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***La chica rara: Witness to Transgression in the Fiction of Spanish
Women Writers 1958-2003***

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Dedication

In loving memory of my mother Joann Ochoa

“y la felicidad que me invadía en el sueño no radicaba
sólo en poderle contar cosas de Nueva York a mi madre y en
tener la certeza de que ella, aun después de muerta, me oía”

---*De su ventana a la mía*, Carmen Martín Gaite

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***La chica rara: Witness to Transgression in the Fiction of Spanish
Women Writers 1958-2003***

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The last twenty years marks a considerable increase in the scholarship of the fiction of Spanish women writers. After Franco's death in 1975, Spanish women gained increasing freedom to write of their experiences of life under a dictatorship. In this study, I examine how Carmen Martín Gaite, Concha Alós, Carme Riera, Adelaida García Morales, and Luisa Castro treat the topics of family, space, and writing. The novels and short stories of these women writers span the last half of the twentieth century and trace female subjectivity and Spanish women's unique perspectives on feminism.

In Chapter One, I show how the selected authors re-write the traditional images of the family to displace masculine authority. The family is the building block of patriarchal society and Spanish women writers reconstruct the family to dismantle Francoist ideology. The relationships between mothers and daughters, in Concha Alós's

Los cien pájaros (1962) and Luisa Castro's *Viajes con mi padre* (2003), is a source of empowerment for the young female characters who look to their mothers as models of independence. Incest, in Alós's *Argeo ha muerto, supongo* (1985) and García Morales's *El Sur* (1985) and *La tía Águeda* (1995), is an example of familial dysfunction that Spanish women writers expose. Finally Riera, Martín Gaite and Castro celebrate their regional culture to challenge Francoist attempt to erase Catalan and Galician identities.

Chapter Two discusses the authors' examination of space and the techniques women use to appropriate space for themselves within the home and in public. Martín Gaite's *El cuarto de atrás* (1978) is one of the most outstanding explorations of space in twentieth-century Spanish literature. In Martín Gaite's *Entre visillos* (1958) and Alós's *Los cien pájaros* (1963) the reader sees how young female protagonists enter prohibited parts of the home, such as the father's library, or neighborhoods to test the limits of family and societal behavior codes.

In Chapter Three I explore the transgressive function of women's writing of and during the Franco dictatorship. I use the term *anti-novela rosa* to refer to the prose of Spanish women writers that do not offer neat solutions to the reader. Unlike the *novela rosa* that assures its reading audience of a 'final feliz' the work of Carmen Martín Gaite, Luisa Castro, and Carme Riera purposely omit conclusions that define the characters' futures. These conclusions function to counter-narrate Francoist strictures of female comportment.

Spanish women writers have successfully challenged patriarchal society to voice their experiences and perspectives. Their fiction addresses the undercurrent of the Franco era to reveal 'unspoken' topics including incest, violence, and drug use. In the late

twentieth century and early twenty-first century, Spanish women writers articulate women's issues with courageous honesty. They have gained strong literary voices in the fiction of Spain.

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Introduction: *La chica rara*

It is necessary to destroy and rebuild the entire false picture
of the world.

M.M. Bakhtin *The Dialogic Imagination*

Cuando una mujer escribe se convierte en una Judith armada
de pluma y la pluma puede ser una arma tan peligrosa como una
espada.

Aurora López and María Ángeles Pastor
Crítica y ficción literaria: mujeres españolas contemporáneas

With the hindsight that scholars have of the twentieth century, this project examines how Carmen Martín Gaite (1925-2000), Concha Alós (1928-), Carme Riera (1948-), Adelaida García Morales (1945-), and Luisa Castro (1966-) inscribe women as subjects in narrative from 1958-2003. Each writer utilizes the *chica rara* to critique and evaluate Spain through the female protagonist's observations and experiences. The works of these women writers span forty-five years and mark the advances and setbacks of women's liberation in Spain. This study contributes to the growing interest in heterogeneity in Spain; therefore specific attention is paid to regional identities, particularly Catalan and Galician culture, and the particularities of Spanish feminism. Rather than following a traditional chronological literary analysis of each novel, the present study divides chapters according to three topics: women's view of family dynamics, female appropriation of space, and the subversive function of women's narrative. Such an approach invites a larger readership in fields outside of literature and contributes to other disciplines including history and women's studies.

The eponymous term *chica rara* was coined by Carmen Martín Gaite in an essay “La chica rara” from the collection *Desde la ventana* (1987), “De ahora en adelante, las nuevas protagonistas de la novela femenina, capitaneadas por el ejemplo de Andrea, se atreverán a desafinar, a instalarse en la marginación y a pensar desde ella; van a ser conscientes de su excepcionalidad, viviéndola con una mezcla de impotencia y orgullo” (100).

Martín Gaite locates Andrea of Carmen Laforet’s *Nada* (1945) as an example of a ‘strange girl’ that defines herself through nonconformity to what society determines acceptable behavior and appropriate interests for young women. The *chica rara* shows no interest in courtship and prefers solitude over socialization. She is the polar opposite of the *chica casadera* in the same way that the post-War novel written by women is a counter-argument to the novela rosa (López 23).¹ The destiny of the *chica casadera* was to fall in love and marry, the most appropriate future for women considered, “el puntal y el espejo de futuras familias” (Martín Gaite, *Usos amorosos* 27). The main difference between the *chica casadera* and the *chica rara* is that the latter does not find romance: rather she is assigned to the role of witness to society, “Laforet ha delegado en Andrea para que mire y cuente lo que sucede a su alrededor, en que no la ha ideado como protagonista de novela a quien van a sucederle cosas, como sería de esperar, sino que la ha imbuido de las dotes de testigo” (Martín Gaite, “Chica” 92-93).

¹ The *novela rosa* is the term in Spanish used to refer to romance novels. Martín Gaite cites Carmen de Icaza, author of *Cristina Guzmán profesora de idiomas* (1936), *Yo la reina* (1950), *La fuente enterrada* (1947), as one of the most popular writers of the this genre (“Chica” 90-91). *Chica casadera* refers to the type of girl destined for marriage, patiently perfecting her skills in domestic duties while she waits for her future spouse.

The female protagonist, beginning with Laforet's Andrea, witnesses the economic hardship of the post-War era and citizens' efforts to survive. This study examines how different women writers utilize the *chica rara* archetype. An analysis of the diverse manifestations of the female protagonist allows for a discussion of the emergence of eccentricity, transgression, and subversion in literature (Mayock, *Strange* 214). The *chica rara* develops in mid to late twentieth century Spanish narrative by women from an odd character, relegated to the domestic environment to a recognizable subject in the urban sphere:

Una característica común a estas heroínas más o menos hermanas de Andrea, es la de que no aguantan el encierro ni las ataduras al bloque familiar que las impide lanzarse a la calle. La tentación de la calle no surge identificada con la búsqueda de una aventura apasionante, sino bajo la noción de cobijo, de recinto liberador. Quieren largarse a la calle, simplemente, para respirar, para tomar distancia con lo de dentro mirándolo desde fuera, en una palabra, para dar un quiebro a su punto de vista y ampliarlo. (Martín Gaite, "Chica" 101)

In order to study the subversive function of such novels I follow a feminist reading to analyze some narrative strategies Martín Gaite, Alós, Riera, García Morales, and Castro employ to show how women in Spain respond to totalitarian prescriptions of female comportment. The first chapter, "Women's View of Family Dynamics", addresses women's attempt to dismantle patriarchy through their rewriting of the Spanish family. The next chapter, "Beyond the Backroom", illustrates how women claim space for themselves in the home and how they appropriate space in the public sphere. Finally,

the last chapter “The *Anti-novela rosa* as Subversion” analyzes the transgressive function of reading and writing as a tool women use to gain agency. This analysis applies theories of subjectivity, nationhood, writing, and space with a specific concentration on the ideas of Kristeva, Rose, and Bakhtin.

Kristeva’s essay, “Revolution in Poetic Language” (1984), defines the maternal, a principle that will influence the rest of her writings on the subject and the process of subject formation. The influence of the semiotic, which precedes symbolic order, allows feminists to discuss how women play an intrinsic role in their children’s development. Kristeva introduces the theoretical work of Mikhail Bakhtin to academic circles in “Word, Dialogue and Novel” (1980). Her presentation of Bakhtin’s ideas of the subversive function of the novel allows scholars interested in women writers to adapt his work to feminist studies although Bakhtin does not consider gender. Kristeva’s “Women’s Time” (1981) offers a European perspective on feminism which resonates with the resistance some Spanish women writers, especially Carmen Martín Gaite and Rosa Montero, have to the feminist movement.

In *Feminism and Geography: the Limits of Geographical Knowledge* (1993), Gillian Rose discusses the en-gendering of geography and how the domestic space of the home is dismissed as a possible arena of significant activity. The Franco regime neglected, as do some geographers, to acknowledge that the home can be a site of female transgression. The young protagonist begins by establishing a private space for herself within the home. As she matures, this desire for space translates into the aspiration to embark on an independent future, often escaping to the city. The *chica rara* takes it upon herself to trespass male space and evaluate what is considered “improper” behavior.

Rose also explores the polarity of urban versus rural society and the mythification of rural areas as the ‘natural’ location for women. This exclusion limited women’s activity in the urban center and therefore denied women access to knowledge. The second chapter analyzes how Spanish women writers problematize the city as an exclusively male space to narrate how women establish independent lives in the urban sphere.

Bakhtin’s *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981) complements a reading of Spanish women writers because both Bakhtin and the writers studied here, with the exception of Castro, lived under a totalitarian regime where freedom of expression was prohibited (Char Prieto 682). The Bakhtinian concepts of dialogism and the novel, as examined through a feminist lens, offer perspective on the subversive nature of Spanish women’s narratives. Dialogue, as presented by Bakhtin, is an inherent feature in the novel because language, a social phenomenon, responds to the context in which it is written and anticipates reactions. The novel is historically an unofficial genre, remaining outside what was considered to be ‘literature’ and thereby is able to defy “hierarchies, authority and sacralization” (Price Herndl 9). Martín Gaite, Alós, Riera, García Morales, and Castro contribute to a dismantling of a totalitarian past by writing in a first person female voice to break with their role in history as defined by Franco.

Carmen Martín Gaite is the point of departure for this study because her contribution to Spanish literature remains unparalleled. Martín Gaite published her doctoral thesis, worked as a translator and professor, and wrote short stories, essays, children’s books and novels. The author’s works span the last half of the twentieth century from her first novel *El balneario* (1954) to the posthumous *Los parentescos* (2001). Joan Brown notes, “Carmen Martín Gaite is the only woman author from among

the ‘old guard’ who has continued to chronicle the changing realities of Spanish women from the Civil War to the present day” (“Challenge” 87).² I have chosen three of Martín Gaite’s novels to analyze: *Entre visillos* (1958), *Retahílas* (1974), and *El cuarto deatrás* (1978). *Entre visillos* narrates adolescent courtship experiences that the author will explore again in *Retahílas* and *El cuarto deatrás*. *Retahílas* is a dialogue created by a series of monologues between the mature Eulalia and her young nephew Germán. The pending death of her grandmother is Eulalia’s motivation to reflect on her education, career, and relationships. In *El cuarto deatrás*, the protagonist C. examines her life and the condition of her country at the moment when the Franco era draws to a close. *El cuarto deatrás* is one of the most studied novels of twentieth-century Spanish literature.

Conversely, critics to date have devoted only sporadic research to the novels of Concha Alós. The lack of critical attention is due to what critics during the Franco era considered inappropriate language and topics for a woman writer. Although current feminist studies, including the work of Elizabeth Ordóñez, encourage research on Alós as a significant voice of the generation of the nineteen-fifties there are only two major sources: Fermín Rodríguez’s *Mujer y sociedad: la novelística de Concha Alós* (1987) and Génaro Pérez’s *La narrativa de Concha Alós: texto, pretexto, y contexto* (1993).³ My study differs from Rodríguez’s and Pérez’s work because I read two of Alos’s novels in relationship to works of her contemporary Martín Gaite. Pérez and Rodríguez provide

² The term “old guard” has a pejorative tone because it suggests a certain antiquity of the work of these writers. The term, “generation of 1950” is a more accurate classification for Martín Gaite and her contemporaries such as Ana María Matute (1926-), Josefina Aldecoa (1926-), and Dolores Medio (1911-1996) among others.

³ The earliest source of research on Alós is, Elizabeth Ordóñez’s “The Barcelona Group: The Fiction of Alós, Moix and Tusquets,” *Letras femeninas* 6.1 (Spring 1980): 38-49.

general readings of Alós's fiction but do not compare her work to that of any other writer. I have selected two of her works that best exemplify women's efforts to legitimize themselves as active subjects: *Los cien pájaros* (1963) and *Argeo ha muerto, supongo* (1982). *Los cien pájaros* (1963), is a first person narration by the protagonist Cristina about her entry into adulthood. Janet Pérez highlights the implausible events of the novel because in the Spanish society of the nineteen-fifties it would have been unlikely that a young, pregnant girl would have left her home and family to start an independent life in Barcelona (*Contemporary* 111). Nonetheless, as the Franco regime loosens control, women's narrative reflects the deconstruction of social barriers for women. Alós continues an examination of the marginalized, female space in *Argeo ha muerto, supongo* (1982). In this novel, the protagonist Jano recalls how her adopted brother replaces her as the youngest of the family. The incestuous relationship that develops between the two siblings serves to dismantle familial order.

Continuing the project of uncovering the work of contemporary writers, I also contribute to the recent critical attention given to García Morales (1945).⁴ Her two novels *El Sur seguido de Bene* (1985) and *La tía Águeda* (1995) offer new insight on the post-War experience since both texts treat the late nineteen-fifties Spain from the hindsight of the late twentieth century. The sinister atmosphere of each text functions as a metaphor for the geographic marginalization of Andalucía and the seclusion people suffered, especially women, in rural society during the Franco era. The rural setting of

⁴ Recent work includes: Mercedes de Grado, "Feminismo de la diferencia y muerte del patriarcado en *Mujeres solas* de Adelaida García Morales," *Letras peninsulares* 14.3 (2002): 427-443, Abigail Lee Six, "Men's Problems: Feelings and Fatherhood in *El Sur* by Adelaida García Morales and *París* by Marcos Giralt Torrente," *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* 79.6 (2002): 753-770.

García Morales's work emphasizes the resistance of official culture because isolated areas often remain unseen, giving the author the opportunity to reveal an intimate view inside households disconnected from society. *El Sur* narrates the incestuous relationship between Adriana and her father and her subsequent attempt to foster her own identity. This narrative of incestuous desire is combined with the use of fantasy to problematize reality and familial order. Incest is a metaphor of inversion caused by the isolation men and women suffered during the Franco era. *Bene* is the story of a gypsy housekeeper that threatens a family with her sexual energy.⁵ García Morales contradicts the traditional image of the gypsy used by writers in the Romantic period to evoke the natural beauty and innocence of Spain. Bene is a seductress and functions to dismantle the familial unit. The gypsy character functions as “other” to the official national identity of Spain (Charnon-Deutsch 22). García Morales extends her portrayal of the marginalized beyond gender to acknowledge the gypsies that live on the fringes of society.

García Morales continues to write of defiant behavior in *La tía Águeda* (1995). The negative portrayal of the female authority figure is a repetitive characteristic that readers find in García Lorca's *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (1936) and Laforet's *Nada* (1945). Critics interpret the negative portrayal of maternal figures as an extension of patriarchal control. Águeda is reminiscent, as the next chapter shows, of the maternal figures in early post-War novels. As in García Morales's other texts, incest is the result of the strict confines of the home environment. The themes of fantasy and incest operate together in *La tía Águeda* to further dismantle hegemonic codes of post-War Spain.

⁵ I address *Bene* briefly in this study because García Morales's focus on gypsies does not correlate with my focus.

I've chosen to include in my discussion two writers whose work contributes to the backlash against Francoist attempts to erase regional identities: Carme Riera and Luisa Castro. Riera, a novelist and professor originally from Mallorca, writes in Catalan, recuperating a literary tradition that was cut off in 1939 when Franco took power. Her works address the struggles of women outside Castille to authenticate themselves and their identities: *Palabra de mujer* (1980), *Una primavera para Domenico Guarini* (1981), and *Cuestión de amor propio* (1988).⁶ *Palabra de mujer* is a collection of short stories, narrated by a female protagonist. Two of the most well known stories from this collection are “Te entrego, amor, la mar como una ofrenda” and “Y pongo por testigo a las gaviotas”. The first story of *Palabra de mujer* “Te entrego” tells the experience of an adolescent’s love for her high school teacher. At first the story appears to follow the *novela rosa* plot in which a young, impressionable pupil falls in love with her much older teacher. At the end of the story it is revealed that the teacher is a woman, not a man. Another story “Y pongo por testigo a las gaviotas” consists of the narrator’s memory of a lesbian affair that she considers a defining point in her life. The narrator is forced to live in a mental institution because she does not want to conform to prescribed heterosexuality. She is haunted by visits from her drowned lover and lives in a state between reality and fantasy.

Four stories from *Palabra de mujer*: “Como si el miedo”, “Arrugas”, “El detergente definitivo”, and “Descasadas” narrate the economic and emotional struggles of four different women through the reproduction of the popular speech of Mallorcans

⁶ *Palabra de mujer* is Riera’s translation from Catalan to Castilian of two collections of short stories: *Te deix amor la mar com a penyora* (1975) and *Jo pos per testimoni les gavines* (1977).

(Resnick 407). “Como si el miedo” narrates a woman’s experience of attraction and repulsion toward the possibility of a sexual encounter with a stranger. “Arrugas” is the story of a woman who escapes abuse from her uncle by working as a maid. In “El detergente definitivo” the mature female protagonist is sent by her relatives to live in a mental institution because they do not comprehend why she does not want to keep the letters of her deceased husband. “Descansadas” is narrated by a mature woman who explains how she and her two daughters have suffered because of their husbands.

Clara, the protagonist of *Una primavera para Domenico Guarini*, is a great contrast to the Mallorcan characters from *Palabra de mujer*. She is a journalist for a Barcelona newspaper and is sent to Italy to write about Guarini’s vandalism of Botticelli’s *Primavera*. Clara simultaneously observes the development of Guarini’s trial while she struggles with the decision to have an abortion. Her trip to Florence is at first an escape from her problems in Barcelona but she is confronted with patriarchal definitions of women as portrayed in Renaissance art. Botticelli’s *Primavera* depicts women as framed by men which resonate with Clara’s position in her relationship with her lover Enrique.

The last of Riera’s works in this study is *Cuestión de amor propio*. This short narrative is a letter that Ángela, a writer, composes to her friend Ingrid. In this letter she shares with her friend and the reader the story of her affair with Miguel, who used Ángela as a means to gain source material for his own writing. Miguel then publishes a novel in which the protagonist resembles Ángela, a jilted, middle-aged woman who embarrasses herself out of hunger for love and romance (Resnick 410). As Ángela writes to Ingrid

she is able to accept and learn from her observations of the existent political strategies in the publishing and academic world.

The two most contemporary novels of this study are by Luisa Castro: *El secreto de la lejía* (2001) and *Viajes con mi padre* (2003). Castro, one of the up and coming writers of the *nueva narrativa*, is part of a generation of Galician writers that uses the region as a backdrop for their narratives.⁷ *El secreto de la lejía* (2001) narrates the experience of the protagonist, África Cabana, as she begins a writing career. África has the opportunity to leave her native Galicia to accept a writing award that develops into a prolonged stay in Madrid. She arrives at the realization that reading her poetry for a radio broadcast in Madrid was the necessary impetus to enter adulthood. The title, *El secreto de la lejía*, refers to the clues África must decipher that will unlock the mystery of good writing and make her work unique.

Viajes con mi padre (2003), is a first person narrative told by Luisa who is caught between her pragmatic, money-driven mother and her more passive fisherman father. She begins her story with the observation that the only commonality between her parents is their mutual contempt for the past (11). Luisa takes it upon herself to examine her family's history to make sense of her own identity. This text parallels Martín Gaite's works because of the mutual references of Galicia, the desire of the protagonist to write, and the fact that *Viajes con mi padre* (2003) and *El cuarto deatrás* (1978) are both autobiographical fiction.

⁷ See Abraldes, Rita, ed. *Narradoras: 25 autoras gallegas*. Vigo: Edicions xerais de gallega, 2000. *Nueva narrativa* is a term devised by Carmen Urioste to refer to novels published in the nineteen-nineties. See Works Cited.

Two main critical studies serve as a springboard for this dissertation: Francisca López's *Mito y discurso en la novela femenina de posguerra en España* (1995) and María Pilar Rodríguez's *Vidas im/propias: transformaciones del sujeto femenino en la narrativa española contemporánea* (2000). Both critics offer a focus that is broad in scope, analyzing women writers from the nineteen-fifties to the present.⁸ López and Rodríguez encourage further study of contemporary writers which led to my decision to include Riera, García Morales, and Castro. There is, however, a gap in the terminology López and Rodríguez use to discuss novels ranging in publication from the nineteen-forties to the nineteen-nineties. The terms “contemporary” and “post-War” function as an umbrella, grouping novels from Laforet's *Nada* (1944) to the recent *Efectos secundarios* (1996) by Luisa Etxenike. Elizabeth Ordóñez recognizes the need for periodization and proposes a “tripartite structure”: post-War (nineteen-forties to nineteen-sixties), transition (nineteen-seventies) and post-Franco (nineteen-eighties) (Ordóñez 27). In “Narrative of Spanish Women Writers of the Nineties: an Overview”, Urioste utilizes the term *nueva narrativa* in reference to literature published in the nineteen-nineties and the turn of the millennium. I study Martín Gaite, Alós, Riera, García Morales and Castro according to Ordóñez's scheme and include a fourth category, *nueva narrativa* to refer to recently published fiction.

The two narratives of the post-War period (1939-1975) included in this project are Martín Gaite's *Entre visillos* (1958) and Concha Alós's *Los cien pájaros* (1963). Both

⁸ Rodríguez's study covers Laforet's *Nada*, Rodoreda's *La plaza del diamante*, Riera's *Te dejo, amor, en prenda el mar* and *Yo pongo por testigo a las gaviotas*, Gómez Ojea's *Los perros de Hécate*, and Etxenike's *Efectos secundarios*. López's study analyzes several works of the following authors: Icaza, Laforet, Kurtz, Medio, Matute, Alós, Martín Gaite, Quiroga, Salisachs, and Soriano.

texts expose the hypocrisy of society while managing to avoid criticism from censors. Through the foreign identity of Pablo Klein, Martín Gaite was able to voice her viewpoint that women should make university education a priority rather than limiting their future to domestic concerns. It was common for writers to use foreign characters to condemn society because it was expected that other countries would be critical of Spain (O'Bryne 203). O'Bryne explains how the *chica rara* was another technique to evade censorship, “La chica rara is how Martín Gaite refers to the non-conforming young heroines and it was through an emphasis on the “oddness” and unrepresentativeness that they achieved certain immunity from the censor” (205). The *chica rara* was not considered by censors as a model that readers would want to emulate.

Irrespective of the subjective nature and workload of the censor, it is shocking that Alós succeeded in publishing *Los cien pájaros* (1963) which openly treats the protagonist Cristina’s first sexual experiences. O'Bryne observes that the censors did not oppose the narration of themes of sexuality if the “perpetrator was adequately punished and ostracized” (205). In the 1960s one could interpret Cristina not marrying the father of her child as a form of punishment. Also, since she is of the working class and a daughter of a prostitute it is likely that her “moral integrity” was not considered important (209).⁹

The majority of the novels in this study fall under the category of the transition period. The year 1975 to the early eighties, marked Spain’s shift from dictatorship to democracy and saw the official abolition of censorship. First, Martín Gaite’s *Retahílas*

⁹ This is the case for Marta in Ana María Matute’s *Los soldados lloran de noche* (1964) (O'Bryne 209).

(1974) and *El cuarto de atrás* (1978) heralded this new age with an examination of women's psychological development. Riera's *Una primavera para Domenico Guarini* and Alós's *Argeo ha muerto, supongo* (1982) continues the examination with a "coming to terms" of the past. Mayock explains, referring to the protagonist of the transition novel:

The female protagonist is no longer the youthful and relatively innocent "chica rara," but is instead transformed into many characters: the middle-aged mother, the professional, the adventuring writer, the daughter, the sexually daring woman, the lover . . . What many would have deemed indeed "strange" during the post-War era both normalizes and multiplies in the post-Franco era. (122)

García Morales tests the boundaries of "strange" in her *El sur seguido de Bene* (1985) and *La tía Águeda* (1995). Janet Pérez reads the works of García Morales as "neo-gothic" because although the novels continue to be set in dark, ominous locations, sexuality is no longer unspeakable ("Contemporary" 136). Indecipherability and insinuation give way to the exposure and denunciation of the abuse of women and children(136).

Finally, the two novels of Luisa Castro, *El secreto de la lejía* (2001) and *Viajes con mi padre* (2003), are part of the *nueva narrativa*, novels published in the nineties and the end of the millennium. Castro and her contemporaries write prose that possesses two main characteristics: memory as a driving force and the search for alternative identities (Urioste 286). More than ever, these 'granddaughters' of Martín Gaite and Alós, "are formulating a culture, a set of strategies that patriarchal society cannot keep out",

including the investigation of women's genealogy and the bonds among women writers and women readers (289).¹⁰ Current writers such as Luisa Castro inherit the literary initiatives of Martín Gaite and Alós and write about female subjectivity in order to understand the struggles of previous generations of women writers while taking on the present challenges in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

REVIEW OF CRITICAL STUDIES ON SPANISH WOMEN WRITERS

Until the twentieth century, few women writers were recognized as creative participants in the history of Spanish literature. Considered in isolation, such writers appeared as, *bichos raros*, an exception to literature that historically associated itself exclusively with male authors. Joan Brown describes the project of literary scholars who trace a female literary tradition as, “an abbreviated enterprise or at least a search outside the canon” (Exiles 13). Brown reminds us that in Spain literature written by women is traditionally divided into three arbitrary periods: before Franco (1100-1936), during the Franco era (1936-1975), and after Franco (1975-present) (12). Prior to the twentieth century, less than twelve female authors received recognition: Santa Teresa in the sixteenth century, María de Zayas y Sotomayor in the seventeenth century, Cecilia Bohl de Faber, Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, Rosalía de Castro, and Emilia Pardo Bazán in the nineteenth century (14). In her essay “Mirando a través de la ventana” Martín Gaite

¹⁰ Urioste explains in further detail, “the creation of real textual dialogues not manipulated by the patriarchal conception of womanhood, relationships among women and between women and men, the affirmation of an identity and of a female sexuality with their own characteristics, the recuperation, through memory, of a past that was suppressed and considered merely subjective or feminine, and, in short, the affirmation of a feminine universe that complements, subverts, and opens gaps in the all-embracing patriarchal organization” (289).

also takes up the project of the recuperation of the lineage of Spanish women writers and explains how historically men fabricated images of women, “Las mujeres no existían como tales, las fabricaban los hombres, eran el reflejo de lo que la literatura registraba, bien superficialmente, por cierto. Pero en su verdadera condición, en la naturaleza de sus ansias, contradicciones y sufrimientos no profundizaba nadie” (30). In the twentieth century Spanish women writers give priority to creating authentic images of women in literature. The last twenty years marks a spate of literary criticism that examines women writers and their work.

The last fifteen to twenty years has given rise to considerable scholarship focused on the excavation of unknown and lesser-known Spanish women writers. Such resources show that critics are very conscious of their responsibility to dispel the myth that historically there was an absence of women writers in Spain prior to the post-War era. This responsibility is described by Linda Gould Levine and Ellen Engelson Marson, editors of *Spanish Women Writers: A Bio-Bibliographical Source Book* (1993):

Our task of creating patterns of diversity, of seeking those common experiences that led from silence to expression and from submission to subversion . . . the contributors have constructed, reconstructed, rescued, and disinterred a lineage of female artistry consistently ignored or neglected to the margins, glorified only to be forgotten, critiqued and mythified in the annals of Spanish literature.(xiv)

The scope of *Spanish Women Writers: a Bio-Bibliographical Source Book* ranges from the fourteenth century writer Leonor López de Córdova to the contemporary playwright Paloma Pedrero.

Growing interest of literature in the vernacular languages has led to the publication of *Double Minorities of Spain: A Bibliographic Guide to Women Writers of the Catalan, Galician and Basque Countries* (1994) edited by Kathleen McNerney and Cristina Enríquez de Salamanca. The editors trace the history of Basque, Catalan, and Galician literature in Spain and the effort to establish linguistic standardization for each language (5). The goal of the editors and contributors is to bring attention to new names and to give recognition to women for serving as, “creators of culture and members of the literary canon” (8). Since the nineteen-seventies, regional literature has flourished in Spain.

One of the most recent contributions, *The Feminist Encyclopedia of Spanish Literature* (2002) by Janet Pérez and Maureen Ihrie, is part of a series of volumes on the history of European women writers. This volume collects bibliographic information of women writers throughout the history of Spanish literature and also includes data on the history of feminism in Spain and the portrayal of women in the works of male writers including Galdós, Unamuno, and García Lorca (viii). Pérez and Ihrie acknowledge that women writers like Pardo Bazán and Rosalía de Castro were appropriated into the official literary canon, leaving out their more controversial work or dismissing its distinctive characteristics (9).

Women writers in Spain have made tremendous strides in the last one hundred years. The modernization of education, particularly in Madrid and Barcelona, aided in broadening public awareness of equality among the sexes. Christine Henseler remarks that in certain regards present women writers were not that different from those of the nineteenth century. Both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries mark a boom period in

Spanish women's literature due to the rise of professional women who were able to support themselves with a literary career, "their work reached the masses as never before and helped redefine the relations between class, community, and nation while actively contributing to changes in social relationships" (117-118). Currently in Spain many women work as writers while maintaining other professions. Rosa Montero, Ana María Moix, and Esther Tusquets are publishers or journalists; Marina Mayoral, Nuria Amat, Carme Riera, and Paloma Díaz-Mas hold university teaching positions (Brooksbank Jones 174).

Henseler examines the experiences of Spanish women writers from the late thirties to the present day. Similar to today, women writers of the generation of the nineteen fifties became famous through participation in literary competitions. The Nadal Prize helped to launch many careers including that of Elena Quiroga, Dolores Medio, Luisa Forellad, and Carmen Martín Gaite (9). This first generation of post-War women writers had to steer their way through their observations of the Spanish Civil War, writing in such a way as to avoid censorship. Writers born in later years were able to exercise more freedom as the Franco regime eased its control. By the nineteen-sixties Spain, influenced by tourism, lent itself to an influx of foreign influences. Women who began writing during this time were able to express their frustrations of the treatment of women to a stronger degree.¹¹ The 1960s marked the development of the publishing industry in Spain and the writers who benefited from the business boom received the label, "best-

¹¹ Esther Tusquets (1936-), Lourdes Ortíz (1943-), Montserrat Roig (1946-1991), Carme Riera (1948-), Cristina Fernández Cubas (1945), Soledad Puértolas (1947), Rosa Montero (1951), and Rosa Regás (1954)

sellers culto”, due to name recognition, the literary quality of their work, and their gender (9).¹²

Critics associate the generation of women writers, born in the 1960s and 1970s as part of the “selling out” of cultural history because their life experiences are detached from the civil war era and the Franco regime (10). Their success is due in part to mass media and promotions of the publishing industry fed by a capitalist consumer economy (10). Henseler suggests that the surge of the publication of women writers in the last thirty to forty years reflects the economic interests of publishers rather than consumer interests (Henseler 141; Urioste 279). Spanish women writers find themselves in a complex situation because they must contend with discrimination of the male-dominated publishing industry, while enjoying unprecedeted recognition and reception (2).

In *Literatura y mujeres* (2000), Laura Freixas also examines women writers in the publishing market and the role that advertising plays in Spain. In 1999, the literary journal *Qué Leer* announced, “Los libros más vendidos de 1999 tienen firma femenina” (34). The statistics revealed the following: on the list of the most popular books sold in Spain from April 1 to May 15th 1999, out of twenty only four were written by women (34). In the same year at the *Feria de libro*, out of the ten most best-selling books only three were by women. Freixas concludes that women writers currently receive such attention, albeit not based on fact, because, “en una cultura cada vez más basada en la

¹² Anny Brocksbank Jones classifies Adelaida García Morales as one of these writers (169).

imagen, las mujeres destacan no sólo por ser minoría sino porque su imagen resulta más llamativa” (37).¹³

Freixas questions if programs in women’s studies detrimentally affect narrative by women because of the tendency to study women writers in isolation. She deduces that women’s studies programs function to, “contrarrestar la imagen de la ‘literatura de mujeres’ como un fenómeno puramente comercial y mediático, indigno del interés de las lectoras y lectores cultos” (80). Freixas, Castaño, and Grünell are three of the critics that have rightfully observed that the majority of academics who study Spanish women writers are from Great Britain and the United States. Mary Nash, one of the leading scholars of feminist studies in Barcelona, was born and raised in Ireland (Grünell 249). The majority of Spanish critics who specialize in women writers received their degrees abroad and teach in foreign universities.¹⁴ In the conclusion of *Literatura y mujeres*, Freixas summarizes the absence of studies of women writers as the result of the historical pejorative association with the ‘feminine’. Women writers are seen by many as producers of entertainment reading that exclusively treat ‘women’s topics’. Conversely, male writers are taken more seriously by their readership and are thought to write on topics of universal interest (144). The growing number of programs and institutes of

¹³ Freixas cites an example of the obsession with the female image in an article from *Época* that said of young women writers, “se visten, se pintan, se peinan y posan” (37).

¹⁴ Francisca López, autor of *Mito y discurso en la novela femenina de posguerra en España* (1995), and María Jesús Mayans Natal, autor of *Narrativa feminista española de posguerra* (1991), and Carmen Urioste are examples, see Works Cited.

women's studies in Spain are working to erase the polarity between 'feminine' versus 'universal'.¹⁵

After consideration of the research of Spanish women's narrative, this dissertation aims at responding to the concerns presented in the works of the above mentioned scholars. In the beginning of the twenty-first century it is no longer possible to use the term 'post-War' to refer to novels written after Franco's death. I concur with the efforts of Ordóñez and Urioste to define the various generations of women writers in Spain. As stated earlier, this study addresses the issue of the heterogeneity of Spain and acknowledges the multi-cultural heritage of women writers. The study of literature written in non-Castilian languages serves to counter-act Francoist attempts to thwart artistic creation. Finally, there is a need to address the problematic situation of an exclusive focus on women writers. Freixas asks if a concentration on women writers, specifically women's studies programs, promotes serious study of women's literary tradition. This is an important question because there may exist a tendency to study women writers in isolation, encouraging the association between women's writing as only written "for women". I strongly believe that it is necessary to study women writers because a limited number of Spanish women writers are mentioned in texts of the history of Spanish literature.¹⁶ If it were not for studies by Freixas, Ordóñez, Levine, Mayock, Pérez and many others, this detail could easily go without recognition.

¹⁵ See Lola Castaño, "Women's Studies in Spain," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 3-4 (1992):127-135 for a thorough list of programs throughout Spain.

¹⁶ José García López's *Historia de la literatura española* (2004) and Richard E. Chandler's *A New History of Spanish Literature* (1961) are two examples.

THEORETICAL APPROACH TO FEMALE SUBJECTIVITY

A common concern that runs through the work of twentieth-century theorists is the dismantling of power and the problematization of authority. Kristeva, Rose, and Bakhtin question the accepted, official representations of the subject in their respective fields of linguistics, geography, and literature. Their works form the theoretical framework that guides my analysis of Martín Gaite, Alós, Riera, García Morales, and Castro.

Semanalysis, the first stage of Kristeva's work, is the study of the semiotic: the effects maternal discourse has on language which exposes the existing, underlying meaning and drives in language and art. The symbolic order is the structure or grammar that controls the meaning of symbols (Oliver xiv). The semiotic, therefore, functions to problematize or dismantle the order of the symbolic, “what remodels the symbolic order is always the influx of the semiotic” (“Revolution” 113). The semiotic disposition produces a shift in the subject recognizing the ability for the reworking of the subject (“System” 29). The capacity for redefining the subject finds its source in artistic or poetic drives which are not controlled by the dominant symbolization systems, “making use of a heterogeneity and an ensuing fracture if a symbolic code which can no longer ‘hold’ its speaking subject” (“System” 30). In her work Kristeva problematizes how the maternal paradigm works to create the subject with continuous influence even after entry into the symbolic order.

Kristeva explains that the artistic or poetic drive gives the subject, via the semiotic, the means to redefine itself. Spanish women writers including Martín Gaite,

Alós, Riera, García Morales, and Castro use their artistic drive to write literature to recreate female subjectivity in Spain. Kristeva emphasizes that after entry into the symbolic order the semiotic, influence of the maternal, continues to affect the subject. I call on Kristeva's theory of the maternal influence to clarify the mothers' effects on their daughters in Castro's *Viajes con mi padre* and Alos's *Los cien pájaros*. The maternal figures share little verbal communication with their daughters, yet nonetheless, set an example of female independence that inspires their daughters to question female comportment. The daughters' decision to leave their home dismantles the control of the symbolic that fails to "hold" the subject.

Kristeva's interpretation of the semiotic and its relationship to the symbolic lends insight into the points of contention during the Franco era: the symbolic, monolithic subject as fabricated by such institutions such as the *Sección femenina*, versus the re-ordering of such a definition through the archetype of the *chica rara*.¹⁷ Moi summarizes, "Kristeva maintains that structuralism, by focusing on the 'thetic' or static phase of language, posits it as an homogeneous structure, whereas semiotics, by studying language as a discourse enunciated by a speaking subject, grasps its fundamentally heterogeneous nature" (24). Martín Gaite describes the effects of the post-War and Franco era, "se me vinieron encima los años de su reinado, los sentí como un bloque homogéneo, como una cordillera marrón de las que venían dibujadas en los mapas de geografía física . . . pensé que Franco había paralizado el tiempo" (*El cuarto* 116). The words "bloque" and "homogéneo" contrast starkly with the language used to describe the desire of the *chica*

¹⁷ See the section 'Female Subjectivity in Spain' for a history of social service during the Franco era. The *Sección femenina* is discussed again in Chapter Two.

rara, as expressed through literature for action, escaping domestic confines: “largarse”, “respirar”, “tomar distancia” (“Chica” 101). As a result movement and activity plays an intrinsic part in resisting patriarchy. The act of hiding in an enclosed space for privacy or recording one’s thoughts in a journal are the first steps toward self-realization. Travel, in particular leaving one’s home town, is a significant activity repeated throughout the course of these novels that acknowledges women’s right to legitimacy and authority in the public space of the city.

The result of the study of semiotics is the recognition of the inherent heterogeneity of language (Moi 24). The role of women writers in the post-War period and beyond is one of renewal, in which they write to redefine what it means to be female. The authors draw from their own life experiences to narrate the progress women make to define their own futures which varies according to the historical context of each novel. In Martín Gaite’s *Entre visillos* (1958), the threat caused by the possibility that Nati will attend university is humorous in comparison to the issues broached in current fiction. In recent novels, such as Castro’s *El secreto de la lejía* (2001), the protagonist África exercises freedoms that would have been impossible in nineteen-fifties Spain.

Kristeva’s introduction of the Bakhtinian concept of dialogism, in “Word, Dialogue, and Novel”, provides a feminist lens through which to examine the subversive nature of the novel and to identify what components function to re-order patriarchal hegemony.¹⁸ She summarizes Bakhtin’s idea of the novel as a living, breathing entity that is part of an ongoing conversation between texts, “literary structure does not simply

¹⁸ I define Bakhtin’s definition of dialogism in the section that explains his *Dialogic Imagination* pages 31-34.

exist but is generated in relationship to another structure” (35). According to Bakhtin a text does not comprise fixed meaning, but is a dialogue between several writings, “that of the writer, the addressee (or the character), and the contemporary or earlier cultural context” (35). In this sense we can detect a dialogue between Martín Gaite, Alós, Riera, García Morales, and Castro on the topics of family dynamics, space, and writing. Bakhtin informs us that, “the novel always includes in itself the activity of coming to know another’s word, a coming to knowledge whose process is represented in the novel” (352-353). These authors provide varied answers to the question of how women gain authority in a patriarchal society. Women writers must rewrite society in their prose to create spaces for themselves that may or may not exist in society.

There are apparent contradictions in Spain between women writers who express feminist concerns in their work but deny classification as “feminist”. The Spanish perspective of feminism is complementary to Kristeva’s project to see the semiotic and the maternal as discourses that affect the subject along with the symbolic. Her “Women’s Time”, calls for a third generation of feminists in Europe to distance themselves from the first and second wave feminists.¹⁹ First, Kristeva criticizes the first wave feminists who identified with the ontological issues of the nation-state (Gambaudo 139). Kristeva also opposes the polarization of men and women as created by the second wave’s focus on difference, which ultimately leads to a process of violence. Her main concern is the definition of a space in order to examine the process of marginalization

¹⁹ First wave feminism developed in the United States and Britain in the nineteenth century. The Women’s Rights and Women’s Suffrage movements fought for equality between men and women. Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own* (1929) and *Three Guineas* (1938) exemplify the ideology of the first wave that was concerned with women’s access to equal rights and pay. In 1949, Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex*

(139). Kristeva poses an important question, “does not feminism become a kind of inverted sexism when the logic is followed to its conclusion?” (202). Carmen Martín Gaite’s and Rosa Montero’s refusal of the feminist label comes from the concern to avoid such a political position.

The main question posed by Kristeva in “Women’s Time”, “why literature?” addresses the power language has to, “disrupt authority and liberate alternative voices” (Leitch 1187). Kristeva offers possible answers to the effects the written word has:

Is it because, faced with social norms, literature reveals a certain knowledge and sometimes the truth itself about an otherwise repressed, nocturnal, secret and unconscious universe? Because it thus redoubles the social contract by exposing the unsaid, the uncanny? And because it makes a game, a space of fantasy and pleasure, out of the abstract and frustrating order of social signs, the words of everyday communication? . . . (207)

The source of such writing finds its origin in the desire to broach topics not previously named, “what has thus far never been an object of circulation in the community: the enigmas of the body, the dreams, secret joys, shames, hatreds of the second sex” (207). Martín Gaite, Alós, Riera, García Morales, and Castro replace masculinist priorities with personal and intimate accounts of women’s experiences, offering varied perspectives to contrast official historical accounts.

marked the beginning of the second wave focuses on the differences between the two sexes and men’s biological, psychological, and economic discrimination against women (Selden and Widdowson 209)

When discussing women writers the terms space and place inevitably enter the dialogue when analyzing their historically limited access to male-dominated culture. Although geographers attempt to define the differences between space and place, they inevitably use the two terms interchangeably. I utilize the term space to define physical and/or psychic areas where women are not defined by patriarchal strictures. The term place is more concrete and denotes geographic locations, where the female protagonist finds herself in the private or public sphere. In *Feminism and Geography: the Limits of Geographical Knowledge* Gillian Rose examines the dynamic between the public and private space and discusses how some geographers ignore women or universalize women as ‘Woman’. She explains how the abstract ‘Woman’ or feminized ‘Other’ is necessary for the masculine ‘Same’ to define itself. Men construct female subjectivity with the motive to promote their own identity, “in life as in letters, (female subjectivity) has been denied existence or has been fashioned, and objectified, by others in order to ascertain their own subject position” (Sielke 12). Rose observes that both time-geography and humanistic geography focuses on men as the norm and overlook the private space of the home as a site of social or political activity.

Time-geography, as defined by Torsten Hagerstrand, is a temporal-spatial structuring of social life that defines limitations in three categories of restraint: capability constraints (i.e., physical abilities, human need to eat and sleep), coupling constraints (i.e., interaction with other people at work or school) and authority constraints (i.e., laws that do not permit certain behavior, i.e. speed limits) (21-22). The first gap that Rose finds in this structure is the neglect to consider the domestic space as a legitimate topic of

study. The primary focus of time-geography is the public space where historically few women interact, ignoring women's experience in the home.

Traditional Spanish refrains such as “la mujer y la sartén, en la cocina están bien” and “la mujer, en el hogar, sin salir a trabajar” (qtd. in Bellver, “Gender Spaces” 33) define the hegemonic definition of female space as specifically domestic, existing merely to promote dominant culture. Rose remarks on the naiveté that time-geographers possess in their belief that, “there are no hidden corners into which time-geography cannot penetrate” (39-40). This innocence is turned on its head by the function that private or female space takes on in the novels of Spanish women writers. For the *chica rara* the home, in particular her room or hiding space, often the attic or closet, is the site for significant self-discovery. Small spaces like a balcony or playroom invite freedom and interaction with other young girls. C. of *El cuarto de atrás* (1978) and Marta in *La tía Águeda* (1995) relish their private time in an environment where they are free from the confines of authority. Time-geographers dismiss the domestic space as nothing more than a point of departure and return and neglect to consider the value of the home environment. For Martín Gaite and others, the home is a significant space for the integration of thoughts, dreams and memories (Bellver 38).

Feminist geographers focus on women's journals and personal accounts of childbirth and experiences of love, experiences of interaction with other women to model what time-geography denies existence. Rose notes, “it is these kinds of emotional and physical fusion between people which time-geography cannot admit in its reduction of human agency to a path and its consequent masculinist, bourgeois and racist repressions of the body” (33). The personal experiences of women, because they are private and

function outside the control or regulation of men, are a threat and are therefore glossed over.

Humanistic geography attempts to address what time-geography ignores, namely human emotion and experience. A focus on places of human interpretation and significance replaces the previous scientific measurements of location of time-geography (42). Humanistic geography parallels feminism in the mutual interest to explore the everyday lives of individuals and the shared concern to overcome dualisms (i.e. insider/outsider, thought/pleasure, body/mind). The ultimate dualism is the polarity between genders because of the power that men exercise over women (52). Feminists observe that humanists show concern for the way in which people are subject to authority but fail to explore the forms of exploitation and oppression that occur (44). Ultimately, humanistic geography perpetuates masculinism because it addresses its ‘Other’ through patriarchal notions of ‘Woman’--- women are not considered as individuals.

Rose looks to artistic representations of women as visual reminders of how men dismiss women as part of their environment. Landscape paintings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries portray men as active, mobile landowners often carrying weaponry. Women are presented as seated and fit into part of the scenery, “in making such a parallel between ‘Woman’ and ‘Nature’ these paintings offered the possibility that women could be used as ‘Nature’ was: ““did not the earth, nature itself, meekly permit her body to be plowed, seeded, stripped, and abused by man?”” (95). In other paintings women are represented by men for male visual pleasure, each looking at herself in a mirror, so that a male spectator can enjoy watching a woman admiring herself or she may gaze out to

invite him toward her.²⁰ The result is that women are relegated to a pace of inactivity. Riera's *Una primavera para Domenico Guarini* (1981), follows the trial of a man who vandalizes Botticelli's *Primavera* (See Appendix). This painting, located in The Uffizi Palace in Florence, Italy, captures the Renaissance imagery of women. The backdrop of the painting is a forest scene and various feminine figures in flowing, languid stances are in the center. There are three male figures: on the left is Mars, picking fruit from a tree, his sword visible; Cupid is above the young women aiming his arrow; on the right Cloris is reaching out to capture Flora. These images of men and women contrast with the modern twentieth- century struggles of Clara who rejects the traditional female role of passivity.

Rose also uses landscape painting to illustrate the dynamic between rural and urban environments, shedding light on women's relationships to both provincial and urban spaces in Spain. She comments that in the nineteenth century the village, representing the rural environment, was associated with harmony, stability, morality, and tranquility (95). The city or urban environment was the antithesis of the virtues associated with rural life. The city was the male environment, a center of civilization and progress, accessible to a limited group. Urban environments represent freedom, empowerment, and pleasure, all things unsuitable for young women (Bellver 39). This is why García Morales describes the city of Sevilla in *El Sur* as vibrating because the movement and dynamic of the city contrasts greatly with the repression and control experienced at home. The city is an arena of possibilities for women, "women without

²⁰ Some examples of these images in Spanish art, are Velázquez *El baño de Venus* and Goya's *La maja vestida/la maja desnuda*.

men in the city symbolize the menace and disorder in all spheres once rigid patriarchal control is weakened” (Wilson 157). Luisa Castro creates a character in *Secreto de la lejía* who lives independently in Madrid and finds artistic inspiration in other women artists.

Current fiction such as Luisa Castro’s novels resonate with that of Martín Gaite because both authors examine popular culture and explore women’s experience as writers. Bakhtin’s concepts of heteroglossia and dialogism found in *Dialogic Imagination* illuminate the explanation of how writers in this study ‘speak’ with each other on issues of female identity. The narratives of Martín Gaite, Alós, Riera, García Morales and Castro undermine patriarchal society through the observations and commentaries of their female characters. Spanish women’s backlash to the Franco era can best be explained through Bakhtin’s idea of de-centering. Heteroglossia is for Bakhtin that which de-centers canonical language and national myths:

This verbal-ideological de-centering will occur only when a national culture loses its sealed-off and self-sufficient character, when it becomes conscious of itself as only one among other cultures and languages . . . only then will language reveal its essential human character; from behind its words, forms, styles, nationally characteristic and socially typical faces begin to emerge, the images of speaking human beings. (370)

In Francoist Spain canonical language was *castellano*, chosen by the dictator to be the exclusive means of communication. Such a decision was made with the intention to obliterate Spain’s regional identities. The national myth of the day was the dictator’s plan to ‘revive’ an empire at a point in history when Spain was in a state of economic

disaster. A fabrication of Spain's past was needed to rouse people's spirits and to distract them from political devastation.

The fiction of Spanish women writers functions to "de-center" Francoist ideology. A deconstruction of the patriarchy is possible through the multiplicity of voices in the novel. Dialogism is what makes heteroglossia possible because it is the "double-voicedness" that makes the novel a "combination of distinct and interacting unities" (59). Bakhtin explains the different components that make up a novel:

- (1) Direct authorial literary-artistic narration
- (2) Stylization of the various forms of oral everyday narration
- (3) Stylization of the various forms of semiliterary (written) everyday narration (the letter, the diary, etc.)
- (4) Various forms of literary but extra-artistic authorial speech (moral, philosophical or scientific statements, oratory, ethnographic descriptions, memoranda and so forth)
- (5) The stylistically individualized speech of characters. (qtd. in Vice 60)

Martín Gaite's *Entre visillos* incorporates the colloquial speech of the day through the characters as well as the "semiliterary everyday narration" of Nati's journal entries. Riera's *Cuestión de amor propio* consists of the protagonist Ángela's letter to her friend Ingrid. The narration of all of the novels and short stories included in this project is executed by women thus recognizing their personal experiences. Knights states, "By empowering female protagonists/narrators through the creative process these writers subvert phallologocentric writing practices in which the masculine is privileged" (172).

In Bakhtinian terms a female narrator represents the 'subordinated language' that the

‘prestige language’ intends to control. Vice explains, “heteroglossia implies dialogic interaction in which the prestige languages try to extend their control and subordinated languages try to avoid, negotiate or subvert that control” (19). Francoist ideology is subverted by the narration of women’s experiences.

The fiction of Spanish women writers goes beyond writing as a private exercise because dialogism, the presence of different voices, is an innate quality to their work. If we look to the earliest novel in this study, *Entre visillos*, we see how Martín Gaite juxtaposes the traditional perspectives of the mothers and aunts versus the rebellious intentions of the young women. The aunt and father represent the mindset of an older generation while the female characters Natalia and Elvira represent Martín Gaite and her peers. The novel is a site of discussion, “discourse in the open spaces of public squares, streets, cities, and villages of social groups, generations, and epochs” (261). Generations of women writers continue to explore the Spanish Civil War and the Franco era to understand women’s experiences.

Spanish women writers want to examine and reexamine history from alternative perspectives. Martín Gaite’s *El cuarto deatrás* (1978) reads fresh because it is autobiographical and representative of an entire generation of women. C. of the novel fears that her memoir will not make a contribution because so many have already been published, “Desde la muerte de Franco habrá notado cómo proliferan los libros de memorias, ya es una peste, en el fondo, eso es lo que me ha venido desanimando, pensar que, si a mí me aburren las memorias de los demás, por qué no le van a aburrir a los demás las mías” (111). The value of her work and all the novels in this project resides in

the voicing of women's personal experiences that are inherently subversive because they survived a dictatorship that intended to erase their identities.

FEMALE SUBJECTIVITY IN SPAIN

In Spain, although the majority of women writers treat women's issues, not all consider themselves feminists. Brooksbank explains that Spanish women are more concerned with the "establishment of transitional cultural space" (163). This section reviews some historical development of female subjectivity in Spain and the history of feminism in twentieth-century Spain.

One can argue that female subjectivity became a concern for Spanish intellectuals during the Enlightenment. In "Defensa de las mujeres" (1726), from the collection of essays *Teatro Crítico Universal*, Feijóo attacks prejudices that the Catholic Church and society held against women (Salgado 162-163). He rewrites the story of Adam and Eve to excuse women from the blame of causing men to fall into temptation. He points out that while Eve was tempted by an angel, Adam fell to the temptation of another human being, thereby diminishing Eve's fault (162). Feijóo also opposes the tradition of courtly love that celebrated women's physical beauty over their moral and spiritual worth (162). Furthermore, Feijóo defends women's intellect and argues that women's intellectual inferiority stems solely from lack of education (162). Some critics, like Ortega López, believe that Feijóo only supported education for women for the ultimate good of the family not for the sake of women as individuals (23-24). It is important to appreciate the

context of “Defensa de las mujeres” because the ideas of the essay would become manifest in coming centuries.

Spanish female identity was traditionally qualified under the label *ángel del hogar*, “an angel of love, consolation to our afflictions, defender of our merits, patient sufferer of our faults, faithful guardian of our secrets and jealous depository of our honor” (Enders and Radcliff 10). The *hogar* of course is the limited, private space, where women are assigned to participate in the nation, but *from afar*. It was not uncommon during the Franco era for a groom to give his bride a copy of Fray Luis de León’s *La perfecta casada* (1583) to remind her of her duties in marriage. Women were confined to their biological functions as wife and mother where their only identity emanated from the objectification of their bodies (Morcillo Gómez, “Shaping” 57). Chapter three follows the female protagonist’s attempts to break with the private sphere of the home to authenticate herself as a subject in society.

Spain, like other European countries in the nineteenth century, accepted gender oppression as part of the political structure of the Napoleonic Code.²¹ Until marriage, women had independence in regards to financial and personal affairs; however, marriage deprived women of these freedoms and made a wife an “appendage” of her husband (Enders and Radcliff 21). Women could be imprisoned for disobedience if they failed to seek permission from their husband to sell property, take a trip, or seek employment (21). The Second Republic in Spain 1931-1936 erased the Napoleonic Code, allotting women freedom to work, expanding property rights and legalizing divorce. These freedoms were

²¹ In Europe after the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Code was the first modern law to decree that a wife’s status was subsumed within that of her husband (McClintock 358).

revoked in 1939 when Franco reverted back to pre-republic law, forcing women to participate as citizens exclusively through their spouses.

Mary Nash notes that historians often considered Spain intrinsically different from the rest of Europe in its historical development; nevertheless, she argues that the development of gender issues in Spain followed the same pattern as that of other Western countries in the early twentieth century (25). The 1920s and 1930s brought influential medical discourse that redefined women's identity to motherhood. Dr. Gregorio Marañón formulated theories based on his perception that women were not inferior to men but were nonetheless biologically different (33). The debate on sex reform and birth control was conducted more for the benefit of men in managing female sexuality than to liberate women from their maternal responsibilities (36).

The dialogue in the women's movement in Spain during the nineteen twenties and thirties rarely discussed sex reform, keeping the focus on equality for women in the work environment. Hildegart Rodríguez was one of the few female defenders of feminist reform and spoke out about sexual equality for men and women; however, most women activists did not address sexuality (40).²² Lucía Sánchez Saornil, a dissenting voice of mainstream gender discourse and co-founder of *Mujeres libres* in 1936, never discussed the issue of birth control or sex reform (41). During these years, birth control was considered a male concern and studied by a closed group of male doctors. Feminist groups in the United States and Britain of this time were similarly focused on social, political and economic reform rather than sex reform (Selden and Widdowson 206).

²² Hildegart Rodríguez, *La rebeldía sexual de la juventud* (Madrid: Anagrama, 1977), *El problema sexual tratado por una mujer española* (Madrid: Javier Morata, 1931).

Until the rise of the Second Republic (1931-1936), what one could label “women’s movement” was a bourgeois effort designed for the urban elite. The illiteracy rate for women in Spain during the first thirty years of the twentieth century was fifty percent (Carbayo-Abengózar, “Feminism” 115). Organizations like *La residencia internacional de señoras*, founded in 1915, and the *Lyceum club femenina*, founded in 1925, were for those women who had the luxury of free time to pursue intellectual and artistic endeavors. In following years the political milieu of the Second Republic gave many women a platform to fight for women’s rights. Margarita Nelken, Victoria Kent, Clara Campoamor, and Federica Montseny and others sought to expose the inequality suffered by women in the private and public realms. Although these women all went into exile in 1936, they strove to carry on their political efforts through their writings.²³

As the Nationalists rose to power, women’s roles were re-defined by obligatory social service. The *Sección femenina* branched from the SEU (Sindicato español universitario) in 1939 under the direction of Pilar Primo de Rivera.²⁴ This was a women’s version of basic training, requiring female students to complete six months of courses in domestic duties. For college women there were two parts of service: *formación*, lessons on political indoctrination and home economics, and *prestación*, volunteer work in an office, daycare, or shelter (62). The *Sección femenina* served as a means by which women were used to stop the modernization of Spain, “politics of moral panic, as a result of cultural anxieties produced by increasingly rapid socio-economic

²³ Vollendorf, Lisa, ed., *Recovering Spain’s Feminist Tradition* (New York: MLA, 2001) is an excellent source on early twentieth century feminism in Spain.

change (modernity), re-imposing traditional gender roles on women became at once a substitute for this lack of control in other areas and an (ultimately unsuccessful) bid to ‘turn the clocks back’” (Graham 184). Middle class women were sent by the government to police women in the private sphere of rural Spain (187). The service women provided was a means of free labor for the government because the members performed tasks that were considered duties rather than work, requiring no financial compensation. Graham summarizes, “The *Sección femenina* was in a sense itself a form of cultural control in that it permitted the appearance of female development involved in public life without giving women entry to formal politics” (193).

From the nineteen-forties to the nineteen-seventies women worked within the confines of Francoist hegemony to continue the struggle for equality. Mercedes Fórmica, a Falangist and member of the *Sección femenina*, succeeded in becoming a lawyer and was successful in turning over three laws from the civic code (Carbayo Abengózar, “Feminism” 115). Her efforts changed conjugal residences from exclusive property of the husband to property of both spouses. If a couple decided to separate, women retained their authority over children from their first marriage. Also, during the process of separation, it was not necessary for a woman to be “deposited” (115).²⁵ In 1961, the Law of Political and Professional Rights of Women was presented by Pilar Primo de Rivera, overseer of the *Sección femenina*, to Parliament. This law gave women the legal right to work in almost any profession except in military combat (118).

²⁴ Pilar Primo de Rivera was the sister of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, created of the Falange Española. The Falange was a party with strong nationalist and fascist ideals that gained support when Franco came into power.

Franco's death opened the floodgates for the recuperation of agency for women, first taken up during the Second Republic. Lydia Falcón slowly succeeded with the help of other colleagues to create political parties which culminated with the publication of the magazine *Vindicación feminista* in 1976 and the creation of the Feminist Party in 1977. The second generation of women writers “la generación de los setenta” emerged at this time with ground-breaking novels of Esther Tusquets. In 1979, Victoria Sendón de León’s *Sobre diosas, amazonas, vestales: utopías para un feminismo radical*, opened a discussion of the feminism of difference for Spanish women (118). Feminism of difference celebrates characteristics which make women unique in comparison to first wave feminism that strived to create equality between the sexes. Focusing on the individuality of women aided in a reconstruction of women to promote an awareness of women’s contributions and roles in society.

Spain currently celebrates many female professionals who write about feminism, mostly women who hold teaching positions in Spanish universities in philosophy, sociology, or history departments.²⁶ Many women find feminism to be too aggressive a perception which could be the result of the negativity imposed on Feminism by the Church and Government. Martín Gaite says in an interview from 1981:

Yo quizá, lo que me ha pasado siempre es que he tenido
una rebeldía muy poco agresiva, pero muy profunda, algo difícil

²⁵ The “depositing of women” meant that a woman was forced to live with other family members or placed in a convent during the separation process.

²⁶ Celia Amorós, Professor of Philosophy in the Complutense University in Madrid, wrote *Hacia una crítica de la razón patriarcal* (1985) and *Tiempo de feminismo* (1997). Amelia Valcárcel, Professor in the University of Oviedo, wrote *Sexo y filosofía* (1991) and *La política de las mujeres* (1997). Victoria Camps, Professor of Ethics at the University of Barcelona, wrote *El siglo de las mujeres* (1998). (Carbayo Abengózar, “Feminism” 119).

de explicar, pero siempre he sido más rebelde de lo que he parecido y me han podido atribuir las personas que me conocen sólo superficialmente. Mi rebeldía no es de alharaca, soy muy gallega en eso, le doy una vuelta a todo y acabo haciendo lo que quiero sin gritar (...) Yo no sé si es táctica, pero procuro rechazar lo que veo que no me gusta, rechazándolo dentro de mí . . . pero no levantando una bandera y gastando pólvora en salvas . . . es que soy modosa, muy modosa. (qtd. in Carbayo-Abengózar, “A manera” 1)

Carbayo Abengózar quotes Carmen Rico-Godoy in her article from *Cambio 16*, “Spanish society at the end of the century has managed to identify feminism with ‘old-fashioned’, ‘ridiculous’, ‘anachronistic’, ‘old’ and many other words mostly just as insulting and discredited” (“Feminism” 121). Rosa Montero clearly articulates the difficulty she finds with the word feminism:

Yo me considero feminista, o por mejor decir antisexistista, porque la palabra feminismo tiene un contenido semántico equívoco: parece oponerse al machismo y sugerir, por toda una supremacía de la mujer sobre el hombre, cuando el grueso de las corrientes feministas no aspiran a eso. Sin embargo, aunque prefiero la palabra antisexistista como más precisa, sigo definiéndome también como feminista porque me niego a dejar la palabra en manos de todos esos machistas que la han intentado desestimar a lo largo de los siglos. Es decir, el término feminismo evoca una lucha social e histórica importantísima, una herencia que sigo asumiendo y reivindicando.

(Montero)

It is necessary to define feminism in Spain and therefore it is most appropriate to use the term anti-sexism. The quotes of Martín Gaite and Rosa Montero resonate with Kristeva's stance in "Women's Time" that calls for a "third generation". The struggle for women in Spain will be to determine how theoretical and ideological perspectives offered by feminists abroad can respond to the everyday life experiences of women in their country.

Critics including Ellen Mayock and Ann Rosalind Jones highlight the fact that Spain has a peculiar relationship with feminism. Rosalind Jones remarks that there is nothing universal about l'*écriture féminine*, French feminists' call to use the body in narrative to free themselves from patriarchal discourse (qtd. in Mayock, *Strange* 225).²⁷ Mayock accurately observes that, "the traditional Spanish prohibition on the liberation of the female body speaks to a distinct form of women's writings emerging in Spain, a writing that acknowledges and timidly addresses the body in the post-War period and then, in some writings of the post-Franco period, begins to translate corporal experience, always within or writing against the powerful socio-cultural context of Catholicism, "mariанизmo, matrimony, and motherhood" (225). While writers like Martín Gaite only hints at female sexuality in *Entre visillos* (1958), Riera is explicit in narrating an affair in her story "Te dejo, amor, en prenda el mar" (1975).

²⁷ L'*écriture féminine* is a term that Hélène Cixous uses in *Sorties* (1981). She calls for non-phallocentric writing that celebrates the female body and motherhood (McDowell 67).

LA CHICA RARA AT THE END OF THE CENTURY

In the late twentieth century and early twenty-first the *chica rara* continues to be a concern for many critics (Francisca López; Mayock, *Strange*). The use of the *chica rara* narrator can now be seen, sixty years after the publication of Laforet's *Nada* (1945), as "a solid tradition of female transgression and subversion" (Mayock, "Strange" 20). *La chica rara* ceases to be an anomaly because women have gained agency that was not possible during the Franco era. Mayock explains:

The circular bind is always present: to discuss the dissolution of gender identity, we must first discuss gendered identity, which necessarily rests on distinction between male and female social and biological spheres. In Spain, the Franco regime's insistence on this distinction problematizes further the issues of gender, sex, biology, and culture that surround women's writing. Most of women's writing during this period responds to the need (put forth by Wittig) to invoke a powerful "I" in order to begin to speak one's way out of gender. It is during the post-Franco period that the "strangeness" of both the female writer and her heroine(s) will expand and become significantly less "freakish". (224)

Although much has been said regarding the *chica rara* this project addresses commonalities in the narrative of women writers in the last half of the twentieth century. Unlike Mayock's *The "Strange Girl" in Twentieth Century Spanish Novels Written by*

Women (2004), I do not divide the chapters according to novels. Each chapter treats a thematic feature and analyzes how each author reacts to the topics of family dynamics, space, and writing. Chapter One, “Women’s Perspectives on Family Dynamics” focuses on how different Spanish women writers portray the familial units in a society that was dominated by patriarchal control. The family, as the basic component of patriarchal Spain, is reconstructed to dismantle Francoist conventions. The relationships between mothers and daughters, from the transition period forward, evolve from contentious to a positive source of knowledge for the younger female characters. Incest, in the work of Alós and García Morales, acknowledges the dysfunctionalities of families and other ‘unspeakable’ topics. Finally, Riera, Martín Gaite, and Castro participate in recuperating Catalan and Galician culture through female voice and memory. Riera challenges Francoist limitations to artistic creation by writing in Catalan.

The next chapter, “Beyond the Backroom” discusses the authors’ treatment of space and the techniques women utilize to appropriate space for themselves. Martín Gaite’s *El cuarto de atrás* (1978) is the definitive Spanish novel on female space. Gillian Rose’s theories of feminist geography broaden Martín Gaite’s treatment of space to acknowledge the historical associations between ‘male’ versus ‘female’ space and ‘rural’ versus ‘urban’ space. In Martín Gaite’s *Entre visillos* (1958) and Alós’s *Los cien pájaros* (1963), the reader sees how the female protagonist enters restricted parts of the home (the father’s library) or neighborhood (the *barrio chino*) to test the limits of family and societal prescriptions.

The last chapter, “The *Anti-novela rosa* as Subversion” incorporates Bakhtinian theories of the novels to investigate the literary genre that Spanish women writers wrote

against, the *novela rosa*. I use the term *anti-novela rosa* to refer to the prose of Spanish women writers that do not offer neat solutions for the reader. Unlike the *novela rosa* that assures its reading audience of a ‘final feliz’ the work of Martín Gaite, Alós, Riera, García Morales, and Castro purposely omit conclusions that define the protagonist’s future. Such endings serve as a counter-discourse to Francoist strictures of female comportment.

This study raises the question of the progress Spanish women have made in their efforts to legitimize themselves as subjects. In *Las nuevas españolas* (2004), Lydia Falcón addresses the current problems of unemployment and lack of financial independence women suffer in Spain. The subtitle of her book, “Lo que las hijas han ganado y perdido respecto a sus madres” begs the question of why current writers like Luisa Castro continue to struggle with their place in patriarchal culture, often in similar ways to that of Martín Gaite. Castro exhibits similar resistance toward feminism and in her novel *Viajes con mi padre* the protagonist Luisa is very nostalgic toward her father. In my conclusions I will address the on-going current dialogue women writers conduct against their country’s past. Finally I will explain my future research that has developed from this project.

Chapter 1 Women's Views of Family Dynamics

During the Franco era the family was a “site of learning” where family members were forced to emulate social and gender codes necessary for dictatorial construction (Cooper 1). The representation of the family is a constant in Spanish literature. Sara E. Cooper traces the parody of family composition back to Cervantes’ *Don Quixote*, “The entire picaresque genre sets forth the family as the original site of learning for its troublemaking characters, and picaresque novels from Spain and Latin America constantly reflect the hypocrisy of aristocratic and religious ideals pertaining to the family” (3).

This chapter examines the counter-discourse that Martín Gaite, Alós, García Morales, Riera, and Castro create to reevaluate familial structure and representation. To challenge Francoist ideology women writers begin with a critique of the family because it is the basic component of the patriarchy. These authors re-write the family to inscribe women as subjects.

The Franco regime reinforced the patriarchal order in which men would be the dynamic leaders while women would exist vicariously through the agency of their husbands. Women were to be the “custodians of honor” who served as models of virtue for their husbands and a teacher of Christian mores for their children (Mayock, *Strange*

25). The reality of the post-War and its aftermath, as revealed by women writers, is that it was not possible for women to remain passive within the domestic sphere.²⁸

Post-War women writers treat the family as a site of reinscription by exposing what is abject to the dominant order. The unmasking of the Spanish family exposes three main themes that problematize Francoist definitions: mother-daughter relationships, incestuous desire, and regional voices. These three topics reveal the underside of Franco's version of the family.

Families in the post-War novel and afterward are often represented as “fragmented”, a term coined by Sara Schyfter to describe the chaotic and unstable family relationships created by the Spanish Civil War (24). The absence or death of one or both parents functions as “symbol and metaphor of a ruptured society” (32). The aftermath of the war left many children orphans and made widows of thousands of wives. The portrayal of such families in novels is the antithesis of Franco's efforts to present the family as a united front against foreign, immoral influences. Alborg notes, “A menudo, en la novelística de las escritoras de la posguerra son las abuelas maternas quienes sobreviven en una sociedad fragmentada por la guerra civil” (17). The grandmothers in *Nada* and *Primera Memoria* enforce patriarchal order over their granddaughters. Andrea, of *Nada*, recalls her arrival to *la calle Aribau*:

Lo que estaba delante de mi era un recibidor alumbrado

²⁸ “Under the terms of the March 1938 Labour Charter (*Fuero del trabajo*), married women were to be ‘free(d) from the workplace and the factory’. The Fundamental Law of 18 July 1938 (*Ley de bases*) established the family subsidy (paid to the father) ostensibly so that women should no longer need to work to supplement low male wages. From 1942 onwards all labour regulations stipulated the dismissal of married women (*excedencia forzosa por matrimonio*) and on 26 March 1946 the Family Subsidy Law (*Ley de ayuda familiar*) deprived men whose wives worked of the state-paid family bonus (*plus familiar*)” (Graham 184).

por la única y débil bombilla . . . magnífica y sucia de telarañas. . .
un fondo oscuro de muebles colocados unos sobre otros como en
las mudanzas. Y en primer término la mancha blanquinegra de
una viejecita decrépita, en camisón, con una toquilla echada sobre
los hombros. Quería pensar que me había equivocado de piso.

(13-14)

The description of the grandmother in *Primera memoria* emphasizes her control of the family. Matia says:

Mi abuela tenía el pelo blanco, en una ola encrespada sobre
la frente, que le daba cierto aire colérico. Llevaba casi siempre un
bastoncillo de bambú con puño de oro, que no le hacía ninguna
falta, porque era firme como un caballo . . . Las manos de mi
abuela, huesudas y de nudillos salientes, no carentes de belleza,
estaban salpicadas de manchas color café. En el índice y anular de
la derecha le bailaban dos enormes brillantes sucios. (1)

Negative descriptions of maternal figures and their homes continue in the novels studied in this project. In *Entre visillos* (1958) Nati complains of her aunt's control of her and her sisters, "La tía Concha nos quiere convertir en unas estúpidas, que sólo nos educa para tener un novio rico, y que seamos lo más retrasadas posibles en todo, que no sepamos nada ni nos alegramos con nada, encerradas como el buen paño" (228). Jano, the narrator of *Argeo ha muerto, supongo* (1982), describes her mother, "Mamá era grande y recia, toda de colores, como un enorme insecto" (15). Likewise, Marta describes her aunt in *La tía Águeda* (1995), "Era una mujer alta, muy delgada con un

rostro poco agraciado, de expresión dura y con unas marcadas ojeras bajo sus ojos negros y muy vivos” (11). In the novels of García Morales the atmosphere of the home is dark and foreboding. Marta describes her arrival to her aunt’s house in *La tía Águeda*, “En seguida sufrí una suerte de desencanto y me sentí inmersa en una atmósfera mortecina y triste” (10).

These disparaging images reflect “the rigid discourse on women’s identities as mothers and, furthermore, the maternal figure was made to symbolize the newly built dictatorial Spain” (Gámez Fuentes 4). Novels written and published in the transition period continue to struggle with the “ghosts of the patriarchy” (Ordóñez 127). In Carme Riera’s *Una primavera para Domenico Guarini* (1981) Clara’s mother reiterates patriarchal values, “Nosotros hemos venido al mundo para sufrir y aguantar. Es la voluntad de Dios: parirás con dolor, obedecerás a tu marido . . . Nadie puede enmendarle el plan a Dios. Como Eva se dejó tentar, pecó y ahora hay que pagarla” (139). Spanish women struggle with the crisis of not finding a place for themselves in the family when there is a lack of positive role models. Later in the chapter it will become clear how Martín Gaite, Alós, and Castro write to remedy this problem.

Laura Freixas observes that in world literature there is an abundance of novels that treat father-son, father-daughter, or mother-son relationships, but few show interest in mother-daughter relationships.²⁹ The emergence of women writers increases the representation of mother-daughter relationships in Spanish literature. Freixas explains why this was not possible before, “Seguramente, porque sólo cuando su derecho a

escribir estuvo bien establecido, empezaron a aventurarse las mujeres a tratar temas que no forman parte de la tradición recibida” (*Madres* 12). Drawing attention to and writing mother-daughter relationships transgresses the concept that the ‘Law of the Father’ is the only source of knowledge and legitimacy.³⁰ Communication between mothers and daughters establishes a semiotic encounter between generations of women. In Alós’s *Los cien pájaros* (1963) Cristina learns from her mother that it is possible for a woman to live independently and create a home for herself. Luisa in Castro’s *Viajes con mi padre* (2003) discovers her own identity through her conversations with her grandmother about their family history. Female independence is achievable because the maternal figures have an influence over their daughters that continues throughout their development. Kristeva’s argument that the maternal discourse influences subjects even after their entry into the symbolic is exemplified in the relationships that Cristina and Luisa have with the maternal figures in their lives.

Freixas’s comment points to the need for more critical analysis of mother-daughter relationships. The maternal figures in Martín Gaite’s *Retahílas* (1974) and *El cuarto de atrás* (1978) contrast greatly with tía Concha in *Entre visillos* (1958). The strength of Martín Gaite’s maternal figures in *Retahílas* and *El cuarto de atrás* comes from the effort in the post-Franco era to recuperate the bonds between mothers and daughters (Ordóñez 128). Alós and Castro examine the mother-daughter bond by showing how it is possible for younger women to learn from their mothers’ struggles. In

²⁹ “desde la *Orestiada* hasta *Eugénie Grandet, Padres e hijos, Los hermanos Karamazov o Washington Square*, pasando por *Hamlet* y *El rey Lear*. En cambio, son llamativamente escasas las obras que ponen en escena a madres e hijas, y todas muy recientes” (Freixas, *Madres* 11).

Castro's *Viajes con mi padre* (2003), the protagonist's mother Rosa, despite her lack of affection, encourages her daughters to pursue a career so they may create a better life for themselves outside of Galicia. The young Cristina in Alós's *Los cien pájaros* (1962) looks at her mother's economic struggles as an example of how women may obtain agency even during a dictatorship.

Critics have also neglected another problem of dysfunctional families. The topic of incest arises in analyzing relations between girls and older males, often male relatives. In *Argeo ha muerto, supongo* (1982), Alós writes of the incestuous relationship between Jano and her adopted brother Argeo. There is a similar power struggle in García Morales's *El Sur* (1985) and *La tía Águeda* (1995). As Josebe Martínez shows, in the twentieth-century novel, incest is a reoccurring theme that voices the power struggles between the dictatorship and the oppressed (331). Alós's and García Morales's take on incest recognizes this on-going struggle from a feminist perspective.

‘Plurinational’ is a critical term signifying Spain’s vast history of heterogeneous cultures.³¹ It is pertinent to address regionalism along with the discussion of feminism because both discourses arose simultaneously after the death of Franco. The Spanish constitution of 1978 called for the equality of gender and the independence of the Basque country, Catalonia, and Galicia. Article 14 of the 1978 Constitution stated that, “all Spaniards are equal before the law, and no discrimination whatsoever may prevail by reason of birth, race, sex, religion or opinion” (Enders and Radcliff 23). Article 2 of the

³⁰ ‘Law of the Father’ is a term that comes from the work of Jacques Lacan as part of the origins of patriarchy. The ‘Law of the Father’ is what disrupts the mother/child bond, allowing the subject to enter symbolic order (Gamble 262).

1978 Constitution recognized, “the right to autonomy of the nationalities and regions” that composes the “indissoluble unity of the Spanish Nation” (Elorza 333). Following the current focus on national identities in recent literary criticism, the final part of this chapter explores the significance of regional Spain in the works of Martín Gaite, Riera, and Luisa Castro. These three writers treat the autonomous regional culture of Spain through their exploration of Catalan, Mallorcan, and Galician heritage with a specific focus on female characters. Although most overt in Riera’s short stories, all three writers recognize a tradition that counters Castilian Spain and transgresses dictatorial demands for a homogenous nation.

DEFINING SPANISH WOMANHOOD IN THE FRANCO ERA

In order to examine how the women authors in this study succeed in rewriting the Spanish family it is necessary to review the gender ideology that the Franco regime forced on society. The ideal Spanish woman was to be a martyr for the betterment of her household and country. An advice column of the Franco era, “Querida amiga”, quotes Generalísimo Franco in his effort to animate its female audience, “En esta hora no quiero olvidar a la admirable mujer española, que supo conducir a sus hijos a la lucha y a la muerte, hasta el punto de que no sé qué es más sublime en esta gesta: si el hijo que cae o la madre heroica y sublime que lo empujó hacia la gloria” (Sopeña Monsalve 192).

The words ‘heroic’ or ‘sublime’ mythify women and create an abstraction of the female subject. Anne McClintock’s analysis of nationhood enlightens the discussion of

³¹ In Fall 2002 the journal *Letras peninsulares* dedicated an entire volume entitled “*Plurinational Spain: Creation and Identities*”.

how gender plays an intrinsic part in the construction of Francoist Spain. Following Benedict Anderson's theory that 'all communities are imagined', McClintock states, "As such, nations are not simply phantasmagoria of the mind but are historical practices through which social difference is both invented and performed. Nationalism becomes, as a result, radically constitutive of people's identities through social contests that are frequently violent and always gendered" (353). McClintock acknowledges that male theorists like Benedict Anderson and Frantz Fanon fail to consider how gender power functions in nationalism and therefore she proposes to fill in this gap (353). The narrative voices of Spanish women writers make a similar contribution because historically women's voices were not given consideration.

Analysis of the topic of gender reveals a severe disparity between the distinct roles men and women play in a nation-state. Men relate directly with each other and the nation-state by active participation in both the private and public sphere. Women are "implicated in the nation through their biological functions, as teachers or propagators of culture and only take on active participation during times of revolution or war" (357).

McClintock states:

All too often in male nationalisms, gender difference between women and men serves to symbolically define the limits of national difference and power between men. Excluded from direct action as national citizens, women are subsumed symbolically into the national body politic as its boundary and metaphoric limit. (354)

Women are a part of tradition, “inert, backward-looking and natural” and men reside on the opposite end of the spectrum, representing progression, “forward-thrusting, potent and historic” (359).

McClintock reviews how historically citizens conceive of a nation in terms of the family, “We speak of nations as ‘motherlands’ and ‘fatherlands’. Foreigners ‘adopt’ countries that are not their native homes and are naturalized into the national ‘family’. We talk of the ‘Family of Nations’, of ‘homelands’ and ‘native’ lands” (357). The family functions to legitimize the subordination of woman to man and child to adult in order to present such a hierarchy as natural (357). McClintock reviews how, after the French revolution, European women were forced to relegate their independence and citizenship to their husbands, “A woman’s political relation to the nation was thus submerged as a *social* relation to a man through marriage. For women citizenship in the nation was mediated by the marriage relation” (358). Franco erased modernization in post-War Spain by reinstating the Napoleonic Code of 1889 to limit women to second class citizenship.³²

The *Sección femenina* echoes this secondary status because as Martín Gaite recalls in *El cuarto de atrás*, “una chica no podía salir al extranjero sin tener cumplido el servicio social o, por lo menos, haber dejado suponer, a lo largo de los cursillos iniciados, que tenía madera de futura madre y esposa, digna descendiente de Isabel la Católica” (40). Obligatory social service was a means by which the Franco regime objectified

³² “While single women retained a good deal of independence, in terms of the ability to conduct business and manage their public affairs, married women were virtual legal appendages of their husbands, to whom they owed strict obedience. Thus, article 57 of the Civil Code of 1889 stated: ‘the husband must protect his wife, and she must obey her husband.’ Wives need their husbands’ permission for everything from

women in order to legitimize its own existence.³³ The Falangist laws of behavior defined women's subaltern role and stressed their symbolic duties as secondary inhabitants of Spain:

1. A la aurora eleva tu corazón a Dios y piensa en un nuevo día para la patria.
2. Ten disciplina, disciplina y disciplina.
3. No comentes ninguna orden, cúmplela sin vacilar.
4. En ningún caso y bajo ningún pretexto te excuses a un acto de servicio.
5. A ti ya no te corresponde la acción, anima a cumplirla.
6. Que el hombre que esté en tu vida sea el mejor patriota.
7. No olvides que tu misión es educar a tus hijos para bien de la patria.
8. La angustia de tu corazón de mujer compénsala con la serenidad de que ayudas a salvar España.
9. Obra alegremente y sin titubear.³⁴

selling property to seeking employment or taking a trip, and could be either fined or jailed for disobedience" (Enders and Radcliff 21).

³³ Luis Suárez Fernández's, *Crónica de la sección femenina y su tiempo* (Madrid: Nueva Andadura, 1993) is an excellent book on the history of social service for women in Spain.

³⁴ The list of behavior codes continues, "10. Obedece, y con tu ejemplo, enseña a obedecer. 11. Procura ser tú siempre la rueda del carro y deja a quien deba ser su gobierno. 12. No busques destacar tu personalidad, ayuda a que sea otro el que sobresalga. 13. Ama a España sobre todo para que puedas inculcar a otros tus amores. 14. No esperes otra recompensa a tu esfuerzo que la satisfacción propia. 15. Que los haces que forman la Falange estén cimentados en un común anhelo individual. 16. Lo que hagas supérte al hacerlo. 17. Tu entereza animará para vencer. 18. Ninguna gloria es comparable, a la gloria de haberlo dado todo por la patria" (Morcillo Gómez, *El feminismo* 82).

This list of behavior codes places Spanish women in a restricted arena where they are acted upon rather than exercising their own independence. Men occupied the foreground of society, while women “maintained the background against which the foreground played” (Rose 5).

Martín Gaite’s *Entre visillos* (1958) is a prime example of the narration of the imposed domesticity on young women. The author captures the routines of a provincial town of the nineteen-fifties, knowledge of which is important for a feminist study because, “the seemingly banal and trivial events of the everyday are bound into the power structures which limit and confine women” (Rose 17). A reading of *Entre visillos* along with Martín Gaite’s post-Franco *Usos amorosos de la posguerra* (1987) demonstrates the author’s ability to narrate the “everyday” of adolescent experiences. Both texts reveal how men depended on the control of women’s activities to maintain their own status in society.

There are two impending marriages in *Entre visillos*, that of Gertru and Ángel and Julia and Miguel. Before the engagement, Ángel explains to his future wife Gertru that she must not surprise him when he is out socializing with his friends, “Es que hay cosas que una señorita no debe hacerlas. Te llevo más de diez años, me voy a casar contigo. Te tienes que acostumbrar a que te riña alguna vez. ¿No lo comprendes?” (149). Ángel exploits his seniority over Gertru to control her virtue. A friend reassures Ángel of his choice of a wife:

Y sobre toda mira, lo más importante, que es una cría. Ya ves,
dieciséis años no cumplidos. Más ingenua que un grillo. Qué
novio va a haber tenido antes ni qué nada. ¿No te parece?, es una

garantía. Ya de meterte en estos líos tiene que ser con una chica así.

Para pasar el rato vale cualquiera, pero casarse es otro cantar. (48)

The male attitude of courtship is mirrored in an anecdote Martín Gaite tells in *Usos amorosos de la posguerra* (1987) about a young man from Andalucía:

Cuando al cabo de dos años un amigo suyo (el mismo que me ha narrado la anécdota) volvió a encontrárselo y le preguntó que qué tal le iba el noviazgo, el interesado bajó la cabeza y declaró que se había visto obligado a romper con aquella chica.

‘¿Por qué?’ le preguntó el otro intrigado. ‘Pues ya ves, porque le toqué una teta y se dejó’, fue la respuesta. (204)

It is not of value to men how other women behave as long as their fiancées are modest. Women are judged on their virtue as well as their physical appearance. Ángel's mother Lydia prepares Gertru for what she must do:

Cada uno lleva su cruz . . . y duchas frías, gimnasia, una crema ligera al acostarse. Gertru seguía todos sus consejos de belleza porque la oía decir que las mujeres, desde muy jóvenes tienen que prepararse para no envejecer. A Lydia le gustaba sentir a Gertru pendiente de sus palabras, como de los mandamientos de la Ley de Dios, y algunas veces, que se sentía generosa, ponderaba su docilidad, como un maestro para estimular al discípulo. (235)

Lydia, as a mother, reinforces patriarchal values to insure that her son will be pleased with his future wife and therefore places great emphasis on Gertru's physical appearance. Advertisements of the day placed a significant amount of pressure on women

to use the proper cosmetics to guarantee success in dating and marriage. One advertisement warns, “Me ponía polvos con demasiada frecuencia y . . . perdí mi novio” (Sopeña Monsalve 167). Another advertisement declares how a woman’s life can change with the right beauty product, “Las preocupadas por no encontrar novio . . . ahora podrán elegir a su gusto” (213). Married women were also a target audience, “¡Mujeres! ¿Queréis dedicar unas pesetas a vuestra persona? ¡Cuánta diferencia por tan poco dinero!” (214).

Julia, another young woman preparing for marriage, receives advice from her confessor. The priest is the voice of patriarchal society and although Julia’s father does not make an appearance until later in the novel, paternal authority remains a constant throughout the text. Here the priest encourages her that through her example of virtue her boyfriend Miguel’s rebellious behavior will dissipate:

----- Vamos, vamos. Estás haciendo un bien muy grande en un alma tibia y endurecida como la de ese muchacho. No decaigas, no eches abajo toda tu labor. Solamente a sus elegidos les pone Dios misiones tan duras. Piensa que cuando te cases, tienes que seguir influyendo en su alma. . . La pureza es el adorno más fragante del alma de una joven y su blancura llega a los sentidos de todos los hombres. (84)

The double standard between acceptable behavior of women versus that of men is palpably clear: “El hombre puede tener aspecto severo; dirán de él que es austero, viril, enérgico, la mujer debe tener aspecto dulce, suave, amable. En fin, debe sonreír lo más posible” (qtd. in Martín Gaite, *Usos* 40). There were few limits to male behavior because society did not consider men as a reference point of virtue or honor, “Un solterón, amiga,

es lo más contrario a una solterona que pueda imaginarse. Un solterón es un ser que ha edificado su tranquilidad a base de egoísmos y pseudocomodidades (comodidades de alquilar, por si nos entendemos mejor)” (45).³⁵

At the Casino, a popular meeting place, young men critique the girls’ physical appearance:

--- para mi las niñas esta noche están de más. Ya me doy
por cumplido.

Hay que hacer desear.

---Sí, oye, se empalaga uno un poco. Vienen demasiado
bien puestas, te dan complejo de que las vas a arrugar.

---Niñas de celofán.

---Niñas de las narices. Para su padre. Las que están de
miedo este año son las casadas . . .

---Además que vengan ellas aquí. Se acostumbran mal. No
se hacen cargo de que uno necesita alguna vez servicio a
domicilio.

---Es verdad. Parecen reinas, chico. (99-100)

This dialogue is an example of Martín Gaite’s ability to capture the colloquial language, more specifically the discourse of young males, of the post-War era. The first critiques of *Entre visillos* celebrated the Martín Gaite’s ability to recreate popular speech (Jurado Morales 138). Yet most early studies miss the point of the novel which was the

³⁵ The expression “comodidades de alquilar” refers to prostitution which was not banned in Spain until 1956.

representation of the stifled existence of young provincial women. Conversely, focusing on the ambiguity of the novel underscores the value of *Entre visillos*. The novel ends noting symbolically that, “con la niebla, no se distinguía la Catedral” (256). This is the first time the cathedral is ‘erased’ from view, in contrast to previous sections, in which the cathedral, a symbol of patriarchy, is clearly seen. This open ending suggests the beginning of alternative futures for women that lie outside the duties of marriage and motherhood. Martín Gaite uncovers support for independence for women found in the magazine *Meridiano femenino* from 1949:

Si queréis interpretar debidamente la soltería--- dice un texto
de 1949---, dejad de pensar en las solteronas como en mujeres
que fracasaron, por alguna razón, en casarse. Y empezad a pensar
si no fueron las casadas las que, por cualquier razón, fallaron
en no quedarse solteras. (*Usos amorosos* 51)

She explains the nature of this point of view, “pero eran voces que clamaban en el desierto, testimonios excepcionales. Y además revolucionarios, por entrar en conflicto con la política del Gobierno y de la Iglesia, aliados en su empeño de reforzar el vínculo matrimonial exaltando sus excelencias y ventajas” (52). In 1949, Simone de Beauvoir published her revolutionary *The Second Sex*. Her often quoted phrase “one is not born a woman, but becomes one” would not receive full recognition by women in Spain until the late nineteen-seventies when women had complete access to French feminist thought. The following section examines how mother-daughter relationships change as the Franco era draws to a close.

ALTERNATIVE MOTHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIPS

Martín Gaite begins *Usos amorosos de la posguerra* (1987) with the following dedication, “Para todas las madres españolas, entre cincuenta y sesenta años, que no entienden a sus hijos. Y para sus hijos, que no las entienden a ellas” (10). There is a generational gap between those who grew up during Franco’s reign and preceding generations that have no personal memories of the dictatorship. The works included in this project convey the necessity of revisiting the past to make sense of history. Recent literary criticism, such as Inmaculada de la Fuente’s *Mujeres de la posguerra* (2002), expresses the desire to close the gap between mothers and their sons and daughters. Her dedication reads, “A mi madre y a todas las mujeres que conocieron la guerra y la posguerra, a los hombres y mujeres de mi generación que no quieren olvidar”(7). Reexamining the past includes an analysis of the primary relationships between parents and children. This section focuses in on the peculiar dynamics of the mother-daughter relationship. Marianne Hirsch observes that in English literature of the nineteen-seventies, the female protagonists begin to identify with their mothers. The fathers, unlike the paternal figures in the nineteenth-century novel, are absent (4).³⁶ Spanish fiction by women of the nineteen-seventies and beyond follows a similar trend.

As the dictatorship loses its grip in the sixties, authors like Martín Gaite are able to amplify their criticisms of the subjugation of women. Martín Gaite’s post-Franco novels *Retahílas* (1974) and *El cuarto de atrás* (1978), foreground non-traditional representations of maternal figures. The main female protagonist of *Retahílas*, Eulalia,

³⁶ Hirsch uses the term ‘Anglo-Saxon’ to refer to literature written in English.

speaks openly about her desire not to be confined in marriage and takes her example of independence from her grandmother, “del matrimonio ha sido siempre poco partidaria y menos del amor novelesco, ya te he dicho que cuando yo era pequeña le molestaba verme enfrascada en esos folletines, ella era feminista estilo antiguo, con el hombre mano dura, y al abuelo el pobre lo tuvo siempre en un puño” (191). Eulalia realizes her uniqueness because her ambitions differ from that of her friend Lucía. Eulalia warns her friend, “En España, Lucía, no cabe compaginar, lo sabemos de sobra, o eres madre o te haces persona” (140). Eulalia opts for a life of travel rather than a future of domestic obligations. She looks to her mother’s experience as an example of a future she wants to avoid, “Mamá ya estaba delicada por entonces y seguía pendiente de todos los caprichos de papá, sumisa, disculpándole siempre; yo eso no lo podía soportar, era una imagen de futuro que rechazaba, quería largarme de viaje, vivir sin ataduras, que nadie me mandara” (143). Eulalia associates motherhood with a lack of personal freedom.

The Ley de derechos políticos, profesionales y laborales de la mujer of 1961 gave support to women in the workplace. The law stated that women should earn equal salary as men for the same work; however, women needed permission from their husbands to continue working after marriage (Folguera 97). Women took on the responsibility of work outside the home along with balancing their duties as wives and mothers. In 1969, Concha Alós wrote an editorial for *La Vanguardia* that addresses this problem. She writes that men’s responsibilities should change to match women’s duties in and outside the home. Alós applauds the facts that in countries like the United States, “la mutual ayuda en todas las áreas, es un hecho real”. The editorial ends with the following conclusion:

El ejemplo hermoso, es válido. La mujer debe emanciparse, debe vivir en todos los sentidos al lado del hombre, pero la necesaria e inevitable incorporación social no depende sólo de ella, sino también de una reeducación del hombre. Hay que archivar las formas tradicionales, montadas sobre el principio del hombre en el trabajo y la mujer en la casa, y emplear otras nuevas apropiadas al momento. (2)

Ten years later, in the late nineteen-seventies, Rosa Montero's *Crónica de desamor* (1979) addresses women's experience of raising children and managing a career.

The protagonist C. of *El cuarto de atrás* is both a writer and mother. In this novel Martín Gaite presents another positive image of the maternal figure, who always supported her daughter's studies and defended her when other mothers criticized, “‘Hasta a coser un botón aprende mejor una persona lista que una tonta’ le contestó un día a una señora que había dicho de mí, moviendo la cabeza con reprobación: ‘Mujer que sabe latín no puede tener buen fin’” (82). In Alós's novels, however, *Los cien pájaros* (1963) and *Argeo ha muerto, supongo* (1982), the mother-daughter relationship is antagonistic.

The work of Concha Alós historically received little critical evaluation other than disapproval of language that male critics considered inappropriate for a woman. Fermín Rodríguez, one of the few critics to date who has studied Alós's fiction in its entirety, cites examples of the negative reception received by the author. He points out that the weekly magazine *La Codorniz*, known for its irreverent language, rejected similar language from women. An anonymous critic says of Alós's *El caballo rojo* (1966), “Concha, por favor, intente seguir su camino de buena escritora. Intente hacerlo

suprimiendo de su página el piojo, la meada y la vomitona. Ya sabemos que un grano tiene pus, pero no es necesario que lo pinche para sus lectores” (Rodríguez, *Mujer* 22).

Although Rodríguez does not give specific examples of readers’ reaction to *Los cien pájaros* one can assume that the novel’s treatment of female sexuality incited controversy. More recently, feminist critics such as Janet Pérez and Elizabeth Ordóñez have reevaluated Alós work for the consistently feminist social conscience the author exercises throughout her novels.

The young protagonist Cristina in *Los cien pájaros* (1963) wants to escape from her household and is embarrassed by her mother’s appearance, “Mi madre iba embutida en jerseys como una esquimal. Por lo menos llevaba tres. Los viejos se los ponía debajo, y, encima, aquel verde que se compró por la primavera. Llevaba en los pies unas zapatillas grises y dos pares de calcetines gruesos de mi papá” (10). Julia’s appearance reminds Cristina of her mother’s former life as a prostitute. Regardless of her unsavory past, Julia is an industrious woman and grumbles, “La niña aparece a las nueve, el señor a las diez. Así es que una ha de pasar todo el santo día pudriéndose detrás de las comidas. Esperando, las veinticuatro horas del día” (14). The mother constantly reminds Cristina what little work experience she has, “a tus años . . . escardando entre el hielo, cogiendo aceituna, quitando los mocos a los hijos de los otros . . . harta de trabajar estaba, ya” (9). Cristina sees how very different her mother is, “Entre su mundo y el mío se parapetaba el plano de Salvá, el olor a madera nueva de las mesas del Instituto, el mapa en relieve de la clase de geografía y las educadas palabras que usaban los padres de mis compañeros de cursos, que eran médicos, abogados o empleados de oficina y no llevaban a diario un mono azul lleno de manchas” (48).

Cristina looks at a picture of her first communion and thinks back to that occasion. She remembers that one day Julia took her for a walk, “Caminamos hasta las calles de detrás del hospital. Yo sabía, vagamente, que aquel era el barrio prohibido. Desde un portal, una mujer con el pelo negro y grasiento llamaba a un soldado chistándole” (130). Julia uses her connections from her years as a prostitute to procure a communion dress from a *señora* or madam.

Alós recognizes that prostitution was a reality during the Franco era and acknowledges the hypocrisy of the “official Puritanism” during those years (Graham 189). Graham explains, “Prostitution thrived on the rigid gender roles and sexual Manichaeism/oppression which underpinned the state’s efforts to stabilize itself on the basis of a closed family unit” (191). The Franco regime’s attempt to remove women from the workplace ultimately imposed on them an increased burden to work in the black market. Alós dispels the ecclesiastic dichotomy of Mary/Eve whereby women found themselves on one of two sides of an impossible polarity. The mother of *Los cien pájaros* is a reminder that, “for all the Franco regime’s aspirations to monolithicity, the socio-economic and cultural experiences of women’s lives in 1940s Spain were complex, conflictive, and plural” (Graham 82). Cristina suffers a sense of inferiority because the mothers of her peers are far more elegant and sophisticated than Julia. She herself feels inadequate compared to Mina, a wealthy child she tutors, “Me estaba mirando las uñas y las manos. Mis manos con las venas abultadas y azules. Luego se ha contemplado sus uñas rosadas y brillantes” (34).

Cristina's outlook on the world changes when, still single, she becomes pregnant. She is now forced to consider how her mother created a better life and achieved economic stability:

He de emplear todas mis energías en hacerme otra.

Una mujer que no se avergüence de sí misma . . . Mi madre, serenamente, barre el polvo que trajo el viento, los papeles que arrastró el gran viento de la otra tarde. Su patio quedará limpio, liso, sin polvo. Después, lo regará y se quedará mirando las ramas de la higuera que empiezan a revivir. Puede que me sirva su ejemplo. Ella construyó todo su porvenir sobre un suelo tambaleante. Desde detrás de un biombo lascivo construyó su historia actual de buena y hacendosa mujer. De un solar pedregoso pudo sacar un techo y cuatro paredes con una higuera delante. (93)

Julia, who at first appears as a model of the long-suffering housewife, is now seen by her daughter as a model of female agency. She becomes the singular example for Cristina on how to survive and search for her own solutions. The 'happy-ending' of this novel is that Cristina realizes it is possible to take risks. She decides to move to Barcelona to start a new life, independent of her family. Janet Pérez comments, "This is laudable, from a feminist viewpoint, but realistically very risky and impractical, unlikely even to be feasible in the Spanish society of the day" (*Contemporary* 111). Nonetheless, Alós's commentary on prostitution is revolutionary in Spanish fiction of the nineteen-sixties.

There is another portrayal of the mother-daughter bond in Luisa Castro's *Viajes con mi padre* (2003). The title of the novel implies that the father would be the more influential of the parents. However, the father, a fisherman, remains throughout the course of the novel a mythic figure for whom the narrator harbors great nostalgia, "era él que se iba a lidiar con la bestia, a purificar su corazón contra el mar enemigo" (50). It is the mother, Rosa, who endures throughout the novel as the head of the household. She encourages her daughters to seek a better life outside of Galicia, "llegar a ser secretarias de algo, maestros de no sé qué, muy lejos del frío de la fábrica y de la humedad de los puertos, a salvo de todo con nuestro dinero, sin maridos, sin hijos, libres de polvo y paja para la única vida que merecía la pena, una vida sin cadenas" (28).

Heidi Kelly, in "Enlacing Women's Stories: Composing Womanhood in a Coastal Galician Village" explains how it is possible for women in rural Galicia to achieve agency. In villages, including Ezaro, there is a malleable divide between genders. Women work outside the home in addition to maintaining the household and controlling finances while their husbands are away at sea or working abroad (202). Employment gives rural Galician women greater freedom than women who remain exclusively in the home. Rosa's work experience in the cannery gives her the necessary perspective to realize there are greater possibilities in the future for her daughters.

Although Rosa's aspirations are feminist, the narrator Luisa insists that this is not the case, "La conciencia de la maternidad como un castigo divino no tiene nada que ver con el feminismo, para ella aquel castigo que éramos mi hermana y yo se convirtió desde el primer momento en un reto contra el destino" (27). Regardless of the narrator's dismissal of feminism, Rosa is acutely aware of the possibilities available for younger

women. As discussed in the introductory chapter, Spanish women writers avoid association with the feminist label because feminism is viewed as a foreign movement that does not directly apply to Spain as it does to other parts of Europe or to the United States. Nonetheless, Rosa is an example of feminist possibilities. Luisa says of her mother, “Ella no había nacido para tener hijos, decía con una mirada contemplativa, casi mística. Yo no la veía como una madre. Yo me la imaginaba como a las niñas videntes de Fátima” (12). Despite the lack of maternal affection, Rosa supports her daughter’s interest in pursuing a career in literature.

Luisa observes her mother’s respect for independent women who manage to remain unaffected by societal demands. This is the case with Amanda, a woman of their village who is shunned because of her drug-use and prostitution. Rosa admires Amanda for withstanding the criticism of the town. Luisa says, “A Amanda, en todo caso ponía a mi madre más en su lugar, el del respeto y la admiración que sentía por todos aquellos que eran libres de espíritu, que no eran esclavos de nada, que hacían de su vida, como Amanda, lo que querían” (182).

The more distance there is from the Franco era, the more complex characters of ‘real’ women there are in Spanish fiction “below the state’s monolithic-mythic construction of gender” (Graham 191). These relationships echo the differences between generations of those born at the close of the Spanish Civil War and those born at the end of the Franco era. Communication is possible between generations if individuals are willing to learn from the experience of their mothers.

EXPOSURE OF DYSFUNCTION

It is only in the last fifteen to twenty years that critics have broached the topic of incest in nineteenth and twentieth century Spanish literature.³⁷ Incest, in the context of the novels of Alós and García Morales, is an abuse of power and sexuality by men over women in a patriarchal society which deeply affects the family. Jane M. Ford explains, “Since the family unit represents man’s most fundamental attempt at social order, incest represents a major violation of that order. As Maisch stresses, incest is not a cause of family disintegration, but a symbol of a ‘disturbed family order’ that already exists” (12). Furthermore, incest discloses the reality that, “families have always been in flux and often in crisis; they have never lived up to nostalgic notions about ‘the ways things used to be’” (Mayock, “Shifting” 13). Authors including Alós and García Morales narrate family disorders and violence that occurs in rural areas that are on the outskirts of the community. The geographic isolation of Andalucía, in *El sur seguido de Bene* and *La tía Águeda*, lends itself to crimes that remain uncorrected.

For the discussion of incest in Alós’s and García Morales’s novels, the term “incestuous desire” fits appropriately because there are few physical acts. There is an emphasis on the emotional trauma associated with such abuse. Incestuous desire is defined as, “any abnormal attachments on the parts of fathers and daughters which permanently inhibit their ability to relate to each other appropriately and to establish

³⁷ See Alfred Rodríguez, “Incest in the Novels of Emilia Pardo Bazán” *Iris* (1990): 89-97., Ellen Mayock, “Shifting Families and Incest in Chacel and Moix,” *The Ties that Bind: Questioning Family Dynamics and Family Discourse in Hispanic Literature*, ed. Sara E. Cooper (Maryland: UP of America, 2004) 43-61., Ricardo Krauel, “Incesto y escritura en *El Sur de Adelaida García Morales*,” *El erotismo en la narrativa española e hispanoamericana actual*, ed. Elvira Huelbes (El Puerto de Santa María: Fundación Luis Goytisolo, 1999) 207-214.

viable relationships with others" (Ford 17). This definition can be extended to include the "abnormal attachments" between siblings or cousins. *El Sur* broaches the theme of incestuous desire between father and daughter. *La tía Águeda* and *Argeo ha muerto, supongo* narrate the relationships between cousins and siblings.

Adriana, narrator of *El Sur*, recalls her childhood and adolescence in a household where she found herself in a polarity created by her enigmatic, depressive father and her religious, uncompassionate mother. *El Sur*, published in 1985, narrates the abuse and oppression of women of the Franco era from the perspective of democratic Spain. Incest can result from the lack of socialization where young girls like Adriana are confined to the home and have little contact with her peers. The isolation of Adriana's home allows for trauma to remain unnoticed. On a larger scale, the protagonist's isolation is a metaphor of the remoteness experienced by Spaniards during the dictatorship. Incest, in the same way that Ordóñez interprets fantasy in García Morales's work, "dares to articulate the unsaid or give voice to that which is customarily prohibited by culture" (260).

The improper relationship between Adriana and her father Rafael is first inspired by her curiosity about what he does in his office. Adriana soon discovers that he is a *zahorí* (diviner) and uses a pendulum to discover water underground. Eventually Rafael includes Adriana in his practices. She recalls:

Te habían pedido que les adivinaras si en aquella
tierra había agua y dónde se encontraba. Ya te había acompañado
varias veces a aquel rito en el que tú pretendías hacerme participar.
Pero sabía que mi ayuda era sólo un juego y te miraba, llena de

admiración, desde una distancia infranqueable. (16)

Rafael's interests are of course tangential to the Catholic dogma of the nineteen-fifties. He chooses a home in an isolated area to segregate the family and prohibits his daughter from attending school. Rafael is a teacher and the only member of the household that freely interacts with the community. The word "silence" is repeated throughout *El Sur* and García Morales's other works to emphasize the protagonist's fear and difficulty in articulating the oppression they suffer. When Adriana does leave the house and begin to make friends her father hits her:

Desde aquel día yo te esquivaba y tú, en cambio,
iniciabas tímidos intentos de acercamiento a mí. Advertí
un amago de antigua ternura en tus ojos, enturbiados ahora
por una honda tristeza. Te escuchaba algún comentario sin
importancia, dirigido a mí, que parecía no esperar respuesta.

Yo guardaba silencio. No sabíamos dialogar. (35)

Adriana interprets her father's demeanor as his preoccupation with what others will say about their relationship. What in actuality causes the father to withdraw from Adriana and later commit suicide is his loss of control over her. He resents his daughter's ability to free herself from the confines of the home and his influence. As an adult, she is able to narrate her past and thus break the pattern of abuse, "Mañana abandonaré para siempre esta casa, convertida ya, para mí, en un lugar extraño" (52).

The confined environment of *La tía Águeda* (1995) stunts the female protagonist's development, causing her to form an unhealthy, incestuous attachment to her cousin Pedro. Marta is orphaned after her mother dies and she is sent by her father to

live with her aunt Águeda. This maternal figure is as staunch a patriarchal figure as those found in early post-War narratives. Marta is rarely permitted to socialize, making Pedro's arrival one of the first opportunities she has for regular companionship with someone of similar age. The young protagonist replaces her longing to be with her father with a desire to be close to Pedro. Marta recalls a game of *veo veo* where Pedro tells Marta he is looking at something that starts with an 'l' and ends with an 's', "Cansada ya de recorrer con mi vista todo cuanto contenía la habitación, me di por vencida. Entonces él me dijo riendo: --- Labios, tus labios" (108).

At first Marta feels uneasy when watched by Pedro, but as she matures she enjoys the attention. Marta remembers how she felt when Pedro decides to photograph her, "De todas formas me sentí satisfecha de que él, durante un buen rato, estuviera pendiente sólo de mí . . . Me halagaba sentir que me observaba de aquella manera" (111). Later Marta lies in bed with Pedro and allows him to touch her breasts. She says this was the first time that she no longer felt like a girl, "ante su mirada, me sentí mayor, sentí que dejaba de ser una niña, y esa sensación me desconcertaba. Ya había cumplido los once años" (115). Pedro is aware of the power he has over Marta and takes advantage of his seniority. Through the childhood memories of her female characters, García Morales challenges patriarchal power through an unsuspected source, the young female. Looking back, the mature Marta realizes the instability of her world, "la idea de la fragilidad de todo había calado hondamente en mí" (147). This is the realization that the family promotes certain myths to instill order that ultimately fails.

Alós also writes of incest in *Argeo ha muerto, supongo* (1982). The novel opens with Jano's description of a family dinner, "Todo en orden meticuloso de jerarquía

familiar, como había aprendido, recientemente, mamá en los libros de etiqueta” (13).

The scene appears ideal until Jano gives the first details about her relationship with her adopted brother Argeo:

Ellos satisfechos y yo desesperada, percibiendo
mil cosas invisibles o inaprensibles para los otros
concienciando el amargo fracaso de mi familia, el mío.
Condenada, inmersa en el pecado, recordando a Argeo.
Mi hermano Argeo que había besado mis labios, mi cuello,
mis cabellos . . . Su imagen dueña de mi cabeza, de mis
sueños nocturnos, de todos los repliegues de mi cerebro.

(14)

Argeo disrupts the sense of order in the household and displaces the father as the head male in the household. Jano explains that after Argeo arrived the father became nonexistent, “Se había convertido en nadie, en un cero a la izquierda” (39). Until Argeo matured, the household was dominated by the mother and daughters. Jano describes the atmosphere, “Mis hermanas y yo, mi madre, formamos, por primera y, quizá, por única vez en nuestras vidas, sin ciencia, ni cálculo, un cerrado matriarcado, actuando sin el hombre, sin su concurso, sin necesidad de su consejo ni de su protección” (40). Jano’s sense of security weakens as she matures and becomes more self-conscious about her deformed foot. She asks Argeo if he is bothered by her deformity and he responds that her foot reminds him of the Chinese tradition of binding women’s feet. Jano says:

Que una china sin aquel balanceo no valía
un céntimo, se la despreciaba y le resultaba imposible,

además, encontrar un marido decente . . . En fin, terminó su discurso dedicándome algunas palabras, vino a decirme que la cojera daba a mis movimientos una gracia, un aire intensamente sexual, que era otro de mis encantos. Supongo que yo sonreía arrobada. (136)

Jano loses her identity in the detrimental relationship, “me sentía parte de su cuerpo, suya, como si se verificara en nosotros el mito bíblico de la costilla de Adán, aquello de ser parte del hombre. Sin identidad propria” (138). When the sexual nature of the siblings’ relationship is discovered by the family Jano is the only one punished, “estaba decretado desde siempre que yo tenía que ser la única que pagará por aquello” (154). Argeo remains free while Jano is sent to a convent to reform her behavior. The convent, in Foucaultian terms, is another institution used to mold people into submissive beings.

It takes many years for Jano to recuperate from the hold that Argeo has over her. Once she discovers writing and art as a cathartic way to release her stress she is able to overcome her depression, “No, no iba a arropar a ningún hombre con las riquezas de mi imaginación . . . yo ya no era la misma. Aquella mujer que adoró a mi hermano había muerto. Como Argeo Vilache, supongo” (244). Rafael’s death in *El Sur* and Argeo’s death in *Argeo ha muerto, supongo* allows the female protagonist to articulate the violations she has suffered. As authors, Alós and García Morales eliminate the male characters who dominate the narrative to give the female protagonist legitimate literary space and representation.

RECUPERATION OF REGIONAL VOICES

As Catherine Davies reminds us, “literature in Spain is written in at least four languages, each with its own national, cultural and literary traditions. This should never be forgotten” (8). A growing trend in literary criticism focuses on regional representation. Concha Alborg, Susan Larson, and Xoán González-Millán are among those that take on such a project to dispel the traces of a dictatorship that worked to homogenize Spanish culture.³⁸ The work of Riera, Martín Gaite, and Castro narrates the revival of Catalonian and Galician identities.

Carme Riera contributes to a tradition of women writers in Catalan that traces its history back to the fourteenth century.³⁹ The fifteenth century marked an abundance of writing including Isabel de Villena’s (1430-1490) *Vita Christi* (1487) and the celebrated Valencian writers Ausiàs March and Joanot Martorell. The following centuries, traditionally known as the “*Decadència*”, was a time of scarce literary production (Pérez, *Feminist* 116). The *Renaixença* of the nineteenth century contributed to the resurgence of the Catalan language that continued in the first half of the twentieth century. One of the most important figures of the time was Caterina Albert (pseudo. Víctor Català, (1969-1966) (117). Her best known work *Solitud* (1905) narrates a young woman’s struggle in an isolated, rural environment. The onset of the Franco era eliminated the publication of

³⁸ Articles that underscore regional interest include: Concha Alborg “Marina Mayoral’s Narrative: Old Families and New Faces from Galicia,” *Women Writers of Contemporary Spain: Exiles in the Homeland*, ed. Joan Brown (Delaware: U of Delaware) 179-197., Susan Larson “Problematizing Spanish Nationalism and Regionalism in the Undergraduate Classroom,” *Letras peninsulares* 2 (2002): 435-448., and Xoán González-Millán “As imaxes emerxentes dunha cultura pública galega: dificultades e desafíos,” *Letras Peninsulares* 2 (2002): 248-266.

³⁹ The beginnings of Catalan literature by women goes back to medieval troubadour poetry. The first female poet was the Reina de Mallorques from the fourteenth century. (Pérez, *Feminist* 115).

Catalan literature in Spain, making it necessary for authors including Mercè Rodoreda (1908-1983) to write abroad in exile. Her *La plaça del Diamant* (1962), one of her most significant novels, narrates post-War Barcelona as experienced by the protagonist Colmena. The post-Franco era marks a rich contribution to Catalan prose that includes writers Esther Tusquets (1936-), Montserrat Roig (1946-1991), and Maria-Mercè Roca (1958-).

The reconstruction and reconfiguration of Catalan national identity is attributed in part to the efforts of Carme Riera (Vilarós 38). Riera narrates women's experience of her native Mallorca in four short stories from the 1981 collection entitled *Te dejo el mar*: "Descasadas", "Arrugas", "El detergente definitivo", and "Como si el miedo". These characters suffer a triple status of marginalization due to their gender, language, and geography.⁴⁰

To date there are two translations in Castilian of Riera's collections of short stories *Te deix amor la mar com a penyora* (1975) and *Jo pos per testimoni les gavines* (1977) : *Palabras de Mujer* (1980) translated by Riera and *Te dejo el mar* (1991) translated and edited by Luisa Cotoner. In *Te dejo el mar*, the four previously mentioned shortstories are under the subtitle 'Bestia de carga'. This subtitle categorizes the narrators as victim of their social class and the men in their lives. Riera simultaneously narrates the oppression of Catalonia with that of lower-class women. The "other" is given a space to verbalize its experiences that would otherwise go untold.

⁴⁰ The original titles in Catalan better summarize the message of each story: "Descasadas" corresponds to "Noltros no hem tengut sort en sos homos" (Nosotros no hemos tenido suerte con los maridos), "Arrugas" corresponds to "Te banyaré i te trauré defora" (Te pondré en remojo y te sacaré fuera de casa), "El detergente definitivo" corresponds to "Es nus, es buit" (Un nudo, un vacío), and "Como si el miedo" corresponds to "De jove embellia" (Cuando era joven daba gusto verme) (Riera, *Te dejo el mar* 181-200).

Riera criticizes the myth of happily-married women supported by their husbands and presents characters that are forced to seek economic independence. The first story “Descasadas” begins and ends with the confirmation that the narrator and her daughters have simply not had much luck with men. The narrator learns early on in her life that she cannot count on others for support, having little family. She gives birth to twin daughters whom the father immediately rejects, abandoning both his wife and children. The mother accepts her fate as part of being a woman, “Y de todos modos, una mujer siempre será una mujer, y si topa bien, tiene que obedecer al hombre y respetarlo . . . Claro que nosotros no hemos tenido suerte con los hombres” (185).

“Arrugas” receives its title from the many wrinkles the narrator has all over her body. Orphaned at a young age, she goes to live with her uncle who constantly threatens her that one day he will submerge her in water and throw her out of the house.⁴¹ A doctor tries to reassure her that the wrinkles are due to the many years of manual labor. The narrator believes otherwise, “Idó yo creo que fue el *conco* Antoni de tanto *desirme* que me *bañaría*, el que me lo *hiso* coger. Y mire si han pasado años desde *entones* . . .” (191).⁴² The wrinkles are a physical manifestation of a difficult life.

Joana, the narrator of “El detergente definitivo” speaks to a doctor at the *casa de salut*, “Es este peso que no me *deca*. No me *deca* ni de día ni de noche, ni cuando me acuesto. Iba a *desir* cuando duermo, pero usted ya sabe que no duermo” (192). Joana’s depression began when her nephews decided she was unfit to live alone, “ellos *desían*

⁴¹ Hence the title in Catalan “Te banyaré i te trauré defora”.

⁴² Cotoner in her translation of *Te dejo el mar* explains the italicized words represent Riera’s intent to, “reproducir el habla de las gentes del pueblo cuando intentan expresarse en una lengua que no es la suya

que no me encontraba bien y me ponían excusas de que todo el santo día limpiaba y ordenaba y tiraba cosas que una mujer *conforme* hubiera guardado como tesoros” (194).

They do not realize that Joana chose to throw away postcards from her deceased husband because she is illiterate. Joana feels displaced and without an identity because she no longer has a home of her own.

“Como si el miedo” is the last story of the section ‘Bestia de carga’. The elderly Antonieta remembers that her beauty was once a source of great pride for her family. She is pleased that she never married and remained a virgin, “Yo, *gracias* a Dios, soy virgen, ¿qué se piensa?, eso no lo puede *desir* todo el mundo, ¿eh? Disgustos me ha costado, créame” (198). Antonieta relates a story of how one evening she was followed by a stranger. Immediately after the incident, she took extra caution by locking her doors. Now she anticipates an encounter with this man:

. . . al cabo de un par de semanas de pasar *ansia*, el
miedo *se me fue* del todo . . . incluso me hubiera gustado, después
de tanto esperar, *sentir* una noche el clic de los dientes de una llave
entrando en la *serradura* . . . No sé, es como si después de aquel
encuentro, el susto y el miedo *se me hubieran ido* para siempre.

(200)

Female narrative voices in Catalan highlight the failure of the fascist program to impose homogeneity on Spain (Resnick 113). Riera’s characters verbalize the struggles

propia. De la mezcla entre el castellano y mallorquín sale un híbrido que alguien ha denominado ‘castellorquín’” (42).

of the poor in the stories “Arrugas” and “El detergente definitivo”. Martín Gaite and Castro also contribute to representing women in the region of Galicia.⁴³

The post-Franco recuperation of Galician identity began in the 1980s as the *movida gallega*. This ‘movement’ marked an explosion of arts that sought to break with a dictatorial past to foster new ideas (de Toros Santos 347). Luisa Castro is one of many writers and artists recognized during these years for their work (347). Galician culture now serves as a thematic source for current prose and cinema. In 1999 *¿Qué me quieres, amor?*, a collection of stories by Galician writer Manuel Rivas, was adapted into the film *La lengua de las mariposas*. In 2005, *Mar adentro*, directed by the Galician Alejandro Amenábar, won an academy award for best foreign film. Now that regional culture is widely accepted, Castro hopes to write a novel in Galician.⁴⁴

Not only recent literature and film celebrate Galicia and its people. In a posthumous publication of lectures by Martín Gaite, *Pido la palabra* (2002), the essay entitled, “Galicia en mi literatura” explains the influence the region has had on her upbringing and writing.⁴⁵ *Lo gallego*, for Martín Gaite, is not only an intrinsic characteristic of her novels that take place in the region but is synonymous with the dynamic between reality and fantasy (122).⁴⁶ The lack of conclusions in the author’s novels is the result of a desire to tinker with ambiguities and all that lies outside of patriarchal definitions. In the closing lines of *Entre visillos*, all the reader can be assured

⁴³ Castro wrote both *El secreto de la lejía* and *Viajes con mi padre* in Spanish and has published poetry in her native Galician.

⁴⁴ “Encuentros digitales: Luisa Castro” 5 of February 2003
<http://www.elmundo.es/encuentros/invitados/2003/02/58/index.html>.

⁴⁵ This edition does not include the dates of each lecture.

⁴⁶ Martín Gaite wrote three novels that take place in San Lorenzo de Piñor, Galicia: *Las ataduras* (1960), *Retahilas* (1974), and *El pastel del diablo* (1985).

of is that Julia boards a train for Madrid. There is no indication whether Natalia will succeed in convincing her father to permit her to attend college or if Pablo Klein will continue to teach in the town. Martín Gaite challenges order through the childhood fantasies of C. in *El cuarto de atrás*, “Yo soñaba con vivir en una buhardilla donde siempre estuvieran los trajes sin colgar y los libros por el suelo, donde nadie persiguiera a los copos de polvo que viajaban en los rayos de luz” (*El cuarto* 78). In terms of geography, Galicia was a place for Martín Gaite where she was not expected to follow societal guidelines of womanhood:

Las temporadas pasadas allí fueron definitivas para mi vinculación con Galicia, que siempre he considerado como mi segunda patria. Aprendí el dialecto de la región y muchas canciones populares, me volví indómita y poco melindrosa, trepé a los árboles y a las peñas, robé fruta . . . allí aprendí a bailar, tuve mis primeros escarceos amorosos y escribí mis primeros versos.

(“Galicia” 123-124)

Martín Gaite finds that women in Galicia are not as constrained as women in Castilla:

De la madre nos viene a muchas mujeres la forma de entender y navegar la vida, y a eso hay que añadir lo que significa el matriarcado en Galicia . . . Ya en mis primeros recuerdos infantiles anida al contraste que yo percibía entre la mezcla de rigidez y sumisión a la norma propia de las mujeres de Castilla y ese despejo e independencia de las aldeanas

gallegas que tomaban decisiones sin consultar al marido,
trabajaban la tierra, trotaban por los caminos y tenían una moral
sexual mucho más amplia. (123-131)

Galician women maintained a freedom that withstood Franco's dictatorship.

Martín Gaite speaks of the “matriarcado de Galicia” which goes beyond her ancestry to refer to literary heritage. Of particular importance is Rosalía de Castro’s *La hija del mar* (1859), whose female protagonist leads a boy on a walk, “se invierten los papeles y ella se hace dueña de la aventura y de la situación, convirtiéndose en Virgilio de su atribulado compañero” (130).⁴⁷ Martín Gaite marvels at the fact that although she did not read *La hija del mar* until after she wrote *Las ataduras* (1960) or *El pastel del diablo* (1985), the girl-guide trope is present in these novels. The common heritage between Rosalía de Castro and Martín Gaite inspires the creation of similar independent characters (132).

Luisa Castro also refers to Rosalía de Castro as one of her most admired writers.⁴⁸

The work of Luisa Castro combines the recuperation of regional identity along with the encouragement of female agency. Martín Gaite is quoted as saying of Castro’s work, “es un salto hacia delante” (qtd. in Rodríguez, “Luisa” 100). In *Viajes con mi padre* Luisa’s grandmother María is a helpful source for discovering her family history. The grandmother, unlike Luisa’s mother Rosa, is willing to share stories of the past:

A falta de datos que mis padres no me
suministraban. . . mi abuela María. . . me contaba historias,

⁴⁷ Rosalía de Castro (1837-1885), a feminist and nationalist, was primarily responsible for the resurgence of Galician literature in the nineteenth century. She is most known for her poetry but also wrote novels.

⁴⁸ Castro expresses her appreciation for Rosalía de Castro in *Diarios de los años apresurados* (Madrid: Hiperión, 1998).

no sólo las reales o inventadas sobre un padre que sabía escribir, sino historias muy viejas que ella había oído de su madre, y su madre de su madre, y que habían llegado a ella en forma de romance, en versos de ocho sílabas y en gallego castellano, la misma lengua de Alfonso X el Sabio. (183)

There is a recuperation of identity that the grandmother extends to her granddaughter Luisa, who often travels to Santiago de Compostela to research her family lineage. Luisa is in the process of recovering a history her parents chose to ignore, “Hay gente que habla de su pasado. Ellos, no. El pasado no les despierta el menor interés, y menos el suyo. Mi padre nació el año en que terminó la guerra y mi madre tres años después . . . Y lo de la guerra lo pongo yo, a ellos nunca se les ocurriría relacionar su nacimiento con un hecho histórico” (10). The parents’ desire to erase the past is potentially detrimental for their daughter who is being denied knowledge of her family. The grandmother has a different perspective because she was born before the Civil War and has more positive memories of the past. The telling of *romances* is valuable because it represents a tradition of orality maintained by women. Furthermore, grandmother and granddaughter find a common bond that strengthens cultural identity.

The novels studied in this chapter voice women’s experiences of the realities of family life. Talking of incest contributes to the readings of “contrapelo” or “against the grain” that validate individual perspectives as opposed to hegemonic definitions of ‘History’. The novels of Martín Gaite, Alós, García Morales, Riera, and Castro expose women’s increasing access to agency. Martín Gaite’s early work has a style that does not overtly criticize the patriarchy because caution was necessary to avoid censorship.

Although Alós's language was considered inappropriate for a woman, she had more liberty to expose the political problems of the time since she never actively participated in literary circles as did Martín Gaite. García Morales, Riera, and Castro take advantage of the freedoms Alós and Martín Gaite did not have in their first novels to examine family life in regions of Spain that were dismissed for nearly forty years. Feminism is the ideological vehicle by which women can criticize the symbolic order and the prescriptions that controlled women. Plural definitions of the family by these Spanish women writers demythify dictatorial portrayals of the familial unit.

It becomes apparent that to gain independence individuals must separate themselves from the family. Pablo advises his pupil Nati in *Entre visillos*, “que no se dejara aniquilar por el ambiente de la familia, por sentirse demasiado atada y obligada por el afecto a unos otros. Que la sumisión a la familia perjudica muchas veces” (214). In *Argeo ha muerto, supongo* Jano reflects back on her childhood and realizes the myths she once believed:

Quizá, me vinieron a la cabeza frases que había
oído sobre la familia: que era el refugio de las personas,
que se trataba de la primera célula de la sociedad y, entonces,
entendí, de alguna forma, esa célula como un bloque, como una
especie de isla soleada y cubierta de árboles protectora. (29)

In *El Sur* Rafael tells his daughter Adriana, “Cuando seas mayor, no te cases ni tengas hijos, si es que quieres hacer algo de interés en la vida” (28). The message to escape domination by family grows stronger in the late twentieth-century as Spain makes the transition to democracy and women are recognized as equal to men in the nation.

África, the protagonist in Castro's *El secreto de la lejía* (2001), severs ties with her family in Galicia and starts a new life in Madrid as a journalist. África's experience correlates to the overall portrayal of the family in the post-Franco novel. Jo Labanyi observes that as the twentieth century draws to a close there is a stress in narrative of the breakdown of relations with parents ("Narrative" 155). The protagonist of each novel studied in this chapter leaves her family and is then able to return to evaluate her experiences and articulate her struggles. After ten years in Madrid, África's mother encourages her to return home. África reflects, "No sabía si quería volver a mi casa o no. La apatía y el cansancio se habían adueñado en mí. Había entrado obligada en aquel lugar y ahora tenía que abandonarlo" (233). África creates an independent life for herself in Madrid and finds friends to substitute her biological family. Nonetheless, she feels the same pull to return to her family home that Eulalia of *Retahillas*, Adriana of *El Sur*, and Luisa of *Viajes con mi padre* also experience.

By leaving their families, women are able to define their own subjectivity. They are able to return home but are no longer trapped by circumventions because they have already established themselves as independent subjects. The female protagonist is witness to the fact that families are institutions that often are brought down because they exist on a precarious power structure. Martín Gaite, Alós, and Castro exemplify in their prose that there is a female tradition or matriarchy that withstands patriarchal strategies of domination in order to voice women's experiences.

Chapter 2 Beyond the Backroom

For the longest time women have been associated with nature and nurture, men with culture, commerce and war; women have procreated, men created. But even the most stubborn gender construction can be resisted.

Liana Borghi “Space and Women’s Culture”
Thinking Differently: A Reader in European Women’s Studies

Spanish women writers, over the span of fifty years, portray women’s efforts to reject stasis in order to act independently in society. Chapter three examines the female protagonist as she leaves her home to become an active participant in the public sphere. The *chica rara* begins her appropriation of space in the home and later in her community. The title ‘Beyond the Backroom’ references Martín Gaite’s *cuarto* in her novel *El cuarto de atrás* (1978) but extends its beyond interior spaces in order to analyze women’s experiences in the city.

In 2003 a conference, “El espacio en la narrativa moderna en lengua española” was held in Budapest, Hungary. There were two presentations on Spanish women writers, Ana María Matute and Lucía Etxebarría, but neither entered into the dialogue of feminist theory of space.⁴⁹ This chapter acknowledges some current feminist theories of space discussed by North American scholars Catherine Bellver and Marsha S. Collins

⁴⁹ Réka Vastag “El espacio en los cuentos de Ana María Matute” and Rafael Climent Espino, “Espacio enajenante y espacio reivindicativo en Amor, curiosidad, prozac y dudas de Lucía Etxebarría.” See Works Cited.

and applies their feminist analysis of space in Martín Gaite's *Entre visillos* to other Spanish women writers.⁵⁰

The first section, “Ángel del hogar No Longer” begins with an analysis of Martín Gaite's essay “Tiempo y lugar”. She believes that space, particularly the interiors of the home, serve as containers of memories so she draws on Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*. Space can be in Bachelard's view, “felicitous” when young women have access to private spaces of their own. The discovery of an attic, closet, or small corner in a house initiates a process of self discovery because privacy allows the *chica rara* an escape from her responsibilities as daughter, sister, or future spouse. However, the home can also be a container of violence, as we see in García Morales's *El Sur* (1985) and Alós's *Argeo ha muerto, supongo* (1982). The *chica rara*'s survival relies on her determination to create her own space in the home.

Two of the novels studied here-- Martín Gaite's *Entre visillos* (1958) and *Retahilas* (1978), and García Morales's *El Sur* (1985)-- feature a young woman's entrance into her father's or grandfather's library or office as an attempt to usurp knowledge historically denied to women. In other novels, such as Alós's *Los cien pájaros* (1963) and Castro's *Viajes con mi padre* (2003), the entire home becomes a female space where the mothers take initiative to support the family economically and work to build proper homes. The maternal figures rule in their own right rather than *portavoces* of the patriarchy, making the paternal figures inconsequential secondary characters.

⁵⁰ See Works Cited.

The next section, “Entry into the City” examines public space by first focusing on the *condición ventanera* as explained by Martín Gaite in her essay “Mirando a través de la ventana” (1987). A woman’s gaze outward to the public sphere is her first step toward becoming an active participant in society. The city in many novels of Spanish women writers represents opportunities for freedom. Repeatedly, the experience of city life, whether it be Santiago de Compostela in Castro’s *Viajes con mi padre* (2003) or Sevilla in García Morales’s *El Sur* (1985), elicits words that evoke freedom and discovery. The excitement of experiencing the city comes from the fact that ,historically, women had extremely limited access to public space. Women’s presence and activity in the city transforms the urban sphere from an exclusively male arena into a site of female knowledge. The *chica rara* gains a sense of power that she would have never experienced had she remained ‘*entre visillos*’.

THE GENDER OF SPACE

What follows is a brief review of feminist spatial theory that informs the analysis of the *chica rara*’s appropriation of space. From an early age, boys and girls learn to engage space through socialization, thereby establishing their roles in society. Leslie Kanes Weisman explains:

Boys are raised in our society to be spatially dominant. They are encouraged to be adventurous, to discover and explore their surroundings, and to experience a wide range of environmental settings. They learn how to claim more space than girls through their body posture (boys' arms and

legs spill over the sides of chairs while girls sit in restrained ‘ladylike’ positions) . . . Girls are raised in our society to expect and accept spatial limitations. From early childhood their spatial range is restricted to the ‘protected’ and homogeneous environment of the home and immediate neighborhood. They are taught to occupy but not to control space.

(24)

The outcome of the different ways boys and girls are socialized is that men exercise more mobility than women in their environment. Men and women’s behavior is a result of the gender divide that society has instilled in them. Of the five writers studied in this project, Martín Gaite examines most closely the dichotomy between male and female space. *Entre visillos* (1958) is a testament to how in post-War society men and women maintained designated areas of the home as well as public places like the *Casino*.

Foucault speaks of societal polarities in a lecture entitled “*Des espaces autres*” (1967):

Our life is still governed by a certain number of oppositions that remain inviolable that our institutions and practices have not yet dared to break down. These are oppositions that we regard as simple givens: for example between private space and public space, between family and social space, between cultural space and useful space, between leisure and that of work. (23)

Spanish women writers do indeed dare to ‘break down’ the oppositions that their characters confront during the post-War years and the transition period. Spanish women writers problematize several societal binaries: inside/outside, public/private,

masculine/feminine. They describe how the *chica rara* succeeds in functioning both within the home and in the public sphere, thus erasing societal codes that exclude unaccompanied females from walking freely in public.

This discussion of space and how women engage their environment draws on the feminist geography of Gillian Rose's *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge* (1993). Rose reminds us that the purpose of feminist geography is to dismantle the dualisms that exist in society "because such dualisms are always bound in the power relations of a society" (48). The fundamental binary is the polarity between masculine/feminine that neither time-geography or humanistic geography succeeds in resolving (48).

Time-geography is the study of the activity of the subject, presumed to be masculine by some geographers, in public as he makes his way through behavior constraints to carry out his daily routine.⁵¹ The conflict that feminist geographers find with this type of study is that time-geography assumes that all space is "white, bourgeois, heterosexual, masculine public space" (39). Furthermore, time-geographers, "deny other possibilities, including an Other; the domestic is not addressed as the Other of public space--- it is ignored" (39-40). A feminist reworking of time-geography includes the "banal activities of everyday life"(25). The seemingly 'banal' activities of female characters such as trespassing into the grandfather's library (*Retahílas*) or creating a secret play space (*El cuarto de atrás*, *El sur*, *La tía Águeda*) are the actions that will

⁵¹ As explained in the introductory chapter, there are three constraints to a subject's activity: 1) capacity constraints (physical limits, need to eat and sleep, transportation), 2) coupling constraints (places where people meet each other) and 3) authority constraints (speed limits, legal age to consume alcohol) (Rose 22).

inspire the ultimate transgression of leaving the home. The *chica rara*'s activity in the home complicates the assumptions of space made by time-geographers that the domestic sphere is not a valuable topic of investigation.

Humanistic geography intends to acknowledge two key topics that time-geography ignores: women and activities inside the home. Place is the focus for humanistic geography, rather than space (represented through scientifically rational measurements of location), because humanistic geographers are concerned with the emotional responses that people exhibit toward a physical location (43). Feminist geographers criticize humanistic geographers because they “feminize” the home and do not consider women as “complex and diverse social subjects” (41). Humanistic geographers fail to address the differences among women and this failure “erases women, not by ignoring all that is associated with them, but by engendering its explicit Other through masculinist notions of Woman” (45). My discussion of women’s experiences in different geographic regions intends to avoid generalizations of women in favor of understanding the diversity of women’s experience in Spain.

Rose explains the naïve perspective of masculinist geography, “Geographers believe that space can always be known and mapped; space is understood as absolutely knowable. That is what its transparency, its innocence, signifies: it is infinitely knowable; ‘there are no hidden corners into which time-geography cannot penetrate’” (38). The results of rethinking time and humanistic geography in feminist terms posits that, “space itself--- and landscape and place likewise--- far from being firm foundations for disciplinary expertise and power, are insecure, precarious and fluctuating. They are destabilized both by the internal contradictions of the geographical desire to know and by

the resistance of the marginalized victims of that desire” (Rose 160). The *chica rara*’s desire to leave the home destabilizes patriarchal definitions of women’s spaces as strictly domestic and her entry into the public sphere claims exterior space for women.

ÁNGEL DEL HOGAR NO LONGER

The *ángel del hogar*, angel of the house, is a nineteenth-century trope that defines a woman as a martyr for her family, “as a mother she is the light and sweetness of the family, as a wife the vale of tears of her husband, as a daughter, an angel who keeps watch and prays for the lovingness and peace of the home” (qtd. in Nash 28). The narration of the *chica rara* is a backlash against Spain’s tradition of keeping women within the confines of the home. Catherine Bellver reminds us of the historical relationship between women and enclosures in Spain, “a country entrenched in medieval Christian morality and overlaid with an Arabic perspective on gender, women were long hidden behind a variety of coverings: veils, jalousies, screens, bars, curtains, fans” (39). This section examines how Spanish women writers counter-narrate the image of the *ángel del hogar* and how women appropriate the patriarchal home in order create authentic spaces for themselves.

In Alós’s *Argeo ha muerto, supongo* (1982), Jano describes her state of ‘imprisonment’ in her mother-in-law’s home, “En casa de la señora Oeste toda estaba hecho, el más insignificante de los rincones aparecía inmaculado, perfectamente ordenado. La cocina era una especie de santosantórum donde sólo pudiera entrar la cocinera y oficial de sacerdotisa la Bonifacio. . . Me sentía como en una cárcel, llena de

rejas, como una prisionera” (207-210). Elvira, one of the main characters of Martín Gaite’s *Entre visillos* (1958) also speaks of the suffocating environment of her home, “A la madre le gustaba que estuvieran los balcones cerrados, que se notara al entrar de la calle aquel aire sofocante y artificial” (122). Elvira’s mother wants visitors to realize that their home is a place of mourning for her husband; however, all ‘proper’ girls experience a state of enclosure whether or not their family is in bereavement. Considering the oppression suffered by women in the home, it is surprising that Martín Gaite applauds the masculinist spatial theory of Gaston Bachelard in *The Poetics of Space*.

Martín Gaite celebrates the work of Bachelard in her essay “*Tiempo y lugar*” because her views on the function of the home parallel Bachelard’s theory that an interior serves to store memories and allows for daydreaming, “the house shelters day-dreaming, the house protects the dreamer, the house allows one to dream in peace” (6). The novel *El cuarto de atrás* (1978) serves as an example of the similarities found in the works of both Martín Gaite and Bachelard. C. says of the ‘backroom’, “me lo imagino también como un desván del cerebro, una especie de recinto secreto lleno de trastos borrosos, separado de las antecámaras más limpias y ordenadas de la mente por una cortina que sólo se descorre de vez en cuando; los recuerdos que pueden darnos alguna sorpresa viven agazapados en el cuarto de atrás” (81). Alós expresses a similar sentiment in *Argeo ha muerto, supongo* (1982). Jano reflects how the old pillows, furniture, and objects hold memories, “fueron testigos un día de vidas, de alegrías y de penas que acaso ya nunca más volverían a ser. En ellos se habían sentado, dormido, gozado, sufrido, habían nacido y muerto quién sabe qué personas, hombres y mujeres, que yo nunca conocería” (96).

Although there are commonalities between the above novels and *The Poetics of Space*, Martín Gaite does not consider Bachelard's failure to acknowledge women's experience of space. Bachelard states in *The Poetics of Space* (1958), "Indeed, the images I want to examine are the quiet simple images of felicitous space . . . on the other hand, hostile space is hardly mentioned in these pages" (xxxv-xxvi). To dismiss "hostile space" is to ignore the analysis of women's state of domestic imprisonment in the narrative of Spanish women writers. Bachelard does not consider women's frustration as the reader sees expressed by Eulalia in *Retahílas* "no aguantaba esta casa ni los noviazgos ni los matrimonios ni nada que entrañara compromiso, estaba tan empapada de deseo de romper amarras, de cancelar toda fidelidad al pasado y al mundo establecido que veía muros y cerrojos por todas partes" (104).

Bachelard describes the home as a man's world, "In the life of a man, the house thrusts aside contingencies, its councils of continuity are unceasing. Without it, man would be a dispersed being. It maintains him through the storms of the heavens and through those of life. It is body and soul"(7). For Bachelard women do not have an identity that goes beyond their domestic duties:

A house that shines from the care it receives appears to have been rebuilt from the inside; it is as though it were new inside. In the intimate harmony of walls and furniture, it may be said that we become conscious of a house that is built by women, since men only know how to build a house from the outside, and they know little or nothing of the "wax" civilization . . . Through housewifely care a house recovers not so much its originality as its origin. And what a great life it would be

if, every morning, every object in the house could be made anew by our hands, could ‘issue’ from our hands. (68-69)

The “wax” civilization refers to women’s domestic responsibilities which is one of the main issues that Spanish women writers criticize in their prose. In the same essay “Tiempo y lugar” where Martín Gaite applauds Bachelard’s work, she observes how literature narrates how women rebel against the society that imprisons them:

A partir de la novela del XIX, esta actitud de insumisión a las reglas que rigen la comunidad suele ser sustentada por una mujer, que poco a poco va marcando la pauta literaria de la heroínas rebeldes. No es otro el tema central de *Madame Bovary*, con todas las Anas Ozores y Anas Kareninas que se le quieran añadir hasta nuestros días, porque proliferan de continuo las secuelas dejadas por el ‘bovarismo’. Quien esté libre de pecado, que tire la primera piedra, yo desde luego no la voy a tirar, porque ahí tienen ustedes mi primera novela *Entre visillos*, donde es la ciudad misma y sus convenciones las que, al convertirse en cárcel para Natalia y Elvira, alimentan en ellas sus sueños de vivir una vida diferente. El libro en una primera redacción se titula precisamente *Cárcel de visillos*, pero luego me pareció demasiado explícito. (400)

Martín Gaite realizes her contribution to the tradition of *bovarismo* yet she does not extend herself to the point of critiquing masculinist theories in her essay. Martín Gaite only cites from Bachelard what is complimentary to her novels, foregoing criticism of his work to avoid controversy. Describing herself as *modosa* when it comes to

feminism, she takes on a similar approach toward Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*. It is a safe decision on her part to establish parallels between her novels and Bachelard's theories without underscoring what many Spanish women writers would find remiss in *The Poetics of Space*.

One of Martín Gaite's first exposures to feminist theories of space came in 1980 when she traveled to New York. She discovered Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and describes her experience of reading this text in her introduction to *Desde la ventana* (1987), "nunca como aquella tarde me he dado cuenta del privilegio que supone para una mujer tener un cuarto sólo suyo y habitarlo como liberación, no como encierro" (12). It is surprising that Martín Gaite did not read Woolf until her arrival in the United States because *Entre visillos* (1958), *Retahílas* (1974) and *El cuarto deatrás* (1978) all suggest the necessity for a "room of one's own". In *El cuarto deatrás* the young C. fantasizes about having her own bedroom, "Cuando tardaba en dormirme . . . el cuarto se mudaba en otro. . . Además el cuarto era solo mío y, si encendía la luz, no molestaba a nadie, una habitación en el piso alto de un rascacielos, podía encender la luz, levantarme, darme un baño a medianoche" (15). It is no coincidence that Martín Gaite read Virginia Woolf for the first time when she arrived to New York to teach at Barnard. The cultural change from Spain to New York City provides her with the necessary perspective to realize how her own theories of space parallel feminist thought.

Martín Gaite's novel *Entre visillos* is a testimony to the struggle young women faced in post-War Spain for individual space. The title *Entre visillos* describes the physical location of the girls when they gather together in Natalia's home. Although the girls are sitting on the balcony, they are in an enclosed space because the *mirador* is a

windowed balcony. The *mirador* does not open the interior environment but is an extension of the cluttered room where Nati's sister and their friend Isabel shelter themselves from the outdoors (Bellver 39).

The *mirador* is part of a room which is described in a way to emphasize the order that women must maintain, “En la habitación del mirador estaba todo muy limpio. Allí se barría y se quitaba el polvo lo primero . . . Era un mirador de esquina. Tenía en la pared un azulejo representando el Cristo del Gran Poder de Sevilla” (16). The impeccably clean ‘female’ space of the home contrasts with the disorder of the streets that Nati views from the balcony, “La calle era fea y larga como un pasillo. Empezaban a levantarse las trampas metálicas de algunos escaparates y se descubrían al otro lado del cristal objetos polvorientos y amontonados” (14). The juxtaposition between the female space of the mirador and the male space of the street is the very polarity that feminist geography works to dissipate.

The dismantling of the dualism of masculine versus feminine space begins with the *chica rara*'s claim of a private space in the home. Her entry into the family library is a site of transgression because it contains materials that society deems inappropriate for female readers. In *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf tells of her experience at Cambridge when she discovers that women must be accompanied by a Fellow of the College or provide a letter of introduction to enter the building (7-8). For Virginia Woolf women's access to particular places and access to knowledge were nearly equivalents (Rose 147). Today women are rarely denied entry into the “archives of knowledge” but, as Rose comments, “a sense of difficulty still arises in part from a feeling that we are caught within the effects of something strong and powerful which restricts us by claiming

to know who women are. We are physically restricted, but there is also a sensation that the limits of what we are and can be have already been mapped by somebody else” (147).

In an interview, Geraldine Nichols asks Carme Riera about her first experiences with literature. Riera recalls:

En mi casa hay una biblioteca muy buena, pero estaba cerrada con llave, porque mi padre consideraba que una niña no debía leer; sobre todo una niña que tenía tanta afición por la literatura. Entonces, en una buhardilla de mi casa--- es una casa del barrio antiguo de Mallorca, muy grande--- descubrí unas novelas de una serie llamada “La novela semanal”, en donde estaba publicado nada más que --- nada menos que--- *La sonata de otoño* de Valle Inclán; la leí con once años. Me quedé fascinada perturbadísima, sobre todo por aquello que dice Valle de que los pecados de amor deben ser siempre perdonados. Pensé: ¿Qué pecados de amor podían ser aquellos? (187)

It is worth quoting the above passage in its entirety because Riera’s experience of reading prohibited texts and entering forbidden areas of the home is a theme repeated in Spanish women’s narratives. As readers we therefore can conclude that many Spanish women grew up in homes that contained restricted spaces. In *Retahílas* Martín Gaite narrates Eulalia’s first experience with literature. Eulalia recalls her trespassing into her grandfather’s library as a form of rebellion against paternal authority, “separé mis ensoñaciones solitarias de todo aquel mundo reglamentado de opiniones y castigos, le eché leña al fuego, hilo a la cometa, allá va, me gozaba en transgredir, en disimular, en robar libros de la biblioteca” (37).

Females have a similar relationship with the father's office which is an exclusively male space within the home. In Martín Gaite's *Entre visillos* (1958) Elvira enters her dad's office, entering male space, a space of authority and knowledge, "Elvira se fue al despacho de su padre. Anduvo un rato mirando los lomos de los libros a la luz roja de la lámpara. Olía a cerrado" (122). The most valuable part of Elvira's presence in this room is her reaction to her surroundings. Elvira most clearly expresses her frustration of living in a provincial town, "Solamente uno que vive aquí metido puede llegar a resignarse con las cosas que pasan aquí, y hasta puede llegar a creer que vive y que respire. ¡Pero yo no! Yo me ahogo, yo no me resigo, yo me desespero" (55). She is disheartened by her surroundings and fantasizes about life in a city larger than Salamanca. Looking out from the balcony of her home, she thinks:

Los árboles, la tapia, la tienda del melonero, ¿por qué no se alzaban como una decoración? Era un talón que había servido demasiadas veces. Le hubiera gustado ver de golpe a sus pies una gran avenida con tranvías y anuncios de colores, y los transeúntes muy pequeños, muy abajo, que el balcón se fuera elevando y elevando como un ascensor sobre los ruidos de la ciudad hormigueante y difícil. (128)

She has a more mature vision of the world since she was exposed to liberal thought through her academic father. Elvira laments her decision to forgo a trip to Switzerland when she had the opportunity. The protagonist's location in her father's office and the view from the balcony makes her acutely aware of societal strictures.

In García Morales's *El Sur* (1985) the father's study is fascinating for the young Adriana:

Por las tardes, cuando no estaba contigo, sin que tú lo supieras, me dedicaba a rondar la puerta cerrada de tu estudio. Aquél era un lugar prohibido para todos. Ni siquiera querías que entraran a limpiarlo. Mamá me explicaba que aquella habitación secreta no se podía abrir, pues en ella se iba acumulando la fuerza mágica que tú poseías. Si alguien entraba, podía destruirla. Cuántas veces me había sentado yo en el sofá del salón contiguo, y contemplaba en la penumbra aquella puerta prohibida incluso para mí. (9)

The incestuous desire between Adriana and her father Rafael makes her attraction to his office somewhat different; however, García Morales also treats the theme of female trespassing into masculine space as a means by which she claims her own subjectivity.

In spite of the prohibited knowledge that the masculine space of the library or office represents, Luisa Castro presents a library, at the Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, as a female space. In *Viajes con mi padre* (2003) Luisa speaks of the university library as a reprieve from family conflict “aquella biblioteca de la Facultad de Filología que fue el útero materno en el que me refugíe después de mi expulsión del clan . . . me aferré a mis libros de Pérez Galdós y me fui a la biblioteca dispuesta a ocupar mi lugar en la mesa del fondo a la derecha, segunda silla, al lado de Lola Fustes, mi amiga de Ortigueira” (200). Both Luisa and her friend Lola maintain a specific area of the library as their own, which for Luisa is a more comforting than her own home. Furthermore, Luisa uses the university library to research her ancestry since her parents know little and exhibit no interest in their past. In *Viajes con mi padre* the library

becomes a site of empowerment for Luisa, who must take it upon herself to learn of her family's history.

The paternal figures' library or office is not the only part of the home that the *chica rara* claims for herself. Often, unused parts of the house become a location where young women can let their imaginations run free, creating psychic space. C. of *El cuarto de atrás* (1978) says, "revivo el antiguo placer por habitar pasadizos, recodos y desvanes, aquel gusto infantil por los escondites. 'Aquí no me encuentran', eso era lo primero que pensaba, y me instalaba allí a alimentar fantasías; también ahora puedo jugar, los objetos en libertad parecen fetiches, los muebles son copas de árboles, estoy perdida en el bosque, entre tesoros que sólo yo descubro" (20).

In the rural setting of Andalucía Ángela, of García Morales's *Bene*, and Marta of *La tía Águeda* (1995), both find places that allow them an escape. Ángela says "la torre, mi lugar predilecto en la casa . . . solía refugiarme allí siempre que me sentía triste o contrariada y cómo nos reuníamos en aquella habitación Santiago y yo cuando teníamos algo secreto que contarnos o deseábamos sentirnos lejos de los demás" (65). Likewise, Marta recalls "Me gustaba ir a la escuela, era allí precisamente donde pasaba los mejores ratos del día. Aunque en la casa de la tía Águeda descubrí un lugar que me maravilló. Era un desván muy desordenado al que se accedía por medio de una escalera que partía de la cocina. Se me antojaba que si mi tía se enterara de lo que yo hacía en el desván, lo convertiría en seguida en un lugar prohibido" (37). Playing becomes in secret spaces a respite for girls who are not permitted to socialize with their peers.

Luisa Castro and Concha Alós extend young women's appropriation of space through their portrayal of how older women claim their home as a site of agency.

Adelaida in Alós's *Argeo ha muerto, supongo* (1982) and Rosa in Castro's *Viajes con mi padre* (2003) are the heads of household and take it upon themselves to build homes for their families. Adelaida decides to convert an abandoned home and thus realizes a life-long dream. Rosa converts the family home into a summer business by renting rooms out to tourists, thus turning their home into a source of financial independence.

In *Argeo ha muerto, supongo*, Jano recalls the guilt her mother suffered because of their poor living conditions. Part of Jano's childhood was spent in a *caseja*, a cottage for storage that her family used as a home. She says of her mother, "Sentía, creo, mala conciencia por nuestra incomodidad--- son los resultados, según he comprobado más tarde, de la educación femenina, las mujeres se culpabilizan de todo lo malo que ocurre a su alrededor" (88). For Alós, the maternal figure is not just a housewife, unlike Bachelard's image of women, but someone with the capacity to convert an abandoned home and garden into the home of her dreams. Through Adelaida's desire to create a home, Alós reacts to the necessity for women to possess individual space. Jano says of her mother:

Y ahora descubro que es curioso, que *La Cenia* fue para mi madre la máxima ambición: ni el dinero, ni la fama, ni los viajes, no los honores, ni siquiera la luna, le hubiera interesado tanto. En el fondo de sí misma sólo había ansiado una cosa: un lugar agradable donde vivir, donde poder envejecer rodeada por todos nosotros. Eran ambiciones de mujer, es posible que se tratara de eso. Misterios del mundo femenino. (99)

La Cenia described as *deteriorada* and *salvaje* becomes, as the result of Adelaida's efforts, a home where each daughter has her own room. Jano observes how

her mother is transformed, “Esta industriosa Adelaida había estado oculta dentro de sí misma hasta que vivimos esta circunstancia. Era como si estuviera desvelando estancias inéditas de sí misma” (98). In adulthood, Adelaida restores *La Cenia* to fulfill her childhood desire for individual space and in turn gives her daughters what she did not have in her youth.

Rosa in Castro’s *Viajes con mi padre* (2003) exhibits a similar desire for her own space. The novel begins with the narrator’s memories of her childhood home, “En la casa de mis padres, donde pasé el verano con los niños después de separarme, todavía guardo mis papeles desde los trece años” (5). Luisa’s return to Galicia, similar to Eulalia’s visit to her grandmother’s home in Louredo in *Retahílas*, brings a flood of memories from her past. In *Viajes con mi padre* Luisa Castro recognizes Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own* through the narrator’s mother Rosa.

During the summer months, Rosa and her two daughters would share one bedroom so that Rosa could rent out the spare rooms, “Con este trasiego de camas y gentes, el verano se convertía en un apasionante carrusel. No sé por qué la gente necesita tanto espacio para vivir. En nuestra casa barata llegamos a convivir hasta quince almas y en perfecta armonía” (35). Taking in summer renters not only provides financial support for Rosa but is also an opportunity to improve her daughters’ futures, “también iba llenando de contenido práctico su experiencia contemplativa y aplicándola a nuestro futuro”(36). After renting to a woman who claims to works for Iberia airlines, Rosa is determined that Luisa should have a lucrative career in addition to being a writer.

Rosa decides to use her money from the boarders to purchase a family burial vault. Luisa says of her mother's decision, "En parte entendía la querencia de mi madre por su nicho. En lo que yo veía una pulsión ancestral, para ella era una conquista reciente, la de tener un sitio en el cementerio que no se mezclara con los huesos de otros, o sea, poco menos que una habitación propia como la de Virginia Woolf" (150). Luisa realizes that her mother's preoccupation with burial plans is how she personally expresses the desire to establish individual space. Unlike Rosa's generation that accepted its place, young women like Luisa exhibit a desire for space by leaving their homes to establish themselves in the city.

ENTRY INTO THE CITY

The urban space, regardless of the size or population, is a source of power because it is a center of knowledge (Resina xxi). Women's access to this power threatens the historically masculine control of the urban sphere. In *The Sphinx in the City* (1991) Elizabeth Wilson examines cities and how they function to control women. She explains how women's presence in a city destabilizes man-made order:

Yet the city, a place of growing threat and paranoia to men, might be a place of liberation for women. The city offers women freedom . . . True, on the one hand it makes necessary routinised rituals of transportation and clock watching, factory discipline and timetables, but despite its crowds and the mass nature of its life, and despite its bureaucratic conformity, at every turn the city

dweller is also offered the opposite---pleasure, deviation, disruption. In this sense it would be possible to say that the male and female 'principles' war with each other at the very heart of city life. The city is 'masculine' in its triumphal scale, its towers and vistas and arid industrial regions; it is 'feminine' in its enclosing embrace, in its indeterminacy and labyrinthine uncentredness. We might even go so far as to claim that urban life is actually based on this perpetual struggle between rigid, routinised order and pleasurable anarchy, the male-female dichotomy. (7)

In Spanish women's narrative, female characters express a consistent desire to flee both the architectural boundaries of the home and the strictures they represent to seek "pleasure, deviation, and disruption" (7). The early post-War narration of Spanish women's entry into the city is a gradual process that begins with the *condición ventanera*, a state where women find themselves on a threshold between interior and exterior space, "limítrofe entre el espacio cerrado y el abierto, entre lo familiar y lo inexplorado, entre el más acá y el más allá" (Torre Fica 2). Conversely, novels written toward the end of the twentieth century, including Castro's *El secreto de la lejía* (2001), portray women that are already active subjects in the public sphere.

In her essay, "Mirando a través de la ventana" (1987) Martín Gaite inverts the use of the term 'ventanera' from the pejorative meaning into a positive description of a woman's desire to escape the confines of interior space. In Golden Age texts 'ventanera' was an adjective used to describe a woman's refusal to submit to her place in the home.

In *Epístolas familiares* Fray Antonio de Guevara warns against this type of woman,

“Guardaos de ser vana, liviana, ventanera, habladora y chocarrera, porque con las damas de esta estofa y librea huélganse los hombres en palacio de hablar y huyen de se casar” (qtd. in Martín Gaite, “Mirando” 34). Fray Luis de León demarcates the appropriate place for women, “Como los hombres son para lo público, así las mujeres para el encerramiento, y como es de los hombres el hablar y el salir a la luz, así de ellas el encerrarse y el encubrirse” (34).

La mujer ventanera is a threat because her position in front of a window represents the possibility for transgression, “La ventana es el punto de referencia de que dispone para soñar desde dentro el mundo que bulle fuera, es el puente tendido entre las orillas de lo conocido y lo desconocido, la única brecha por donde puede echar a volar sus ojos, en busca de otra luz y otros perfiles que no sean los del interior, que contrasten con éstos” (36). Although Martín Gaite does not believe that there are differentiating qualities between the writing of men and women, she admits that in her work and other Spanish women’s prose there is a common focus on windows:

La ventana condiciona un tipo de mirada: mirar sin ser visto. Consiste en mirar lo de fuera desde un reducto interior, perspectiva determinada, en última instancia, por esa condición ventanera tan arraigada en la mujer española y que los hombres no suelen tener. Me atrevo a decir, apoyándome no sólo en mi propia experiencia, sino en el análisis de muchos textos femeninos, que la vocación de escritura como deseo de liberación y expresión de desahogo, ha germinado muchas veces a través del marco de una ventana. La ventana es el punto de enfoque, pero también

el punto de partida. (36-37)

The motif of the window and women's gaze to the exterior space is a topic that Martín Gaite traces back to the nineteenth-century Galician writer Rosalía de Castro. In her essay "Mirando através de la ventana" Martín Gaite remembers a visit she made to Castro's home in Padrón, Galicia. She noticed a particular window that appeared to frame the outside view of the country as if it were a landscape painting. Martín Gaite questions whether that was window that inspired the following verse by Rosalía de Castro, "Dende aíquí vexo un camiño que non sei adonde vai; por lo mismo que non sei quixera o poder andar" (37). The poetic voice expresses anxiety over an undetermined future which early post-War characters, including Julia and Nati in Martín Gaite's *Entre visillos*, convey in their decisions of whether or not to remain in the home. Julia is caught between the demands of both her boyfriend and father, "Me quiero ir a Madrid, me tengo que ir. Si vuelvo a hablar con él es para decirle otra vez lo mismo. Se enfada y no quiere entender; Miguel también está enfadado, no me escribe, Yo no les puedo dar gusto a los dos" (73). *Entre visillos* concludes with Julia's departure to Madrid to live with her boyfriend. Julia's departure from Salamanca is progress toward legitimizing herself as independent from her family and familial duties.

The *condición ventanera* appears in the novels of Concha Alós and Adelaida García Morales and are increasingly more concerned with their personal freedom, unlike Julia in *Entre visillos*. The mature Jano, in Alós's *Argeo ha muerto, supongo* (1982) expresses the happiness she feels as she looks out her bedroom window. Jano, now a wife and mother, experiences the same relief as younger female characters, when she

discovers solitude. A change of atmosphere provides Jano with the necessary privacy to dedicate time to reading, writing, and painting:

Me sosegaba sentirme aislada en aquella habitación tan alta,
al lado del desván, desde cuya ventana podía espiar a las estatuas
en una nueva perspectiva y, curiosamente, desde este lugar no me
sentía amenazada por ellas, era como si no pudieran verme. Pero
lo mejor de aquel cuarto . . . era la libertad que suponía para mí.

Podía encerrarme allí y hacer todo lo que se me ocurriera: leer,
dibujar, escribir . . . Estar sola y quieta, dormir. Era como un
estudio aislado de la casa, sólo para mí. (217)

As an adult Jano finally receives a ‘room of her own’. The *condición ventanera* appears again in García Morales’s *La tía Águeda* (1995). Marta is sent by her father to live in provincial Huelva after the death of her mother. She describes her aunt’s home, “En seguida sufrí una suerte de desencanto y me sentí inmersa en una atmósfera mortecina y triste” (10). Marta’s perspective changes with the arrival of her cousin Pedro who, because of his gender and age, has greater mobility in the community. Pedro talks to his aunt about Marta’s need for freedom “Estamos en un pueblo y un pueblo pequeño, no está viviendo en una gran ciudad. La tienes que dejar salir un poco, la estás asfixiando” (119). Marta begins to realize the possibilities available to her outside of the home. She looks out her window:

Al día siguiente, cuando me levanté por la mañana y abrí la
ventana, me llevé una enorme sorpresa. Todo en el pueblo, las
calles, los tejados de las casas, estaba cubierto de nieve. Fue la

única vez que nevó en muchísimos años sobre la provincia de Huelva. Era la primera vez que yo veía la nieve. Todo cuanto podía contemplar desde la ventana había adquirido un aspecto de ingrávida, y parecía estar sumido en un sueño profundo. (97)

The reference to snow evokes the color white, which contrasts with the dark interior of the home. Marta's view of the outside is a turning point in the narrative as she learns to challenge her aunt's rules. A young woman's departure from home is the first step toward the deconstruction of the binary between the home and the outside world. Female presence in exterior spaces erases the exclusive association between masculinity and the city.

Early post-War texts of women's experiences in the city narrate controlled activities and events. Bellver comments on the rituals and repetitions presented by Martín Gaite in *Entre visillos* (1958), "The Spanish custom of the stroll with friends, in the city square or along a main street, reinforces the "herd" syndrome that consolidates individuals into groups and promotes unchallenged conformity . . . the circular path of their walk provides a visual image of the monotonous routines and circumscribed movements that governed their lives" (42). In provincial post-War towns, including Salamanca, there are established spaces that women are allowed to frequent: home, school, and church. When women socialize, they travel in pairs or groups because 'ladies' do not walk in public without a companion. Conversely, the male characters of *Entre visillos*, including Pablo Klein, a visiting teacher of German at the institute for girls, have full access to town and often walk the streets alone to explore cafés and bookstores. As a foreigner he has a keen insight into the division between masculine and

feminine spaces in post-War Spain. Pablo is looking in from the outside, thus reversing the condition of the females that peer out to view public spaces from behind the curtains (Brown, *Secrets* 63).

In *Entre visillos* (1958) Martín Gaite juxtaposes male and female experiences of the city by alternating chapters narrated by Nati and Pablo. It is through Pablo's experience that the reader witnesses how architecture functions to maintain boundaries between genders within the interior of the home or in public places such as the *Casino*. When Pablo arrives at the institute where he will teach, he is startled by the dilapidated structure, "chocaba la desproporción y la torpeza de aquella fachada que parecía dibujada por la mano de un niño" (34). The 'oddness' of the school building is a metaphor of the lack of importance placed on women's education. This becomes more evident when Pablo begins classes and describes the differences between the portions of the building reserved for Jesuit priests versus the side reserved for the girls' school. He notices the comfort of the priests' side of the building in contrast to the sparse arrangements on the girls' side, "todo aquel edificio me recordaba un refugio de guerra, un cuartel improvisando. Hasta las alumnas me parecían soldados, casi siempre de dos en dos por los pasillos, mirando, a través del ventanal, cómo jugaban al fútbol los curitas, riéndose con una risa cazarra, comiendo perpetuos bocadillos grasientos" (208). The priests enjoy the comforts of a proper heating system and larger space within the building while the girls must be diligent to respect the space of the priests and not enter the stairwell when they are present, "tocaban antes una especie de gong muy sonoro para poner en aviso a las alumnas y evitar así probables encuentros turbadores para los seminaristas" (207).

The men ‘take up more space’ confirming Weisman’s observation that men are spatially dominant (24).

Women exist in the provincial city of Salamanca as other to the men (Carbayo Abengózar, “Manera” 3). Even within the interior space of the home, men and women maintain distance, as Pablo observes when he visits Elvira’s home for her father’s wake. Pablo describes how Elvira greets him then returns to where the ladies are seated, “Hizo un saludo extraño, una especie de sonrisa al vacío y se dio la vuelta. La amiga la siguió. Se abrió el círculo de mujeres que estaban alrededor de la camilla, y la dejaron pasar en silencio, como a una imagen santa. Yo seguí a Teo a la otra parte de la habitación, donde había exclusivamente hombres” (56).

The separation of male and female space is most pronounced in the *Casino*, where the women’s yellow tea room is separated from the men’s dark, smoky bar by a curtain. Pablo describes the scene, “Vasos, botellas, adornos, largas faldas pálidas fueron quedando atrás en una habitación amarilla. Al fondo había una puerta con cortinas recogidas. La trasporte: era el bar. Me asaltó un rumor de voces masculinas. No habría más de tres mujeres entre los hombres que fumaban en grupos ocultando el mostrador, y una de ellas era Rosa, en el centro de un corro de chicos vestidos de etiqueta” (98).

Rosa is a marginalized figure because she enters a space that is considered inappropriate for most women. She is shunned by the other young women, who, although they enjoy Rosa’s performances at the bar, do not want to socialize with her. Scholars including Collins remark how society castigates women who break the norms of acceptable behavior. Rosa is dismissed as a prostitute since she independently moves

about the city because of her profession as an entertainer (Collins 3). Women who do not fit into societal prescriptions of female behavior pose a threat to the community.

Nati's innovative appropriation of masculine space, at first glance, does not appear to challenge authority as does Rosa's behavior. Nati's visits to the cathedral invert the purpose of the structure, which is to discipline subjects. Natalia's climb to the top of the cathedral tower converts a structure symbolic of male control and power into a means of female escape. Natalia introduces this private retreat to her older sister Julia which contrasts with the behavior of their eldest sister Mercedes. Mercedes sets her watch to the clock on the belltower, "la gran esfera blanca del reloj como un ojo gigantesco" which is a symbolic gesture of her acceptance of patriarchal norms (24). While Mercedes chooses to follow prescribed behavior Nati utilizes the cathedral in a non-traditional way. Natalia guides her sister Julia:

--- Anda, mira que eres, no te pares aquí. Si sólo falta
otro poco como lo que hemos subido para llegar a las campanas.

. . . ---No seas loca--- dijo su hermana, sujetándola---, ¿Te vas a
caer, ¿no te da vértigo?

--- Qué va. Mira nuestra casa. Qué gusto, qué aircito ¿Verdad que se
está muy bien tan alto? Mira la Plaza Mayor. (73)

Julia is overwhelmed and begins to cry as Natalia admires the city from afar. Julia's emotional struggles emanate from the pressure her boyfriend exercises over her and her father's refusal to give her permission to move to Madrid. Madrid represents progress and is more of a target of foreign influences than provincial areas of Spain. The

capital represents access to new ideas and exposure to popular culture, all that lies outside of Catholic Spain.

Women from Madrid who visit Salamanca are viewed as strange by the local residents. Martín Gaite establishes a distinction between the girl from Madrid, ‘la de Madrid’ and the young women from Salamanca. The use of the label ‘la de Madrid’ distinguishes this character from the local young women as ‘other’ and more promiscuous. Pablo listens to a conversation between the girl from Madrid and another young woman, ‘la chica de rosa’, on the train ride toward Salamanca, “la chica de Madrid llevaba sandalias de tiras y las uñas de los pies pintadas de escarlata” in contrast “la de rosa tenía medias” (27). The mother of the young women dressed in pink criticizes the girl from Madrid and says, “Pues va hecha una exagerada” (28). Women’s appearance in post-War Spanish society is a source of ridicule and judgment for those that observe them. Toward the end of the Franco era and beyond, women gain a sense of anonymity which will assist them in avoiding criticism.

Marisol, la de Madrid, draws attention to herself because she is more sophisticated than the girls from Salamanca. The other girls criticize Goyita that she took her friend from Madrid to see the cathedral, “Mira que llevarla a ver la Catedral, mujer, a quién se le ocurre. La tenemos que divertir de otra manera” and Marisol responds, “A mi todo me parece igual lo que construían en aquel tiempo. Vengan bóvedas y más bóvedas” (44). Goyita’s friends are aware that as inhabitants of a town outside the capital, they are isolated from culture. There is a level of sophistication and knowledge that is associated with city life; therefore, when the young salmantinas fantasize about a more exciting life they automatically think of Madrid.

Women from Madrid pose a threat to the virtue of Nati and her peers because they are representative of the progress Franco intended to eradicate. Teresa in *Entre visillos* is an enigma because not only does she live in Madrid, she is divorced. The reader is first introduced to Teresa by Pablo's account of the first time the two characters meet, "Esta chica estaba separada de su marido, que vivía en Madrid con una artista de cine, y le mandaba a ella dinero de vez en cuando. Ella misma me contó estas cosas apenas nos presentaron, y según dijo, tenía como un privilegio el haber encontrado este estado de vida ideal . . . Siempre había en su apartamento otras amigas muy guapas, que se reunían allí y hablaban del amor. Federico me dijo que Teresa era lesbiana" (134).

Psychologically, Madrid is a very distant place from Salamanca. Franco was most successful in maintaining patriarchal values in smaller cities and towns tangential to the capital. The isolation that the young female characters suffer causes them to romanticize their mental images of Madrid.

Martín Gaite captures the adolescent fascination with Madrid in *El cuarto de atrás* (1978) when C. describes the occasional visits she and her family made to Madrid, "el nombre de la capital, evocado desde la provincial, a la luz de una lámpara, teñía indefectiblemente de prestigio cualquier plan que se hiciera. 'Eso, cuando vayamos a Madrid; mejor en Madrid' . . . la gente en Madrid andaba de otra manera, miraba, se vestía y hablaba de otra manera, con una especie de desgarro" (71-76). As an adolescent C.'s experiences are limited by her grandmother who is obsessed with maintaining a perfect home. C. sees Madrid as the very opposite of the order her grandmother insists upon:

Afuera, la ciudad bulliciosa invitaba a la aventura, me llamaba,
todo mi cuerpo era una atena tensa al trepidar de los tranvías
amarillos, al eco de las bocinas, al fulgor de los anuncios luminosos
alegrando allí, a pocos pasos, la Puerta del Sol, y me sentía tragada
por una ballena; se me propagaba todo el bostezo de la casa con su
insorportable tictac de relojes y su relucir inerte de plata y porcelana,
templo del orden . . . (69)

Martín Gaite's positive portrayal of the city and the opportunities available can be attributed to the freedoms she had as a young woman. The author, unlike the young women in *Entre visillos*, was encouraged by her parents to move to Madrid to pursue a university degree. Martín Gaite also experiences Salamanca very differently from her female characters and does not convey the same sense of confinement. She says of her childhood and adolescence in Salamanca:

Puedo asegurar que a caminar sin prisa, trenzando la mirada
con el paso, aprendí en Salamanca. Es el legado más importante,
junto con el del habla, que me ha dejado de herencia . . .
Salamanca despierta al ritmo de mis pasos y sé que me reconoce,
que guarda mi imagen, aunque no diga nada como yo la suya.
En eso se cementen los amores eternos: en el secreto. ("Salamanca" 196-
198)

Martín Gaite writes *Entre visillos* to acknowledge and give voices to those women who were not as fortunate such as Elvira who says, "Yo me ahogo, yo no me resigno, yo me desespero" (55).

In post-Franco narrative the *chica rara*'s entry into the city marks the end of her confinement in the domestic sphere. A commonality among the descriptions of women's experiences in the city is the use of the vocabulary that evokes life and movement. In García Morales's *El Sur* (1985) Adriana is fascinated by the thought of her father's native city of Sevilla, "Para mí eras un enigma, un ser especial que había llegado de otra tierra, de una ciudad de leyenda que yo había visitado sólo una vez y que recordaba como el escenario de un sueño. Era un lugar fantástico, donde el sol aparecía brillar con una luz diferente y de donde una oscura pasión te hizo salir para no regresar nunca más" (6) After her father dies Adriana is able to leave her home. The city of Sevilla is drastically different from Adriana's dark and isolated house in the country. The reader experiences the city through Adriana as she describes her arrival "hecha de piedras vivientes, de palpitaciones secretas. Había en ella un algo humano, una respiración, un hondo suspiro contenido" (40).

In Sevilla Adriana sees that it is possible for women to live independently as does her father's ex-lover Gloria Valle. Adriana discovers that Gloria wanted nothing to do with Rafael and remained unaffected by his control. Unlike Adriana's mother, who was forced to give up her profession as a teacher once she married, Gloria lives alone with her son Miguel, fathered by Rafael, and supports herself through her antique business. The city of Sevilla serves as a source of knowledge where Adriana is able to fill in the gaps of her father's past as well as witness that women can live independently.

In Luisa Castro's *Viajes con mi padre* (2003), the protagonist Luisa experiences Santiago de Compostela in a similar way with her project to research her family history. Luisa's grandmother is the only person that will speak to her of the family's past;

therefore, Luisa decides to travel to Santiago to visit the libraries at the university to do research. Santiago de Compostela is a source of empowerment where Luisa is able to uncover information that her parents choose to dismiss. Luisa's narration of her arrival to Santiago evokes a similar excitement to that of Adriana in *El Sur*, "Era la primera vez que yo pisaba esa ciudad. Luego estudiaría allí, pero entonces para mí era una ciudad mítica, y me sentía un poco subida a una nube según avanzábamos, cada calle era más bonita que la anterior, más estrecha, más antigua" (185). While Martín Gaite writes discreetly of sexuality, Castro equates Luisa's arrival to Santiago as part of her sexual maturity.⁵²

In Santiago Luisa initiates a friendship with Gregorio who is also from Foz, "Mi despertar sexual se había iniciado dos años antes en el columpio de la sesión juvenil de la discoteca, y en ese sentido creo haber tenido siempre un comportamiento normal, pero el verano que empecé a ver a Gregorio mi sexualidad estaba a flor de piel" (186). Luisa takes advantage of the anonymity that Santiago gives her where she is unknown. The city provides the necessary distance from her home where Luisa does not have to perform as a dutiful daughter.

Luisa and Adriana's initial experiences in the city contrast with those of women in Carme Riera's *Una primavera para Domenico Guarnini* (1981) and Castro's *El secreto de la lejía* (2001). Both texts focus on female characters who immediately find themselves in the city and therefore do not have a romanticized vision of the urban sphere. Both novels treat the experience of Spanish women during the Transition period

⁵² The next chapter compares the narrative dialogue in the works of Martín Gaite and Castro.

but from two different perspectives. Riera's novel *Una primavera para Domenico Guarini* focuses on the time period in which it was published. Castro's *El secreto de la lejía* utilizes the hindsight of the mature África to articulate what she has gained from her years in Madrid.

Clara is the protagonist of Riera's *Una primavera para Domenico Guarini*. She is a journalist who is sent by her office in Barcelona to Florence to write of the trial of Domenico Guarini, a man accused of committing murder and destroying Boticelli's *Primavera* at the Uffizi. While Clara is able to board a train and travel alone, this was not a possibility for women in the nineteenth century. Her trip begins with an acknowledgement of the limitations placed on women "a finales del siglo XIX, por un prestigioso periódico madrileño que, en nombre de la moral y de las buenas costumbres, argüía su excesiva velocidad, que su traqueteo incesante inducían, sobre todo a las mujeres, a pensamientos y deseos condenados por la Santa Madre Iglesia" (23). This prejudice alludes to two threats: first that the movement of the train can be a source of physical gratification for women, dismissing men as the source of women's sexual satisfaction. Secondly, a woman's presence on a train challenges the purpose of technology in the nineteenth century which was to facilitate men's mobility between rural and urban spheres while assuring women's stasis in the home (Rose). Women strategize to transgress the definitions of the 'appropriateness' for women. Their travel breaks with the accepted domestic routines thus disrupting, "the banal reproduction of patriarchy in banal activities of everyday life" (Rose 25).

Carme Riera examines the juxtaposition of women's traditional place in society as represented in Boticelli's masterpiece *Primavera*, where the Renaissance fantasy of a

woman is presented as framed by masculine characters, versus women's contemporary experiences at the end of the twentieth century. The painting represents the "visual ideology" that existed in the fifteenth century and continues to be perpetuated at the end of the millennium. A close examination of Botticelli's *Primavera* reveals the imprisonment that women suffered in the supposed 'open' space of nature. In the center of the painting, from left to right, are the three graces (Grace, Charity, and Beauty), Venus, Flora, and Cloris. The six female images are framed by the triangle that the three male figures form: Mercury, Cupid, and Zephyr. Mercury, the messenger of the gods, places his weight on his left side to accent his sword. He is viewed in the moment of plucking a fruit from a tree, exercising his power over nature. The presence of male dominance is most overt on the right side of the painting where the viewer witnesses Zephyr and his attempt to capture Cloris. In *Una primavera para Domenico Guarini*, Laura is a victim of a man's obsession for control that mirrors the image of Zephyr as he seeks Cloris.

Through Clara's articles we learn that Guarini, who suffered a history of mental illness, becomes obsessed with a woman named Laura Martuari. Guarini would fantasize about the women he watches in the streets of Florence until the day when he discovers Laura and decides to dedicate himself to her:

Solía mirar provocativamente a las mujeres, no sólo las desnudaba, sus ojos eyuculaban con precisión exactísima en el untuoso escondite del sexo. Ahora, por primera vez, dejaba a un lado los despojos obscenos que obtenía como trofeos para desear exclusivamente poder seguir descansando la mirada sobre el rostro sereno y dulce, sobre la

figura casi infantil que se alejaba. (84)

The city of Florence is an icon of western culture and Riera chooses the city as her backdrop to examine the male gaze on a broad level. The male objectification of women as portrayed in Martín Gaite's *Entre visillos* (1958) develops in Riera's novel into a criminal obsession. Riera describes Florence as she narrates Clara's walks in the city, "La ciudad está sucia, llena de papeles y desperdicios. Una rata de alcantarilla cruza corriendo por delante de ti" (79). The grotesque image of the city extracts Florence from the idealized imagery of western Renaissance culture in order to expose the continuation of women's confinement.

From the day Guarini sees Laura he is determined to find her again and therefore spends his days walking the streets of Florence. Guarini is convinced that it is his responsibility to protect Laura from the world that intends to poison her, "Tengo que protegerla de los zarpazos de los demás, incluso de sí misma. Hace mucho tiempo que le he regalado mi libertad, estoy tranquilo, satisfecho: seguiré dependiendo para siempre de una mirada violeta, de un iris matizado por las lilas, de unos ojos empapados en glicinias moradas . . ." (89). One evening as Guarini copies Flora's image from Botticelli's painting he realizes that the character's face is similar to that of Laura. He wants to control her and prevent her from ever getting old. Guarini gives the same reason to explain why he destroys Botticelli's *Primavera*.

Clara's articles emphasize the continual dominance that men exercise over women and the threats that women must endure in the urban sphere. Her references to Botticelli's fifteenth-century work emphasize man's intent to 'frame' or limit women. The inclusion of this painting emphasizes the historical place of women as peripheral to

culture. Placing women within the backdrop of nature limits her to a biological role associating her exclusively with fertility.

Whereas Riera's focus is on Western culture, Luisa Castro chooses the Madrid of the early eighties to explore women's urban experiences in *El secreto de la lejía* (2001). Similar to Cristina's departure from her home to live independently as a single mother in Alós's *Los cien pájaros* (1962), it is equally unlikely, that a young woman, like Castro's África, would be able to support herself financially at the age of twenty to live alone.⁵³ The value of *El secreto de la lejía* does not rest on the probability of events but that Castro argues for the legitimization of a woman as a writer in the urban realm.

África begins her narration “A los veinte años, yo ya era una buena candidata a este tipo de desafíos. Claro que lo que voy a contar ocurrió en Madrid, y entonces, en esa ciudad sucedían cosas bastante inauditas” (7). Castro's protagonist is cognitively aware that her experience in Madrid was the push she needed to becoming an adult, “Creo que si no fuera por aquella llamada, me las hubiera arreglado para seguir curándome de mi prolongada adolescencia por una eternidad” (9). África's ability to look back on her years in Madrid and understand the effect they had on her resonates with the often quoted lines from Laforet's *Nada* when Andrea says, “De la casa de la calle de Aribau no me llevaba nada. Al menos, así creía yo entonces”(294). One of the major distinctions between Laforet's novel and Castro's is that in the latter's novel the family is absent.

Upon her arrival in Madrid, África observes how she is viewed as different as well as how the new friends she makes do not maintain certain traditions. She is

⁵³ In *Las nuevas españolas* (2004), Lydia Falcón, interviews contemporary Spanish women to address the present struggles both men and women have with unemployment.

immediately labeled an ‘outsider’ when a taxi driver says to her “sois raros los gallegos” (24). Likewise, África observes many differences including how some *madrileños* reject traditional gender roles. During her first days in Madrid África stays with Belén, a woman she meets on the bus ride from Armor. Belén maintains a full-time job while the boyfriend stays at home to care for their son. Luisa describes Belén’s situation “uno de esos casos en que la belleza la ostenta el hombre y la mujer va a la oficina” (30). África is witness to a reversal in gender roles that she did not observe in her own home. It pains África to see how limited Belén is because of her work schedule, giving her more reason to pursue a career in writing.

Isaac, the man who invites África to Madrid to present her poems, does not come through with his offer. África is relieved to not have any obligations “La libertad, que siempre había despreciado como un artilugio innecesario que sólo se otorga a los desgraciados que no pueden acceder a otras clases de beneficios, se me revelaba ahora como un don. Vagaba por las calles al sol, podía o no coger un autobús, incluso podía ir a ver cuadros a algún museo. Tenía tiempo” (34). As África explores Madrid, she befriends an elderly Galician writer and his wife, Eleuterio and Julia. Julia is the unlikely source of advice for the young África, “Los hombres no quieren a nadie, mujer. Y para qué te hace falta un hombre a ti, tan joven” (65). As Isaac fails to realize the promises he first made to África, she establishes connections with the inhabitants of the city who exist outside popular social circles.

África sleeps in the morning, writes in the afternoon, and spends most of the night in bars, becoming part of the “counter-culture” of drug addicts and alcoholics. She describes the rides she takes on the “búho” (owl), the last bus that runs at night:

Y lo mismo pasaba con mis compañeros de “búho”, rotos, desguazados, que a principio podían resultar amenazantes pero que no pasaban de hacerme trencitas en todo lo que duraba la línea. A las cinco de la madrugada cogía aquel bus en la red de San Luis, me sentaba en el primer asiento y el que se sentaba detrás se ponía a peinarme. Así íbamos en amor y compañía hasta Manoteras, sin mirarnos las caras ni hablarnos, medio dormidos y totalmente borrachos, anónimos y borrosos. (76)

Anonymity is what allows África to be mobile in the city; however, the lack of connections with other people will cause her to suffer. It is Piedad, and not Isaac, who will serve as a model for África as she makes her way into the city, “Creo que el encuentro con Piedad fue para mí un pulso con la ciudad. Había llegado a Madrid arrastrada por una soga, pero ahora estaba allí, con una mesa, una máquina de escribir y varias cuartillas” (101). However, Piedad also warns her of the dangers that exist, “Las ciudades parecen hechas para desconcertarnos, dijo, Odio todo esto, esta imprevisión, esta violencia” (141). The experiences of Piedad and África mirror each other and both suffer psychologically from the confusion and disconnection they experience in Madrid. Piedad says to África, “No somos tan diferentes, África. Lo supe desde que leí tus poemas. Y cuando te vi ya no lo dudé. Somos almas gemelas” (143). Piedad goes on to say “el amor es una porquería” as if to warn África of the men, like Isaac, that she has met (143). This warning is an indicator to the reader that África’s experience in Madrid will not include the compulsory ‘final feliz’ of the *novela rosa* offered to women as a means to escape reality.

Castro's *Secreto de la lejía* is doubly subversive because she presents Madrid during the years of the *movida* from a woman's perspective. In contrast to *Entre visillos* where the men are the ones that have full access to the city, here in *El secreto de la lejía*, África exercises much more mobility. The novel concludes with África's realization that after ten years she is transformed, "Volver a los lugares donde has vivido tiene algo de espectral. Que todo siga igual, los mismos olores, los mismos edificios, cuando dentro de ti todo ha cambiado, toma de pronto la forma de un reproche. O ni siquiera eso. Indiferencia. Es como si la arquitectura de la ciudad, imperturbable, te mirara pasar" (236). Madrid is the backdrop for África's experiences that she transforms into literature.

If we consider the changes that have occurred in Spanish society from the Spanish Civil War to the end of the Franco era, women's efforts to claim space for themselves becomes all the more noteworthy. In the span of forty years women have unlocked the doors that prevented them from education and personal freedom. The repetition of a young woman's entry into her father's office or library is a metaphor of women's struggle for equal access to the spaces men enjoy. In current fiction, the city replaces the library as site that women trespass to benefit from the privileges formally reserved for men.

In the next chapter I analyze how the *chica rara* subverts her society through writing. Many of the characters in the novels by Martín Gaite, Castro, and Riera are writers who create new definitions of female subjectivity. The term *anti-novela rosa* addresses the transgression of the characters who write as well as the goal of Spanish women writers to produce novels that are different from the texts they were encouraged to read. There are many similarities between Martín Gaite's *El cuarto de atrás* and

Castro's *Viajes con mi padres*. Castro, like Martín Gaite, references the popular culture of her day to reflect society's influence on young women. Such commonalities are not a coincidence but a result of a tradition of women writers in Spain.

Chapter 3 The *anti-novela rosa* as Subversion

Las mujeres nunca descubren nada. Les falta el talento creador, reservado por Dios a las inteligencias masculinas.

Pilar Primo de Rivera⁵⁴

This last chapter examines Spanish women's commentaries on writing and literature. Women's narrative in the twentieth century is unique because, as Martín Gaite notes, "surgen en literatura figuras de mujer no creadas por un hombre ni exploradas bajo la falsilla propuesta por él" ("La mujer" 327). Of the selected writers in this project, Martín Gaite, Luisa Castro, and Carme Reira focus most strongly on the topic of women as writers; therefore, I choose these authors to examine women's engagement with literature. The fiction of Spanish women writers disproves Pilar Primo de Rivera's quote that says that women are incapable of being discoverers or creators. In the previous chapter on space, young women trespassed prohibited rooms to access literature. This chapter examines women's production of literature and how it differs from the 'acceptable' reading material for women, namely the *novela rosa*.

The creation of a female protagonist by women is inherently subversive because female voices, historically silenced, take the foreground in twentieth-century Spanish narrative written by women. Bakhtin's theories of the novel inform the analysis of how Spanish women writers utilize fiction to challenge authority. This chapter examines how

⁵⁴ (qtd. in Morcillo Gómez, "Shaping" 51)

the *chica rara* matures into the *mujer novelera* and how Spanish women writers reappropriate the term *novelera* from its pejorative significance into a positive contribution. All of the texts studied in this project reject the *novela rosa* and offer open-ended conclusions in their fiction. Unlike the '*final feliz*' of the formulaic romance novel genre, the Spanish women writers in my study avoid limiting their characters' futures. I utilize the term *anti-novela rosa* to describe novels written from the post-War period and beyond that form a backlash to Francoist ideology. The *anti-novela rosa* is a narrative of female independence and women's changing attitudes toward their reliance on men.

According to Bakhtin, dialogue is an intrinsic quality of fiction because language always responds to the context in which it is written. Each novel reacts to previous narratives while anticipating the novels to be written in the future. Natalia's desire in Martín Gaite's *Entre visillos* (1958) to pursue university studies sets a new example of female agency that leads to África's opportunity, in Luisa Castro's *El secreto de la lejía* (2001), to support herself as a journalist in Madrid.

Julia Kristeva was one of the first theorists to introduce Bakhtin to a wide audience and exemplified how his theories could be used as a tool for feminist literary analysis. In "Word, Dialogue and Novel" Kristeva synthesizes Bakhtin's concept of the novel as subversion. She explains that the novel, "embodies the effort of European thought to break out of the framework of casually determined identical substances and heads toward another modality of thought that proceeds through dialogue (a logic of distance, relativity, analogy, non-exclusive and transfinite opposition)" (56). Bakhtin's theories resonate with the narrative of Spanish women writers because the European

novel, like Spanish women's prose, was historically considered inferior.⁵⁵ The novel functions as a platform for women writers to contest societal behavior codes and an opportunity to appropriate agency for themselves.

Starting in the post-War era, Spanish women wrote in response to a society that marginalized women. The writing and publication of novels that address their historical context produces a meeting place for writers, readers, and society to gather and interact. Martín Gaite, Alós, García Morales, Riera, and Castro establish a continuous discussion of female subjectivity and compare and contrast the progress women have made from the post-War era to the present. Heterogeneity is the definitive idea when addressing the topic of contemporary Spanish female identity which becomes evident when reading several women writers from different generations and regions. As David Herzberger says of Martín Gaite, "she posits a counter-discourse in which history is awakened to the fragmented and indeterminate essence of the subjective" (39). Similar comments can be said of later writers who counter-narrate female prescribed gender roles to remove women from the Virgin Mary/Isabel la Católica paradigm. In the twenty-first century it is no longer permissible to think of women as a single generic group 'Woman'. Women are no longer limited to a singular role, contrary to the ideology of the *Sección femenina*.

⁵⁵ Kristeva comments that Rabelais, Swift, Sade, Lautréamont, Kafka and Bataille have always been and still remain on the fringe of official culture because the novel does not have the same prestige as poetry (Moi 56).

MUJERES NOVELERAS

The rejection of authority by Spanish women writers comes from writing about women's experiences that were historically considered insignificant. Martín Gaite's *Entre visillos* opens with a page from Natalia's diary where she expresses her frustration that her friend Gertru has changed now that she is engaged. Nati is unable to express her feelings to Gertru, thus she resorts to writing in her journal. Nati's habits of writing and studying are a concern for her aunt, who is preoccupied by Nati's lack of friends. Nati complains, "Que estudie en el salón. Que por qué esa manía de estudiar en mi cuarto con lo frío que está, que ellas no me molestan para nada. . . Lo malo es por la tarde, cuando vienen visitas, esas horas desde que salgo del Instituto hasta que cenamos, que son tan gustosas para escribir el diario y copiar apuntes" (216). Writing is a form of rebellion as Martín Gaite explains in her essay "La mujer y la literatura":

Ninguna mujer que decide coger la pluma ha dejado de sentir antes, casi siempre desde la primera infancia, una cierta incapacidad para distinguir el mundo de los sueños del de la realidad. Y la reacción de rebeldía frente a lo establecido —que buscará necesariamente cauces de expresión—también se gesta en la infancia de la futura escritora con peculiar virulencia.

(327)

Nati writes to release her dissatisfaction, which is a habit her aunt and friends do not understand.

Elvira, another *chica rara*, must leave home to find a quiet place to read. She escapes to the river to read poetry and recites a poem by Juan Ramón Jiménez, “Mis raíces, qué hondas en la tierra, mis alas, qué altas en el cielo, y qué dolor de corazón distendido” (137). She later says to her teacher, “Hoy aquí, lejos de la gente y de las circunstancias que me atan, me olvido del cuerpo, no me pesa, sería capaz de volar; pero en cuanto me ponga de pie y eche a andar hacia casa se me vendrá todo el recuerdo de mi limitación” (137). For Elvira, reading is a means of escape when she cannot remove herself physically from her environment. Literature is a vehicle of exploration that helps Elvira and Nati to realize new ideas and access knowledge otherwise denied to them.

In Martín Gaite’s later novels, including *Retahilas* (1974) and *El cuarto deatrás* (1978), the main characters are adult women. Ellen Mayock describes the mature protagonist C. in *El cuarto deatrás* as a “*mujer rara*” (21). She is correct in observing that in post-Franco literature the protagonist is often a mature woman who reflects on her past, “the female protagonist is no longer the youthful and relatively innocent ‘chica rara’, but is instead transformed into many characters: the middle-aged mother, the professional, the adventuring writer, the daughter, the sexually daring woman, the lover-- - all still reflecting characteristics of the ‘chica rara’ (122). Mayock creates the term “*mujer rara*” to define the mature female characters that surfaced in the post-Franco novel. However, it is more appropriate to utilize the term *mujer novelera*, also coined by Martín Gaite, to understand the characters in their historical context. *Mujer novelera*, a term not as often used as *chica rara*, is more fitting than *mujer rara* because it

specifically references society's judgments toward women and their inclination toward writing and literature in Spain. Martín Gaite explains the history of the use of the term *novelera* in post-War Salamanca in her essay "Las mujeres noveleras":

Hoy ha caído en desuso el adjetivo de "novelera" con el que era costumbre calificar, siendo yo niña, a cierto tipo de mujeres. Tardé en captar el sentido que las personas mayores daban a este vocablo. No se lo solían aplicar, con gran sorpresa mía, a aquellas mujeres que mostrasen un particular afición a la literatura . . . sino a las que no se reconocían demasiado satisfechas en el seno de los argumentos rutinarios que formaban la trama de su vivir. (96)

Ironically the adjective *novelera* does not refer to women's specific interest in reading but rather her dissatisfaction with life. The word *novelera* references characters such as Ana Ozores in *La Regenta*, who fall victim to reading provocative novels. By labeling a woman *novelera*, society cautions women against questioning the circumstances of their lives. In Martín Gaite's day a *chica novelera* was tolerated but a *mujer novelera*, "entrañaba ya un juicio más rígido" (97). Young women were allotted a certain amount of frivolity because of their age; however, a married woman was not permitted to doubt her role.

Martín Gaite reflects on her readings of classic novels and the female protagonist she has encountered that were all led to their downfall by too much reading. She realizes that *mujeres noveleras* have always existed:

Vine a deducir no sólo que la mujer novelera había existido siempre, sino que era la misma literatura la que, al rescatarla de la vida, podía haber definido su imagen como ejemplo propuesto para ser rechazado. A mis paisanas no se las tachaba de noveleras porque leyeron pocas o muchas novelas, sino porque en su deseo de escapar de la realidad se adivinaban resonancias de aquellas otras heroínas de las novelas, que se perdieron por leer novelas y soñar con vivirlas. (97).

Women's dissatisfaction threatens patriarchal society because society's foundation rests on women's limited mobility. Reading novels and , more importantly, writing novels became for many women, the “único recurso al que podían agarrarse para hacerle frente y aguantarla” (98). Martín Gaite sympathizes with women's unrest and encourages them to convert their emotions into literature. The narrative of Spanish women writers transforms the meaning of the term *novelera* from a derogatory label to a definition that celebrates women who want to read and write novels that narrate their experiences. The novels studied in this project reflect how women want to be and be seen, unfettered by behavior codes. Through reading and writing literature, Spanish women create alternative identities for themselves.

NOVELA ROSA AS FRANCOIST PROPAGANDA

When speaking of the progress made by Spanish women writers, it is necessary to examine the tradition they wrote against, namely the romance novel. The *novela rosa* genre in Spain began with the publication of the *folletín* or serialized novel in the

nineteenth century. Andrés Amorós, one of the first critics to analyze the *novela rosa*, defines it as, “Sí, ese tipo de novelas que leen en el metro las chicas que reparten paquetes . . . y en las clases aburridas las estudiantes, y en sus casas casi todas las demás. Son novelas de bolsillo, baratas (unas 8 pesetas), cortas (unas 120 páginas), que se suelen publicar semanalmente, editadas en papel muy ordinario y con un dibujo atractivo en la portada” (11). Amorós investigates the formulaic characteristics of the *novela rosa*, with a focus on several novels by Corín Tellado, one of the most prolific writers of the genre who continues to write to this day.⁵⁶

Amorós observes that the male and female protagonists of the romance novels are always the same, “Son jóvenes, hermosos, apasionados. Parece milagro conocerlos en medio de toda nuestra pobreza, de toda nuestra tristeza, de la mediocridad, del dinero, de los días grises, el mal humor y el cansancio de vivir” (16). The male hero is always tall and strong, “de anchas espaldas y cintura breve, musculoso, delgado, de elegante porte, moreno, alto y fuerte, de músculos duros” (18). Conversely the heroine is always younger, smaller, and less privileged to emphasize the hero’s dominance, “Ella es frágil, bonita, sensible, esbeltísima de cuerpo escultórico, aquel cuerpo de diosa mitológica” (18). The female protagonist’s stature places her in the background in comparison to the physically and economically advantaged male protagonist, who will rescue a woman. As Radway explains, “the happy ending restores the status quo in gender relations when the hero enfolds the heroine protectively in his arms” (81).

⁵⁶ *Eres una pecadora* (1966), *Semilla de odios* (1963), *Su traición y mi destino* (1966), *Barreras para el amor* (1966), *No debo quererte* (1966), *La condenada* (1966), *Un hombre ante mi puerta* (1965), *Sólo él la conoció* (1966), *Cruel desconfianza* (1966), *Después de aquella noche* (1963).

Martín Gaite builds on the analysis of Amorós by examining the ideology of the *novela rosa* and the detrimental effects the genre had on women. Martín Gaite sees the *novela rosa* as representative of Francoist ideology. For Martín Gaite, popular literature captures the culture of the era in a way that is more honest and revealing than the ‘official’ definitions issued by such Francoist organizations as the *Sección femenina*. In *Usos amorosos de la posguerra* (1987), Martín Gaite poses the following questions, “Pero bueno, esa gente que iba a la guerra, que se aglomeraba en las iglesias y en las manifestaciones, ¿cómo era en realidad?, ¿cómo se relacionaba y se vestía, qué echaba de menos, con arreglo a qué cánones se amaba? Y sobre todo, ¿cuáles eran las normas que presidían su educación?” (11).

In *Usos amorosos de la posguerra*, the chapter entitled ‘Nubes de color de rosa’ underscores how women fell victim to ‘Cinderella’ fantasies that anesthetized them from the realities of life under a fascist regime, “Cuanto más desgraciadas se sintieran en la realidad, más necesitaban de aquella identificación con las heroínas inventadas por María Mercedes Ortoll, María Luisa Valdefrancos o Concha Linares Becarra, a las que cuando menos lo esperaban les llovía del cielo una ilusión que las hacía sentirse transfiguradas, distintas. El mago de esta alquimia, por supuesto, era siempre un hombre” (144).

Pessimism was to be avoided at all costs because a negative depiction of life in a novel was seen by Francoist culture as a direct critique of the dictatorship. Martín Gaite quotes the magazine *Medina*, “Convienen los libros alentadores que levanten el ser a definitivos propósitos, que nos lleven a ser cada día mejor y que indiquen a hacer algo útil en el mundo; por el contrario, debemos huir de las lecturas pesimistas; es unos de los factores que más poderosamente influyen en el endurecimiento del espíritu” (148). Martín Gaite

succeeded in expressing pessimism in novels by utilizing foreign characters such as Pablo Klein in *Entre visillos*. However, it would not be until the late seventies that Martín Gaite could write freely.

In *El cuarto de atrás* (1978), Martín Gaite names Carmen de Icaza, author of *Cristina Guzmán profesora de idiomas*, as the *portavoz* of the ideals of the *Sección femenina*. Martín Gaite explains:

Carmen de Icaza, portavoz literario de aquellos ideales, había escrito en su más famosa novela *Cristina Guzmán*, que todas las chicas casaderas leíamos sentadas a la camilla y muchos soldados llevaban en el macuto: ‘La vida sonríe a quien le sonríe, no a quien le hace mueca’, se trataba de sonreír por precepto, no porque se tuvieran ganas o se dejaran de tener; sus heroínas eran activas y prácticas, se sorbían las lágrimas, afrontaban cualquier calamidad sin una queja, mirando hacia un futuro orlado de nubes rosadas.(83)

Cristina Guzmán’s optimism was a necessary façade to encourage trust in Franco’s plans for Spain. The *Sección femenina* reinforced women’s traditional responsibilities to serve with the ulterior, self-serving motive of preventing modernization in Spain. Martín Gaite criticizes the *novela rosa* because of its nature to deceive readers. C., in *El cuarto de atrás*, is disappointed after reading *El amor catedrático* because of its clichéd ending: a young woman sets off to pursue a university degree, only to marry one of her professors before she finishes her studies. C. explains her reaction to the novel:

A mí el final me defraudó un poco, no me quedé muy convencida de que la chica esa hubiera acertado casándose con un hombre mucho más viejo que ella y maníático por añadidura . . . tanto ilusionarse con los estudios y desafiar a la sociedad que le impedía a una mujer realizarlos, para luego salir por ahí, en plan *happy end*, que a saber si sería o no tan *happy*, porque aquella chica se tuvo que sentir decepcionada tarde o temprano; además, ¿Por qué tenían que acabar todas las novelas cuando se casa la gente? (81)

In recent times critics, have continued the investigation on the politics of the *novela rosa*. In “The Romance Novel, or, the Generalísimo’s control of the popular imagination” Salvador Faura, Shelley Godsland, and Nickianne Moody explain how popular fiction was written with the intention to force, “a particular moral attitude that would further distance them from the sexual liberalism tolerated in some democratic nations” (47). By imposing specific moral codes Franco controlled the readers through the materials they read, “His state-managed mass media promoted certain types of beginnings, endings, and codes, and these had to be adhered to by any author who wanted to write *novela rosa*. At the same time, any writer who intended to engage with the genre had to follow the demands of an audience that was exclusively used to a constrained literary discourse which did not challenge status quo” (48).

A recent analysis of Corín Tellado’s *Tres amores* (1964) shows that she too made subtle criticism of Francoist social mores (Faura 57). Faura, Godsland, and Moody remind us that Tellado was divorced and admitted to others that she did not believe in lasting love. *Tres amores* ends with three couples traveling by train to an unknown

destination. Faura, Godsland, and Moody explain, “I believe that she offers this particular form of narrative closure because she could not envisage any location in which her characters could be happy forever, and thus omitted one” (57). Faura and others call for a reinvestigation of the *novela rosa* to study the underlying subversion that remains to be acknowledged.

THE ANTI-NOVELA ROSA

Martín Gaite, Riera, and Castro substitute the formulaic romance plot with the narration of women’s engagement with literature. The topic of love does enter into their works but they continue their narrations beyond the ‘final feliz’ to examine what occurs beyond the first kiss. All three authors write to answer two questions posed by Martín Gaite: the first question from *El cuarto de atrás*, ¿Por qué tenían que acabar todas las novelas cuando se casa la gente? (81) and the second from *Usos amorosos de la posguerra*, ¿Cómo eran en realidad? (11). The *anti-novela rosa* is composed of an open ending where often times the reader can speculate on the future of the protagonist.

By placing Natalia’s private thoughts in the opening of *Entre visillos*, Martín Gaite acknowledges a voice seldom heard and dismissed by society. Toward the end of the novel Natalia observes how as Gertru prepares to marry she puts all her books in storage to make room for “cosas de plata, manteles, cajitas de piel, zapatos, vestidos, cinturones” (242). Natalia sees that marriage becomes synonymous with the abandonment of reading and writing. Natalia reminisces about how ,when she first moved to Salamanca, both she and Gertru wrote diaries. She is saddened by the changes she

sees in Gertru but does not share her feelings with her friend, “Natalia se tapó la cara contra el hombro de Gertru y se echó a llorar a desconsoladamente” (243). Natalia witnesses that a woman’s decision to marry is synonymous with her relinquishing of her books. This is unsettling for Natalia because she realizes that she will have to put her dreams aside to fulfill her family’s expectations. However as author, Martín Gaite allows for possibilities by choosing to conclude *Entre visillos* without specifying whether Nati will remain at home or attend university.

The characters of Martín Gaite’s later novels *Retahílas* and *El cuarto de atrás* are mature women who have established their independence. These novels reflect society’s gradual acceptance of women who chose to make a life out of writing. Since both novels were published at the end of the Franco era, Martín Gaite is able to speak forthrightly about women’s experiences with literature. In *Retahílas*, Eulalia states emphatically to her friend that a woman must make a choice to either marry or study, “eres madre o te haces persona” (140). Eulalia exhibits from a very young age a desire to be different.

Eulalia first learns of the world through reading, “llorar desvíos injustificables; emociones precursoras de las que más tarde, al sustentarse sobre argumentos reales, no sólo conocía ya sino que las sentí más falaces y menos genuinas que las de esos veranos de la infancia cuando en cada anochecer venía a ser sustituida por la protagonista de la historia que estuviera leyendo” (38). When her grandmother discovers Eulalia reading her grandfather’s books she immediately feels guilty, “Leer, desde aquel día, se convirtió progresivamente para mí en tarea secreta y solitaria . . . empecé a estar a la defensiva cuando leía aquí, con el oído alerta, preparada para ocultar mi embebimiento si me veía forzada en un momento dado a levantar los ojos para mirar a alguien” (33). The danger

of Eulalia's reading is that she may be introduced to ideas inappropriate for a 'proper' young woman.

Eulalia discovers dynamic female characters in literature that differ greatly from her female relatives. Madame Merteuil in *Les liaisons dangereuses* is the antithesis of Eulalia's mother and grandmother:

Laclos pulverizaba el concepto de amor arraigado en
occidente, su heroína lo era por revolverse contra lo sublime,
contra aquellos modelos ancestrales de conducta amorosa,
al atreverse a demostrar que la única verdad del amor radicaba
en su trampa; hice mi catecismo de aquel libro y de allí en adelante
la señora Merteuil cínica, descreída, artífice de su propio destino. (142)

Eulalia's discovery of an example of a powerful woman is precisely what she needs to encourage her own independence, "yo, después de maduras reflexiones, había decidido no enamorarme nunca y estaba segura de lograrlo" (143). Eulalia fears she will become like her mother whom she remembers as submissive to her father. Although Eulalia intended to remain single, she acknowledges that she behaved like a protagonist of a *novela rosa* when she was married to Andrés:

Todo el veneno de esos folletines de los que tanto he
renegado en la vida se me desbordaba de sus diques y la
marea vengativa venía a incrementarse con imágenes de películas
y lecturas posteriores, una procesión de heroínas pálidas con
los ojos llorosos y el corazón en ascuas escribiendo cartas que
no han de recibir jamás contestación, esperando al amante

Eulalia is just one among a generation of women who fall victim to the *novela rosa*. Martín Gaite challenges the *novela rosa* in her parody of the male in *El cuarto deatrás*. The interlocutor of *El cuarto deatrás* is described as “Es alto y trae la cabeza cubierta con un sombrero de grandes alas, negro también” (29). The reader cannot be certain whether this man is real or if he is part of a dream; nonetheless, C. utilizes her encounter with this unknown man to analyze her past. C. describes her nervousness as the strange man enters her living room:

A veces tengo sueños donde acabo de correr un gran peligro,
tormentas, naufragios, extravíos, y alguien me coge de la mano y me
lleva a un refugio, me acerca a la lumbre. Es una sensación intermedia
entre ésa y la del juego de los ojos vendados: de retorno y alivio.
Querría decirle que ya no tengo miedo—‘Oh, Raimundo, contigo nunca
tengo miedo’—que le agradezco que me haya traído a esta habitación. (38)

However, ‘el hombre de negro’ does not ‘save’ C. but functions to help her to organize her thoughts and articulate her ideas about writing and literature. In an interview with Marie-Lise Gazarian-Gautier, Martín Gaite dismisses the importance of the ‘hombre de negro’ and says his identity is insignificant (53). ‘El hombre de negro’ says to C, “—Que me haya dejado compartir el secreto de Bergai. Se lo guardaré siempre, se lo juro” and C. describes her reaction, “La emoción me traba la garganta, parece una despedida. Nos estamos mirando como antes de que sonara el teléfono, Carola no existe, sólo él y yo” (171). Martín Gaite parodies the dependence women were portrayed as having on men in the *novela rosa*. C. does not fulfill the role of the ‘damsel

in distress' that a wealthy, older man will rescue. The bond between the mysterious man and C. is not romantic but intellectual, based on their all-night conversation about C.'s experiences of growing up during the Franco era that are manifest in the novel *El cuarto de atrás*, "El sitio donde tenía el libro de Todorov está ocupado ahora por un bloque de folios numerados, ciento ochenta y dos. En el primero, en mayúsculas y con rotulador negro, está escrito 'El cuarto de atrás'" (181). C. finds her book where she previously placed Todorov's *Introducción a la literatura fantástica*, thus inscribing herself as a writer.

Martín Gaite examines women's collective experience with the *novela rosa*, "Influida por la lectura de las novelas rosa, que solían poner un énfasis lacrimoso en las insatisfacciones de las ricas herederas, pensaba en la niña de Franco como en un ser prisionero y sujeto a maleficio, y me inspiraba tanta compasión que hasta hubiera querido conocerla para poderla consolar" (58). C. identifies with Carmencita Franco because she sympathizes with her loneliness. As she watches the televised funeral procession of Franco, C. remembers a previous occasion when she first saw 'la niña de Franco':

Esa imagen significó el aglutinante fundamental:
fue verla caminando despacio, enlutada y con ese gesto
amargo y vacío que se le ha puesto hace años, encubierto
a duras penas por su sonrisa oficial, y se me vino a las mientes
con toda claridad aquella otra mañana que la vi en Salamanca con
sus calcetines de perlé y sus zapatitos negros, a la salida de la
catedral. No se la reconoce—pensé---, pero es aquella niña, tampoco
ella me reconocería, hemos crecido y vivido en los mismos años

ella era hija de un militar de provincias, hemos sido víctimas de las mismas modas y costumbres, hemos leído las mismas revistas y visto el mismo cine, nuestros hijos puede que sean distintos pero nuestros sueños seguro que han sido semejantes. (119)

What saves C.'s generation from further victimization by Francoist ideology is the emergence of a woman rarely seen: the woman writer. Laforet has a strong effect on C. because she is Spanish, unlike the foreign film stars Greta Garbo or Diana Durbin, who are remote figures from a different culture. Laforet serves as an example of how Spanish women can be:

Recuerdo que cuando le dieron el primer premio
Nadal a una mujer, lo que más revolucionario me pareció,
aparte del tono desesperanzado y nihilista que inauguraba
con su novela, fue verla retratada a ella en la portada del
libro, con aquellas greñas cortas y lisas. Sentí envidia pero
también un conato de esperanza, aunque yo, por entonces,
más bien soñaba con ser actriz, estaba en primero de carrera
y preparábamos una función sobre entremeses de Cervantes.

(60)

Laforet's appearance is startling to C. because the author chooses to wear her hair short, which contrasts to the heroines of films and popular novels who wore long hair. Laforet's appearance is even more controversial if we compare her to Isabel la Católica, the highly promoted icon of the *Sección femenina*. Images in the news of active women break the pattern of the historical association between the female gender and passivity.

Martín Gaite's novel *El cuarto de atrás* is equally if not more powerful than Laforet's *Nada* because she had the freedom to address societal problems that Laforet did not due to censorship.

C. describes how she first began to write when she would visit her grandmother in Madrid. She describes Madrid as a place, “donde se fraguó mi desobedencia a las leyes del hogar y se incubaron mis primeras rebeldías frente la orden y la limpieza” (67). C.’s visits to the capital ignite her desire to question customs and habits. She is intrigued by the visitors that stay at the hostel on the second floor of her grandmother’s building. C. begins to write of these visits that take place on the second floor:

No venía a nuestro piso, no llamaba al timbre ninguna
visita inesperada de las que yo invocaba en sueños, atribuyéndole
el rostro de gentes con las que me había tropezado por la calle y a
las que sentía portadoras de algún relato insólito, excitante. Escribí
varios ejercicios de redacción sobre ese tema de la visita inesperada, y
algunos no me quedaron mal del todo; desde entonces he venido
asociando la literatura con las brechas en la costumbre. (68)

Writing is not only a means to create experiences for one self but to also create new environments. C. is discouraged by the constant routine in her grandmother’s house, thus inspiring her to imagine the people that visit the hostel, inventing stories.

One of the last sections of *El cuarto de atrás*, is entitled ‘La isla de Bergai’. The title comes from the stories C. and her friend write in secret about a place they could escape to, “Bastaba con mirar a la ventana, invocar el lugar con los ojos cerrados y se producía la levitación. ‘Siempre que notes que no te quieren mucho—me dijo mi amiga--,

o que no entiendes algo, te vienes a Bergaí” (155). In adolescence C. continues to write converting her lack of ‘success’ in love into literature, “Aprendí a convertir aquella derrota en literatura, otra vez será, a intensificar mis sueños, preparando aquella frase que le diría a alguien alguna vez, escribía un poema, nunca tenía prisa, y así pasaba el tiempo” (157). C. transforms her experiences into literature, making writing her most valuable experience.

Linda Gould Levine describes Martín Gaite’s role as a writer, someone who creates new fiction and confirms women as artists. She refers to *El cuarto de atrás* as, “a complex and hybrid form of fiction, which not only reveals those secret spheres of woman’s existence previously absent from literary texts, but even more significantly, confronts us perhaps for the first time in Spanish literature with a portrait of the artist as woman, simultaneously creator and midwife, bringing forth words and memories and reaffirming her birthright as woman and writer” (162). Martín Gaités acts on the advice she offers to women in “Las mujeres noveleras” and converts her dissatisfaction into literature.

Luisa Castro’s two novels *El secreto de la lejía* (2001) and *Viajes con mi padre* (2003) resonate with Martín Gaite’s novels because Castro is equally conscious of women’s experiences with literature. Just as Martín Gaite blurs the separation between reality and fiction Castro does the same in *Viajes con mi padre* where her protagonist writes a story that later becomes reality. Most significant is how Luisa Castro makes reference to popular literature and culture of the nineteen-seventies, similar to Martín Gaite’s techniques in *El cuarto de atrás* and *Usos amorosos de la posguerra* to write about the cultural influences of the Franco era. To date there is only one critical article

about Luisa Castro's novels, "Luisa Castro o la escritura doble" by Béatrice Rodríguez. She describes *El secreto de la lejía* as "la novela abre paso a una reflexión sobre la literatura, sobre el papel del (a) escritor (a)" (106). This article , however, does not comment on Castro's most recent novel *Viajes con mi padre*; therefore, this section addresses the author's more recent commentaries on literature.

Luisa Castro's protagonist África in *Secreto de la lejía* exhibits no hesitation to leave her native Galicia to pursue a future as a writer in Madrid. África's independence is the result of earlier Spanish women's progress in breaking from the confines of the home and acquiring equal rights with men. Early on in the novel África contemplates a future as a writer:

Me puse a mirar al conductor, que en todo lo que
llevábamos de trayecto aún no había mostrado de su rostro
más que el perfil, y pensaba que si algún día me convertía
en escritora, quería ser como aquel hombre, capaz de transportar
a la gente de un sitio a otro sin rechistar, sin necesidad de entablar
conversación con los pasajeros para sobrellevar mejor la soledad de su
trabajo. (20)

Upon arriving in Madrid, África is judged by the people she encounters and their prejudices toward *gallegos*. África defends her origins when others comment about the need to travel to Madrid to write, "Ahora, los escritores ya no tienen que venir a Madrid. En Galicia también hay libros . . . y bares. Además, ni siquiera estoy segura de querer ganarme la vida de esto" (25). In this novel, Luisa Castro establishes a young woman's

identity as a writer in Madrid while simultaneously acknowledging the unique attributes of Galician writers.

One of the first artists that África meets is Eleuterio Costa, an aging poet who admits to África that “la literatura me ha quitado muchas penas” (68). He tells África of his experiences when he first arrived to Madrid, “Había muchos poetas gallegos. A los gallegos no hay nada que les guste más. Tenemos un alma lírica” (69). Castro’s intent to address Galician literature in this novel is her acknowledgement of the *movida gallega* of the nineteen-eighties.

The title of the novel, *El secreto de la lejía*, comes from the advice that Eleuterio Costa gives to the young África. After reading samples of her writing, Eleuterio says:

--- Le falta el secreto de la poesía.

--- ¿Y cuál es ese secreto? --- pregunté, devolviendo el papel
a su sitio encima de la mesa.

--- En mi pueblo había un hombre que conocía el secreto
de la lejía y a nadie se le ocurría preguntarle por tal cosa.

Pero todos lavaban con su invento. Y esto . . . --- dijo
el viejo, aludiendo a mi poema y dejando escapar una
risita burlona--- esto no lava, amiga. (69)

África is very defensive because Eleuterio does not appreciate her poems. She does not want to accept the fact that her writing is superficial and she has yet to find her voice:

Todo lo que Eleuterio me contaba quedaba ensombrecido
por mi rabia de poeta menoscambiada.

---Pues me van a publicar el libro ¿sabe? Cuando se
enteren en Armor no se lo van a creer.

--Me alegro por ti—respondió Eleuterio--, pero en Armor
conocen el secreto de la lejía, no te olvides.

--Ya, y a mí qué me importa.

--Te importa más de lo que tú crees—sentenció mi vecino--
Cuando puedas lavar el corazón roñoso de los hombres,
entonces serás una nieta digna de tus abuelos los arponeros,
una poeta de tu pueblo. Ahora, ¿qué? Si quieres hacer carrera
de intelectual, eso es fácil aquí. Mírame a mí, hasta yo he
publicado un libro. (73)

Eleuterio makes a distinction between writers from Madrid and writers from Galicia. He explains to África that he never wrote to be recognized, a goal she is focused on, but rather as a means to alleviate sorrow. África intends to capture La Tilleira, Galicia in her poems “El tiempo corría de prisa en aquel apartamento de Manoteras, buscando adjetivos y adverbios para acabar de impresionar a Eleuterio con un retrato fidedigno de La Tilleira, una prueba que certificara mi calidad de poeta del pueblo, de poeta digna de Armor” (74). África will later accept that she must write what she is currently experiencing rather than dwell on the past.

África also establishes a relationship with Piedad, a painter, who identifies with África because she also arrived in Madrid at a young age. África is drawn to Piedad because she is the first woman she meets who shares similar artistic interests: “Yo no sé nada de pintura, pero sus cuadros me parecieron espléndidos, poderosos, consistentes. Y

al mismo tiempo sutiles y aéreos. Aunque sólo sea por un momento, el arte tiene la misión de obrar milagros. Aquellos cuadros ejercieron en mí una influencia inmediata. Tuve la impresión, cuando empecé a ver uno y después otro, que estaba ante una gran persona” (92). Although eccentric, Piedad is a positive figure in África’s life and her success in Madrid inspires África to focus on her own work.

When Piedad comments on the truth that África expresses in her poems, she becomes defensive, “—Yo no digo la verdad en mis libros—susurré, sin poder contenerme--, yo no voy por ahí diciéndole la verdad a cualquiera. Y tampoco la pido. Yo no quiero para nada la verdad. Quédate tú con tu verdad” (95). Piedad’s interest in África’s work causes her distress because she as of yet lacks the confidence to receive criticism, whether positive or negative. África knows that Piedad has returned to Madrid after a several year stay in a mental health facility. The fact that Piedad identifies with África’s poems frightens her into considering that she too might be crazy. In retrospect África understands the role Piedad played in her experience in Madrid:

Creo, ahora, que le debo muchas cosas a Piedad, entre
otras mi vocación. Posiblemente, si no la hubiera
conocido mi destino hubiera sido muy diferente. La vocación
es algo que te llama, pero también es lo que rechazas, aquello
contra lo que luchas, de lo que escapas. Adónde te lleva eso
es una incógnita difícil de resolver, y en esa incógnita me
metí yo, con un dinero que no era mío y con todas las páginas
en blanco por delante. (101)

Luisa Castro writes with great honesty about the challenges women face as writers. The metaphor of the future as a blank page represents the unknown when one chooses an untraditional path in life. África is at first alone with her experiences in Madrid until she acknowledges the comfort there is in knowing another female artist, Piedad. Writing is the one constant in África's life and provides her with routine, "Al contrario que el resto del mundo, un escritor siempre está en su casa. Puede no ponerse al teléfono, puede no levantarse de la mesa, pero siempre está ahí, secuestrado entre las paredes de su conciencia" (102). África's greatest difficulty as a writer is accepting who she is rather than trying to meet her preconceived expectations of what her experience in Madrid would entail.

As África becomes more acquainted with the city she becomes involved in a circle of friends whose lives are entangled through love, sex, and crime:

Todo lo que dejaba atrás le hubiera bastado a cualquier novelista para montar una novela. Desde luego, los ingredientes no faltaban. Estaba Isaac el Bueno, estaba Stoneman el Oscuro, estaba Piedad la víctima, estaba Lucía la Mala . . . Madrid me había hecho un buen regalo nada más llegar. Pensaba que con aquello ya podía vivir de rentas por una eternidad, pero que ahora tocaba hacer mi propia fortuna y seguir insistiendo en mi pobre y desatendida historia de La Tilleira. (178)

África does not include herself in defining the characters of her novel because, like Andrea in *Nada*, she is an observer, a witness to other peoples' actions.

África arrives to Madrid with the intention of writing poems of her native Galicia but what she will only discover later is that she must write about the story unfolding before her. She must write of her own experiences in the present moment instead of trying to capture her past:

Es difícil sacarse de encima las historias y darles un final.

Supongo que eso sólo pasa en las novelas. Por eso las necesitamos. Buscamos convertir en pasado lo que sigue siendo presente, un presente eterno. Y, seguramente, a nadie le coge la vida tan de sorpresa como a quién, desde el principio, se niega a ella. (179)

El secreto de la lejía concludes with the publication of África's poems and the republication of Eleuterio's previously censored novel *La cara de dios*. Isaac Alcázar, the man that first invites África to participate in a poetry contest in Madrid explains Eleuterio's past. Eleuterio wrote one novel *La cara de dios* in the thirties but from its publication it caused great controversy. The novel states that there is only one inhabitant in the world and humans comprise many bodies but only one mind. The book was banned once Franco came to power so admirers, including Isaac's father, kept a secret copy. Isaac and his friends share a bond because they have all read Eleuterio's book. Isaac says of Eleuterio Costa, "El era un pionero de la nueva psiquiatría, sostenía que los enfermos no debían ser reclusos. Para él un esquizofrénico era un ser privilegiado por Dios, donde Dios se manifestaba por partida doble. Pero nadie estaba preparado en este país para escucharle" (54). This text was prohibited because it was considered to cause its readers to feel dissatisfied, unsettled with their traditional understandings of God and

existence. The function of *La cara de dios* is the opposite of the popular literature that was written and dispersed to lull society into acceptance of Francoist ideas.

África decides to visits her old neighborhood in Manoteras, where she first met Eleuterio Costa. The driver informs África that a very famous Galician writer lives in the neighborhood. Conversely, when she first arrived in Madrid ten years earlier, Eleuterio was unknown and she was criticized because of her Galician heritage. Years later society's attitude toward Galicia and its writers has changed and the taxi driver informs her, "Le han dado hace poco el premio nacional de algo. Me ha tocado llevarle al médico una vez. Está mal, el hombre. Es una pena que la gente con tanto valor tenga que envejecer" (235). The novel confirms the recuperation of Galician literature after the Franco era.

Piedad also celebrates success with a major exhibit of her paintings. África says, "El nombre de Piedad lucía en letras grandes, y bajo su nombre un paréntesis enmarcaba los años 1983-1993, mi llegada a Madrid y mi salida del sanatorio" (244). Both Piedad and África suffered breakdowns in Madrid that required stays in psychiatric hospitals, "Ella salió de todo aquello al tiempo que yo me fui hundiendo, y lo cierto es que ahora . . . yo no era consciente de ningún sufrimiento, sino acaso de un trabajo hecho, cumplido, de una tarea a la que se me había convocado y que terminé con éxito, hasta el final. Para eso, quizás, me llamó desde la radio. Por eso yo vine a Madrid" (249). We can assume as readers that the novel we are reading is the book that África eventually decided to write. Castro ,like Martín Gaite, writes a novel about the book that is in front of the reader.

Castro's most recent novel *Viajes con mi padre* (2003) is also a reflection on literature and is semi-autobiographical, as is Martín Gaite's *El cuarto de atrás*. As the title suggests the narrator Luisa expresses great nostalgia for her father and looks to him as a mythical figure, “mi padre es un hombre de mundo, y sus primos los Relámpagos son para mí como príncipes de un reino perdido, herederos de una estirpe de gigantes que se pasean por la calle con las manos en los bolsillos y con las espaldas anchas anunciando a lo lejos su majestad” (7). Her career as a writer begins with a writing contest in Alcázar de San Juan, one of the first trips she will take with her father.

The young Luisa imagines her father as a hero similar to Ulysses in the *Odyssey*, enduring trials at sea, “Yo me quedaba rezando en caso pero era él el que se iba con Dios, era él el que se iba a lidiar con la bestia, a purificar su corazón contra el mar enemigo. El ritual siempre era el mismo. Como los toreros antes de salir a la plaza pero al revés, mi padre antes de irse al mar retaba a pulmón abierto a las fuerzas de la naturaleza, se inmolaba” (52) In later years Luisa realizes that her father is not a hero and recalls one occasion when her father returned from the sea:

Celebrábamos una de aquellas llegadas millonarias y mi padre nos colaba por sus piernas cogiéndonos por las manos y volteándonos, mientras mi madre de brazos cruzados nos miraba con un poco de envidia. Se empeñó en que mi padre la agarrara también a ella y le hiciera la voltereta. Fue la primera vez que fui consciente de que mi padre era humano. (90)

Luisa's observation of her father does not affect their relationship and they continue to travel when she participates in writing contests and must travel outside of

Galicia. She describes the walks she would take with her father, “lo que me sucedía con mi padre formaba parte de un orbe de cosas intransferibles, para las que no se había inventado el lenguaje” (106). Luisa’s relationship with her father reveals a reverence for patriarchal culture but as Luisa matures she will reject women’s traditional roles in a male dominated society. Writing is her escape from an environment that would otherwise lead her to a limited future similar to that of her mother.

Although her father is a key figure in her life, Luisa never comments on his reactions to her writing. Luisa’s mother Rosa is supportive of her daughter’s intentions to become a writer. Luisa says of her mother, “La escritura para ella no era una cosa de locos, sino todo lo contrario. Verme sentada ante un folio en blanco era lo que más se parecía a la lucha por la vida, y esas sentadas las consideraba productivas” (149). Rosa encourages Luisa to write and sends her to take typing lessons with a writer named Olivita. Luisa is mesmerized by Olivita in a way that is reminiscent of C.’s reaction to Carmen Laforet in *El cuarto de atrás*, “Olivita era exuberante. Había viajado por todo el mundo, tenía collares persas y mayas, y colgantes egipcios. Hacía nudismo en las rocas y se vestía y se pintaba con todos los colores de la paleta” (151). Olivita is an example of experiences that lie outside of Galicia in which Luisa wants to participate.

Luisa also relates how she was influenced by popular literature and later began to write:

En el último año del colegio empezamos a leer las
aventuras de una joven en un reformatorio, el libro estrella
entonces era *Nacida libre*, y trataba de una adolescente a la
que le pasaba de todo, desde violaciones hasta castigos corporales

insufribles. Influida por esta literatura, escribí un cuento de una niña que llegaba a mi pueblo. (151)

Luisa Castro references the popular culture of the nineteen seventies, mirroring Martín Gaite's allusions to American actresses in *El cuarto de atrás*. Luisa describes the young woman she meets at a writing contest:

Mar era un poco chico. Tenía quince años pero parecía mayor. Llevaba el pelo corto, hablaba con una contundencia que intimidaba un poco, con una seriedad que se rompía con continuos golpes de efecto, chistes intelectuales y gracias muy documentadas . . . pasados unos años me di cuenta de que su ventaja estribaba en que había leído antes a Cortázar que yo . . . Me llamó la atención su soltura y su atuendo: pantalones vaqueros, camisa blanca y americana marrón. Sólo le faltaba la corbata, quizás por el calor. (79)

Luisa insinuates that Mar is a lesbian but does not directly articulate her judgment. Although Luisa has more opportunities than the young women in Martín Gaite's *Entre visillos*, she is still consumed with appearances. Idoia is very feminine and represents what the majority of young girls strived for in the nineteen-seventies:

Idoia era todo lo contrario. Era una chica preciosa, lo que una quiere ser a esa edad. Tenía una melena rubia, larga y rizada, los ojos azules y un cuerpo muy bien formado. Entonces, la jovencísima sex-symbol Brooke Shields interpretaba en la gran

pantalla El lago azul. Para mí, Idoia era una mezcla perfecta entre santa Teresa de Jesús y Brooke Shields. Yo a Teresa de Jesús la conocía por una fotografía que había visto en un libro. Me pasé muchos años de mi vida rezando para despertarme algún día con aquella cara. Pero ese sueño no se realizó y ahora tenía a Idoia Larraiba frente a mí. (79)

Luisa Castro and Martín Gaite both address the culture's standards of physical beauty that were perpetuated throughout the twentieth century. As Luisa matures, she will find increased reprieve in reading and writing because both serve as distractions from societal pressures. Luisa writes a story about a mischievous girl named Clara who she says, "a la que yo trataba de salvar" (152). One day a new girl arrives to class named Clara just as Luisa wrote in her story:

Pero aquella chica se llamaba Clara, como la de mi cuento, y su aspecto físico coincidía en todo con las descripciones que yo había usado para inventar a mi personaje. Era morena, grande, de pelo rizado y salvaje y movimientos excéntricos. Era una fiera a la que no había manera de contener dentro del uniforme. Así la había visto yo en mi cuento y así resultó ser la Clara real. (152)

Luisa ponders the crossovers between reality and fiction. She exhibits a deep knowledge of Hispanic writers and intelligently articulates her views on literature:

No sé si fue Borges el que dijo que lo que se escribe en un papel en alguna parte del mundo acaba sucediendo. Creo que para él ésta era una generación simultánea, y de

reminiscencias platónicas: mientras se escribe, sucede.

Aunque él, como Calderón de la Barca, pone el énfasis en la calidad ficticia u onírica de la realidad. Para ellos el mundo es el producto de una mente que lo imagina, y lo único real para ellos era esa mente. Para mí, cada vez más, lo único real era lo imaginado, y quién lo imagina no resultaba precisamente un dios, sino más bien un reo condenado y responsable de cada una de las atrocidades que primero escribe y, luego, indefectiblemente suceden. (156)

The above passage evokes Martín Gaite's comment in her essay "La mujer y la literatura" where she said that women who write do not always distinguish between between "sueños y la realidad" (327). Luisa speaks of the responsibility she feels as a writer, but is uncertain about her talent. It is the lack of access to examples of women writers that causes Luisa to question her abilities:

Empecé a sospechar que yo no escribía como una escritora, a pesar de mis esfuerzos por pertenecer desde el primer momento al clan de los literatos, sino que mi escritura más bien era como la de mi tía cuando nos mandaba sus cartas desde Madrid, una escritura primaria, no artística. (155).

As Luisa matures, she discovers that writing is therapeutic when coping with her relationship with Gregorio, "y cada vez aquello fue cobrando más terreno y me fue dando más pereza encontrarme con Gregorio, porque la escritura me protegía, y en los

encuentros con Gregorio me sentía cada vez más perdida, hasta que la cosa acabó como acabó . . . De esas excursiones al corazón de Gregorio, yo volvía mareada y trataba de recuperarme en las hojas de un cuaderno” (188). Luisa finds her authentic literary voice when she begins to write of her personal experiences in the same manner in which C. of *El cuarto de atrás* converts her negative romance experience into literature:

Antes de dejar Foz y trasladarme a vivir a Santiago, escribí
un libro de poemas oscuro, un libro que nació de aquellas experiencias
y de aquel dolor. Yo no sé si con el dolor se aprende, no lo creo. Lo que
uno aprende es a convertir el dolor en otra cosa . . . Yo agarré aquel primer
dolor y lo lancé bien lejos, con una caña de cinco metros, y del mar surgió
un libro de poemas amoroso y cruel. (193)

Castro responds to Martín Gaite’s concern that novels often end in marriage by focusing on the aftermath of a relationship. When Luisa realizes that she should write of her own experiences, instead of imaginary characters, she is able to move forward with her writing career. Luisa is a *mujer novelera* because she does not follow the traditional path that many of her friends choose, “En aquella época, a mediados de los ochenta, ya era una cosa rara casarse y tener hijos tan joven, pero entre el grupo de mis amigas ésa fue la elección, una elección anacrónica, extraña. Foz siempre ha sido un lugar de gente al revés. También mi hermana se contaba entre las bajas de esa epidemia” (199). Luisa’s relationship with her mother Rosa is strained by her decisions to focus on her writing. Rosa grows closer to Luisa’s sister because she can better understand and identify with this daughter’s life. Luisa experiences a strong sense of isolation from her family that

causes her to fall into a depression. Rosa's attitude toward Luisa changes when they receive news about the publication of Luisa's first book:

Después de mis arrebatos alcohólicos cualquier noticia sobre mi actividad de escritora para mi madre era una luz verde a la esperanza, porque ella estaba segura de que ambas aficiones, la de escribir y la alcohólica, se originaban en la misma fuente y salían por el mismo caño, de tal manera que sólo una podía aniquilar a la otra. . . . Aquella noticia de la publicación de mi libro mi madre la vio como una salida muy honrosa. (209)

Luisa achieves her goal of becoming a writer and later moves to Madrid. The book we read is a collection of memories that flood Luisa's mind when she returns to Foz for her grandmother's funeral. Luisa is reminded of her travels with her father when he accompanies her to the bus stop to return to Santiago, "El día que se empeñó en acompañarme a coger el autobús para Santiago me acordé de nuestro viaje a Alcázar, y luego de lo demás. Sólo quería escribir de eso, ya lo dije al principio, de ir a su lado flotando en una nube, de su graciosa compañía" (228). Although Castro's novel is entitled *Viajes con mi padre* the focus of the novel is Luisa's writing. Castro's novel may appear from the title as a confirmation of patriarchal status quo but is narratively transgressive because she utilizes female adolescent memories to speak of literature and writing. Luisa narrates her struggles to become a writer and therefore challenges male dominated control of literature. Spanish women share a collective experience of being prohibited from access to literature. Carme Riera continues to explore the topic of women and their experience with literature in *Cuestión de amor propio* (1988).

Cuestión de amor propio (1988) is the antithesis of a romance novel because it is the narration of the end of a romance as told by Ángela as she writes a letter to her friend Ingrid. In this fictional letter Riera addresses women's experiences of writing at the professional level as well as men's portrayal of women in literature. Carme Riera explains her decision to write the short novel in epistolary form:

It may be due to my studies with nuns of the Sacred Heart order, the Order responsible for the education of the female characters of Laclos's *Les Liaisons dangereuses*. We had to compose letters constantly, as literary exercises, and so I had a great deal of practice in school and that, at least initially, undoubtedly influenced me. . . I have always been separated geographically from people who were important to me, and letters were a good means of communication. . . In the case of *Quèstió d'amor propi*, it seemed to me that a letter was the appropriate form for allowing the protagonist, Ángela, to tell her story from her point of view without being interrupted or challenged. If the story had been written as a dialogue, her friend would have asked her questions, Ángela would have lost narrative control, and it would have been more evident that her version of events is just that, one version. (203)

Bakhtin's theories contradict Riera's interpretation that a letter is a monologue because according to him one can not write in a vacuum but is always responding to a previous utterance. Although we don't read Ingrid's response to Ángela's letter, it is

possible to imagine her sympathy and acknowledgement of her friend's troubles. Ingrid's 'absence' invites the reader to imagine what her response would be and the reader takes her role as recipient of the letter. Riera says, "I have employed this technique because of its efficacy as a means of creation, a relationship of complicity with the reader" (204). The reader participates in the 'dialogue' by filling the role of the receiver of the letter. The reader can anticipate future letters that will be written in the same way so that he or she can decide the fate of the characters in the fiction of Martín Gaite and Castro.

Kathryn Everly explains Riera's efforts to subvert the epistolary genre by remarking how unlike the nineteenth century, when women documented their life through correspondence, Riera creates this letter from a non-realist perspective (184). In an interview with Riera, Everly asks the author about the ending of *Cuestión de amor propio* and whether Ángela is satisfied by the act of writing a letter. Riera replies:

Yo creo que hay diferentes cosas, la primera es que
no sabemos si la historia fue así porque solamente
tenemos una voz. Por eso las cartas me gustan tanto
a mí, me parece un género tan fácil porque no tenemos
más que un único punto de vista y por eso no siempre
tiene la razón la persona que escribe. Yo no sé si, pues
no he llegado a saber si él realmente fue tan malo como
dice Ángela que fue. (184)

By writing a singular letter Riera plays with the validity of Ángela's story and leaves the reader to decide what Ingrid will do, "This places a more interactive

responsibility on the reader. We become a form of audience, not only reading but also judging the sincerity of the narrative process” (185).

Ángela clarifies in her letter to Ingrid why she has not corresponded in a year and apologizes for delay in explaining why she has not written until now:

Pese a que estoy acostumbrada al íntimo trato con las palabras--- la literatura es poco más que las palabras---, cuando acudo a ellas, no para describir sensaciones ajenas, crear personajes de ficción o construir situaciones imaginarias, sino para conjugarlas en primera persona de acuerdo con mi realidad, soy torpe, obtusa y a duras penas consigo que la expresión se adecúe con exactitud al contenido” (18).

Ángela expresses an anxiety about writing her personal experiences that Martín Gaite’s and Castro’s novels do not reveal. Riera’s protagonist’s difficulty in writing this letter to Ingrid alludes to the seriousness of what she must write. Ángela’s letter consists of her experience of how she met and had an affair with Miguel, whom she meets at a literature conference. Ángela is the author of *Interior amb figures* (*Interior with Figures*) of which Ángela recalls Ingrid’s commentary of the novel, “Tus novelas, me decías, ganarían mucho si fueras capaz de resolver por ti misma, y no a través de los orgasmos de tus personajes, tu vida sexual, si fueras capaz de aceptar con naturalidad y sin cortapisas el deseo” (20-21). Ángela writes to Ingrid to share with her when she was led by her desire.

Ángela describes the first time she sees Miguel, speaking at a conference, “El mago de mi adolescencia, el prestidigitador capaz de sacar de la chistera una bandada de

palomas, anudar y desanudar pañuelos en un abrir y cerrar de ojos . . . estaba de nuevo ante mí” (27). Ángela marvels at how eloquent he is when speaking about *La Regenta* and argues that for the first time in Hispanic literature, Clarín addressed unfulfilled sexual desire, “El problema de Ana Ozores, de todas las Anas Ozores de la época, no era el de una personalidad inadaptada, sino el de una libido insatisfecha” (28) Ángela decides that in order to get his attention she will make a comment that contradicts his thesis. She argues that it was the lack of affection in her childhood that caused Ana Ozores to feel the need to seek out lovers, “Toda la vida de la Regenta está dominada por esos anhelos, mucho más que por la búsqueda de su realización sexual. Su entrega al zascandil de Mesía obedece a la seguridad de que cada noche, después de amarla, de arroparla, le contará un cuento distinto” (29). Miguel responds that her arguments, “denotaba una cierta inclinación muy femenina” criticizing Ángela for her ‘puritanism’ (29). The antagonism between Ángela and Miguel leads to an affair fulfilling Ángela’s childhood fantasy:

Los escritores, salvo raras excepciones, me interesan poco, aunque en la adolescencia les rendí un culto devoto. No sólo recogía autógrafos en un cuaderno impecable, sino que mantenía correspondencia con varios y, lo que es peor, aspiraba en secreto a casarme con alguna joven promesa, todavía incomprendida, a quien yo ayudaría a triunfar. (26)

Brad Epps comments on Ángela’s traditional views, “she finds it hard to give up certain ideas and ideals about love, sex, men, and women: and she is out of tune with contemporary feminism” (108). Ángela is also a victim of the *novela rosa* because she

sees herself as a facilitator to creating literature via a man as opposed to writing independently. As Ángela proceeds with her relationship with Miguel she falls victim to him.

Maryellen Bieder calls to our attention how Riera juxtaposes cultural identities between Miguel, who writes in Spanish, and Ángela, who writes in Catalan, “Miguel represents literary fashion and critical acclaim; for him, books are a cultural commodity that advance his career. Ángela is a peripheral writer in terms of language, gender, national identity and genre, as the title of her novel suggests” (60). Ángela feels inferior to Miguel and realizes they are an unlikely match. She says of his romantic letters:

A mí me supieron a gloria, tal vez porque las había estado
esperando no desde hacía una semana, sino desde hacía meses o
años, quizás desde toda la vida, y porque se las oía a alguien a
quien yo no podía interesarle como escritora, para medrar a mi
sombra, ni dada mi edad como un trofeo digno de exhibir. . . . Más
bien era yo quien, en todo caso, hubiese podido aprovecharme de
la situación de Miguel en el mundillo cultural ya que, precisamente
un mes antes de conocerle, había sido nombrado Director de la
Fundación para el Progreso de la Cultura, sin duda una de las más
importantes del país. (35)

After a month and a half of letters, phone conversations, and sexual encounters, Miguel disappears, “Pero aquella noche no llamó ni tampoco al día siguiente, ni al otro. Ni escribió, ni volvió a mandar flores. Sencillamente, se esfumó, desapareció como si se

lo hubiese tragado la tierra” (46). Ángela soon discovers Miguel has used her as the model for a character in his book, *El canto del cisne*:

Y me di cuenta que el personaje de Olga, la madura escritora catalana, cursi como un repollo con lazo, si no es mi retrato es, por lo menos, mi caricatura, y el de Sergio novelista de moda, triunfador, brillante y excesivamente inteligente, es él, tal como se ve, revestido de un halo hagiográfico. . . En las páginas de la novela no se describe una noche intensa, bella y pletórica como yo la recuerdo, sino vergonzante, fracasada y estéril. (69)

The letter we read narrates Ángela’s attempt to free herself from the experience and to seek revenge with Ingrid’s help. Ángela informs Ingrid, who lives in Denmark, that Miguel will be traveling to Copenhagen for a conference and to write articles that will be printed in newspapers in Spain and Latin America. She asks Ingrid to speak to Miguel when they meet at the conference and give him false information. Ángela knows he will later use this false data in writing, causing him to lose any possibility of becoming a candidate for the Nobel prize in literature. Ángela’s plan to make a mockery out of Miguel subverts the literary authority that men have exercised throughout history.

There are many implied dialogues throughout the fiction of Martín Gaite, Riera, and Castro. These Spanish women writers address women’s secondary status in the literary world and respond to Francoist ideology to reclaim their identity as individuals who are creative and artistic. Spanish women’s fiction narrated by female characters

subverts Francoist dogmas including “Obedece, y con tu ejemplo, enseña a obedecer” or “Procura ser tú siempre la rueda del carro y deja a quien deba ser su gobierno” (Morcillo Gómez, *El feminismo* 82). Women writers of twentieth-century Spain dismiss patriarchal codes to write themselves into literary tradition.

It is not a coincidence that both Martín Gaite in her essay “Las mujeres noveleras” and Carme Riera’s *Cuestión de amor propio* refer to Ana Ozores of Clarín’s *La Regenta* (1885). Ana Ozores is one of the classic female characters of nineteenth-century Spanish literature. She is a definitive example of men’s portrayal of women because, as Martín Gaite explains in her essay, she is used as an example to show why men think women must be controlled. Furthermore, Clarín’s novel suggests that women can not tolerate exposure to literature because it leads them to improper behavior. Miguel’s focus on Ana Ozores’s sexuality in Riera’s *Cuestión de amor propio*, reflects that men often relate to women sexually rather than recognizing women’s complexities. Miguel’s novel parodies women’s sexuality, thus confirming men’s superior status over them. Martín Gaite, Castro, and Riera remove women from their status as objects for men to underscore their capacity to be as creative as men.

As readers we witness how Spanish women writers dismantle the romantic novel genre to explore possibilities outside of formulaic plots. Furthermore, the absence of conclusions in their novels invites the reader to participate and decide what possible conclusions there may be. At the beginning of the twenty-first century we can look back at the previous century and discuss the literary traditions of Spanish women writers and their successful efforts to claim authority as writers.

Conclusion

The topics of family, space, and writing are only three examples of a wide range of subversive issues explored in the fiction of Spanish women writers. The growing quantity of criticism on Spanish women authors is a testament to scholars' desire to give these women their due critical attention. A significant commonality in the fiction of Martín Gaite, Alós, Riera, García Morales, and Castro is the use of young female characters that function as witness to their society. Francisca López and Ellen Mayock both refer to *la chica rara* in their investigation of Spanish women's fiction. This is not a coincidence, but rather proof that with the hindsight we have of the twentieth-century scholars can speak of a tradition of *la chica rara*.

Martín Gaite did not write her essay "La chica rara" until 1987, forty-two years after the publication of *Nada*. The span of years between the publication of Laforet's novel and Martín Gaite's essay comprised the time in which Spanish women writers reacted to the revolutionary concept of a female narrator who observes society but does not subscribe to societal behavior codes. As a survivor of the dictatorship, Martín Gaite writes *Desde la ventana* as a reflection of those years that was only possible after the transition into a democratic state where she could write freely about the emergence of a literary tradition authored by women.

At the 121st Modern Language Association Annual Convention a panel entitled, "Sixty Years after *Nada*: The Literary Legacy of Carmen Laforet (1945-2005). María T. Zubiaurre presented a paper "Carmen Martín Gaite lee a Carmen Laforet: Sobre los

oscuros orígenes de las hijas de Lilith". Zubiaurre traces the origins of the *chica rara* to the Lilith, the mythical first wife of Adam in the Book of Genesis. Lilith, created before Eve, refused to be submissive to Adam and fled from his control. She remains a symbol of female independence and therefore Zubiaurre states in her presentation that *la chica rara* is "hija de Andrea y nieta de Lilith". I am not in agreement with Zubiaurre because *la chica rara* is not a mythical figure. *La chica rara* is the literary manifestation in post-War Spain of women's efforts to combat society's prescriptions of female comportment. In the future the term *la chica rara* will become more popular in use because it is a literary term that defines women's subversion of traditional now outmoded codes of female behavior.

Martín Gaite is the forerunner of generations of women who chose to rebel against a society that encouraged them to find their exclusive fulfillment in marriage and motherhood. Martín Gaite responded to her adolescent upbringing through her writing, giving artistic expression to her experiences. The writers studied in this project create narrative realities that rework traditional gender roles. Martín Gaite, Riera, and Castro excavate regional identities to recognize that a singular female identity is a fallacy. Martín Gaite, Alós, García Morales, and Castro trace women's physical movement from the confines of the home into the public space of the city. Finally, Martín Gaite, Riera, and Castro parody the popular reading material deemed 'appropriate' for young women and reveal the underside of the Franco era.

The selected novels by Martín Gaite studied here, *Entre visillos*, *Retahílas*, and *El cuarto de atrás*, reflect women's gradual claim to autonomy from provincial life to their maturation into independent women who travel and write. Martín Gaite's novels serve as

a testament to the demise of the dictatorship that she criticized with increased freedom of expression. *El cuarto de atrás* is a canonical novel of twentieth-century Spanish literature because Martín Gaite speaks for an entire generation of men and women who, upon the death of Franco, were shocked because, although they anticipated the end of the dictatorship, Franco's death was not a solution to forty years of isolation. Since Martín Gaite is one of the most studied Spanish woman writers I pose the question, how can we study her in new ways? An innovative approach would be to examine her collages and drawings and compare her work to the visual art of her contemporaries including Mercé Rodoreda. Such a project would introduce Martín Gaite to a new audience outside of literature.

Alós's novels *Los cien pájaros* and *Argeo ha muerto, supongo* are the most daring of the selected works of this project because she openly treats the controversial issues of prostitution and incest. Although I do not include Alós's *La madama* (1969) in this study, the novel also examines prostitution. In *La madama*, Cecilia is forced into prostitution to support herself and her children while her husband remains imprisoned by the *nacionalistas*. It would be valuable to research how Alós treats the economic challenges of women during the Franco era. To date this is the second dissertation that examines Alós's novels and it is one of only a handful of studies that closely analyzes *Los cien pájaros* and *Argeo ha muerto, supongo*. Specialists in the literature of Spanish women writers must continue the project of excavating literature that was dismissed or unrecognized at the time of its publication.

Riera, often studied along with other Catalan women writers, is examined here among four other women from different regions of Spain. Her characters are unique

because they range in economic class from the impoverished women of Riera's short stories in *Palabra de mujer* to upper-class intellectuals such as Ángela in *Cuestión de amor propio*. Regardless of their economic status, Riera demonstrates that women are often victims of men regardless of their economic class. Riera is the singular writer in this study that includes a reference to a painting, Botticelli's *Primavera*. Riera extends her focus outside of Spain in *Una primavera para Domenico Guarnini* to explore how men's control of women depicted in Italian renaissance art.

García Morales is an enigmatic literary figure who has gained critical and popular attention. Her novels are dark in character and she repeatedly uses the word 'silencio', evoking the isolation of the characters in her novels. Critics including Elizabeth Ordóñez and Janet Pérez focus on the fantastic and gothic qualities of García Morales's novels which make reference to astrology and witchcraft. I choose to analyze *El Sur seguido de Bene* and *La tía Águeda* as a commentary on the hardships of the Franco era in the region of southern Spain that suffered because of their distance from the capital cities. García Morales also addresses incest in, *El Sur seguido de Bene*, one of the most noteworthy novels of the end of the twentieth century

Luisa Castro considers herself both *española* and *gallega* and writes in both languages. Her novels are intriguing in their own right for the references to Galician culture in *Viajes con mi padre* and the focus on a woman's experience as a writer in *El secreto de la lejía*. Castro's works dialogue with the fiction of Martín Gaite and respond in part to Martín Gaite's call in *Usos amorosos de la posguerra* for the research of dating customs in nineteen-seventies Spain. Luisa Castro's new novel *La segunda mujer* becomes available to the public in February 2006. She narrates the relationship between

Julia, a twenty-five year old woman, and Gaspar, a fifty-seven year old man from Catalunya. This novel examines how differences in social class and culture affect romantic relationships. On the surface the age difference between the male and female protagonists resonates with the *novela rosa* genre where the man's more mature age emphasizes his authority over women.

I hope to study Castro's other novels and the fiction of other Galician women writers to gain expertise in Galician literature. At the 2005 Convention of the Modern Language Association, Dr. Kirsty Hooper, a lecturer in Spanish and Galician at the University of Liverpool, chaired a panel entitled, "21st century Galician Studies: New Spaces, New Voices". As new scholars of Spanish literature we are adapting ourselves to the mindset that there is no longer a singular national identity in Spain, a Francoist ideal, making it necessary to address the heterogeneity of regional cultures in Spain.

One of the contributions of this project is my response to Rebecca Johnson's call for Spanish scholars to rely more on feminist literary criticism from Spain in her articles "Spanish Feminist Theory Then and Now" (2003) and "Issues and Arguments in Twentieth-Century Spanish Feminist Theory" (2005). Johnson states, "We have not been accustomed to considering Spanish thought when theorizing about feminist issues in Spanish writing, partly because that writing often does not resemble theory, as we understand it--- namely, engaging in overt abstraction" ("Issues" 247). I follow Johnson's advice by studying Martín Gaite as a writer and as a critic. I cite Martín Gaite's essays "La chica rara", "Mirando a través de la ventana", "Tiempo y lugar", "La mujer en la literatura", "Las mujeres noveleras", and "Salamanca la eterna novia" and

“Galicia en mi literatura”. Martín Gaite’s essays are broad in scope and serve to analyze her works as wells as those of other Spanish women writers.

It is necessary to utilize Spanish feminist theory when studying Spanish women writers to be able to understand situations particular to the history of Spain. American academics including Elizabeth Ordóñez and Maryellen Bieder lament that Spanish women refuse the feminist label and that they do not admit to reading other Spanish women writers. Some Spanish women fear that they will be categorized as ‘writers for women’ who only write on ‘feminine’ topics. Laura Freixas’s *Literatura y mujeres* explains the above issue as the conflict between ‘lo universal vs. lo femenino’. It is a common assumption that male writers address topics of interest to all; however, women write on topics that would only interest other women. Freixas is hopeful that the increasing number of women’s studies programs in Spain will rectify this issue.

Another critic and writer, Rosa Montero responds to the issue of feminism in Spain and says she prefers the term ‘anti-sexista’ to avoid a reverse marginalization where men are punished because of their gender. Johnson reminds us that Spanish women had a history of avoiding the ‘feminist’ label long before Martín Gaite expressed such an opinion. Carmen de Burgos is just one example from the early twentieth century who, “was a master of holding feminist positions and carrying out feminist activities, while strategically rejecting the label” (246).

Luisa Castro imitates Martín Gaite’s hesitance toward feminism through the mother in *Viajes con mi padre*. Rosa expresses not wanting to have children and exhibits Virginia Woolf’s philosophy of the necessity for every woman to have a place of one’s own. However, the narrator Luisa says of her mother:

La conciencia de la maternidad como un castigo divino no tiene nada que ver con el feminismo, para ella aquel castigo que éramos mi hermana y yo se convirtió desde el primer momento en un reto contra el destino, y se lanzó a el como mi padre se lanzaba al mar, a juramentos, sin pintura de uñas, sin secador del pelo. Desde el primer día que vinimos al mundo en la casa de Marzán, mi madre se plantó con los brazos en jarras en medio de la miseria, hincó fuertemente sus pies en la tierra de la cocina, miró amenazante al exterior; al otro lado de la ventana donde el musgo trepaba por las paredes de las casas y empezó a diseñar su plan. (28)

Rosa's plan is to work in a canning factory to make a better life for herself and her family. Although Castro avoids associating feminism with the character's plans, feminism is the impetus for her desire for autonomy. Martín Gaite states in her essay "Galicia en mi literatura" that women from Galicia are more independent and have a more liberal attitude toward sexuality than women from Castilla. In the next year I plan to do research in Galicia to investigate women's experiences in the region.

I want respond further to Roberta Johnson's call to "search for Spanish feminist theory wherever it may be found" by recognizing Lucía Etxebarría's essays *La Eva futura: Cómo seremos las mujeres del siglo XXI y en qué mundo nos tocará vivir* and *La letra futura: El dedo en la llaga: Cuestiones sobre arte, literatura, creación y crítica*. Etxebarría explains in *La Eva futura* her views on feminism:

En los noventa se requiere una redefinición, para que deje de existir ese absurdo personaje de mujer que dice: "Yo no soy feminista, pero... (y a continuación va desglosando los puntos fundamentales

del ideario feminista, uno por uno) . . . *pero aspiro a ganar igual que un hombre, pero no me gusta que se me juzgue sólo por mi físico, pero creo que los medios de comunicación presentan una imagen falsa de lo que es la mujer, etc, etc, etc. . .*" . . . En el imaginario popular, una feminista es la mujer que quiere ser más fuerte que los hombres, o que quiere vivir sin hombres o que quiere ser un hombre. Pero para mí una mujer feminista no se define en absoluto según su relación con los hombres, sino según su relación consigo misma y con el resto de la población en general. (17)

Etxebarría is revolutionary because she does not censor herself and in her fiction openly treats women's sexuality. *La Eva futura* and *La letra futura* are prime examples of Spanish feminist theory that Roberta Johnson calls on Hispanists to read. A revision of this project would include the analysis of Etxebarría's essays and novels to explore in more depth the *chica rara* in democratic Spain.

This study in its present form focuses on the issues of family, space, and literature I have drawn upon parallels between authors that would otherwise have gone unrecognized if I divided chapters according to author. In the future it would be enlightening to carry out a study on the pre-*chica rara* characters, novels published from the beginning of the twentieth century to the Spanish Civil War. The project would investigate how authors including Rosa Chacel, María Teresa León, and others anticipate the tradition of the *chica rara*. I hope my project is inspiring to those within and outside of Spanish literature and encourages further investigation of Spanish women writers' fiction.

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Vita

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