism," the genre to which Martín-Santos presumably belonged.

5. One could well read *El Mercurio* as a Madrilenian experiement similar to *Walter*.

Chapter Five

Conclusion: *Walter's* Relevance Today

Thematically and more importantly, formally, Moix wrote *Walter* with a keen sense of the direction of the new novel. Her participation in the *gauche divine* contributed to her sense of how the novel should be written. Thematically, she was ahead of her time in terms of the politics of sex and gender. As seen in Chapter Four, Moix's particular way of examining patriarchy is to study the manner in which it causes both sexes to suffer. The feminist movement that arose in the 1960s focused on inequality, as if patriarchy were a system in which men benefited and harmed women. And while no one would deny that men have profited economically and otherwise from patriarchy, during the sixties and seventies few if any activists seriously entertained the idea that patriarchy could cause men as well as women to suffer psychologically. In the late 1980s Benjamin argued that systems of domination harm both sexes, and in 1990, David Gilmore wrote about the pressure that patriarchy places on men in particular. Few Spanish novelists, however, were examining the effects of patriarchy on both sexes in the early 1970s when Moix wrote *Walter*.

As the feminist movement has evolved to concern itself more with the human condition in general and issues that affect both sexes such as sexual orientation, the most relevant authors will portray the experiences of men and women in a way that does not necessarily emphasize one sex over the other and that depicts how the two sexes are more similar than they are different. They will do so, as does Moix, without denying or minimizing the reality of sexism and homophobia. Moix addressed gender politics in this manner at a time when most people still thought of the system as one in which only

women suffered. Moix, however, shows how her male characters suffer substantially in a context of rigid gender expectations.

Kingery, having written one of the first book-length studies of Moix's works, has has largely argued that Moix's fiction subverts feminism. As seen in Chapter Two, others, such as Soufas, have stressed the non-feminist characteristics of Julia, such as weakness and passivity. This writer reads the two novels without interpreting any subversion of feminism or arguing that Julia's character is weak and therefore undermines feminism. One must consider the fact that Moix, who is clearly a feminist in her journalistic writings, did not see herself obligated to send any message, feminist or otherwise, in her fiction. If she refrains from sending a feminist message, then, she does so not to subvert feminism, but to protect her aesthetic freedom.

Many have asked why Moix's female characters do not narrate, and as seen in previous chapters there are many formal answers to this question that do not imply that Moix wanted to silence them. A "feminist" text, for example, does not necessarily require a female narrator or that the protagonist tell her own story. A feminist text will evince a awareness of gender, regardless of the narrator's gender. In addition, since feminism has broadened to examine the ways patriarchal systems can harm both men and women, a contemporary "feminist" text will examine the lives of both sexes. As shown in this dissertation, all of Moix's characters suffer for reasons at least partially related to sex and gender. Ismael, for example, suffers greatly, and arguably more than Julia, because Julia has ended her suffering, but Ismael, living as if he were dead, endures death in life.

Kingery's reading clearly concludes with the argument that Moix's works subvert feminism:

> one must still admit that the complete destruction of female (but not male) characters, the use of negative women (but not men) to represent the Regime's oppression, and the use of varied male (but not female) narrators undermine feminism. Each of these techniques could have been applied in a non-gender-specific manner so as to permit a general social criticism while also affirming equal possibilities for men and women. (229)

It is difficult to argue that Lea is destroyed while Ismael is not, that Maite suffers more than Ricardo, or that, in terms of representing the Regime's oppression and hypocrisy, the grandmother is a more negative character than Ricardo's father. Moix's characters are too complex to draw such conclusions. One must also keep in mind that the first character to be "destroyed" in *Julia* and *Walter* is male-- Rafael undergoes extreme headaches and then dies young.

Even if one agrees, however, that Moix's female characters suffer more than the male ones and that the male narrators undermine feminism, the conclusion that Moix could have written in a more gender-neutral way so as to send a general social criticism contradicts the aesthetic of the *gauche divine*. Moix's primary goal was aesthetic, not political. Moix had read many "politically correct" novels that she considered to be of poor literary quality, and she would not sacrifice aesthetics to politics.

Even as many writers were questioning the idea that the novel should play a politically critical role, the *gauche divine's* position on aesthetic freedom may have seemed too extreme. The absence of obvious social criticism in Moix's works reflects

the ideals of the *gauche divine*, which valued the writer's aesthetic freedom over any possible political obligations. The *gauche divine*, however, contributed to Moix's intellectual formation so that she would be the kind of scholar who would join Martín-Santos in writing one of the few works that were able to address the problem of the novel as a genre.

The only political messages in Moix's works are so extremely nuanced that they are left to the readers' interpretation. The reader perceives the difference, for example, between the cousins' views on poverty and the grandmother's, but this factor does not necessarily constitute a message or criticism. The potential message of *Walter*, for example, is not so much a message as a recognition that the true sexual and emotional lives of the bourgeois stand in great contrast to the rigid expectations of conservative Spain.

Moix did not believe she was obligated to provide a social criticism in her novels; nevertheless, simply to portray the reality of the adolescent bourgeois lives and the hypocritical expectations of the parents, constitutes a form of criticism. The only way to refrain from criticism would be to portray the adolescents as emotionally healthy young people who thrived under the dictatorship, which was the message that the dictatorship tried to send.

Moix is able to write a formally innovative and complex novel without completely removing her works from their political and social context. She falls in line with the ideas of the *gauche divine*, which shunned the idea that the writer is obligated to send a political message, but at the same time she is not apolitical. As seen, the

characters who don't conform to social and political expectations suffer: not allowed to date men, Víctor becomes a victimizer; having written in his diary about the hypocrisy of his parents and the priests, Ricardo is beaten and brain-washed, Julia is depressed to the point of suicide; Ismael rejects a stable job and lives like a ghost, etc.

In addition to maintaining some roots in the political and social context of her time, Moix maintains a connection with the small tradition of Spanish women writers that began with Laforet. Even when Moix seemingly breaks with this tradition, by, for example, employing a third-person narration (in *Julia*) where one might have expected the more traditional first-person narration that Moix's female predecessors had used, this formal decision can be seen as one that aimed at renovating the tradition rather than rejecting it. In *Julia*, for example, even though Moix chooses third-person narration for Julia's story, she preserves the title character's point of view.

Moix takes the themes of the Spanish women writers and pushes them to extremes. Matute, for example, had addressed the emotional loss of innocence in early adolescence, while Moix's characters are physically forced to lose their innocence during childhood. Martín Gaite's Natalia is intellectually drawn to her teacher while Julia obsesses about living with her professor. Both Matute and Martín Gaite had dealt with the contrast between on the one hand, the rigid social expectations of Franco's Spain and on the other, the way adolescents and young adults really lived, but Moix makes that contrast even greater. In *Walter*, for example, there is no common ground between the expectations of the grandmother and the views and actions of her grandchildren. Moreover, as adults, many of the cousins, such as Lea, María Antonia, and Ismael, have completely rejected the values of their grandmother.

In addition to Moix's ability to portray the adolescent and adult suffering that results from growing up during the Franco regime, she is particularly skilled at portraying the extreme sense of loss and grief that pervades *Julia* and *Walter*. The grief is so heavy that the characters are not fully alive human beings. Julia, for example, feels that rather than living her life she is watching herself on the screen. Ismael moves in a world of ghosts and is ghost-like himself. Whereas women characters had often been silenced and thinned out in the traditional novel, in *Walter*, this silencing applies to both genders. Such is the nature of life under a patriarchal regime, the novels seem to say. In the tradition of Spanish women writers, such vulnerable and profound grief had not been so sensitively expressed since *La Plaza del Diamante*, and even then, the nature of that grief was based largely on the lack of physical necessities, whereas in Moix's works the emphasis is on psychological grief.

Moix maintains and transforms the thematic traditions of Spanish women writers, but her most important literary contribution is to the formal aspects of the novel. For example, *Walter* is extremely dialectic, the shifting between narrators and speakers is often purposely confusing, the progression is non-linear, changes in scene and time are not clearly marked, a confusion and fusion exists between the narrator and protagonist, the inaction of present time contrasts with the voyage into the past, and *Walter* does not want to be narrated, but nevertheless is.

Moix uses these techniques to question the portrayal of reality in fiction. The dialectic quality emphasizes different realities, the shifting of narrators serves to underscore that reality is subject to point of view, and the fluctuations in time and unmarked changes in scene emphasize the fact this tale relies on memory, which is

blurry, or possibly completely false. In addition to these techniques that question the portrayal of reality, the narrator has said that reality, especially as in the form of words, is false and deceitful.

The metafictional aspect of *Walter* also stands out. Moix criticizes the act of writing as she writes. She questions the use of words to portray reality and she makes clear her rejection of the post-war novel. As Bush observed, in *Walter* she even seems to refer back to *Julia* to state that her formal objectives are different now. *Walter* asks what kind of novel is relevant at that point in the history of the Spanish novel. Realism is clearly not the answer, but in some ways she seems to say that the relevant novel does not exist, because the writer is doomed to repeat herself, to become trapped in the story, as is Ismael. Moreover, she humbles and even humiliates the writer: Ismael, the narrator and a failed poet, is a mute circus clown who, in his act, is abused and killed. The narrator ironically emphasizes this aspect of Ismael by frequently referring to him as the "Great Yeibo."

The subtle conclusion that the relevant novel does not exist may be one of the factors that keeps Moix's readership small and her novels excluded from literary histories. The humbling of Ismael could be seen as a commentary one the role of the writer while Franco was still alive: because of censorship and the undefined readership, the writer was silenced and invisible. It would be foolish to think that a writer living in Spain could actually accomplish something meaningful that would be read by many. The writer, rather, is an abused clown.

While Moix was contributing to the formal renovation of the novel, the readership of Spanish novel was changing as well. Ayala argues that readership was undefined in

the Franco era, and while this is largely true in Moix's case, she could rely on the small *gauche divine* to read her novels. Members of the *gauche divine*, however, were not necessarily the ideal readers: they thought of Moix as a little sister and viewed her works as evidence of her potential, rather than the finished products they were. Tusquets and Marsé, for example, did not read *Walter* as a novel that would be difficult to improve upon or that would influence other novels.

Aside from the *gauche divine*, it is not clear who Moix's readership has been. Some have thought of her mainly as a poet, or at best as a writer who was not integrated into the corpus of writers who dominated the discourse about the novel. Moix has never enjoyed the broad readership of Laforet, Rodoreda, Matute, or the more contemporary Tusquets. Batlló argues that readers were not ready for *Julia* because it expresses extreme weakness and vulnerability. Spanish high school students, however, have been required to read *Julia*. Translations of Moix's works broadened her readership: Jones translated *Virtudes Peligrosas* in 1997, and Kingery translated *Julia* into English in 2004. Ironically, *Walter*, Moix's most accomplished work, has yet to see translation. The difficulty in defining Moix's readership, or the fact that her readership fluctuates, should not indicate that her novels lack literary value.

One reason her readership is undefined and small is that *Walter's* referents aren't directly connected to the social context of the moment. The referents are connected by metaphor, which depends on the reader's interpretation. Many writers were promoting the idea of the novel without a referent, but Moix, even as she does not avoid all referents, comes closest to writing it.[1] Martin-Santos, undoubtedly one of the most important writers of the time and the one who initiated the transition towards privileging

language over the referent, did not privilge language over the referent to the level that Moix does in *Walter*. *Volverás a Región* approximated the anti-referential novel more than Martín-Santos and his followers, but not as close as *Walter*.

Moix actually accomplished the independent work of art, but the reason she has limited readership might be exactly because *Walter* lacks the referents that readers often desire. This factor would explain why so few read *Walter*, her ultimate creation. It would also explain why a non-Spaniard, Julio Cortázar, appreciated *Walter* immediately: as a Hispanic-American he did not have the same desire to read works that referred to the political context in Spain.

Moix is recognized as a fine writer, but not read. One could consider her work a cult product because interest in her work surges and fades. The lack of readership and the sporadic interest in her work, however, should not indicate an artistic judgment. Her skill at portraying the inner conflicts that have arisen from adolescence is exceptional, but more remarkable is her ability to portray angst and grief in a formally innovative and complex novel.

Moix's works, especially *Walter*, may only recently be arriving at the point in which they are perfectly relevant for today's reader and no longer too far ahead of their time. The lack of referents that date the novel is one factor that makes it relevant today. Moreover, after the popularity of Lucía Etxebarría's and José Ángel Mañas's novels, readers cannot possibly be shocked by the content of *Walter*, as they may have been in the early 1970s when Franco was still alive. Ironically, a novel from 1973 may be more relevant now than when it was when published. If Etxebarría's and Mañas's novels are relevant today, then *Walter*, which is far more complex formally, certainly is as well.

1. Even Moix includes some referents: in *Walter*, for example, the Catholic school, the university, Franco, different styles of politics, etc come into play.

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