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Nicole S. Dobianer

PhD in Hispanic Studies

**Auto-fiction and Identity in Esther  
Tusquets' Trilogy**

Supervisor: Dr. Montserrat Roser-i-Puig

## Abstract

This thesis investigates personal development and identity formation in Esther Tusquets and the female protagonists in her trilogy, composed of *El mismo mar de todos los veranos (EMM)* (1978), *El amor es un juego solitario (AJS)* (1979) and *Varada tras el último naufragio (VUN)* (1980).

Recent autobiographic publications had made it possible to shed light on the author behind the literature and had provided indications that supported a hypothesis of life influencing literature.

This thesis approaches the question of identity formation primarily through the female protagonists in the trilogy. Their emotional and sexual development, analysed in Chapter 2 and 3, is seen as indicative of a similar developmental path taken by Tusquets. Chapter 2 and 3 therefore focus on the protagonists' identity development in emotional and sexual terms and elicit further parallels that exist between the literary plot and the author's life by complementing the analysis with a conceptual background on autobiography, auto-fiction and psychoanalysis in women's development. The backdrop of auto-fiction suggested that textual analysis of Tusquets' autobiographic literature should also allow for a margin of scepticism regarding the reliability of its content. The conclusions derived from Chapters 2 and 3, were seen as paramount because they allowed for putting the later analysis of the author on issues, such as love, sex, motherhood, career, solidarity, individuality and independence, into context. The objective of Chapter 4 was to extract Tusquets' perspective on womanhood and identity put forward in the trilogy. To do so, her definition of femininity, evidenced by her autobiographic works and her novels, was analysed against the backdrop of patriarchal history, thought and theory provided by Marilyn French, Kate Millett and Gerda Lerner. All this led to a conclusive portrait about Esther Tusquets', her identity and development in regards to womanhood, as well as, a renewed analysis of her protagonists and their identity formation process.

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## Introduction: Conceptualisation

This thesis investigates identity formation in the female protagonists of Esther Tusquets' trilogy composed of *EMM* (1978), *AJS* (1979) and *VUN* (1980).<sup>1</sup>

Esther Tusquets had made a name for herself from the 1980s among academics researching her work as well as readers in general. Researchers who have found her work interesting have predominantly focused on female, erotic literature. As a result, many have researched the lesbian angle on her literature and have also analyzed the use of sex, power and subversion in the novels. The novels, caused a great hype when they were first published because erotic literature written by women was uncommon and the lesbian love element was ground-breaking in a country that was only just starting to free itself, from the conventional ideal of a wife, by the example of Queen Isabella I and only just enjoying its first substantial wave of feminism.

Aside from the literary analysis of the novels, this thesis will take account of various factors that contributed to Tusquets being willing and able to write this kind of literature. But it will pay particular attention to her socio-historical background, as this thesis will show. Life in the upper classes in Barcelona may have been very progressive and liberal, but appearances were still very important and no one before Tusquets had ever really dared to break with convention like this before. The novels were different in their nature. This was particularly the case for *EMM* and *VUN* in comparison with *AJS*. *EMM* was ground-breaking for its depiction of the lesbian relationship, while *AJS* was even more daring, by indirectly addressing the topic of male superiority and letting her female protagonists subvert the traditional hierarchy, using power and sexuality openly for manipulative purposes in her literature. This was highly provocative when we

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<sup>1</sup> I use the term 'identity formation' loosely and also mean to infer identity progression throughout this thesis.

consider the control and strong hold that the country had been under only a few years earlier. *VUN* in this regard, does not share a particularly provocative theme. The novel treats the love and loss of a marriage and impending divorce. However, *VUN* forms an important part of the collective whole, particularly as far as identity formation is concerned. So, one can see how Tusquets' literature had sparked the interest of readers and academic researchers alike.

After the first ten years of its publications, these were the topics that discussion circled around, but in later years critics and researchers also focused on the three novels together and they became known as a trilogy, for the many similarities that the narrative structure, plot and characters shared.<sup>2</sup> Once the novels came to be perceived as a trilogy, they also came to be seen as developmental in their nature. At this point, they were researched on the merit of female identity formation. Today the after-effect of Tusquets' novels remain to be felt in academia and university teachings of Hispanic literature, but the circumstances that compelled academics to study Tusquets before, are no longer the same. Times have changed, Spain has changed, and the author too had matured and has recently passed away. However, before her passing, Tusquets had still been able to provide more personal context to her work, letting her narrative move more to the sidelines and letting us examine what lay behind the middle-aged woman, that in the 1970s, wrote these novels. And this is what this thesis investigates. This is not merely a literary analysis of the narrative, but a piece of research that attempts to connect the author with her work, her country and her culture. It hopes to show that Tusquets' trilogy is an expression of individualism hidden behind cleverly provocative content. I would like to take this time to mention, that while her autobiographic excerpts are taken

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<sup>2</sup> Academics, who have discussed Tusquets' work in later years are cited in Chapter 1 in greater detail and include the following: Bellver (1984), D'Ambrosio-Servodidio (1986, 1991), Franklin-Ichiishi (1991, 1994), Gould-Levine (1987), Hart (1991, 1993), Houchens-Clayton (1992), Molinaro (1991, 1992), and Odartey-Wellington (1993) and Vásquez (1991),

seriously in regard to their content, I reserve at times, the right to skepticism in interpreting her memories and experiences. This particularly relates to her opinions and, not as much, to her historical and sociological experiences. The reason is, that her experiences relating to this content are corroborated in other publications by other authors. I have, however, found it more useful to reference Tusquets own recollections of these events.

My thesis starts with a literature review in Chapter 1. As has already been suggested, my thesis is not the first to address identity formation in the protagonists of the trilogy. Some have addressed it from a Jungian perspective others from an erotic and power perspective and others have only addressed a small part of this extensive question. My thesis however, provides a new perspective, in that it offers a more detailed and closer analysis of the association between the novels' plots and the author. This is primarily thanks to Tusquets' recently published autobiographies. Although I do not propose to solely focus on her autobiographical material, my intention in this thesis is to connect the two. As a result certain focus on the author is warranted and mostly reflected in Chapter 4. The literature review also introduces my individual contribution to knowledge in more detail. Each chapter also features an introduction with the various key topics and arguments that will be addressed, creating a link between the reader's understanding and the relevance of the information provided. This thesis starts with the assumption, that a significant part of Tusquets' personal life experience had flown into her trilogy, that there must have been an apparent connection between her protagonists and her, and that identity formation plays a part in all this. This is my reason for fusing the concept of identity formation with the author's personal life.

Tusquets started writing the first novel of her trilogy, just before her split from Esteban Busquets, her long-term partner, father of her children and the self-proclaimed

'love of her life'. I believe this to have greatly impacted Tusquets' personality, considering that they had had many rather significant issues to contend with, throughout their relationship. As her autobiographical works outline, once the relationship took a turn for the worse, Tusquets had to deal with jealousy, control and possessiveness. While she describes their love as all consuming and passionate, she also admits that in the end it made her into a submissive woman, forced to resort to lying in order to retain some independence and individuality. I believe, therefore, that part of her very own struggle for re-definition after their relationship, had found expression in her novels, as they happened to treat very similar issues to those that surfaced in her own life. There are many parallels between the novels, the protagonists, the plot and the characterisations of Tusquets and her fiction. On their own, these may seem inconsequential, but regarded cumulatively they become significant, even if insufficient, to draw up a whole argument that sustains the entirety of this thesis. Tusquets' trilogy can be considered auto-fiction, and as such, it results particularly hard to separate and distinguish the fictional from the autobiographical. This complication will be discussed in detail in the conceptualisation to Chapter 2. For the time being, it suffices to remark, that Tusquets' admission of incorporating personal experience in her fiction implies that it is auto-fiction.<sup>3</sup>

Although this thesis proposes to research identity formation in the trilogy, I would like to concede that it does not attempt to determine increased individuation, from one novel to the next, using the same theoretical framework. This is only the case for *EMM* and *VUN* because these two novels show the same narrative structure and can therefore be analysed together in terms of identity progression. I have refrained from doing the same for *AJS* because the novel is very different with regard to its narrative

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<sup>3</sup> See previous comment in this introduction, regarding the extent of which, I intend to take Tusquets experiences and memories at face value.

structure and lacks an emotional angle, which renders it unsuitable for the application of Julia Kristeva's theory on SIP, semiotic disruptions, abjection and melancholia. However, what makes Kristevian theory so suitable for *EMM* and *VUN* is the identity formation analysis. Kristeva's theory allows for an analysis of the different experiences that the protagonists go through on their way to a stable, more complete identity. Furthermore, Kristevian theory pays exceptional attention to the emotional aspect of these experiences and this lends itself particularly well to the novels, since Tusquets' writing too, focuses exclusively on the emotional experiences.

In spite of its great difference to the other two novels, *AJS* nevertheless attempts to discuss identity formation. But unlike *EMM* and *VUN*, it addresses how identity originates from sexuality, power and morality. As a result, instead of focusing on the emotional aspect of individual development, I focus my study of *AJS* on the sexual, moral and power aspects portrayed in the novel and how these, too, are relevant in identity formation.<sup>4</sup> In order to provide the analysis with a more complete perspective, I have selected Almudena Grandes' *CDC* (2004). The reasons why I have deemed it necessary to incorporate *CDC* into my thesis, will be given at a later point in this section, but its suitability to carry forth the analysis along with *AJS* is undisputed. *CDC* disposes of a very similar plot structure and also features a triangular relationship based on sex at its centre. The only deviation from *AJS* is that in *CDC* it is two young men and a young woman.

Chapter 2 commences with some background information on the theory of auto-fiction, autobiography and psychoanalysis in women's development and relates them to identity progression in the protagonists of *EMM* and *VUN*. The conceptualisation of this chapter attempts to outline what auto-fiction is and its connection to autobiography,

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<sup>4</sup> I find the relevance of sexuality and power justified because identity formation is a composite development, taking account of every aspect of a person and sexuality. As Chapter 3 will show, this is a valid argument in this respect.

since these two writing genres often overlap. This is done in the pursuit to ascertain, if Tusquets' novels contain autobiographic elements, and therefore personal expression of the author's life. While due to the nature of auto-fiction, it is exceptionally difficult to prove beyond reasonable doubt that the author's personal life had influenced the plot of the novels; this chapter nevertheless hopes to point to various theoretical issues and parallels that support this assumption. Although primarily concentrating on the protagonist's identity formation between the first novel and the last, this chapter will at times, draw connections to Tusquets as a woman within the context of the novels' plots. Furthermore, it addresses the very important element of truth in these genres. By looking at auto-fiction, autobiography, truth and the influence of psychoanalysis, what I am proposing is not that Tusquets' conscious intent was to use her personal life in her writing, in order to achieve a particular effect, but that in writing this type of fiction, the auto-fictional or autobiographic effect accompanies the writing naturally. This contributes to Dervila Cooke's proposition that 'all narrators become what they narrate, creating themselves in writing/narration' (Cooke 2005 227). And I look at auto-fiction according to Cooke's understanding of the genre, as a piece of writing that 'mixes events from the author's life with fiction, combines the conventions of autobiography with those of fictional writing, and presents the author, as both himself or herself, and a fictional character' (Cooke 2005 75). The following section then looks at the impact of psychoanalysis in Spain and its impact on female identity formation. It addresses identity formation and its connection with the mother-daughter relationship, the psychological process involved in gaining agency, self-awareness and independence, all factors that are tightly wound up with psychoanalysis. Spain has had a fraught relationship with psychoanalysis, as Sigmund Freud first proclaimed it in the beginning 1900s. But during Francoism, it was particularly the sexual component of his research

that caused unease in the regime, the Church, and, ultimately, the population. It was only in the 1970s, with Jacques Lacan's theory of psychoanalysis that Spain began to warm to the concept.<sup>5</sup> This state of affairs is, I believe, significant with regard to the reception and publication of Tusquets' narrative and it is for this reason that I have chosen to substantially integrate it into my thesis. The last part of the conceptualisation of Chapter 2, introduces the theoretical background to Julia Kristeva's theory on the subject-in-process for the main analysis in section 2.3 and 2.4. In sections 2.3 and 2.4, I investigate identity progression between *EMM* and *VUN* and to indicate numerous parallels between the protagonists, the plot and the author's personal life through the years.

Chapter 3 addresses *AJS* and Almudena Grandes' *CDC*. The conceptualisation, split between three sections, first discusses the cyclical nature of desire, sexuality, lust and sexual morality and describes how all these concepts are interrelated. It explains how sexuality has come to reside at the centre of every human being and illustrates what creates lust and desire, driving us to act on these impulses. It seemed particularly relevant to map the protagonists' sexual motivations because, according to Foucault in the *History of Sexuality* (2008), the nature and motivations behind individual sexual impulses determine the subject's moral constitution. This is important because, the morally sound subject has mastery over her impulses and consciously chooses to follow them in a positive and beneficial manner, particularly in regard to the self. The conclusion drawn is, that only the morally sound subject, as theory will show, has a chance to grow through individuation. As a result, the main section of Chapter 3, evaluates sexual morality in the female protagonists of *CDC* and *AJS*. This is to establish whether the protagonists are morally-sound subjects and act with integrity and

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<sup>5</sup> Jacques Lacan's perspective on psychoanalysis was propagated through linguistics and not as overtly sexual as Freud's, which appears to have been the reason for its delayed reception. Chapter 2 will outline this in more detail.

in their partner's best interest, by trying to ensure no harm is done and doing their best to create a loving, supportive and positive environment free of repressive power relations and destructive erotic pursuits. By contrast, the morally lacking subject will not pursue a deep connection than the physical. In consequence, the chapter addresses the relevance of eroticism and sexual morality for identity formation and places either of these concepts within the individual development of the protagonists. This section looks at how, eroticism can impact an individual's feelings of desire, pleasure and lust, how it encourages and supports sexual contact, experience and emotional attachment and how it can encourage or discourage identity formation. I concentrate on *AJS* here because its protagonist pursues an escapist strategy through sexual experiences and not an identity formation objective. This, however, does not mean that eroticism lacks elements of identity formation but it is for this reason that *CDC* forms part of this thesis. *CDC* makes it possible to carry forward the analysis in section 3.4.4 and 3.4.5, and thereby greatly supports this chapter. Georges Bataille argues for two different types of eroticism; one, which is physical, and the other, which is emotional; but only emotional eroticism contributes to individuation. It is my contention here that both *CDC* and *AJS* display each, only one of these types of eroticism. This analysis will therefore look at both and establish which novel possesses emotional eroticism that acts as a developmental tool closely related to Foucauldian eroticism, which is a more philosophical approach to love (2008 1349). It also hopes to ascertain, which novel possesses physical eroticism, and, which is of superficial, volatile and highly subjective nature. This kind of eroticism makes it more suitable as an escapist tool, where the benefit lies within the instantaneous reaction to the situation rather than the long-term result. This argument presents an extension to the previous analysis of sexual morality and tries to identify how the protagonists of *AJS* and *CDC* relate emotionally to their

sexual experiences. The subsequent section addresses the Foucauldian principles of power, developed in *Analytik der Macht* (2005), self-awareness, concern for self and agency. It investigates the concept of personal power and its connection to agency, as a facilitator of identity formation. The conceptualisation introduces his theory of power and its connection to sexuality. This allows for an analysis of power relations and a determination of whether they are positive or negative and how they affect identity formation. The main analysis determines, which type of power structure the relationships of *AJS* and *CDC* fall under. The framework here categorises power as either positive and productive or negative and repressive, and thereby, as either encouraging or restricting the protagonists' sexual and emotional development and ultimately their identity. Lastly, the concept of agency is introduced. The section treats its connection to identity development and Foucault's founding principles of morality, developed in *History of Sexuality* (2005), are clarified. These principles are 'self-awareness' and 'concern for self' and they are of importance in the development of agency and identity formation. Agency illustrates the type of power that comes about from integrity and is founded in morality. This is where the previous analysis of sexual morality and eroticism become connected because Foucault's fundamental moral principles, 'concern for self' and 'self-awareness' require the fulfilment of these and only an individual with a sound sense of morality can be considered eligible. The chapter closes with a conceptualised discussion of how all these factors are important in the process of identity development.

As outlined at the beginning of this introduction, Chapter 4 addresses the author directly in her autobiographic works *Confesiones de una vieja dama indigna* (2009), *Habíamos ganado la guerra* (2007), *Confesiones de una editora poca mentirosa* (2005) and *Prefiero ser mujer* (2006). Tusquets' recent wave of autobiographical publications

had made it possible to re-address the novels in conjunction with her life, by analysing factors such as love, sex, motherhood, career, solidarity, individuality and independence, and to investigate how far her personal experiences impacted on the storyline of her trilogy. This section, therefore, looks at two fundamental questions. Firstly, the definition of femininity according to patriarchal guidelines, whose clarification later contributes to a better understanding of the identity formation process in women and how Tusquets had dealt with these same issues in her personal life. The aim in this chapter is to illustrate that the protagonists' female identity portrayed in the trilogy originates from a very personal space that can be connected to her childhood, adolescence, adulthood and the experiences related in her autobiographical works. It further illustrates, the structural and principal similarities between the theoretical model of patriarchy and the actual Franco dictatorship, according to research by Kate Millett (1971), Marilyn French (1985) and Gerda Lerner (1991). This is to provide a socio-historical, as well as personal context, for later analysis of the author. By separating Spain's socio-historical context into sections of ideology, biology, sociology, class, education, religion and psychological effect, this section is able to methodically evaluate Tusquets' background and determine the factors that had impacted her development throughout the years. The analysis primarily concentrates on the years between 1940 and 1960, since these relate to Tusquets' childhood, adolescence and young adulthood and are probably among her most impressionable years in terms of individual development. It further discusses, the significance of gender identity and how the notion of femininity has been greatly influenced by patriarchy. It illustrates how femininity was mistakenly defined as inferior to masculinity and the reasons for it. The last section of the chapter will attribute attention exclusively to the analysis of Tusquets and her own identity formation process over the years. It acts as an extension to the

previous section, by looking at Tusquets' ideological mindset in regard to the most fundamental issues of womanhood such as role expectations, motherhood, career, individuality and solidarity and at how she had applied her convictions to her own life. The first argument concerns women's behavior and the corresponding role expectations. In this section I investigate the profile of a very individualistic woman, who suggested a new model of femininity after Franco. The subsequent section, addresses Tusquets' perspective on motherhood and career and its, often, problematic connection for women, who desire to have both. It also addresses individuality because, among the many things that constitute individuation in a woman's life, is the development of her own voice, as an opinion independent from external influences. Such a development is often problematic because opinions differ and cause friction. Nevertheless, the ability to assert oneself and stand by these convictions within societal confines is a strong indicator of an independent individual. And this section places Tusquets in this category. To close, this chapter looks at solidarity and friendship between women as a way of building and securing social cohesion, support and equality within a group and the individual. Here, I address Tusquets' point of view and women's responsibility of learning about their own history, whose worst consequence has been the hindered development of solidarity amongst them.

All these differing arguments, outlined above, play an important role in identity formation. Not only in the protagonists of the novels, but also in the author's own life. Hence the connection between the author and the protagonists is particularly vital here and it is this thesis' objective to illustrate this connection.

# Chapter 1: Existing Criticism and Individual Contribution to Knowledge

This section's prime objective is to critically evaluate the work already undertaken, in relation to Esther Tusquets' trilogy and to present my own thesis' proposition and individual contribution to knowledge in this field.<sup>6</sup>

## 1.1 Esther Tusquets

Within the large spectrum of research that has been carried out in connection to Esther Tusquets' literature, there are several topics that have been extensively researched. As previously outlined, in the introduction to this thesis, these have followed a pattern of which identity formation is the most recent. In my thesis, I propose to look at them again and connect the dots between the different topics tying them into a single theme of identity formation. In an attempt to conceptualise the objective of this thesis, I will discuss the most note-worthy work done to date.

The search of identity in relation to the novels of Esther Tusquets has been a topic that was well researched during the years following the novels' publications. Tusquets' literature allowed for the investigation into the feminine role model in Spain and touched the then current *zeitgeist*, which led to it being taken up for academic study

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<sup>6</sup> The material referred to, will primarily relate to Esther Tusquets. My initial intention was to also include a brief reference to Almudena Grandes and academic work done on her and *CDC*. However, until now it has not been possible to find any work written on *CDC*. Most of her reviewed work has been done on the then scandalous novel *Las edades de Lúlu* (1989), for which she won the *Premio Sonrisa Vertical* in the same year. But *CDC* appears to never have been noticed for its similarly daring portrayal of a triad relationship. As a result, this section will be accordingly brief and omit the section of books, specialised articles, M.A. dissertations and PhD theses entirely.

in the following years. The last ten years has seen much being done on Tusquets and most work concentrates on the beginning of the 1990s, where focus has shifted slightly from the identity question of women to a discussion of various other factors that Tusquets literature has sparked.<sup>7</sup> These have included class differences, the subversion of the female role model, the political aspect of her work, (post)modern thought, psychoanalysis, discourse, gender, archetypes and symbology.<sup>8</sup>

### 1.1.1 Books and Specialised Articles

Among the books and specialist articles in this field, Franklin-Ichiishi has probably published the most extensive and relevant book in regard to my research, *The Apple of Earthly Love: Female Development in Esther Tusquets' Fiction* (1994), which extensively analyses the various psychoanalytical theories that came to bear on the issue of identity formation in women. Among them, feature the object relations approach and self-psychology, thereby covering the spectrum of the Freudian and post-Freudian schools of thought. She also applies Jungian archetypal theory and the concept of the animus/anima to the identity formation process. Besides lending a comprehensive analysis of all the psychoanalytic theories that aim at clarifying individuation issues, she also rightly addresses the feminist perspective, by primarily relating to work by Hélène Cixous and focusing on the question of gender and patriarchy within Esther Tusquets' literature. While her book is an exhaustive piece of research, within the confines of identity formation of most of Tusquets' novels, she has nevertheless narrowed her

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<sup>7</sup> Reasons for this shift are given in Chapter 4.

<sup>8</sup> The political relevance of her work is an avenue that I have pursued in my last year of PhD study, but which does not find immediate relevance to the question of identity formation addressed within this thesis.

analysis to certain key topics i.e. the symbology of fairy tales and mythology, the mother-daughter relationship and women's relationship to language and desire in *EMM*.

Her analysis of *AJS* focuses on the essential human condition of solitude and the protagonist's search, to momentarily alleviate the pain of it, through the connection with others in love and sex. While this analysis is clearly warranted, my research approaches a different angle. The construct of the triangle in *AJS* is analysed in sexual and erotic terms. Chapter 3, analyses the link between erotic and sexual motivations in the protagonists and their impact on the individual's morality, by making use of the theories by George Bataille and Michel Foucault. The thought process that guides this, is the belief that identity formation is linked, to a sense of morality, that is likewise closely connected to the sexual realm, and that morality is exceptionally useful and necessary to develop agency, self-awareness and concern for self, which Foucault regarded as the cornerstone of morality.<sup>9</sup>

She also engages in an analysis of *VUN*, where she elaborates on the topic of solitude already discussed in *AJS*. In *VUN*, however, her discussion progresses to the next level. It leads to an experience of enlightenment at the conclusion of the novel, mapping out a strictly progressive maturation of the protagonist throughout the trilogy. My own analysis of *VUN*, however, focuses on the events in the novel that threaten to destroy the emotional equilibrium of the protagonist, thereby highlighting the extensive struggle that goes on within the subject at breaking points, where strength of character is developed, rather than showing factors that are at play during the individuation process.

Mary Seale Vázquez' edited a collection of articles by various authors entitled *The Sea of becoming: approaches to the fiction of Esther Tusquets* (1991). Although the book addresses almost all literary works by Tusquets, it attributes increased attention to

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<sup>9</sup> This last point refers to the differing motivations of the protagonists in *AJS* and *CDC*, which have caused them to engage in their respective sexual and erotic adventures.

*Para no volver* (1985), a novel often regarded as the fourth book of the original trilogy of *EMM*, *AJS* and *VUN*. Although several chapters address the same books as my research, the topics are of no direct relevance to my project. The book does not pursue a clear topical focus because it was the first book of collected essays on Tusquets ever published and the intent was merely to present a unified body of critical research on Tusquets. The chapters focus on aestheticism, memory, metaphor, intertextuality and actor and spectators.

Nina L. Molinaro also published a book on Tusquets' fiction, in 1991, analysing it from the angle of power, as defined in Michel Foucault's philosophy. Molinaro connects the concept of power with feminism and women's development. Since my thesis focuses on the concept of power in *AJS*, the only relevant chapter is 'The simulacra of Power', where Molinaro comments, on pages 50-55, on the power relationship between the protagonists, with the objective of ascertaining, who uses whom and how. This is different from my analysis, insofar, that my analysis of power features a more comparative basis between *AJS* and *CDC*, and also focuses on the bigger picture rather than the detail. The objective is to ascertain, the nature of the power structures at work in *AJS* and *CDC*, and to determine how they impact identity formation in the protagonist, rather than to analyse the specific events and actions where power is demonstrated. I investigate the aspect of power that allows for identity development and not the application of power within sexual relationships to gain control, as I feel was Molinaro's objective.

Additionally, Molinaro has written several more articles on Tusquets' novels including a conference paper entitled 'La narrativa de Esther Tusquets' (1992). In it Molinaro deals with power, once again, and identifies the different types and uses of power in the trilogy, *Siete miradas en un mismo paisaje* and *Para no volver*. She

outlines that, the novels by Tusquets, are demonstrations of different types of power through different media: *EMM* displays power through its intertextuality, *AJS* through a simulation of reality, and, ultimately, *VUN* through language and time. Here again, the common thread is the plot of each novel and how it reflects the concept of power. However, the analysis remains strictly within the confines of the concept of power.

Linda Gould-Levine addresses all three novels in her article 'Reading, rereading, misreading and rewriting the male canon: the narrative web of Esther Tusquets' Trilogy' (1987). She addresses intertextuality within Tusquets' literature, makes a reference to power in *AJS* by qualifying Tusquets literature as a mode of 'literary warfare' (Gould-Levine 1987 203). It further describes *VUN* as the most positive novel of the three, in regard to identity formation in the trilogy. Her focus, however, clearly resides on the literature within the literature that Tusquets so readily employs. While the article has provided useful insight to certain aspects of my analysis, it has not contributed to the identity formation aspect of my thesis.

Another article, which addresses eroticism as a unifying element for the novels of the trilogy is 'The language of eroticism in the novels of Esther Tusquets' (1984), where Catherine G. Bellver investigates a maturation process in the protagonists, by equating it, to the author's use of erotic mythology definitions and descriptions. Bellver addresses the metaphoric use of space, the sea, cats and flowers to represent various erotic images within the novels and in so doing, also touches on the most commonly noted themes that Tusquets deals with in her literature. Such as the battle of the sexes, the psychological quest for identity through sexual experience and female sexuality from a strictly female perspective. At first glance, it appears that Bellver and my work on *AJS* have much in common because of its erotic component. Nevertheless, while I agree with Bellver, that eroticism in Tusquets' novels is a vehicle towards a larger

objective, my research was geared more towards the larger objective of identity formation, where identity is composed not solely of an erotic aspect, but is constituted of an emotional and also on an intellectual angle.

I have also referenced an article and a book chapter by Mirella d'Ambrosio Servodidio in my thesis.<sup>10</sup> The first is entitled 'Esther Tusquets' Fiction: The Spinning of a Narrative Web' (1991), the subsequent one is an article and entitled 'Perverse Pairings and Corrupted Codes: El amor es un juego solitario' (1986). The former is a more extensive analysis of the trilogy, as well as, *Siete miradas en un mismo paisaje* and *Para no volver*. Both contain a similar structure and carry, at their centre, the conviction that three codes prevail in the novels. These are of psychosexual, game and narrative nature and interactive. The most common themes of power and desire are addressed and both add a short analysis of the mother-daughter bond, guided by psychological reasoning. The book chapter, in particular, argues for a Freudian viewpoint. This is done, by leading the argument that Tusquets repeated her story lines and provoked similar scenes in her books to work through issues of separation and loss in an attempt to find meaning and re-create meaning in the process. The article, in turn, takes a closer more focused look at *AJS*. By engaging in detail with the demonstration of the different codes and pointing out the actions and scenarios that subvert, pervert and invert the protagonists' actions, she illustrates how the novel becomes highly unorthodox. While I agree that subversion is a core element in Tusquets literature, my own research does not address this angle. My arguments in Chapter 4 on patriarchy, propose an entry point into this kind of reasoning, but it does not develop it further and dedicates more attention to the author's own personality in the face of patriarchal pressure.

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<sup>10</sup> I would like to mention here that these two articles are referenced differently, as either Servodidio or Ambrosio-Servodidio. I have taken over the author's representation of her own name, which is the reason for this difference.

Stephen Hart has also produced two analyses on Tusquets. The first, entitled 'White Ink: Essays on twentieth-century feminine fiction in Spain and Latin America' (1993) is much like Serovidido's, a book chapter, in which he outlines in preliminary form, what he later addresses in detail in the article 'Esther Tusquets: sex, excess and the dangerous supplement of language' (1991). Both draw on different themes, but the former concentrates on the fairy tale references in *EMM* and how the female protagonists are used to subvert patriarchy. This book section makes preliminary comments on the link that exists between patriarchy, knowledge and language, which are later developed in the article. In the article, Hart addresses the common topics of identity and power that lead the trilogy but eventually addresses feminine writing, according to Hélène Cixous and Luce Irigaray, too. His primary focus in this article is language and the excess of metaphors and references that Tusquets' literature delights in. He outlines, how Tusquets uses the connection between sex and the text to explore the desire of her protagonists. This article and the book section have proven very useful and, particularly, the latter, has supported my research on desire and its connection to identity and power in Chapter 3 because I share Hart's view on Tusquets' intention with language in her literature. However, in my research I have found that I was more interested in what Tusquets wanted her protagonists to portray, than in how she portrayed the underlying issues that they faced.

### **1.1.2 Published MA Dissertations and PhD Theses**

In regard to the emotional maturity of an individual being analysed in a published M.A. dissertation or PhD thesis, Frances Houchens-Clayton's thesis entitled *Love and Loss: The quest for female individuation in three novels by Esther Tusquets*

(1992) comes closest to matching the research purpose of my own.<sup>11</sup> Houchens-Clayton states, how the individuation process apparent in Tusquets' trilogy, falls in line with Jungian and archetypal theory. Using insights provided by one of the most renowned literary critics of the XX century, Northrup Frye, and feminist criticism, to assert incremental maturation of the protagonist in each of Tusquets' novels. While it can be assumed that her thesis is more extensive in this regard because she dedicated her entire thesis to it, my own work only focuses on displaying the exact circumstances that bring about the protagonist's new identity, with the help of Kristeva's theory on the 'subject in process'. Here, of course, there are various differences though. First, the different theories provide an entirely different approach to the topic of identity. Furthermore, Houchens-Clayton also focuses exclusively on the protagonists, while my research divides attention between the significance of the protagonists and the author.

Similar research has been carried out, by Franklin-Ichiishi at the University of Iowa. In her thesis entitled, *Love and woman's inner development in Esther Tusquets' fiction: Toward a new 'Bildungsroman'* (1991), she also approaches Tusquets' trilogy as a development tale of a female maturational process.<sup>12</sup> In her research, she has incorporated a variety of different critical approaches of the Freudian and post-Freudian schools, in particular the object-relations theory and self-psychology, as well as, the Jungian archetypal theory for defining gender. In this regard, she has done something similar to Houchens-Clayton, but has restricted her analysis of the Jungian paradigm to *EMM*, varying different theoretical approaches. Franklin-Ichiishi also proposes a revision of the female *Bildungsroman* to truthfully reflect the different parameters that determine women's development. To illustrate these differences, she addresses the lost pre-oedipal bond with the mother and Cixous' theory on female writing. Overall,

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<sup>11</sup> Her thesis was carried out and published at the University of Oregon.

<sup>12</sup> She also regards *Para no volver* (1985) as part of the trilogy.

Franklin-Ichiishi's thesis and mine, do not have much in common apart from the identity question. Only in her fourth chapter, does she explore the self with relevancy to my own proposition, but at this point she uses Tusquets' *Para no volver* (1985) for her analysis.

Odartey-Wellington also illustrates the female search for identity in Esther Tusquets trilogy.<sup>13</sup> Her M.A. dissertation entitled *Opresión y búsqueda de la identidad de la mujer en la novela posfranquista* (1993) establishes a direct link to General Franco's dictatorial policies and proposes that women's failures are in direct correlation to the behavioural guidelines, imposed on women between 1939 and 1975. Further focus is attributed to the protagonist's de-personalised condition and attempts to suggest redemptive action for the loss of identity. While the search for identity in her and my work are common cornerstones, her approach differs greatly from my own because of its direct political and historical link and its decided focus on de-personalisation and on the wider Spanish society. My thesis, on the other hand, engages primarily with the motivations of the protagonists and the author and regards their personal and emotional implications as a necessary pre-requisite to extract meaning and arrive at a more stable and secure identity.

### **1.1.3 Tusquets' Autobiographical Works**

Esther Tusquets died of pneumonia in Barcelona on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2012. In her last years, Tusquets increasingly published autobiographical works, which have shed light on the author behind the text and which contributed considerably to the content of this thesis.

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<sup>13</sup> The dissertation was published at McGill University, Canada in 1993.

Her last autobiographical work was *Confesiones de una vieja dama indigna* (2009). The book spans most of her life and is regarded as a more personal extension of *Habíamos ganado la guerra* (2007). In this book, she focused on her personal life and particularly on her love experiences, friendships and acquaintances. It is the first book that allows a look behind the scenes and shows Tusquets and her experiences throughout her own developmental process. The autobiography's advantage lies in its critical perspective, which may often be considered rather sarcastic or even cynical. It points out discrepancies, in what has been suggested is Tusquets' character and what her character is according to the author herself.<sup>14</sup> Consequently, this book has been a very useful source in my thesis.<sup>15</sup>

The first autobiography written by Tusquets was a book that told the story of the civil war, its effects and consequences for her family and the upper class of the Barcelona *bourgeoisie*. *Habíamos ganado la guerra* (2007) was much like Tusquets' trilogy, a daring book to write because of the insight that it provided into Tusquets' family background and their political entanglements.

Another autobiography focuses in particular on Tusquets working life as an editor. It is entitled *Confesiones de una editora poco mentirosa* (2005). This book was useful for Chapter 4, in eliciting Tusquets' perspective on career and the publishing world, as well as, everything else related to her work for Lumen.

And lastly, although not autobiography in the strictest sense, *Prefiero ser mujer* (2006) has been another book that has helped me in gaining an understanding of the author. It has been specifically useful, in regard to getting an insight into the role of women and their behaviour in Spanish society. This book is a collection of newspaper essays that Tusquets has published over the years and which was compiled and updated

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<sup>14</sup> The benefit of this will be elaborated on in the conceptualisation of Chapter 2 and 4.

<sup>15</sup> Please refer back to the introduction for a better understanding of how her autobiographical work will be employed in this thesis.

into book form, in 2006. In it, Tusquets talks about being a woman and how it has made her feel over the years. She speaks of her convictions and societal prejudices that have, at times, interfered with her own development and ideals. This book has, once again, been particularly useful in mapping Tusquets character and experiences and has greatly helped shape Chapter 4.

## **1.2 Gaps in Existing Research and Individual Contribution**

As this literature review has outlined, identity formation in Esther Tusquets' trilogy, is not an entirely new research concept, and many before me, have used different theories and different perspectives, in analysing the maturation process of her protagonists. Researchers have approached the topic, from greatly varying sides and focused their attention on different elements. In this literature review, I have only incorporated the works that I have found to be most significant and most closely related to my own focus of research. I have also found it necessary to reference the works that have helped me shed light and which helped advance my own research.

The extensive research that has been done on Tusquets, suggests at first glance that the topic of identity formation may have become saturated by analytical approaches. However, this is misleading. In the first instance, in spite of the sheer volume of psychoanalytic and literary theory that exists and can be applied to the identity question, there still exist gaps that new research can fill. Identity is a fluid concept that evolves along with the female condition. As my research will address in Chapters 2 and 4, the feminist movement evolves and consequently transforms women's mind-sets. Although the main focus of this thesis, resides in the identity formation process of the protagonists in the trilogy, which is set in the 1960s and 1970s in Spain, it also pays significant attention to Tusquets and her development over the

years, leading into the XXI century. By analysing her autobiographic work, we gain a valuable and not yet researched 'now and then' perspective and see the author and her own development in connection with her literature. Due to Tusquets' recently published autobiographical works, I am able to bring the author and her personality to bear on her novels and the identity formation question and this has so far never been done.

I, ultimately, propose a similar analysis of the protagonists. I am now also able to contribute a new perspective on the maturation process in the trilogy. Because of the genre of auto-fiction that Tusquets has selected in her trilogy and which my research supports, I cannot entirely allow myself to draw parallels between the protagonists and the author and I have, therefore, been required to focus on the protagonists in Chapter 2 and 3. This limitation notwithstanding, it has become clear, throughout my research, that Tusquets has let much of her own history flow into her literature, and for this reason my research has consciously considered the identity question in her novels' protagonists for structural support. The connection that I see between the author and the identity question is based on my conviction that Tusquets' literature does not simply tell a story but it is not simply, just fiction either. Because it was written in the late 1970s, I consider her literature to broach the topic of what it was like being a woman in Spain around this time. The arguments that she portrays, illustrate controversial discussion points such as lesbian love, defiance regarding patriarchal role expectations, to name a few. And this is the reason, why her books have received so much attention over the years, particularly in the 1980s and early 1990s. They illustrate, how exceptionally hard it was for women, to move outside conventional guidelines, without meeting with societal sanctions that were often painful to withstand. Tusquets had chosen to use fiction, primarily, to illustrate her point, to let her protagonists' lives move through the various stages attached to identity formation.

The dialogue that these theories have with each other is based on the hypothesis that identity formation is composed of various aspects. These aspects are considered as being of emotional, moral, erotic and sexual, as well as, individual nature and contribute to a full, and composite identity in the end. Identity is, therefore, not a concept that can be analysed in isolation. For this very reason, I have selected Kristeva, Foucault, Bataille, Millet, Lerner and French for this thesis' theoretical framework.

My intention was to look at Esther Tusquets, her trilogy and autobiographic literature and to be able to deduce how identity had been reflected on all three counts. As well as, to address all the differing approaches of Tusquets regarding this topic. *EMM* and *VUN* were, in this sense, decidedly focused on the emotional aspect of identity formation. Hence, I selected Kristeva for this section. Kristevian theory itself connects with Foucault and Bataille, insofar, that the emotional experience of love is always also of sexual nature. However, *EMM* and *VUN* lacked, this decidedly sexual angle, and *AJS* and *CDC* were able to provide it. With Foucault and Bataille's theories, I was able to engage with the importance of sexuality and eroticism in regard to morality, which was always a question of identity as well. This section also led me to investigate power relations, inherent in love relationships, and connected, once more, with the question of agency and identity. By looking at agency, the discussion embarked on the discussion of how far are we able to control or influence how, as women, we develop ourselves in society. This is, where I made the connection with patriarchal theory and the influence that it has had on women's development, over the years. Additionally, this was where, an analysis of Tusquets' development, would become exceptionally insightful and would allow for a more complete reading of identity formation in a Spain that was on the verge of the XXI century.

As a result, I have decided to put together a series of different analytical approaches in this thesis because I feel that one theory is not able to adequately do the different nature of the novels justice. Consequently, Chapter 3 looks at the identity question from the angle of sexual morality and eroticism and suggests why this approach is as significant as it is valid, in regard to identity formation. What results, is an analysis that shows, how the protagonists in these novels, have progressively reached a higher and more profound awareness of themselves and outlines the factors that have supported this progress or have limited it, as is the case for *AJS*.

The protagonists, although rightfully acknowledged as fictional representations of a hypothetical circumstance, are significant here, because when we regard Tusquets' work as auto-fiction, her writing allows for the consideration of self-alteration through writing. As Fowlie has remarked, in this genre, the self continues to be in process because the writing process causes the author to use memories that are both conscious and subconscious to recount events in the past (Fowlie 1988 165, 166), and this is the underlying assumption that this thesis seeks to prove that has not yet been attempted by any other researcher in the field.

## **Chapter 2: Emotional Transformations in the Protagonists' identities *El mismo mar de todos los veranos* (1978) and *Varada tras el último naufragio* (1980)**

### **2.1 Introduction and Hypothesis**

This chapter analyses Esther Tusquets' *EMM* and *VUN*, by looking at the emotional transformations that the different protagonists undergo throughout the novels.<sup>16</sup> It provides insight on topics such as auto-fiction, autobiography, truth, women's writing and the importance of psychoanalysis in women's development. The chapter's main analysis tracks the female protagonists, E.'s and Elia's, individuation process from *EMM* to *VUN* in a sequence of emotional experiences that lead to a more stable identity. These emotional experiences in *EMM* include E.'s lesbian relationship with Clara, leaving her husband and dealing with her mother's role in her life. It also includes, returning to her childhood home and reconnecting with the past and her lost love, to find new strength in the present. In *VUN*, it includes: dealing with the abandonment of her husband and her writer's block, as well as, claiming her role as a mother in her son, Daniel's life. Much like the previous novel, Elia is forced to re-evaluate her life through great disappointment. By revisiting a past mind-set, she eventually exits victoriously.

Relating auto-fictional, autobiographical and elements regarding the significance of truth are relevant here, to help in showing that Tusquets novels reflect elements of

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<sup>16</sup> *VUN* considers only Elia as its main protagonist and will therefore forego the additional characters in this analysis.

her personal life. This chapter hopes to show that, aside from the protagonist's individuation, the novels also provide insight into the author's own individuation progress. Women's writing and psychoanalysis, further underpin the previously made arguments, by allowing Tusquets' literature to be seen from a female developmental perspective, with psychoanalysis lending a helping hand in situating Tusquets and her literature more accurately in relation to Kristeva's identity analysis.

The underlying hypothesis, here, is that the emotional experiences that both protagonists undergo, impact on their emotional constitution and identity. This includes: leaving their husband, or being left; re-orienting themselves sexually and trying to come to terms with the past and the loss of love. It consequently brings them more into themselves. In addition, this chapter hopes to establish that the emotional transformations, which the protagonists undergo in each novel, are different in nature. Both novels support the argument for identity formation to differing degrees and ends. It will be argued that *EMM* only shows indications of change, while the protagonist never embraces her transformation entirely and that the protagonist of *VUN* successfully accomplishes what Kristeva describes, in her interview with Sellers, of temporary stability in her identity (Sellers 1989 133).<sup>17</sup> At adequate stages, I will establish a connection between Tusquets as an author and her novelistic plots, demonstrating how, through her own personal experiences, Tusquets gave shape to her protagonists and novelistic plots and how they could be interpreted as a reflection of herself.

The analysis outlined above, will be supported and facilitated by an application of Kristeva's theory on *le sujet-en-procès* (The subject in process) (SIP). I would like to allow for Judith Butler's criticism of Kristeva's semiotic disruptions theory here, by arguing that my intention, in this thesis, is not to demonstrate a conclusive identity

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<sup>17</sup> While Elia in *VUN* does not succeed at implementing all theoretical arguments that Kristeva's theories outline, her transformational record is overall positive. Please refer to the conclusion of this chapter for more detail.

constitution in the protagonists. My aim is to illustrate that Kristeva's semiotic disruptions theory is capable of triggering a desire for emancipation in the protagonists. Hence, Butler's criticism of Kristeva's theory, being a questionable emancipatory ideal, does not really apply here, for it is never used for this purpose (Butler 1991 124, 125).<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, I also discuss theories that stand in relation to Kristeva's SIP which are of relevance in identity formation. This is because I believe that the inter-relatedness of said theories is necessary to achieve a change in the protagonists' identities. Consequently, among these theories are, the concept of abjection, which Kristeva outlines as an on-going process that does not respect the boundaries of the subject and thereby constantly disrupts its sense of self, being forced to oppose and reject all that appears foreign to itself (Kristeva 1982 2). Abjection follows from semiotic disruptions because for the subject to defend its constitution against the abject, it requires an already preliminary sense of self, which will only be established through semiotic disruptions. Thus, it concerns itself with identifying the various disruptions to the self and comments on the resulting progress achieved by the subject. Melancholia is also a critical element in my discussion, as it analyses the subject in its mourning for the lost love object. It directly concerns the subject's constitution of self and more specifically it focuses on the consolation of the self after the loss of the love object (McAfee 2007 60). For the purpose of this thesis, I will pay close attention to how the subject deals with this loss and whether it emerges from the loss with an increased sense of self.<sup>19</sup> By pursuing this

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<sup>18</sup> Please refer to section 2.2.2.

<sup>19</sup> According to Lechte, Kristeva relates that melancholia is often directly related to the mother-daughter relationship in women (Lechte 1990 34). While I regard the mother-daughter relationship as significant in female development, I have in this thesis, refrained from analysing its impact in great detail. Additionally, this chapter takes an alternative view-point on the love object that melancholia discusses. It allows for the equity between the mother figure and a more general love object, such as a lover or a husband, given that Kristeva's theory allows for this interpretation as well (Kristeva 1989 81). This is particularly because my thesis focuses, in more details, on the impact that the romantic lover has in Tusquets' literature. This is particularly so because my thesis focuses on the impact of the figure that the romantic lover has in Tusquets' literature. The mother figure is not engaged with further because, in this context, Tusquets

line of argument, melancholia fulfils the last step in the constitution of identity that the subject must master in order to arrive at a more stable and stronger identity.

## 2.2 The Contextual Significance of Self-Writing and Psychoanalysis

This section introduces the theory of auto-fiction, autobiography and the significance of truth within the genres and relates it to Esther Tusquets' novels *EMM* and *VUN*.

Tusquets' novels have been said to contain autobiographic elements and in conjunction with her autobiographies, some of the themes contained in her novels, can be interpreted as personal expressions of the author's life. While due to the nature of auto-fiction, it is exceptionally difficult to prove beyond reasonable doubt, that the author's personal life had influenced the plot of the novels this chapter still indicates certain events and statements that support this. By looking at auto-fiction, autobiography, truth and the influence of psychoanalysis, I am not proposing that Tusquets' conscious intent was to use her personal life in her writing, in order to achieve a particular effect, but instead that writing this type of fiction means that the auto-fictional or autobiographic effect accompanies the writing naturally. This would agree with Dervila Cooke's proposition that 'all narrators become what they narrate, creating themselves in writing/narration' (Cooke 2005 227).

This chapter further looks at auto-fiction, according to Cooke's understanding of the genre, as a piece of writing that 'mixes events from the author's life with fiction, combines the conventions of autobiography with those of fictional writing, and presents

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herself ignores the due attention that it deserves. This textual gap is very telling, for it suggests a reluctance to acknowledge her mother. Section 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 will look at this in more detail.

the author as both himself or herself and a fictional character' (Cooke 2005 75).<sup>20</sup> While concentrating on the protagonist's identity formation, between the first novel and the last, this chapter will, at times, also draw connections to Tusquets as a woman within the context of the novels' plots.

The following section illustrates the interrelatedness between theories of auto-fiction and autobiography, along with the implication of truth within this abstraction. It additionally looks at the significance of psychoanalysis in women's development.

### 2.2.1 Female Auto-Fiction, Autobiography and Truth<sup>21</sup>

Auto-fiction is a difficult concept to analyse because such a genre can never be analysed objectively: its interpretation always remains subjective (Cooke 2005 215). This very fact is the fundamental paradox that defines the difficulty of this chapter. But, as Anne F. Garreta argues, the mimesis that auto-fiction gives rise to, are reflections of individual memory, influenced by the psychoanalytic discourse, whereby literary associations and slips become unconscious memory processes that are in fact rich in significance. Thereby, what surfaces behind the fiction is in fact the very motor that motivates the author (2007 234). Analysing Tusquets' *EMM* and *VUN* as auto-fiction is

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<sup>20</sup> The genre of auto-fiction has been widely discussed. Because of its paradoxical nature, many differing views prevail. I would like to refrain from engaging with the theory behind auto-fiction and various interpretations by Serge Doubrovsky, Vincent Colonna and Philippe Lejeune, to name some of the most renowned in this field. My restraint, here, is a reflection of the immediate rationale of the chapter, which is the determination of identity formation in the protagonists, rather than the analysis of auto-fiction in the text.

<sup>21</sup> The term *auto-fiction* will be used from here forth because this thesis proposes that the novels selected fall into this category. It also acknowledges that the differences between autobiography and auto-fiction are at times, very subtle and subjective at best. For this reason, when the content of the novels is backed by theory, there may occasionally be a reference to an element being autobiographic. In these circumstances it can be assumed that the theory used, is also applicable to auto-fiction. This is because, when attempting to contrast auto-fiction and autobiography, I agree with Domna Stanton, who postulates that although not all fictional writing is autobiographical; all autobiography contains elements of fiction (Stanton 1998 136). This draws on the close connection that exists between autobiography, auto-fiction and truth in these genres (136).

particularly challenging because this genre produces a sensation of indecision and hesitation and one becomes uncertain of the nature of information that one is dealing with (Jeannelle 2007 30). Therefore, as Laurent Thierry outlines, the crux of the matter becomes knowing the author well, so one is able to distinguish between valuable and not so valuable information (1997 20). Nevertheless, aside from the genre's natural implications, auto-fiction is often similar to autobiography. Dervila Cooke describes 'auto-fiction to be a function of the autobiographic effect' confirming the inherent links that these genres share. Auto-fiction, therefore, creates this mix within a single work, by separating it from the reader's knowledge of other texts (77, 75), leaving its interpretation, entirely to the reader. One can, therefore, understand how very slippery the concept of auto-fiction is, alone because each reader is bound by his subjective judgement, regarding the content of literature. Consequently, auto-fiction may only be experienced, as such, when the reader possesses biographical information about the author (215, 216) and is able to put what he reads into context. As this chapter will show, the guidelines proposed above, fall in line with Esther Tusquets' *EMM* and *VUN* and her autobiographic works that will be cross-referenced accordingly in this section.<sup>22</sup>

Writing autobiography and auto-fiction, is considered to be an 'exercise book in the somewhat shameful art of confession' (Fowlie 1988 165). Its personal nature can be compared to a game of mirrors 'in which the writer's mind is reflected', or to 'an *alter ego*' (Aronson 1991 1, 99). These statements reflect, what I hope to find in Tusquets' novels because the elements that constitute this genre, are derived from personal experience and despite varying novelistic interpretations, they are exceptionally private and because of that facilitate, 'the discovery of a personal truth beyond all traditional

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<sup>22</sup> I would like to briefly mention here, what has already been broached in my introduction: I may exclusively point out the parallels that exist between Tusquets' personal life, as portrayed in her autobiographies, instead of proposing a detailed explanation. This is mainly because most of the arguments that will be made are only mentioned briefly, by Tusquets herself and because this perspective is only an adjacent focus in this chapter.

moral certainties' (Gusdorf 1991 5). They allow the author to find her own voice and position herself, according to her personal convictions. This presupposes a consistent, though restricted, self-perception and a personality that is free from all moral, religious or political bias or belief (6). This is reflected, in Fowlie's remark that writing autobiography helps the individual to understand his own feelings, hopes and motivations (1988 165). Fowlie states that prestigious autobiographies, by Jean-Paul Sartre and Marcel Proust, for instance, suggest that 'writing is a process of self-alteration' (Fowlie 1988 165). The self continues to be in process because the writing process causes the author to use memories that are both conscious and subconscious to recount events in the past (166).<sup>23</sup> Recounting these events, within an autobiographic or auto-fictitious form, allows the author to re-live them once more. And this allows for the reconciliation of past mistakes with present regrets, and thereby, acts as an emotional cleanser (165). This argument is ultimately the reason behind applying these views to Tusquets. I believe that having written *EMM* and *VUN* (and *AJS*) has facilitated in her, this same 'process of self-alteration' (Fowlie 1988 165). Indications that corroborate this are strong, since my research has shown that Tusquets started writing *EMM*, during a moment in her life, where she was about to separate from her long-term partner. And since Tusquets' narrative circles around love, loss and finding oneself, it is not a far stretch to imagine that parts of her own struggle with love may have found its way into her trilogy. Particularly, when we consider that the process of writing auto-fiction or autobiography triggers the repeated return of images and scenes that mirror the identity of the writer, in the first instance, to himself and later to the reader. This creates an impression of 'self-alteration' through the composed narrative. In this way the written material comes to mirror self-knowledge in time (166). This

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<sup>23</sup> A possible link with Kristeva is apparent here. While Kristeva does not focus on written language, in particular, she does outline how the subject goes through a similar process of self-alteration in her SIP theory.

further provokes, as Claudia Gronemann postulates, a transformation in the relationship between language and subjectivity, which then implies and defines a new language-dependent reality principle (2002 46).

Within this context, truthfulness becomes important because without it an individual's writing cannot grow or progress. In Tusquets' case, people and events that had moved and affected her personally inspire her work. This could be observed by comparing her latest autobiographies with the events, protagonists and experiences that she had expressed in her novels.<sup>24</sup> Due to its nature, autobiography ultimately relies on the author to tell the truth. However, as posited by Gusdorf in *Le principe de l'identité* (1991), truth is always subjective and because of it, truth as it is portrayed in autobiography and auto-fiction is a slippery and difficult concept. The same, of course, applies to Tusquets' literary work. I, therefore, do not assume to understand Tusquets' motivations or intentions entirely, nor expect that she did so herself. Stanton draws on an idea by Lejeune, when relating that there is always a conflict between, how the subject perceives his life to be, the way it really is and the way that he wishes it was. In a writer's literary work, this causes the subjective view of the author to clash with reality and his hopes or dreams for his life. The clash of these three versions of truth provokes the splitting of the subject, although the author constantly seeks to unite the three, often opposing, versions of himself throughout his literary creation (Stanton 1998 136). This may explain, why authors often reject other peoples' conclusions, as his intentions may appear different to himself. This had likewise been the case with Tusquets, whom I asked at a reading of her then latest work in Zurich, in 2009, whether she saw a connection that united the novels *EMM*, *AJS* and *VUN*. This, she instantly denied, although it is widely commented on in the academic field that these novels share

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<sup>24</sup> Her autobiographic publications are: *Correspondencia privada* (2001), *Confesiones de una editora poco mentirosa* (2005), *Habíamos ganado la guerra* (2007), *Confesiones de una vieja dama indigna* (*Confesiones*) (2009).

many similarities. Autobiography therefore remains a double movement, in which the interchanging between fiction and reality is simply inevitable. According to Barthes as quoted in Siegel, we may have to concede that we never:

Manage to achieve more than an unstable grasp of reality [which] doubtless gives the measure of our present alienation: we constantly drift between an object and its demystification, powerless to render its wholeness. For if we penetrate the object, we liberate it, but we destroy it; and if we acknowledge its full weight, we respect it, but we restore it to a state which is still mystified. (Siegel 1999 29)

With this quote Barthes underscores, how it can be impossible to make sense of auto-fiction because of its ready switching between fact and fiction.

Roy Pascal in *Die Struktur der Wahrheit in der Autobiographie* (1965) puts forward the view that the history of autobiography can be seen as the pre-history of existentialism (211). True autobiographic material possesses the movement of life and induces a new awareness of self, as well as, a new formulation of responsibility vis-à-vis the 'I' (213). To achieve this, it challenges the author to be aware of his inner workings, to be in touch with his soul and to be able to express this in his work (212). This statement assumes the benefit of increased personal awareness through writing, which once again, is something that Tusquets also denied, when I asked her about it. If this is indeed true, is hard to say. What, nevertheless, is clear is that the different events connect and demonstrate a dynamic between the plot and the narrator. This, as Pascal suggests, is the case in a good autobiography (221). Theory then states that this creates a connection between the author and the reader. It facilitates textual analysis because it mirrors the author's views and provides the reader with insight into the author's character, making it easier to interpret the text. With a sound connection between the author and the

reader, the many different facets of truth are easier to be distinguished and comprehended. But even with this connection, Pascal acknowledges, there still exists a discrepancy between what the author decides to reveal from his life, and what he invents. These then surface, as distortions of the truth (79, 84) and are the reason why this chapter can only suggest a subjective interpretation of Tusquets' work.

The genre's ambiguous nature, of course, leaves room for, yet again, another viewpoint that makes up for its shortcomings. Pascal argues that these distortions belong to the skill of writing and can be as insightful as the truth itself. Although they may somewhat influence the psychological and historical truth, they may not reduce its contextual value. However, whether they constitute errors or mistakes can only be evaluated when viewed in relation to the connection between reader and author (79, 84). It, therefore, may occur that fictional elements, within the selected books, have not actually existed, taken place, or that its interpretation does not reflect, accurately, the author's intent or the historical and political circumstance. This does, however, not mean that their purpose within the story is insignificant, or that it does not shed light on more obscure issues that the author may not have wanted to reveal, or admit to openly. Authors, after all, reserve themselves the right to either reveal or hide 'their' truth (80). Not every detail is necessary, only those that the literary interpreter regards as significant insights into a particular personality (79). Ultimately, it remains up to the reader to make up his mind about the intentions of the author. To me, in this respect Tusquets' works are not autobiographies; they are fictions that contain autobiographical accounts. While no one has really ever attempted to see Tusquets' trilogy from this vantage point yet, I still believe that this interpretation is a valid and academically useful analysis of her work.

One of the reasons that support my interpretation of Tusquets' works is the curious coincidence of the publication dates of both novels coinciding with the post-Franco revival of the Spanish feminist movement in the late 1970s. Gusdorf theorizes that the origin of the autobiographical novel originated in Western culture, amidst the industrial revolution. Stanford-Friedman argues that for him, 'autobiography is the literary consequence of the rise of individualism as an ideology' (Stanford-Friedman 1998 73). This individualism that underscores the rise of autobiography and the, much later, practice of women's self-writing, seems to find resonance with this very same feminist movement.<sup>25</sup> This may, in the first instance, suggest certain accordance with Gusdorf's assumption, but the issue is not so clear-cut, since Tusquets had never been an openly proclaimed feminist. I will refrain from elaborating on her ideological polemic here, but suffice it to say that Tusquets may be considered for all intents and purposes, as what Pamela Aronson's calls a 'fence-sitter' (Aronson 2003 918).<sup>26</sup> And I agree with Stanford-Friedman, that increasing individualism in connection with

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<sup>25</sup> The history and development of the feminist movement in XIX century Spain manifested its first distinct presence with the instauration of the II Republic in 1931 (Pastrana-Álvarez 2008 1). Between 1931 and 1936, women were given the right to vote and were even appointed to political positions and parliament (1). The progress made with the II Republic was then crushed with the instauration of the Franco dictatorship and, while dedicated feminists, maintained their resistance through clandestine meetings there were few active members until the 1970s (Rolón-Collazo 2002 23, 24). 1975 was declared the international year of women by the United Nations and caused a revival of feminist activity, not only in Spain, but worldwide (Jones 2005 288). This led to the organisation of the *I Jornadas Nacionales para la Liberación de la Mujer* in Madrid and also the first significant rise of feminism in Spain (Martínez-González 2011 10). Following its emergence, feminism underwent several transformations, from being institutionalised, to losing its collective unity (Rolón-Collazo 2002 26, 27). Consequently it stopped to solely signify civil rights and equality for women and became known for topics, such as lesbianism, violence against women, sexuality, new technology, prostitution, work and health (Historia del feminismo en España 2008 5) (Martínez-González 2011 14). It also showed particular interest in an individuation aspect of women's development that allowed them to re-define their own identity, divorced from the more traditional ideal (Historia del feminismo en España 2008 6).

<sup>26</sup> According to Pamela Aronson a 'fence-sitter' represents a paradox by 'embracing ambiguity' (Aronson 2003 916). Tusquets exemplified this because, in spite of being born in 1936 and having witnessed the full development of feminism in Spain, she denied the feminist movement any credit in her development as a writer. Additionally, women like her appear to be less willing to openly admit to being feminist because they believe that the movement in the 1970s has gone too far and they dislike being associated with a movement that alienates men, the media and often the general public (913, 905, 906). Mazquiarán de Rodríguez argues that Tusquets had, herself, on various occasions consciously disavowed any feminist tendencies or agenda in her writing (1991 174, 175). In spite all that, 'fence-sitters' are known to swing either way.

women's feminist movement and their development, makes the use of autobiographic elements in writing, an expression of individual authority in the realm of language (1998 73).

Gusdorf also outlined specific character traits that an autobiographer is likely to possess and how these, in turn, contribute to self-knowledge. Applying these traits to Tusquets facilitates an understanding of why the novelist has used some of her life experiences in her literature. Gusdorf's character traits presuppose that the desire to write autobiography requires a certain degree of self-esteem and that a person who does not consider herself relevant, would never dedicate herself to autobiography (1991 227, 228). But this is no indication of arrogance or superiority within the individual. In fact, Gusdorf outlines an interesting paradox 'l'homme exception, c'est plutôt celui qui se résigne à n'être pas exceptionnel, à se perdre dans cette masse dont l'homogénéité n'est qu'une illusion d'optique' (Gusdorf 1991 230). Thus, the belief of being worthy of writing autobiography is often accompanied, by the acknowledgement that we are not exceptional at all but we nevertheless attempt to prove ourselves to the outside world. Tusquets' familial background suggests this very attitude. While, she had been born into a class of the Barcelona *bourgeoisie*, which supported the Nationalists during and after the war, it meant that Tusquets had already been painfully aware of class differences all throughout her life (Tusquets 2007a 33, 34).<sup>27</sup> Tusquets was, therefore, part of the upper class in Barcelona, which in later years may have contributed to her mind set in regards to writing autobiography; after all, she was brought up to believe that all people were equal and that she was able to deal with 'anything' in her life: 'tú puedes con todo' (Tusquets 2009 261).

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<sup>27</sup> There is a paradoxical element, here, that suggests a conflict in regard to the truthfulness of her autobiography. Although Tusquets had repeatedly stated that she felt uncomfortable with the class thinking and according behaviour that reigned in Barcelona at that time (Tusquets 2007a 33, 34), she had never undertaken any notable rebellion in that respect or given up her privileges of a comfortable life either.

Research carried out by Gusdorf, has further shown, that biographers conceive that the essential elements of a personality reside in its eccentricity, its abnormality and exceptional character, and that if today we speak of such, we speak of people that have managed to exceed originality, in order to integrate themselves seemingly effortlessly, into the general order of others (1991 280). Gusdorf's description reminds of an extract in *Confesiones*, where Tusquets recalls that Frederico Correa described her as 'imprescindible' to know (Tusquets 2009 59), and that he found her strange and unusual (58). While some may regard such a comment as unkind, Tusquets felt flattered by it. She further related that it was not the first time that something she said, did or represented, seemed outside the ordinary or the norm (59), which suggests the very attitude that Gusdorf outlined. Autobiographers, according to him, are also characteristic because their personalities contain revolutionary traits. They possess a disposition to question everything and everyone around them, and desire to constitute their own moral framework (Gusdorf 1991 229). This is, likewise, a point that I find to be vividly reflected in Tusquets' works, particularly in her later ones. While it may not yet have been very strongly reflected in the late 1970s, when she published her trilogy, such a disposition became particularly prominent in her latest autobiography, where she aspired to 'convertirse en vieja dama indigna' (Tusquets 2009 10): 'Intent[ando] vivir a mi aire, sin atender a normas ni formalismos, sin pretensiones de respetabilidad, disfrutando con voracidad y sin vergüenza de los placeres que restan' (Tusquets 2009 157). Gusdorf's *Le principe de l'identité* discusses, just how, these character traits contribute to *la connaissance de soi*, contending that 'le principe d'identité s'affirme en rupture avec les conformités établies' (Gusdorf 1991 245). This lets us deduce that an individual's identity defines itself in relation to the social network that surrounds it and

the degree of ease with which he/she, either accepts, or rejects it.<sup>28</sup> This has been reflected in Tusquets' trilogy. By addressing themes, such as lesbian love, she clearly rejects Spanish conservatism of the time.<sup>29</sup> And for Gusdorf, the true identity of the autobiographer remains elusive until he decides to: 'se démarquer de son milieu, prendre ses distances et consommer une rupture matérielle ou mentale' with that supporting network (Gusdorf 1991 246). Tusquets had only attempted this in her last autobiography, *Confesiones* (2009), and her last books. To a certain extent, the disposition portrayed in *Confesiones*, had always been latent in her work, even though, in 1978, when she started her trilogy, she may not have had the same attitude about life or her own person that she had had in her late seventies.<sup>30</sup>

Gusdorf, therefore, provides a useful framework for an analysis of a characteristic autobiographer. However, he has been criticised, by several feminists, for providing a male-orientated perspective. Shirley Neuman identifies one of his shortcomings in *Autobiography and Questions of Gender* (1991), where she puts forward a key attribute that differentiates women from men as: interdependence and community. According to her, 'women define their identity in terms of their relationship with others' (Neuman 1991 2). Women, therefore, must feel interdependent with the community.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, Gusdorf's insights are valid and useful, despite the feminist criticism, because individualism is a necessity in society. This was because that such a society possesses the connotation of self-reliance and personal independence. The issue here was that for feminists, this excluded, all potential writers that history did not deem worthy of possessing individualism, minorities and women (Stanford-Friedman 1998

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<sup>28</sup> This point of view, relates directly to Julia Kristeva's theory on SIP, which later analysis of the protagonists will show. Please refer to section 2.3 and 2.4 for more detail.

<sup>29</sup> See Chapter 4 for more details on this.

<sup>30</sup> Closer analysis of *Confesiones* shows similarities to the protagonists' story lines in *EMM* and *VUN*. However, I have refrained from developing it, as it goes beyond the scope of this thesis.

<sup>31</sup> Susan Stanford-Friedman agrees with this and I, too, believe that this is certainly true.

72). At best, therefore, Stanford-Friedman considers his theory as discriminatory towards feminists and only sound when applied to men (72). However, despite societal pressures, Tusquets had managed to write this type of literature, publish it and become famous. This conclusion appears too simple and, in Tusquets' case, hardly applicable.<sup>32</sup>

Further criticism made of Gusdorf is that his emphasis on unique selfhood ignores the differences inherent within male and female gender identity propagated so successfully by the Catholic Church.<sup>33</sup> This issue addresses the underlying problematic, that according to feminists, a woman can never perceive herself as a unique entity because she so mindfully realises that she is defined as a woman by the dominant male culture. In *Women's Autobiographical Selves* (1998), Lynn Sukenick refers to a remark by Simmel, that notes how 'it cannot be overlooked that the woman forgets far less often the fact of being a woman than the man of being a man' (Sukenick 1977 28). This standpoint in regard to Tusquets would suggest again that she was not able to write, be heard or publically voice an opinion. And this is simply not the truth. Her trilogy is the best example to suggest that she never conformed to the Spanish ideal of the time. While this is only one instance where Tusquets defies norms, it does not agree with Stanford-Friedman's statement.<sup>34</sup>

There remains, however, one statement by Gusdorf with which, I must strongly disagree. Gusdorf insists that identity of the self resides outside the limits of possible experience, meaning that identity is not in direct relation to the autobiographers' feelings and experiences (1991 261). This can simply not be true for women, and here, I

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<sup>32</sup> I additionally refer, here; to separating elements that divide male and female gender characteristics and which are, often, argued to be reflected in the writing of an author. Particularly in regard to Tusquets' works, I do not agree with it. See Chapter 4 on Tusquets' ideological development for support of this view.

<sup>33</sup> The standpoint assumed by the Catholic Church, in relation to women, is that they are inferior beings in comparison to men (Folguera-Crespo 1984 529). See Chapter 4 for more detail.

<sup>34</sup> To look at this issue in more detail please refer to Chapter 4.

must concede feminist criticism their convictions that women must constantly fight for their identity because of society's deeply rooted patriarchal foundations.

### **2.2.2 Psychoanalysis in (Spanish) Women's Identity Development**

This section introduces the reader to the concept of psychoanalysis and its relevance and significance, in regard to identity formation in women. It also draws on female writing to illustrate the connection between psychoanalysis, writing and the female search for identity. In this respect, it addresses Spain in particular because much like the feminist movement, the reception of psychoanalysis in Spain has been disruptive and has had a different timeline and background than in the rest of Europe.<sup>35</sup> Section 2.2.3 and the subsequent sections then provide a specific introduction to the theory used in this chapter, as well as, necessary background, concentrating on Kristeva.

Female autobiography has been theorised, as being directly connected with psychoanalysis because it often implies an aspect of auto-realisation (Ciplijauskaitė 1994 13). This is because psychoanalytic theory, according to Minsky, 'provides a structural theory for the construction of identity and has increasingly been used, especially by feminists, to expose and explore the unconscious dimensions of both history and contemporary culture' (Minsky 1996 3). This is why it is frequently written in first person and takes the form of autobiography or auto-fiction, which facilitates auto-analysis and the expression of emotions for the authors. Ciplijauskaitė sees this type of writing, as a metaphor for women's liberation from the imprisonment of their bodies and culture (1994 14). In the XX century, with the upsurge in the feminist

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<sup>35</sup> Psychoanalysis has seen different waves starting with the Freudian, Lacanian and lastly, the Kristevian. This section contrasts specifically the reception of Freudian and Lacanian feminism and outlines their differing perceptions regarding identity development in women.

movement, this type of writing went from '[la] protesta airada' (Ciplijauskaitė 1994 14) to becoming '[una] expresión natural' (Ciplijauskaitė 1994 14). Among the genres of female literature that have created a reputation for themselves, is the *Bildungsroman*, specifically applied to describe the personal development of an individual. According to Francisca López, it was used from the 1940s up to today, to express the conflict inherent in spiritual growth and social integration that women struggled with everywhere (1995 190). While much feminist, or feminine literature have adhered to these motives, some women, such as Tusquets have appropriated the style with a different intent or, at least, a decidedly ambivalent motivation, in regard to the feminist cause. The change experienced in the feminist movement at the turn of the XXI century, has also changed this genre and, in fact, the stronger the movement grew, the more some women tried to separate themselves from it.<sup>36</sup>

Particularly in Tusquets' case, her novels and the inherent feminine issues they bring up, are not necessarily connected to feminism as a collective movement for the author. While Tusquets' positioning on the issue had been ambiguous, I understand that Tusquets regarded female individuation as something individual and strictly personal and this may explain how certain issues surfaced in her novels without a need to be considered from a dogmatically feminist perspective.

Returning to psychoanalysis and its adjacent writing style, the themes that were of particular interest in Spain after the dictatorship, were personal and erotic-sentimental growth (López 1995 191). Additionally, with the beginning of the 1980s literary values began to shift, and women's attitude towards writing started to change.<sup>37</sup> Instead of writing in defence of their social position, they were now able to dedicate time to

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<sup>36</sup> Please refer to an article of mine entitled, *A feminist/femininity perspective on Esther Tusquets' self-representation in Confesiones de una vieja dama indigna (2009)*, published in the eBook of the interdisciplinary press, for details on the problematic ([www.interdisciplinary.net](http://www.interdisciplinary.net)).

<sup>37</sup> According to Ciplijauskaitė, these shifts refer to England, the United States, Spain and, to a certain degree, Italy and Portugal (1994 13).

writing unhampered, and, thereby, finding their own voice (Ciplijauskaitė 1994 16). López remarks that consequently, the most frequent conflict portrayed in Spanish post-dictatorship literature became 'el choque entre el deseo de la mujer de realizarse por medio de fuertes relaciones personales y los valores vigentes en su sociedad que le confieren un estatus de necesaria inferioridad en el desarrollo de esas relaciones' (López 1995 61). According to Mitchell, who states that 'psychoanalysis is not a recommendation *for* a patriarchal society, but an analysis *of* one' (Mitchell 1975 xv), the conflict that is portrayed in literary terms seems to be a reflection of the lacking relevancy of the psychoanalytic doctrine in Spain. What is more, for her, 'psychoanalysis gives us the concepts with which we can comprehend how ideology functions [...] it further offers an analysis of the place and meaning of sexuality and of gender differences within society' (Mitchell 1975 xxii). However, it took until the 1980s, another five years after Franco's death, to become popular. This was partly due to its reception in Spain, and its consequent struggle, to gain a foothold. Although I do not propose that Tusquets' can be read in strictly psychoanalytic terms, I believe that a revival of the feminist and the psychoanalytic movement have had their impact in her as an author and her narrative. For this reason, one has to consider the circumstances of its reception in more detail.

Although Freud's first publication appeared in Vienna in 1893 (Druet 2007 1) and was expected to be first institutionalised in Spain, its practical application (2006 1), never occurred until 1908 (Iñaki 2006 2). When articles of Freud regularly appeared in publications and received international exposure, even then, did Spain still remain opposed to Freud (2). Blame for this can partially be attributed to the Catholic Church, which had adopted an increasingly forceful and controlling attitude after 1850, due to a surge in liberalism, anti-clericalism and the formation of liberal and moderate political

parties (Maier-Allende 2003 3). The liberalist and sexual theories of Freud, posed a further threat to its survival and it reacted with an active political agenda, to try and undermine it on a national level.<sup>38</sup> Jorgé Maier-Allende puts the reality of these times into perspective, when he posits:

Hemos de tener en cuenta que en España aún pesaba mucho la mentalidad católica y ésta era una vía inmejorable por la que detener el avance y desarrollo de las nuevas ideas científicas. También [era] una forma [...] de controlar ese desarrollo y adaptar éstas a la verdadera manera de conocerlas. (Maier-Allende 2003 5)

The religious element was strongly propagated in Spanish society and Freud's ideas - fiercely anti-religious and derived from sexuality – were regarded as highly scandalous and subversive (Trías 2006 3). Consequently, in 1918, the Spanish Catholic Church even went so far as to insist on a 30-year ban of any psychoanalytic material ('Diccionario de psicología, letra E España' 2008 2). Therefore, in the years running up to WWI, inclination towards or rejection of the psychoanalytic doctrine, was regarded as an indicatory device of an individual's ideology, in other words, as a political statement, rather than a scientific one (Iñaki 2006 2).

So, although the Catholic Church was the predominant factor in repressing the doctrine, there were sufficient issues that made the beginning of the XX century, a decidedly inopportune moment for the establishment of psychoanalysis in Spain. One of them was the looming governmental succession crisis, which provoked an unstable political environment. In addition, Spain was facing an economic crisis, as a result of WWI. And within this highly volatile environment, the psychoanalytical doctrine was

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<sup>38</sup> Various splits throughout the Church community led to fierce debates, diplomatic protests and accusations of heterodoxy (*La época regeneracionista* 2008 1). But the Church's politisation was slow and its progress steady. And in 1857, it therefore managed to gain an important foothold in politics that strengthened its political stance against the implementation of psychoanalysis (Maier-Allende 2003 3).

not perceived as an innovative ideology, but rather, as a political threat that divided conservatives, progressives and moderate political parties, only prolonging instability (Ruiz-Castillo 2001 1).

Finally, with the instauration of the II Republic in 1931, psychoanalysis had its chance to flourish, when the political environment inspired many Spaniards to loosen up some of their conservative views and adopt more liberal outlooks and activism. Unfortunately, this did not last, as its implementation was interrupted by the Civil War (1936-1939), and the following highly conservative Franco regime. Consequently, many professionals, intellectuals and supporters of Freudian ideology, were either exiled or left Spain of their own accord, for fear of being jailed or assassinated ('El psicoanálisis en el ámbito hispano' 2008 1).

After the Civil War and with Franco's ascension to Head of State, the freedom that psychoanalytic research, development, practice and publications had previously promised, became drastically restricted and scientific and intellectual advancement in this domain was, consequently, deterred for the next 36 years (Iñaki 2006 2). However, this was not to say that Franco entirely passed over psychoanalysis. On the contrary, this tactic was to utilise both, the known position of the Church towards psychoanalysis and the prelature of Opus Dei, to let them repeatedly discredit the movement ('Diccionario de psicología, letra E España' 2008 2). Proclamations were followed by the application of censorship, to most, but not all, of Freud's works in the hope to further deter the national public, from buying into Freudian ideology (Druet 2006 1). In reality, Franco's government had recognised its potential and remodelled it to suit the *Generalísimo's* needs. Consequently, when Ruiz-Castillo cites P. Maset's description of the Spanish psychiatric model in her essay *Psicoanálisis en España (1893-1968)*, it does in no way resemble the liberal model that it really was. Instead, it is described as

anti-democratic and authoritative, resembling a system, in which political and religious control prevails and, where personal and scientific rupture with previous activity contributes to international isolation (Ruiz-Castillo 2001 2).

While this proved temporarily effective, Franco's government soon encountered obstacles in reformulating Freudian theory (Elices-Agudo 2007 94). So as not to have to declare psychoanalysis a total loss to the regime, he tried to enforce censorship not only to Freudian content, but to all cultural and epistemological areas ('La guerra civil española y el mundo del libro: censura y repression cultural' 2008 6). This proved difficult, since, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Franco's regime underwent an economic and cultural liberalisation in an attempt to move out of international isolation. And this move brought with it, an increased exposure to foreign points of view, differing life styles and increased flow of tourism and trade with the rest of Europe and Africa. It prompted the realisation that his regime would be forced to become more tolerant on issues that before, were rigorously forbidden and triggered the eventual relaxation of censorship law, which manifested itself in an upswing of publications, on topics, such as Marxism, psychoanalysis, existentialism and structuralism (Chandler 1991 384).

It was in the 1970s, that psychoanalysis really started to be incorporated into Spanish life and culture. The final success occurred for several reasons. With Franco in poor health, his strict reign over Spain relaxed even further. This allowed formerly exiled psychoanalysts to re-enter Spain from South America and establish themselves (Sánchez-Barranco 2007 13). Oscar Masota, an Argentinean supporter of the ideas of Jacques Lacan, introduced Spain to Lacan. This brought about the first active psychoanalytic movement in Spain (Druet 2006 1). Spain took more enthusiastically to Lacan than to Freud. This was possibly because his ideas lay in the linguistic realm and

were not as scandalous to Catholics as those, so inherently sexual, of Freud (Trías 2006 3).

Thus psychoanalysis and feminism, both share, a Spanish revival in the 1970s, which also meant increased concern for gender identity, sexuality, the body, family and power relations, in any art or piece of literature thereafter (Minsky 1996 17). What is more, psychoanalysis served as a useful basis for feminist theory. Reasons for this being, as Minsky argues 'it attempts to create rational knowledge [...] about the construction of identity which allows us to use it to analyse historical and cultural questions in distinctive ways. It focuses on the effects of unconscious desire and loss originating in early childhood' (Minsky 1996 14). Work by Kristeva can also be included here, since it features many parallels to Lacan's and only diverges in the attribution of importance of the female mother figure and the subject's development through language, but not, in its fundamental constitutive structure (McAfee 2007 30, 35). To support a pro-woman, pro-emancipation agenda, psychoanalysis is therefore, an important element, because it addresses the problem of gender identity, taking into account the unconscious. While I do not intend to relate this section too much to feminism as a political movement, I would like to explain here that to me the term 'feminism' is used predominantly to underline a pro-feminine, pro-woman consciousness. The acknowledgement of the unconscious in human beings, in turn, provides a way of investigating and scrutinizing the existing values that seem to restrict the freedom of women in society. Psychoanalysis has therefore been, of particular interest in the empowerment of women. The search for identity and a desire to change the societal position of women and family structures has caused artists, writers, intellectuals and politicians to pursue and openly claim this liberty and freedom. Writers, in particular, have set out to incorporate psychoanalysis in their novels and

autobiographies (Saguaro 2000 2), and when they have not strictly done so, they have used these concepts disguised in their narrative, as may arguably have been the case with Tusquets. The approach that this thesis, therefore, takes towards feminist, feminine issues and psychoanalysis can be expressed in Simone de Beauvoir's words 'one is not born a woman – one becomes a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society' (Beauvoir 1997 296).<sup>39</sup> In the spirit of this quotation and in Juliet Mitchell's words, the following section will look at the identity formation of the protagonists in *EMM* and *VUN*, so that, 'woman is a female to the extent that she feels herself as such [...] It is not nature that defines woman; it is she who defines herself' (Mitchell 1975 306). And this is why, at times, this thesis' framework does not remain entirely rigid in terms of demonstrating gender identity. It allows for masculine traits, to be likewise exhibited in women. I refer, once more to Beauvoir, who so eloquently put what is outlined in this context:

I [shall] place woman in a world of values and give her behaviour a dimension of liberty. I believe that she has the power to choose between the assertion of her transcendence and her alienation as object; she is not the plaything of contradictory drives; she devises solutions of diverse values in the ethical scale [...] [this is because] for woman to love as man does – that is to say, in liberty, without putting her very being in question – she must believe herself his equal and be so in concrete fact; she must engage in her enterprises with the same decisiveness. (Beauvoir 1997 82, 705)

For this perspective on women and identity, Kristeva's work is suitable because it attributes adequate weight to the female sex, whilst still basing great importance on the linguistic realm. With the emphasis on women writers, and their literature, this is of

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<sup>39</sup> I use the terms 'feminine' and 'feminist' interchangeably here because as I have established, Tusquets could not really be argued to have led an overtly feminist agenda in her writing. Instead, she regarded it as a personal matter and this is, also, what I would like this section to reflect.

great relevance here. Kristeva's ideological positioning, in regard to feminism, is curiously as ambiguous as Tusquets' was, which may increase her suitability here. Kristeva appears to consider female writing as a political statement, but employs it much more vaguely, to enforce a sense of identity, as Grosz relates (1989 65). I believe that in this sense, Grosz has captured Kristeva's intention, as far as identity formation is concerned. Without invalidating Butler's impression of Kristeva's work, I believe that her criticism is justified if we regard Kristeva's work on the semiotic as a definite concept that explains the stages leading up to a stable, composite identity. If we, however, take into account Kristeva's belief that identity is an ever-changing concept, as she elaborates in *SIP*, the variable that Butler's criticism uses to undermine her work is moot because arguing that the maternal subversion that occurs within the symbolic realm, can never amount to more than a temporary subversion, is not applicable here (Butler 1991 125). As previously stated, my intention in this thesis is to indicate the necessity and usefulness of Kristeva's theory on semiotic disruptions in the protagonists of *EMM* and *VUN* to show that the semiotic disruptions that the protagonists went through supported and caused them to advance in their identity formation. While she agrees that identity formation occurs as a result of the subject's awareness of sexual difference, she sees it as a personal process that occurs within the subject and to which, only the subject is privy to, unless she decides to express herself publically (67). Grosz argues that for Kristeva, the subject is neutral and the phallus is common to the male and the female sex. Following this, events like castration occur to both sexes equally (66) underlying, once more, my opinion that gender identity in the advent of female emancipation may no longer be such a weighty issue as it once was. Although far from being irrelevant, my point here is that women, such as Tusquets, no longer hide behind the notion of being a woman and thereby the objective behind identity formation has

incidentally become fulfilled. The reason I also chose Kristeva was because of her differentiating female individuation from male and because she saw a significant connection between the mother and the daughter, as far as, identity formation was concerned.

Kristeva's theory also attributes great weight to the mother figure. Within this thesis the significance of the mother figure is, for the most part, not engaged with in great depth. While I concede, that it is at times apparent in Tusquets, it is not present in elaborate terms. As such, Tusquets' dismissal of the importance of the motherly element in her literature, considering her very own issues with her mother, is really quite telling here. It indicates the difficulty of female individuation in the face of denial of the motherly element and might be worth exploring further. It will, consequently, be discussed from a theoretical standpoint first, and then a more author- and literature-specific context.

Female autobiography faces the problem of the 'mother-daughter relationship', which can be problematic for the daughter, when establishing her own identity. In psychoanalytical terms this is because, of a differing process of ego development before the oedipal stage for girls and boys. Girls, have more fluid ego boundaries than boys. They are not confronted with early identification and subsequent rupture with their mother, which boys have to go through. Hence, they learn to gradually become familiar and exemplified with the mother. This, in turn, develops the fluid interface between the female self and others later in life, resulting in problems of separation and individuation between mother and daughter in later life (Smith and Watson 1998 16, 17).<sup>40</sup> Siegel points out that the confrontation between mother and daughter is often so conflicting because they frequently mirror each other to a great extent. This reflection is often

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<sup>40</sup> It also relates to the concept of the 'Other', which will be discussed later in this section.

unwelcome and confusing for both and intensifies the ambivalence of their relationship. In line with Siegel's reference to the function of the mirror in this relationship, Stanton comments on the notion of Lacan's mirror image. In both circumstances, the mirror image presents the 'possibilities of becoming' something more than we are now (Stanton 1998 138). In the context of identity formation, this notion holds particular significance for the daughter in relation to her mother. The mother presents for her, all that she can be and naturally the daughter initially identifies herself as a continuation of her mother (López 1995 61). However, the relationship between mother and daughter becomes problematic, when the daughter starts to develop her own female identity and stops assimilating her mother, to often, even radically, separate herself from her. This can further be complicated, when the mother does not allow her child this space and freedom of development. Adrienne Rich relates what she coined as 'matrophobia', to describe this phenomenon. That is, 'the fear not of one's mother or of motherhood but of becoming one's mother' (Rich 1995 235). For her matrophobia thus originates from the great similarities that mother and daughter often share and much of the hatred that can ensue between them comes from female lives that are unfulfilled and from the self-hatred generated by their own struggle to break free (235). Despite this apparent animosity, there is, as Rich relates, the desire for 'mutual confirmation from and with another woman that daughters and mothers alike hunger for, pull away from, make possible or impossible for each other' (Rich 1995 218). This creates in each woman, a well of anger towards her mother and vice versa (Rich 1995 224). This ambivalent relationship had been apparent in Tusquets' life and in her novels, where the mother figure was either absent or portrayed negatively.<sup>41</sup> As Tusquets' outlined in

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<sup>41</sup> *EMM* shows a mother that attempts to control her daughter by infantilising her behaviour and her capabilities to decide her life for herself. Although not directly relevant to this chapter and more to the author's own personality, in *AJS*, the novel remarks several mother figures of the main characters as being apathetic, distant and cold.

*Correspondencia privada* (2001), her mother could never accept her daughter, for who she had been because they were not alike and, therefore, she had never been a good enough daughter to her mother.<sup>42</sup> *Correspondencia privada* is, therefore, so insightful because it is the earliest account of admittedly written auto-fiction by Tusquets.<sup>43</sup> The relationship of a young girl with her mother is essential, as otherwise, like in Tusquets' case, it leads her to question her own personality, indicating that there must be something wrong with her if her, own mother cannot love her and accept her for who she is.<sup>44</sup> For Rich, this admission is the ultimate stumbling block in the mother-daughter dynamic. In *Correspondencia privada*, Tusquets openly questions the reasons why her mother could not accept her for who she was. This desire for acknowledgement that underlies most of Tusquets' writing is, according to Rich, exemplary for the need to feel encouraged in her quest for individuation as a woman as a daughter's rage towards her mother is likely to be perpetuated by her mother reducing her to a non-priority status and forcing her to look to someone else for validation (Rich 1995 244). Rich's reasoning is that:

The quality of the mother's life [...] is her primary bequest to her daughter, because a woman who can believe in herself, who is a fighter, [...] is demonstrating to her daughter that these possibilities exist. (Rich 1995 247)

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<sup>42</sup> Incidentally, this same problematic is broached in *EMM*, where it presents itself as the same fundamental issue dividing the protagonist E. and her mother.

<sup>43</sup> The book is a collection of letters that are modelled on the most influential people that have been part of Tusquets' life. Among these, feature particularly her mother and her later partner, to mention a few.

<sup>44</sup> In Tusquets' case this issue only seemed to have exhausted itself after years of writing and numerous publications that addressed a similar issue. With the publication of *Correspondencia privada* in 2001, she finally seemed to have put the topic *ad acta*, when she wrote 'pero si nuestra relación se quebró [...] fue porque comprendí [...] que nunca (y, en cuanto se relaciona contigo, 'nunca' es un nunca sin paliativos ni esperanza), por mucho que me aplicará, lograría tu aprobación' (Tusquets 2001 37).

What appears to be the ultimate failing in Tusquets relationship with her mother (as in the relationship between her protagonist E. and her mother in *EMM*), is the refusal from the side of the mother to truly engage with her daughter and her development into a woman and to openly talk to her about the 'expectations and stereotypes, false promises and ill faith, awaiting them in the world' (Rich 1995 248). To truly believe in the promise that one can be anything one wants to be, as long as we are ready to fight for it, we need to 'create priorities for [ourselves] against the grain of cultural expectations, to persist in the face of misogynist hostility' (Rich 1995 248). However, to ensure this point is reached more readily, a daughter must have first 'been both loved and fought for [by her own mother]' (Rich 1995 244). Therefore, in order to overcome what holds them back from achieving her full potential, women will often repress the motherly element.

Therefore, in order to overcome, what holds her back from achieving her full potential, women will often repress the motherly element. This is what can be identified as matrophobia, as Rich described it:

A womanly splitting of the self, in the desire to become purged, once and for all, of our mother's bondage, to become individuated and free. The mother stands for the victim in ourselves, the unfree woman, the martyr. Our personalities seem dangerously to blur and overlap with our mothers', and, in a desperate attempt to know where mother ends and daughter begins, we perform radical surgery. (Rich 1995 236)

Siegel agrees with Rich's thinking, outlining that in the face of such a problematic it can occur that the female writer will differentiate her relationship with her mother right out of existence, stating clearly how she identified with her father instead. Rich and Siegel,

however, differ in how this is demonstrated in women. Rich argues that a woman identifies with two women instead. One, who represents the biological mother and who, surrounds the domestic sphere, while the second woman is admired for her career and achievements instead (Rich 1995 247). Siegel, however, believes that women's autobiography or auto-fiction still remains characterised by an inability to silence the maternal influence within it completely (Siegel 1999 15). And since erasing it is not possible it becomes charged, much like a 'textual abyss' (Siegel 1999 15). She argues that the literature may lead off into the symbolic realm, until it stops short because the daughter tries to emulate her father, but the maternal element in her writing is undeniable and resides outside of symbolic discourse. This means that the daughter always stumbles over the gender gap and the semiotic/symbolic divide. To me, Tusquets appeared like a textbook case of exactly this same psychological problematic. In her autobiography *Confesiones*, she also suggested that she felt closer to her father and emotionally identified more with him. Additionally, literature in this thesis does not succeed to indicate a mother figure that reflects Tusquets' supposed issues with her own mother, despite the validity of Rich's theory.

But, it is not just the relationship with her mother that is significant for the daughter's development. Her relation to the voice within, 'the Other' is equally important. According to Julia Watson, employing a shadow of 'the Other' within female writing, may act as liberation for the daughter from the restrictive constraints of her conventional life (1988 182). It is argued that the multiplication of 'Others' 'permits [the] exploration of the self as a history rather than an ego and as a drama enacted over the duration and against the lapses of memory' (Watson 1988 181). It is, exactly, the use of 'the Other' within female literature that characterises this genre and explains, why female autobiography and auto-fiction lack the self-dramatizing egoism and self-

reference, which can be found in the Rousseauian autobiography, which is considered as typically masculine (183). I would go as far as to suggest, that this 'Other' makes particular sense when applied to an analysis of Tusquets' literature, if we consider it auto-fiction. Otherness can be seen as a tool for self-understanding, which permits the escape from the sociological restrictions of every-day life (183), enabling and facilitating the individuation process and the separation of the daughter from the mother. When the element of the 'Other', is perceived as an entity that goes beyond the boundaries of the self, it permits the individual to acknowledge her own conventional existence as different, and the 'Other' becomes an extension of that self. In this way, the 'Other' does not limit, but is, indeed, ever present and the self, as we know it, becomes elusive (187). It allows the author to 'improvise' his own life on paper.

### **2.2.3 Julia Kristeva's Theory of the Subject-in-Process**

For introductory purposes, I would like to use this section, to illustrate the differences between Lacanian and Kristevian theory of identity formation in the infant. I refer to the identity formation process of an infant, here, to better illustrate the psychological change that takes place. The later analysis, then, focuses on the different plateaus and stages that take place in the formation of an increasingly stronger identity. Consequently, the following section may, at times, switch perspectives between infant and adult. To draw an adequate picture of the process of identity formation in this chapter, we need to consider Lacan and Kristeva's work. I refer to Lacan in this introduction because his work is the forerunner of Kristeva's theory on SIP.

According to Minsky, Lacan believed that feelings of loss and desire become transformed into language (Minsky 1996 4), and that the unconscious was structured as

a language. Kristeva, then, made her own adjustments to his theory and now allows for a psychoanalytic analysis of Tusquets auto-fiction. Although Kristeva departs from the same underlying argument as Lacan, her work is more specific, in regard to female identity formation. She sees the development of self, in women, as a 'developing entity, changing by definable stages' (Stanford-Friedman 1998 74). And in an interview by Susan Sellers, Kristeva commented that individual identities, are constantly called into question and personalities are constantly changing, although the subject is likely to reach a plateau of stability from time to time (1989 132, 133). Therefore for identity formation to take place on Kristeva's terms, the connection with the mother is central to the development of the daughter, and represented by the *chora*: a symbolic expression of the mother-daughter bond, which supports the infant's tactile relation to its mother's body, and later, provides the child with the necessary drives for symbolic expression (McAfee 2007 19).<sup>45</sup> As Moi relates, for Kristeva, the daughter can never establish herself as a subject, or enter the linguistic realm, without a stable connection to the mother. The Lacanian mirror phase is therefore, accomplished when objects can be perceived as detached from the semiotic *chora* (Moi 1986 13). When this occurs, Kristeva's perspective of female development agrees with Chodorow's in that 'through their early relationship with their mother, women develop a sense of self continuous with others and a richly constructed, bisexual, Oedipal-oscillating-with-pre-oedipal inner self-object world that continuously engages unconscious and conscious activity' (Chodorow 1989 184). This statement stresses, how vital it is for women to continuously feel the connection with others because it allows them to alternate between the conscious and unconscious aspects of their psyche that provides the connection

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<sup>45</sup> The *chora* is enforced in infant years, before he/she is able to speak (McAfee 2007 18). The infant communicates, at this point, through intonations and gestures that the drives, which are energy charges as well as psychical marks, articulate as the *chora* 'a non-expressive totality formed by the drives and their stases in a motility that is full of movement as it is regulated' (Kristeva 1984 25).

between the symbolic and semiotic and between the daughter, the mother and the 'Other'. It is this interconnectedness, that allows for the establishment of the subject and entry into the realm of the symbolic (188). This identity is significant because without it, the subject is unable to perform 'meaningful, subversive or creative action' (Moi 1986 14). The entry into the symbolic marks the moment, when language becomes important to individuation.<sup>46</sup>

For Kristeva, language cannot be separated from the person that uses it (McAfee 2007 29). And she posits that an identity is constituted, as soon as, the subject is conscious of signification (Kristeva 1980 124). The speaker and the subject, therefore, are, in turn, composed of different processes, until they reach a (stable) identity (McAfee 2007 29). In *Polylogue* (1977), Kristeva describes, how 's'identifier au procès de l'identité signifiante, subjective, sociale [...] c'est précisément avoir la pratique du procès, mettre en procès le sujet et ses stases, faire de sorte que les lois de la signifiante correspondent aux lois objectives, naturelles et sociales' (Kristeva 1977 90). And Kristeva analyses these various processes that put the speaking-being 'on trial' and question the constitution of its identity.

This happens through interplay of two factors: the symbolic and the semiotic. A symbolic mode, in which meaning is conveyed through the use of logical terms and expressions, and a semiotic one, which finds expression through a flow of words that are motivated by emotion, feeling and desire. The symbolic form of expression, originates from the conscious mind, where the subject expresses itself via a stable system of signs. On the other hand, the content of a semiotic form of expression, relates to the unconscious (McAfee 2007 16, 17).<sup>47</sup> Up to this point in an individual's

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<sup>46</sup> See 2.2.2 for more detail.

<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, she stresses that the signifying process is, in fact, a process, where the ever-occurring changes come together in the *chora* and not a state of being (Moi 1986 12). Her work also places the mother figure, not the phallus, at the centre of subjectivity theory.

development, Lacanian and Kristevian theory do not greatly diverge. This only occurs, once, identity formation takes place. Because identity is unstable, at any given point in the subject's life, linguistic signs, meaning and as a result the speaker are constantly called into question and required to re-establish their identity within the existing system. This has led her to name the theory SIP.<sup>48</sup> It can also visually be thought of as a courtroom trial, which puts the subject on a stand and questions it (Sellers 1989 132). Language is of vital importance, and like Lacan, she believes it to be a structuring device that is required as a condition for the production of the subject (Grosz 1989 39). But unlike the Lacanian mirror-stage, Kristeva argues that the child's separation/differentiation from the mother takes place before Lacan's mirror-stage, more precisely, when the child begins to expel everything from the body that it finds unpleasant, in a process called 'abjection' (McAfee 2007 35).<sup>49</sup>

Kristeva further departs from Lacanian theory, when she makes the bodily drive relevant in the creation of language, as work by Freud had initially theorised. She also draws a connection between the semiotic, the maternal and bodily drives, assuming that it is the body that initiates and harbours the symbolic. Kristeva believes that it is the maternal element that then propels the individual into subjectivity (Oliver 1993 3). The constitution of the symbolic is facilitated by the subject's separation from the semiotic (Kristeva 1980 136) and symbolic language becomes a protective measure for the daughter that enables her to forge a separate identity from the mother (Minsky 1996 181). For Kristeva, this ambivalent relationship between the semiotic and the symbolic is vital and she encourages women to 'employ a *double* discourse which reflects [...] both 'masculine' and 'feminine' – both inside and outside the boundaries of the

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<sup>48</sup> SIP is treated in this thesis, as an all-encompassing theory, constituting semiotic disruptions, abjection and melancholia.

<sup>49</sup> This supports my understanding of the inter-relatedness of all three theories as portrayed in this thesis.

Symbolic' (Minsky 1996 181).<sup>50</sup> For Kristeva, 'the symbolic [...], is the inevitable attribute of meaning, sign, and the signified object for the consciousness of [...] [the] transcendental ego' (Kristeva 1980 134).

In later years, after the individual is fully developed, the semiotic becomes fundamentally opposed to the symbolic and constitutes the anarchic, formless circulation of sexual impulses and drives that cause the dividing and organising of the body, following the pleasure principle (Grosz 1989 42, 43). It starts to represent the 'unnameable drives of the body, the unconscious, the intuitive, the irrational' (Ekland 1997 78) and becomes the body's non-verbal way of expression through language, specified as semiotic disruptions. It 'introduces wandering or fuzziness into language' (Kristeva 1980 136), and is at once 'instinctual' and 'maternal' (Kristeva 1980 136) tempting the subject to enter the realm of the symbolic that provides meaning and signification through sign and syntax (136). This is the underlying nature of the semiotic: its impulsivity, its unpredictability and its transgressive nature in regard to the symbolic. Therefore, despite its apparent power to influence and impact, the subject must always rely on the solid and organised structure of the symbolic to deprive it of its ambiguity and give it meaning (McAfee 2007 17). Therefore in relation to the symbolic it is frequently seen, as 'modes of expression that originate in the unconscious whereas the symbolic could be seen, as the conscious way a person tries to express himself, using a stable sign system' (McAfee 2007 17). The symbolic is the realm of language and consciousness, where the subject comes into being and formulates itself, as a person

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<sup>50</sup> It is important, here, to mention that Kristeva believes that neither, male nor, female should possess a rigid, superior position of authority over the other because both sexes have the potential to wield power that can be classified as oppressive over the other (Minsky 1996 180, 181). This also agrees with my opinion remarked earlier, that makes Tusquets particularly suitable to be analysed, according to Kristevian theory.

(Bowie 1991 92), where words and meaning are created (McAfee 2007 17).<sup>51</sup> Both exist in a well-established hierarchy, on the basis of maternal repression (Grosz 1989 49) leaving the semiotic and symbolic mutually dependent on each other and simultaneously opposing and conflicting powers.<sup>52</sup>

Kristevian theory of individuation and language presents, in relation to Tusquets' auto-fiction, '[a] discursive or signifying system in which the speaking subject makes and unmakes itself' and, thus, constitutes an important part in the establishment of subjectivity (McAfee 2007 14). The author's and her protagonists' abilities to express themselves, rely on the successful interplay between the symbolic and the semiotic. The semiotic will struggle for power over the symbolic, causing what will later be discussed as semiotic disruptions, where emotions overtake logic (Kristeva 1984 81, 25).<sup>53</sup> It is this constant struggle that allows for individual transformation and growth. For this reason, language is not considered a dead entity but a dynamic process, in which people generate meaning, in what can be called a signifying process (McAfee 2007 14). Kristeva sees women's writing, as Cixous describes it, with unease. She believes that it 'essentialises women and attempts to provide them with a fixed identity' (Grosz 1989 64). Grosz argues Kristeva's conviction, by stating 'that disentangling women's self-definition from the domination of the phallus requires two conditions: first, women should be thrown into society's contradictions not by patronising but by positioning them in the same ways as men; and by experiencing a heterogeneity, not between one (sexually specific) body and another, but between oneself and one's body

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<sup>51</sup> Consequently, the symbolic enacts the paternal side of the coin and presents the law of the father and the castrated mother, while the *chora* and the semiotic are distinctly feminine and maternal in nature (Grosz 1989 49).

<sup>52</sup> The inherent connection of the semiotic and symbolic with the maternal element, which underlies the SIP theory, supports the importance and relevance of melancholia in 2.3 and 2.4, in the development of the individual and this thesis.

<sup>53</sup> The same principle of power struggle governs abjection. However, abjection occurs to a different end throughout a person's life. It, nevertheless, remains, much like the semiotic element, a constant presence and possible threat to the individual's subjectivity.

or oneself and one's language' (Grosz 1989 66); in other words, an established equality between the sexes. And this '[dis]entanglement [of] women's self-definition from the domination of the phallus' (Grosz 1989 66), is what section 2.3 and 2.4 propose. By eliciting semiotic and symbolic reactions in the protagonists, their self-definition is removed from under a patriarchal perspective and their identity is discussed, from a more heterogeneous viewpoint.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> The above expressed argument of a fixed identity, also found reflection in Tusquets' personality, as will be discussed, in more detail in Chapter 4.

### 2.2.3.1 Semiotic disruptions

Semiotic disruptions deal with an overspill of emotion and can have a beneficial effect on the subject, by disrupting the subject's constitution of self because they challenge the individual to develop a stronger structure of the 'I' (Kristeva 1984 25) (Sellers 1989 133). As such, in regard to semiotic disruptions, it is important to observe how the individual deals with an excess of emotion or an unconscious, unexpected presentation or expression of emotion. Emotion, for Kristeva, is primarily expressed via language, which explains how Kristeva sees language as possessing such a fundamental significance in identity formation. For Kristeva, the semiotic in language is 'fundamentally heterogeneous' (Moi 1986 24). This very fact means that the subject, who seeks expression via the semiotic, is forced to repeatedly revise his/her positioning within the discursive realm over time (24). This is reflected in Kristeva's 'stages' of identity development. Furthermore, whatever is expressed via the semiotic, the rules of discourse are that it 'receive[s] its meaning from the person(s) to whom it is addressed' (Moi 1986 32). As such, meaning is not clear-cut, but, in fact, dependent on someone else's interpretation. For Kristeva, this heterogeneity is also embodied, by the unconscious, which also 'shapes the signifying function' (Kristeva 1980 135). 'Identifying the semiotic disposition means in fact identifying the shift in the speaking subject' (Moi 1986 29), it means identifying the change that has taken place in the subject (29).

The Freudian threat of castration, according to Kristeva, comes about when the thetic is fully split or separated.<sup>55</sup> This threshold signifies that the subject has entered into the symbolic realm and from then on the semiotic *chora* will remain repressed and

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<sup>55</sup> Kristeva describes the thetic, as part of the signifying process where identification between subject and object is established through a break in the process, such as a split and argues that 'all enunciations, whether word or of a sentence, is thetic' (Kristeva 1984 43), that is, part of the identity formation process.

'can be perceived only as pulsional pressure on or within symbolic language: as contradictions, meaninglessness, disruption, silences and absences' (Moi 1986 13). Thethetic is seen as 'the Other' and it represents a 'precondition for signification, i.e., the precondition for the positing of language' (Kristeva 1984 48) and as Moi relates:

Significance is a question of positioning. The semiotic continuum must be split if signification is to be produced. This splitting (*coupure*) of the semiotic *chora* is thethetic phase (for *thesis*), enabling the subject to attribute differences and thus signification to what was the ceaseless heterogeneity of the *chora*. (Moi 1986 13)

### 2.2.3.2 Abjection

The process of abjection is also considered to be one of the most fundamental processes in the formation of self. The theory of abjection constitutes the expulsion of what is foreign to the individual; it establishes a border between the outside world and what the individual considers 'I'. It, nevertheless, functions as a stabiliser for emotional well being, because the successfully conquered abject leaves the subject beyond a certain doubt of its constitution. The abject desires to destabilize the subject, but it incidentally stabilises it. Kristeva's concept of abjection first arises in an infant at the pre-Oedipal stage. It manifests as an unconscious sense of disgust in front of his own or his mother's bodily secretions (Minsky 1996 182). Once the subject has established his own identity as separate from the mother, the disgust that is experienced becomes transformed into the 'abject' and is evoked in connection with the feminine element (183). It becomes simultaneously equated with anything that is repressed and marginalised (183). At this stage of an individual's development, abjection theory operates much the same, as does the theory of semiotic disruptions. It imposes itself on

the individual at regular intervals 'hover[ing] at the periphery of one's existence, constantly challenging one's own tenuous borders of selfhood' (McAfee 2007 46). The abject can be considered anything that is a conscious or unconscious threat to 'one's own clean and proper self' (McAfee 2007 46) and imposes conditions on the subject, which the subject must fulfil. It is a process of expulsion, which is a method of establishing the borders of the constituted subject (46), resembling a malady that befalls the subject on its way to a richer and more fulfilling personal identity.

### 2.2.3.3 Melancholia

Melancholia, in turn, presents a further stepping stone on the road to the constitution of the 'I'. A hidden aggression against the lost love object underlies melancholia, which is a feeling characterised by ambivalence and hostility incorporated within the mourning of this something that is lost (Kristeva 1987 106). This loss is originally linked to the maternal object (McAfee 2007 60), and Lechte affirms that melancholy strives towards a reunion with the mother.<sup>56</sup> Thus Kristeva outlines that depression only ensues when the separation from the mother has been unsuccessful leading to either objectal or narcissistic depression (Lechte 1990 34).<sup>57</sup> Kristeva's research into Aristotelian study cites that melancholia was not an illness that befell the subject, but one, which was inherent in its nature. It presented a euphoric counterpoint to the death drive, an element of the genius of human existence and its coextensive anxiety (Kristeva 1989 7). For Kristeva, however, melancholia asserts that the speaking

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<sup>56</sup> As already remarked, melancholia is often studied in conjunction with the maternal element. However, in the ensuing analysis, I have allowed for the mother being replaced for other romantic-emotional connections that the protagonists have made. The reasoning behind this is Tusquets' already mentioned refusal to address the mother figure in her literature. Theory surrounding the influence of the mother will nonetheless be provided whenever the interpretation of the texts requires it.

<sup>57</sup> The symptoms and meanings of narcissistic and objectal depression will be elaborated on later in the detailed analysis of 2.3 and 2.4.

being's life is a meaningful experience, thus when meaning appears to shatter under the melancholic pressure of depression so does life and the individual's will to live (1989 6) and as a consequence, she deduces that melancholia most often affirms itself during moments of crisis (8), becoming an extension of abjection and semiotic theory. For Kristeva, 'melancholy is amorous passion's sombre lining, a sorrowful pleasure' (Kristeva 1987 104). She argues that it is 'an identification with the loved/hated other' (Kristeva 1987 106). The subject turns against himself as a reaction against the 'Other', caused by unacknowledged carnal desire (106). The melancholic holds on to the feeling of sorrow because it has lost the love object. It is, for that reason, that it is so hard for him to let go of it in the end (107).<sup>58</sup> The depression that ensues is linked to the individual's inability to lose that something, which appears inherent to the subject's well-being, so as losing it also entails a loss of its own being (1989 5). McAfee states that the mourning of the lost thing is often related to the maternal object but can take many different forms. It is predominantly a loss, whose mourning is characterized by ambivalence and hostility, for the object lost is equally loved and hated (2007 60). Within this construct, the death drive is an important element because it drives the melancholic in his suffering.

Melancholia is also a narcissistic illness, perpetuated by an individual trying to satisfy his own narcissistic need of being loved for what he is (Jacoby 1990 98). Kristeva supports this view, when she verbalises that 'sadness would point to a primitive self – wounded, incomplete, empty' (Kristeva 1989 12). Within this chapter, the loss that the love object leaves in the individual and the resulting narcissistic wounds are investigated. Melancholics consider themselves to be riddled with fundamental flaws and their sadness is evidence of an unsymbolisable and unnameable

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<sup>58</sup> The words 'depression' and 'melancholia' are used interchangeably in this section. While Freudian theory acknowledges slight differences between them, Kristeva in her work, intended for both words to have the same meaning. For Kristeva sorrow underlies depression (Kristeva 1987 107).

narcissistic wound created by the loss of their love object that gave their existence meaning. Kristeva thus concludes that 'depression is the hidden face of Narcissus, the face that is to bear him into death, but of which he is unaware' (Kristeva 1989 5). While every individual ultimately loses his love-object not all experience depression, as a result. The symbolic order intervenes in the maternal bond between mother and child, facilitating an individual's successful transition into the symbolic realm where the use of words in speech will substitute the maternal loss and adequately voice it (Lechte 1990 27). As a result, literary expression can often be perceived as:

That adventure of the body and signs that bears witness to the affect: to sadness as the mark of separation and the beginnings of the dimension of the symbol, to joy as the mark of triumph, placing me in that universe of artifice and symbol which I try to make correspond, as best as I can, to my experiences of reality. (Kristeva 1987 108)

Depression only results, when the subject cannot accomplish the transition between semiotic and symbolic because s/he cannot recover the maternal element through signs and language (1989 43). Thus, melancholia analyses the subject's constitution of self, concerning itself with the consolation of the self, which must now function without the love object. It looks at how the protagonists deal with their loss, because vanquishing sorrow is achieved when the ego identifies with the symbolic realm and all it entails (1987 109). They recover from it by replacing, healing or reconstituting their fragmented and incomplete self. And this presents the last step in the constitution of identity that the subject must master in order to arrive at a more stable and stronger identity.

## 2.3 *El mismo mar de todos los veranos* (1978)

This section and 2.4 address all three theories related and do so exclusively for *EMM* and *VUN* respectively.<sup>59</sup> Analysis of these novels will illustrate the particular crisis points that the protagonists go through, in an attempt to establish an identity. The first theory addressed, will be semiotic disruptions, followed by abjection and eventually melancholia.

### 2.3.1 Semiotic disruptions

The theory on semiotic disruptions commences with a very central point propagated by the novels: conventionality. The subject's sense of 'I' is put into question at every proceeding, where it moves outside of what is considered to be the norm (Sellers 1989 132). Molinaro claims this unconventionality, by suggesting that the protagonist 'refuses to wear the masks worn by her familial role models and instead opts to emulate the protagonists of her childhood memories, the heroines she encountered in her literary intertexts' (Molinaro 1991 34).<sup>60</sup> In the novel this unconventionality is represented, by the protagonist's decision to first leave her husband and subsequently engage in a lesbian relationship with Clara and these decisions place her in uncharted territory. Although we can assume that the time in which the story is set, rests reasonably near the time of the novel's publication in 1978, Spanish society

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<sup>59</sup> Not all of Kristeva's theoretical considerations are evident in both novels. As a result, the relevant theory will be outlined as required. Should the same theoretical argument be present in *VUN*, then, it will only be superficially broached again in 2.4. 2.4 will draw on the necessary detail to illustrate its point, but will not provide repeated background information on the theory if it has already been given in 2.3. Footnotes may also refer back to specific sections.

<sup>60</sup> Although Molinaro claims this unconventionality in Tusquets' protagonist, the same is apparent, in the author herself. Please refer to Chapter 4 for more detail on my argument that Tusquets' character in *EMM* could have been a partial reflection of the author herself.

towards the end of the 1970s, still remained conservative, in regard to lesbian love and divorce.<sup>61</sup> The protagonist, aware that she must keep this affair a secret, decidedly avoids public gatherings so as not to reveal her identity and be branded for her unconventional choices. This suggests the validity of Molinaro's interpretation that 'the truth of Spanish society has moved from one disguise to countless variations' (Molinaro 1991 28). While E. may be willing to commit to exchanging one mask for another, as a metaphoric representation of exchanging a stable heterosexual marriage for a younger lover and a lesbian affair, she nevertheless, falls in love with Clara. And it is this that initiates the characteristic struggle between the semiotic and the symbolic 'porque Clara [...] está por fin aquí, previsible final de un primer acto que no podía terminar – ahora lo sé' (Tusquets 1978 60). But E. wavers letting the symbolic rule her mind, suspecting that breaking convention by taking a lesbian lover, is after all something that may entail consequences that she might be unwilling to live with. This is particularly obvious towards the end of the novel, where her rational mind tells her that living this love affair is not realistic and that she cannot live the life with Clara that she lived with Julio. For E., Clara and Julio present opposing extremes. They present unconventionality and emotion versus conventionality and rationality, respectively, on the same social continuum. *EMM* shows a protagonist who approaches a choice that reflects her true self, but who actively avoids public acknowledgement of the new identity that her choice reflects.<sup>62</sup> Ultimately, E. opts for a conventional choice thus underlining her unwillingness to subject herself to further societal ridicule.

Kristeva further posits that all identities are constantly called into question and that, consequently, they are unstable and subject to repeated alterations. She applies this to both the identity of linguistic signs, the identity that meaning conveys and to the

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<sup>61</sup> Refer to section 4.2 for more detail.

<sup>62</sup> Refer to Charles Taylor's theory on identity formation in Chapter 4, section 4.2 for the importance of public acknowledgement in the validity of identity confirmation.

identity of the speaker (Sellers 1989 132). Because *EMM* does not dispose of an identity perspective that is conveyed through linguistic signs or the identity of meaning, this section will elaborate directly on the identity that the speaker conveys. Looking at the protagonist's relationship with Julio and subsequently with Clara, we can observe that E.'s identity fluctuates depending on whom she is with. Without Julio, she resembles 'aquella niña triste, que no tuvo otra compañía que la de sus fantasmas' (Tusquets 1978 30). She fills the conventional, socially obligated and clichéd role of the model wife. She generates an identity, a meaning to her life, which she relates as 'falsificación y [...] fraude de todos los papeles asignados y asumidos' (Tusquets 1978 30). With Clara, she experiences a different sense of self and her words acquire a different meaning 'empiezo a musitar también yo palabras muy extrañas, palabras que tampoco tienen sentido y que pertenecen a un idioma no aprendido [...] surgen en una embriaguez sin fin' (Tusquets 1978 157). The meaning behind these words impacts her identity 'estoy aquí, desvalida y desnuda como nunca lo estuve en el pasado [...] deshaciéndome en palabras, fluyendo toda entera de mí misma en un torrente de palabras' (Tusquets 1978 158). The way that E. loves Clara is so ambivalent that her words convey a different meaning and reflect differently on her. This seems to accordingly reflect, the impact that Kristeva assigns to poetic language '[it is] an unsettling process – when not an outright destruction – of the identity of meaning and speaking subject' (Kristeva 1980 124, 125). While it appears that E.'s love for Clara is more intense and brings her more into herself, this is not necessarily obvious from the novel, 'yo sé [que] cuando Clara dice amor está aludiendo a algo muy especial [...] amor como el que durante años y años habrá puesto en mí Julio' (Tusquets 1978 161). This quote illustrates that both loves have the same potential for self-reflection and degree of intensity, but it also illustrates the double meaning of speech. According to Soler, Lacan sees two interpretations

taking place. One, on the level of 'grammatical signification' (Soler 1996 48) and another, on the unconscious interpretation of what is said. Ambiguity is removed only when the interlocutor makes his final decision on the interpretation of the words spoken (48). In E.'s case it first appears as if Julio's love is no longer a determinant in her life because her intense infatuation with Clara eclipses her past temporarily. But, as the novel progresses, the reader comes to realise how the semiotic (emotionally driven infatuation) clashes with the symbolic (the reality of the situation). E.'s newly assumed identity as a lesbian is questioned when she realises that she will have to incorporate Clara in her life:

Buscando un piso para las dos, consiguiendo dinero de su padre, haciéndome preparar unos cursos para la universidad -, una existencia en la que yo no sé siquiera si creo o si no creo, porque nadie me aclaró nunca si a las aves de mi raza les pueden volver a nacer alas [...] empiezo a sentir miedo, y miro a Clara, con una última y remotísima esperanza de que se oponga, de que [...] escapemos juntas y sin equipaje hacia cualquier parte, [...] y es ya seguro que la última prueba, el último hilo del capullo, voy a tener que superarlo, voy a tener que tejerlo sola. (Tusquets 1978 199, 202)

Throughout the novel, the protagonist assumes a passive attitude towards her relationship with Clara. While gripped by the passion and love that the young girl feels for her, she remains but a spectator. Here, I agree with Vázquez that E.'s identity seems lost at decisive times during the novel (1991 165). Her wavering identity becomes 'a continuum whose two components meet, change places, and return to their starting points, only to do the same all over again' (Vázquez 1991 157). As the summer draws to a close she realises the fantasy of it all. With Julio appearing to reclaim her, reality clashes with daydream, fantasy and fairy tale illustration. E. is torn between two lives

where she would assume differing identities. Her identity is unstable because being with Clara requires believing in love; and she knows that when Clara speaks of love she means something very special but something sinisterly dangerous, which scares her (Tusquets 1978 161). With Julio, this is not the case. Life with Julio is a return to routine. A return to a life that she describes as 'una falsedad tan sórdida' (Tusquets 1978 205), 'una trampa monstruosa y gigantesca' (Tusquets 1978 205), but a safe choice, nonetheless. This point, likewise affirms, the underlying problematic of *EMM*, that is E.'s choice of a different, a better path only to retreat at the last minute, thus frustrating her development.

Kristeva also argues that our identity is never stable, but that we arrive at a state of stability instead (Sellers 1989 133). *EMM* appears to portray the ever-changing concept of identity rather than stability. At the beginning of the novel, the protagonist seems willing to change. Clara's appearance signals a great transformation, but as the plot wears on, we realise that Clara is only a temporary distraction that brings E. face to face with her own resistance to change. Ultimately, E. reverts back to her old ways, leaving Clara by the roadside as collateral damage, 'las dos sabemos que la situación no tiene salida [...] y comprendo de pronto que supe todo esto [...] desde el principio [...] que nunca logré engañarme y quizás ni engañarla' (Tusquets 1978 227, 228). Temporary stability seems attained only when she returns to Julio again 'la marcha de Clara supone para mí un inmenso alivio, y que cuando ella esté al otro lado del mundo [...] podré volver yo [...] a hundirme sin problemas en este duermevela que es mi vida, mi no vida' (Tusquets 1978 228). While stability seems apparent, there is no discernible

individuation. E. returns to her gala dinners, to her cinematographic premières and her nights of love (228), that is, she returns to what she knows.<sup>63</sup>

Semiotic disruptions occur within time-specific narrative phrases.<sup>64</sup> For Kristeva, there are two temporal dimensions linear (or cursive) history and monumental time (Kristeva 1981 14). These differing temporal dimensions suggest that women experience the element of time differently than men. Kristeva outlines that linear time is often argued to be masculine and monumental time is its female counterpart (16, 17).<sup>65</sup> In general, both novels are constituted of monumental time. As Molinaro asserts, the narrative structure of the novels rejects linearity in favour of a non-chronic narrative style recounting the subjects' experiences (Molinaro 1991 60). The temporal aspects of the narration relate only and exclusively to the world the protagonists have created for themselves and narration skips backwards and forwards defying further linearity (60). *EMM* shows these temporal disjunctures and how they impact the protagonist's state of mind best. E. longs to escape adulthood, the painful reality of a broken marriage and a suffocating routine. To achieve this imaginary escape she returns to her parents' house. In an attempt to accentuate the temporal disjunction Tusquets employed fairy tale references. The protagonist's escape, on the other hand, is entirely motivated by emotion and her unrealistic desire of seeking a feeling she had when she was a child. Longing for the protection and care of her younger years, her

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<sup>63</sup> Until this point I have argued issues specifically related to SIP. While I regard this theory as all encompassing, I have still included some points here because they relate most closely to semiotic disruptions.

<sup>64</sup> Although these disruptions usually relate to narrative structure and can therefore be of increasingly stylistic nature, the following paragraphs will pertain exclusively to the protagonist's state of mind. However, these narrative disruptions will reveal a conflict between the conscious imposition of self, which can be considered a symbolic aspect, and the underlying structures of the subject's being, the semiotic aspect, which opposes the symbolic construct of time (Ekland 1997 79).

<sup>65</sup> Linear time is regarded as masculine because it follows a chronological and rational sequence of events, a description that can be associated with the symbolic order and the law of the father. On the other hand, according to Kristeva, monumental time is akin to the feminine nature and thus constitutes repetition, eternity and cyclicity because it is driven by a biological rhythm that does not adhere to rationality and regulation (Kristeva 1981 16, 17, 18).

longing overpowers any rational and symbolic consideration, such as the fact that some things will never look or feel the way they did when seen through childhood eyes:

Sofía, aquella mano muy suave [...] que me había despertado un amanecer tras otro en la niñez [...] me pregunté ahora cómo me las habré arreglado [...] sin su contacto protector y suave, durante esta infinitud vacía que ha durado millones de años.

(Tusquets 1978 71)

While her desire to go back in time, does not bring her the expected security and care, it does re-connect her with her past and her roots. In doing so, she adheres to *Woman's time* (1981), repeating her experience of the past.<sup>66</sup> This re-connection with a time, so inherently feminine and so greatly desired brings about a strengthening of her person as such. This argument is in direct correlation with Gerda Lerner's opinion that women's inferior social status was directly connected with their ignorance about their own history (Lerner 1991 271).<sup>67</sup> *EMM* beautifully portrays the individual situation that results from the internalisation of Julio's history, which is that of men and patriarchy and *EMM* illustrates how to counteract its impact by producing a female history. In my opinion, Tusquets' use of fairy tale and mythical allusions and metaphors particularly, when talking about E. and Clara in their romantic entanglement, shows an attempt of such a female history, or could in any case be interpreted as such.<sup>68</sup>

Semiotic disruptions further occur on the level of the thetic phase. Kristeva states that the semiotic positioning between the thetic and symbolic phases is an important pre-requisite for the creation of meaning. As the thetic element marks the borders between the semiotic and the symbolic, it produces a split that facilitates a

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<sup>66</sup> (Kristeva 1981).

<sup>67</sup> Please refer to 4.3.4 for further detail on Lerner's theory.

<sup>68</sup> Please refer to section 4.2 for more detail on this argument.

diverse functioning of the signifier because this sign, that conveys meaning, stands in direct correlation with the instinctual drive of the semiotic (Kristeva 1984 48, 49). E. exemplifies this, in her desire for Clara. She resists Clara's seductive influence, maintaining her rational composure. But as her grandmother dies, the roles become inverted and 'por primera vez, soy yo la que recurro a Clara – se invierten finalmente los papeles -, y la llamo con dedos temblorosos' (Tusquets 1978 144). The moment is characteristic of a semiotic disruption that originates from the thetic element represented by the grandmother. Her death marks the dividing line between E.'s cool composure and her emotional constitution. With the grandmother's death, E.'s previous conviction breaks and produces a diversely functioning signifier that finds expression in her affair with Clara. E.'s emotion takes over and she gives into her feelings relinquishing control to Clara and letting emotion rule over reason. The effect that this emotional reaction ultimately produces is one of increased self-awareness. The scene is key to the novel for it has a snowballing effect on the protagonist's life triggering the realisation that she is not happy in her life with Julio. This said, its effect is, however, dampened by the characteristic push-pull effect that the novel exhibits, which will be addressed in turn.

Disruptions of the semiotic element can also occur via the symbolic. As the semiotic moves beyond the symbolic, to situate itself across from the subject, it also seeks to enunciate a denotation, a truth or an ideology in relation to the subject (Kristeva 1984 81). In *EMM*, E.'s decision to initiate an affair with Clara, demonstrates the uprising of the semiotic element that seeks to provoke truth through confrontation with the symbolic of the subject. This confrontation occurs the moment Julio returns to claim his wife. His return forces her to choose. This moment, marks the beginning of the end in relation to the individuation process because it happens at a time where E. has made their affair her personal truth; a reflection of her true self. Now, she is forced

to enunciate a clear position in relation to Clara or Julio, 'y es ya seguro que la última prueba, el último hilo del capullo, voy a tener que superarla, [y] [...] tejerlo sola' (Tusquets 1978 202). The protagonist's consequent retreat belies what she claimed as truth and outlines the victory of the symbolic over the semiotic. Therefore, in regard to this argument, *EMM* shows no self-awareness nor does it show the victory of emotion over rationality.<sup>69</sup>

### 2.3.2 Abjection

The abject is described as something 'improper' and 'unclean' that the body feels the urge to expel (Kristeva 1982 2, 3). Kristeva sees a connection between death and abjection, relating this particularly to the influence of the corpse on the subject as it:

Show[s] me what I permanently thrust aside in order to live [...] if dung signifies the other side of the border, the place where I am not and which permits me to be, the corpse, the most sickening of wastes is a border that has encroached upon everything [...] the corpse, seen without God and outside of science, is the utmost of abjection. It is death infecting life thereby threatening the very existence of the self. (Kristeva 1982 3, 4)

In *EMM*, abjection is not only illustrated through the grandmother's dead body, but it extends further than the dead body; comprising other bodily secretions such as vomit, excrement or fluids (Kristeva 1982 2, 3). E. experiences the abject through the grandmother's corpse and its smell:

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<sup>69</sup> The following section on abjection, describes further obstacles the subject has to master in the process of identity formation.

Mientras yo quedo aquí jadeando y ahogándome, sabiéndome húmeda y sucia desde la cabeza hasta los pies, contaminada por la proximidad de la muerte [...] el tufillo inconfundible de la angustia y el miedo: huelo a animal asustado. (Tusquets 1978 144)

The proximity to her grandmother's corpse throws her living body into conflict over the abject of death. She experiences now 'I am at the border of my condition as a living being. My body extricates itself, as being alive, from that border' (Kristeva 1982 3). This conflict is illustrated through Tusquets' previous quote where everything around E. becomes death, making it clear what she stands to lose. Consequently, her only desire is to get away from it all, to erase every trace of it from her life, 'voy a encender la chimenea para quemar en ella ese horrible vestido negro, [...] esas asquerosas medias tupidas y oscuras, hasta los zapatos y la ropa interior – todo huele a muerte -' (Tusquets 1978 145). When abjection materialises in the form of a corpse, it is experienced as dangerous, because the subject comes face to face with its own instability and lack of control over itself (Gross 1990 92), and its own mortality. Confronted with her own mortality, her 'I' seeks to reaffirm its vitality and she reaches out for Clara. It is the abject within this scenario that challenges and breaks down 'esta pretendida mujer distante y superior' (Tusquets 1978 145) it is the abject that reduces her to 'una bestezuela angustiada' (Tusquets 1978 145). It breaks down old borders and impressions, to make way for a new awareness and a new sense of life. For E., this action is key because it initiates her affair with Clara and revives her faith in love: 'me traspasa el presentimiento de que tal vez por fin alguien ha vuelto a amarme en mis tristezas y mis miedos, en mi soledad irrecuperable' (Tusquets 1978 145).

The abject is articulated through negation, transgression, denial and repudiation and its nature is therefore characteristically unconscious and repressed (Kristeva 1982 6,

7). E. represses the memory of her former lover Jorge so wilfully and strongly that it leads to what Kristeva describes as 'enough for a defensive position to be established – one that implies a refusal' (Kristeva 1982 7). But one, that is 'not [radical] enough to allow for a secure differentiation between subject and object, and yet [...] a sublimating elaboration. As if the fundamental opposition were, between 'I' and 'Other'' (Kristeva 1982 7). This is illustrated by the following quote:

Mientras ingería pastilla tras pastilla [...] me condenaba al matrimonio con Julio, a mi farsa de amor, a mi farsa de trabajo, a mi farsa de vida [...] – no influyen para nada las princesas fugitivas [...] en el destino de los héroes que optan por la proeza solitaria de autodestruirse – [...] sólo entonces [...] llegó a mí algo que no era propiamente dolor, algo que se parecía mucho al odio. (Tusquets 1978 224)

The last part of the quotation, illustrates the 'sublimating elaboration' Kristeva talks about (Kristeva 1982 7). E.'s feelings have been so greatly repressed that she is only now able to start feeling hate, which is by far not yet the end of her grieving process. E.'s marriage to Julio is, likewise, only a further act that signals denial and repression of her emotions. It is only through Clara's presence and love that E.'s memory is triggered and challenges Jorge's exclusion and repression through time, because in order to live her affair with Clara, the protagonist is forced to confront the past and her present with Julio. This is illustrated through Clara's vision of their future that meets with E.'s doubts about her past and present and displays the unresolved emotions that keep E. locked in a 'lifeless' state of being:

Una existencia en la que yo no sé siquiera si creo o si no creo, porque nadie me aclaró nunca si a las aves de mi raza les pueden volver a nacer alas [...] quizás entonces esta historia maravillosa que Clara ha fabulado para mí pueda ser todavía lo bastante real

como para anular tantos años [...] lo bastante real para hacerme revocar mi decisión de no vivir. (Tusquets 1978 199, 200)

For the abject to produce the individuation effect that this analysis seeks, the protagonist would need to relinquish her past and present in favour of her love for Clara. However, the protagonist does not accomplish this. Instead, she repeatedly betrays herself and her love for Clara, when she spends a second night with Julio and so no individuation takes place.

A further characteristic concerning the abject is its paradoxical double timeframe described as 'a time of oblivion and thunder, of veiled infinity and the moment when revelation bursts forth' (Kristeva 1982 9). My interpretation of Kristeva, leads me to suggest, that the alternating use of reality and fairy tale in the novels may fall into this double timeframe. Hart suggests, that for Tusquets fairy tales 'act[ed] as a kind of metaphorical backdrop against which the characters measure[ed] [...] their own emotional lives' (Hart 1993 80). These various narrative shifts function in a similar fashion for the reader, revealing the Spanish reality of the 1980s layer by layer through the protagonists' conflicts and challenges. The protagonists of both novels draw parallels between myths and fairy tales and contrast them with the people in their fictional worlds. Servodidio asserts that Tusquets employed these references as 'an enchainment of signification' (Servodidio 1991 174), which contributes to the moment of Kristevian revelation that surges from a mythically vague and opaque universe (Kristeva 1982 9). Servodidio argues, that Tusquets achieved this particular result 'through a persistent doubling back and zigzagging movements within and across texts that produce the metaphorical mirroring and metonymic linkage' (Servodidio 1991 174) so common to creating new meaning. In this way, new meaning and self-

awareness are triggered for the protagonists, the author and the reader on several different narrative levels.<sup>70</sup>

The following argument engages with identifying the object of primal repression, which at the same time is also a representation of the abject within the subject that provokes and incites it to re-constitute its identity in the face of conflict.<sup>71</sup> At this point in the analysis Kristeva outlines that the abject can also be the object of primal repression, a precondition for narcissism (1982 12). When this is the case, it causes 'the speaking being, always already haunted by the Other, to divide, reject, repeat' (Kristeva 1982 12). Jorge represents E.'s object of primal repression, for she is unable to reject his presence in her life, even if this occurs in its repressed form. Additionally, after his suicide, his abandonment remains the reason for her inability to 'caminar ya sobre las aguas' (Tusquets 1978 225), to 'volar sola hasta el país de Nunca Jamás' (Tusquets 1978 225). E. remains consumed with him. She repeats the hurt that he inflicted on her with Clara; unable to believe in a love that saves her from it:<sup>72</sup>

Si yo [...] había dejado sencillamente de existir para él [...] y sólo entonces [...] llegó a mí algo que no era propiamente dolor, algo que se parecía mucho al odio, porque [...] nunca podría caminar ya sobre las aguas aunque alguien me dijera en algún instante «ven conmigo», nunca aprendería a volar sola hasta el país de Nunca Jamás, abandonada en la isla de Naxos, sin alas y sin remos. (Tusquets 1978 224, 225)

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<sup>70</sup> The following point will illustrate how this self-awareness comes about on all three counts. This point has been addressed on a very general level for both novels. To be able to analyse the use of repetitions and fairy tale references I will fuse it with a different argument that Kristeva's theory proposes.

<sup>71</sup> This argument is relevant to a later point in this section. The object of primal repression should, however, be addressed beforehand, since it helps to ascertain that E. has, indeed, repressed her love and past with Jorge and that this traumatic experience has led her to flee into fairy tale representations as a result.

<sup>72</sup> Section 3.3.3 will relate the narcissistic crisis that is evoked in E. in more detail. At this point, I would like to draw the reader's attention to this argument's connection with melancholia.

Jorge embodies what Kristeva describes as 'that pseudo-object that is made up before but appears only within the gaps of secondary repression' (Kristeva 1982 12).<sup>73</sup> Julio exemplifies a secondary repression for her and in the times when he has left her and she escaped to her parent's house by the sea, she remembers Jorge. Julio and Clara are but mere attempts to break away from this experience of abandonment that holds her back from fully living her life. Jorge represents a 'constant risk of falling back under the sway of a power as securing as it is stifling' (Kristeva 1982 13) because she cannot separate or reject Jorge's influence in her other relationships. She is 'unable to be satiated within the encompassing symbolic' (Kristeva 1982 12), which constitutes the surrounding circumstances that the next quote outlines, where E. keeps battling against the significance of the role that Jorge has assigned to her:

Brotó la certeza terrible de que [...] si Jorge moría antes de darme a mí la posibilidad de manifestarme, de actuar mínimamente, de representar un papel [...] sin permitirme darle réplica ni entrar en el juego, la partida solitaria que había decidido jugar ya sin mí con la muerte, no habría entonces posible salvación ni posible huida. (Tusquets 1978 224, 225)

The abject represented by Jorge, thereby, repeatedly confronts the subject (Kristeva 1982 13). E. indulges these feelings of hatred, abandonment and betrayal in her affair with Clara, and only rejects and thrusts them aside, when Clara dreams of a future together, ultimately remaining 'haunted by the other' (Kristeva 1982 12). 'Clara [...] va construyendo un futuro imposible para nosotras dos, un futuro improbable que se contrapone y que prolonga mi pasado inverosímil y perpetuamente reinventado' (Tusquets 1978 184). Jorge's abandonment, which lies at the heart of all of E.'s love

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<sup>73</sup> Please refer to Kristeva's argument of primal repression for more detail on the significance and the object of secondary repression in *EMM*.

affairs, and his unwillingness to attribute significance to her, have caused her to believe that it is impossible to assert her own identity. Jorge's abandonment leaves the subject with a fragile sense of self, which substantially impacts on the image she has of herself threatening to break it as soon as repression is relaxed:

Aquello iba a encontrarse por el contrario más y más, a hacerse paulatinamente menos y menos tolerable, como un cáncer maligno [...] puesto que afecta al centro mismo de nuestra existencia, algo que habría de crecer conmigo hasta mi propia muerte y con lo que debería en cierto modo y sólo siempre hasta cierto punto aprender a convivir.

(Tusquets 1978 225)

Moving away from the textual analysis, a second layer suggests that through metaphorical mirroring the use of myths and fairy tales reflects more than a single story. Tusquets draws on the reader's imagination and emotion, leaving interpretation open, and thus, offering a further narrative level. Gould-Levine believes, that this was ultimately Tusquets' intention. Her characters generate their own life scripts through the texts that they have read and assimilated (1987 209). The following paragraph illustrates what Gould-Levine has argued, as being the struggle of the protagonist to re-define her life and self:

Quizás aguarda ya muy cerca el mundo mágico de los secretos ritos subterráneos donde juega Deméter, donde baila Deméter la danza de la muerte con el Minotauro [...] para alcanzar a ver la puntita erguida del rabo esquivo de un conejo pedantorro y blanco, para encontrar a la bondadosa - a la cruel - Comadre Nieve, o a tres enanos barbudos, que habrán de devolvernos a la superficie convertidas en monstruos de circo. (Tusquets 1978 81)

While the characters themselves, re-define their life through a metaphorical mirror, this type of narrative also facilitates reflection in the reader, whose interpretation will, in turn, vary depending on the texts s/he has read. The text also sheds light on the author. Aside from having a particular affinity for fairy tales, Tusquets in my opinion, employed them consciously in her novels. As will be mentioned in section 2.4, she was aware of the negative influence of the female role model in fairy tales (2010 70), even though, it has become clear that Tusquets did not in any form support them. This lets me suggest that there is a subversive narrative strategy at play which provokes a change of perspective and possibly reflects an obvious struggle of the women of that time to release themselves from the traditional ideals so diligently portrayed in fairy tales that society expected of them.<sup>74</sup> I believe that Tusquets' intention was to subvert the use of language as it had been employed by patriarchy. As a result, I also support Waelti-Walters, when she argues that women's status is re-enforced through word of mouth propaganda and their description of being inferior, 'the world is the way it is because it has been told that way' (Waelti-Walters 1982 140). This facilitates an evaluation of language, according to women's own standards, and a first step towards moral freedom (140). References of fairy tales within the narration provide a very obvious distinction from reality, desire and expectation. In *EMM*, the protagonist questions the world and herself as Kristeva argues it occurs only in the full throws of repression (Kristeva 1982 11).<sup>75</sup> E. derives her self-image from fairy tales, thus coinciding with Hart's opinion that the protagonist believes that fairy tales have the power to 'unlock the secret of human relationships' (Hart 1993 81). This is supported by the following quote, which portrays her doubt in regard to her self-image, leading to

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<sup>74</sup> Please refer to Chapter 4, section 4.3 for further details on Tusquets' ideological positioning in terms of women's emancipation.

<sup>75</sup> Kristeva states, 'consciousness has not assumed its rights and transformed into signifiers those [...] unstable territories where an 'I' that is taking shape is ceaselessly straying. [...] There is an effervescence of object and sign' (Kristeva 1982 11).

the interpretation that she had defined herself according to fairy tale characters or characteristics and was suddenly faced with a not yet recognised discrepancy between reality and imagination, and, consequently, a re-evaluation, 'porque el bien y el mal quizá no estén tan separados y distantes como en los cuentos de la infancia, y ¿soy yo de verdad una niña buena?' (Tusquets 1978 81). The element that suggests maturation, in this regard, is found, as Hart recognised, in the way fairy tale references are employed (Hart 1993 83).<sup>76</sup>

Kristeva portrays the abject as *jouissance* and it is the establishment of an *alter ego* through the 'Other' that provides the possibility for the existence of the abject (Kristeva 1982 9, 10). Elia experiences this *jouissance* through Clara. Kristeva describes it as a violent and painful passion that the individual 'joys in [...] [on en jouit]' (Kristeva 1982 9):

Y comprendo de pronto que supe todo esto con certeza casi total desde el principio mismo de nuestra aventura [...] que nunca logré engañarme y quizás ni engañarla, y ahora mismo, por encima de cualquier tristeza [...] descubro que la marcha de Clara supone para mí un inmenso alivio. (Tusquets 1978 228)

It is what Tusquets describes as 'alivio' that expresses *jouissance* for Elia, through Clara. It is a state of being, where the ego relinquishes its previous identity, in order to envision itself through the eyes of another (Kristeva 1982 9), and the 'I' does not disappear in it, but finds, in that sublime alienation, a forfeited existence' (Kristeva 1982 9). This appears to occur with E., when she meets Clara because her previous sense of identity with Jorge comes to bear on her:

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<sup>76</sup> I will not go into particular detail here, on how maturation is determined, in connection to fairy tale references. This is because Hart, Servodidio and Molinaro, to name a few, have already commented extensively on it and this argument does not contribute to my overall objective.

Y descubro que [...] me ha sido devuelta íntegra [...] una tristeza vieja que creía para siempre perdida [...] y que no hacía otra cosa que aguardar paciente su momento, [...] Es inútil que Clara me interrogue [...] sobre los hombres [...] que yo he amado.  
(Tusquets 1978 90)

Kristeva declares, 'I experience abjection only if an Other has settled in place and stead of what will be 'me' [...] an Other who precedes and possesses me, and through such possession causes me to be' (Kristeva 1982 10). E. experiences the establishment of the *alter ego* with Clara. For her, 'the Other' has taken over after Jorge's loss and has been sustained during her life with Julio. As she begins her affair with Clara, the *alter ego* reclaims a side of E. that she only remembers from being with Jorge. The *jouissance* that was once given up, in favour of 'the Other', is reclaimed when the subject participates in the discourse of 'the Other' (Fink 1995 99). The following quotation illustrates this and describes the profound connection that E. feels for Clara almost rivalling Jorge's 'Clara no es, [...] una más en una larga serie de amantes, y nadie hasta llegar a ella estuvo tan cerca de compartir y asumir conmigo un pasado irreparable, tan a punto de acompañarme en imposibles soledades terminadas' (Tusquets 1978 180). Kristeva further states that 'when 'I' [...] experience[s] *jouissance* – then 'I' is heterogeneous' (Kristeva 1982 10). It becomes 'ambivalent, a heterogeneous flux marks out a territory that I can call my own because the Other, having dwelt in me as *alter ego*, points it out to me through loathing' (Kristeva 1982 10). Kristeva argues that one can 'experience abjection only if an Other has settled in place and stead of what will be 'me'. Not [...] an Other with whom I identify and incorporate, but an Other who

precedes and possesses me, and through such possession causes me to be' (Kristeva 1982 10).<sup>77</sup>

This argument of abjection, once more, conforms to the characteristic dilemma of *EMM*. The protagonist initiates an individuation process and gradually gains awareness, but, ultimately, is unable to relinquish herself from its influence. The novel closes and E. remains caught in feelings of resentment for both men, while leaving behind the one person that really seemed to provide her with the opportunity to heal her past hurt.

Abjection also results from primal repression - a demarcation that 'notifies us of the limits of the human universe' (Kristeva 1982 11).<sup>78</sup> In *EMM* primal repression finds expression through the character of Jorge. He represents the 'space [that] becomes demarcated, separating the abject from what will be a subject and its objects' (Kristeva 1982 10). His death marks the space between the abject element of death and the subject (the protagonist) and notifies the protagonist 'of the limits of the human universe' (Kristeva 1982 11) in which she lives, where 'la raza de los hombres empezaba y moría con Jorge' (Tusquets 1978 209).<sup>79</sup> This realisation impacts on the protagonist's consciousness as representation and affect (Kristeva 1982 11). At the limit of primal repression however, consciousness refuses to function and provide signification (11). As a result, emotions take over and it becomes clear to the protagonist that she may never again love this way. For her, Jorge had been the limit of the universe. Abjection is visible through E.'s feelings of anger, betrayal and grief over being abandoned and the very repression of Jorge's significance in her life. This specifically impacts on her when Clara asks about the story of Jorge: 'Clara concluye [...] porque me duele demasiado

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<sup>77</sup> In this case there are two interpretations possible. Both, Julio and Jorge represent the abject. For Julio, please refer to a previous quote already given in this section that outlines her resentment for his person. For Jorge the same applies.

<sup>78</sup> Please refer back to an earlier part in this section on fairy tales.

<sup>79</sup> This quotation again shows certain relevance with the fairy tale allusions, discussed a few pages earlier.

[...] para evitarme el sufrimiento extremo de decirlo: «Pero Teseo abandonó a Ariadna en la isla de Naxos»' (Tusquets 1978 197).

Theory outlines that consciousness and the sense of 'I' give way under intense emotional circumstances, such as the loss of someone loved and that these cause the borders of the 'I' to become fluid (Kristeva 1982 11). In such a state, E. decides to marry Julio and as expected cynically relates 'lo gracioso de esta trampa es que elegí meterme en ella junto con un hombre al que, no sólo no quiero, sino al que tampoco odio, ni desprecio de veras, un hombre al que ni juzgo ya' (Tusquets 1978 207). Repression is necessary to withstand 'intolerable significance' (Kristeva 1982 11) because E. is caught in a trap. She attempts to break out of this trap with Clara, but as she realises that they may not withstand the pressures of everyday life, she goes back to Julio, ignoring the realisation gained and returning to a protective primal repression. This illustrates, once more, the characteristic problematic of individuation in the protagonist of *EMM*.

Abjection is further controlled through sublimation, which is characterised as 'something added that expands us, overstrains us, and causes us to be both here, as dejects and there as other and sparkling. A divergence, an impossible bounding [...] joy – fascination' (Kristeva 1982 12). Clara represents the subliminal element to E., and Maite is the vehicle that provides it, with her description of Clara as an 'indómita princesa azteca' (Tusquets 1978 59). E. notes that she should be repelled by the description, but instead, she is intrigued and strangely attracted to it. Kristeva describes the process as 'a cancer that the listening devices of the unconscious do not hear, for its strayed subject is huddled outside the paths of desire' (Kristeva 1982 11). The same appears to happen to E.:

Esa facilidad para encontrar motivaciones sórdidas o para provocar historias confusas. Porque Maite sabía, con esa odiosa astucia femenina para accionar y profanar los mecanismos ignorados, que su descripción delirante [...] que vino a ofrecerme a domicilio [...] hubiera debido repelerme aunque sólo fuera por sus fallos de estilo. (Tusquets 1978 59, 60)

The abject becomes 'edged with the sublime' (Kristeva 1982 11), and *EMM* shows, how the abject moves through the subject and how sublimation can keep it within its bounds (11). What should have repelled E. about Maite's description, actually attracts her. Her words form a 'cluster of meaning' (Kristeva 1982 12) and verbal caresses (12) carry the protagonist away in her fantasy. The fantasy that she consequently constructs around Clara's person triggers sublimation, which Kristeva describes as 'a spree of perceptions and words that expands memory endlessly and encounters the reader drifting off to a secondary universe' (Kristeva 1982 12). This causes Clara to become mythic to the protagonist 'es donde podemos encontrarnos con la Bestia, donde puede revelarse el Minotauro, [...] y Clara es sin lugar a dudas la Bella de mi historia' (Tusquets 1978 84). She is no longer just a young girl, but a princess and a siren and the protagonist creates around her, a world that is filled with wondrous fairy tale elements that are to underline how exceptional Clara is. The fantasy that the protagonist engages in, in her contemplation of Clara and the persistent mythical and fairy tale links that she draws, suggest a desire to return to her childhood, a return to the innocence of infatuation and love. It exemplifies, 'a divergence, an impossible bounding. Everything missed, joy – fascination' (Kristeva 1982 12). The protagonist does not grow, she does not realise the discrepancy between the world of fairy tales and reality, and she falls blindly into her affair with Clara because she seeks the past, the happiness of her younger years.

A final point concerning abjection is represented by the confrontation and subsequent collapse of the subject and the object (18). In *EMM*, E. and Julio seem to display this behaviour. In E.'s life, 'Julio ha sido para mí únicamente esto: representación constante y casi siempre dolorosa y presente de la vida y de la muerte que eligió para mí Jorge' (Tusquets 1978 208). Theory states that 'subject and object push each other away, confront each other, collapse, and start again – inseparable, contaminated, condemned, at the boundary of what is assimilable, thinkable: abject' (Kristeva 1982 18). This is particularly evident, through Julio's repeated absences for *unknown periods of time*, 'Julio ha partido una vez más con rumbo desconocido' (Tusquets 1978 40). But E. retaliates by leaving for her parent's old house by the sea. Both take lovers to display their emotional independence from each other but after a while they confront each other as if there had never been a doubt that they would come together *again* 'tan seguro el regreso (ese regreso que prometen y garantizan [...] como si yo pudiera dudar por un instante que ha de volver, o como si esto pudiera en lo más mínimo afectarme' (Tusquets 1978 40). Eventually Julio arrives to reclaim E. and as they meet the wall of resistance that initially protected them from each other, collapses and both characters fall back into their old habits, only to start the cycle all over again:

O tal vez presentíamos [...] que llegaría un momento en que esta compleja maquinaria siempre a punto [...] iba a desplomarse por fin sobre nuestras cabezas - o tal vez únicamente sobre la mía [...] lo mismo pudo haber ocurrido hace diez años, o pudo tardar otros diez en ocurrir [...] una chata historia incansablemente repetida. (Tusquets 1978 16)

Once again the subject is aware of the repetitive reality of her relationship but unable to affect change.

### 2.3.3 Melancholia

The origin of melancholia is found in the maternal connection between daughter and mother, which is described as highly volatile and fragmented in *EMM*. As already related briefly in the introductory section to this chapter, the mother element is very significant in the development of the daughter and feelings of melancholia are reflected in this often, ambivalent and conflicting relationship. While *EMM* briefly addresses the mother figure, its analysis is not very detailed for two reasons: Firstly, the mother presents a narrative figure on the sidelines of the novel's plot, and, secondly, as seen in the analysis of melancholia, it has mostly been replaced with a more general lover object, such as romantic love whereby the problematic dynamic that the woman encounters with her mother is transferred almost in exact detail onto the protagonist's romantic attachment.<sup>80</sup> Firstly, the mother figure presents a narrative figure on the sidelines of the novels plot, and, secondly, it has already been outlined that the mother figure in the analysis of melancholia has mostly been replaced with a more general love object, such as romantic love.<sup>81</sup>

As outlined in section 2.2.3.3 feelings of melancholia are initiated, by the loss of the mother figure (McAfee 2007 59). The protagonist's life in *EMM* is overshadowed by a less than perfect relationship with her mother. Even before the tragic love story between her and Jorge commences, she is brand marked by the absence of maternal love. She sees her mother as a statue that is deprived of any maternal emotion or humanity, describing her as 'mucho más distante que todas las estatuas, una madre [...]

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<sup>80</sup> The more complex workings at play behind this projection, is related in detail in section 2.2.2 and subsequently in section 2.2.3.1-2.2.3.3.

<sup>81</sup> Since *VUN* lacks a reference to a mother figure entirely, as far as Elia is concerned, section 2.4 will exclusively analyse melancholia from the lover's perspective.

que sólo está de paso' (Tusquets 1978 8). The relationship between them is less than amicable and the daughter knows that she is alone with her grief, 'que no ha interrumpido desde luego su viaje, cómo pude pensar que ocurriría, cómo pude imaginar una reacción, no ya maternal, sino al menos humana' (Tusquets 1978 22). She laments, how her mother doesn't deem her worthy of a visit to console her, sending her a letter instead: 'ha mandado eso sí una carta sapientísima, por una vez una carta y no una postal' (Tusquets 1978 22). Her mother's refusal to provide her with adequate emotional support and love, translates into a feeling of abandonment that Kristeva mentions, as the cause of melancholy (Kristeva 1989 5). Tusquets dealt here with the characteristic feelings of a daughter, such as, neglect on part of the mother, as Rich addressed:

Under the institution of motherhood, the mother is the first to blame if theory proves unworkable in practice, or if anything whatsoever goes wrong [...] [it] finds all mothers more or less guilty of having failed their children. (Rich 1995 222, 223)<sup>82</sup>

It is these conflicts that leave E. swaying between hatred and love, which according to Kristeva, is expected since the individual deals with an inner dialogue of 'I love that object [...] but even more so I hate it; because I love it, and in order not to lose it, I imbed it in myself; but because I hate it, that other within myself is a bad self' (Kristeva 1989 11).<sup>83</sup> The protagonist, like the Kristevian subject, develops repressed anger towards the maternal object 'lo de madre es sólo el nombre con que la ligo a mí de modo harto fantasmagórico e incierto, pues la maternidad en modo alguno la define y no agota o quizá no cabe entre las posibilidades de su esencia magnífica' (Tusquets

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<sup>82</sup> Please refer to 2.2.2 for further detail on the mother-daughter relationship.

<sup>83</sup> At this point, feelings of abjection become entangled with melancholic sentiments, outlining their interrelatedness, which will consequently be discussed next and in section 2.4.3.

1978 10). This love-hate scenario is common because the subject cannot live without the internal/maternal element but simultaneously hates it because its integrity has been undermined by its loss (McAfee 2007 60).

When access to the maternal object is prohibited, it also blocks the desire for the maternal or love object (Kristeva 1982 14). In *EMM*, the protagonist remains alone, unable to reach out to her mother, because she is not aware that she is mourning her mother's loss in the first place. This is because melancholia is often a feeling of sadness that cannot be expressed in words (McAfee 2007 61), given that the loss occurs during a time in the individual's life where there are no words yet 'after one has made thethetic break into the symbolic (after one begins to differentiate subject from object and to speak)' (McAfee 2007 60). When this is the case the subject turns back on itself at the height of narcissistic confusion and attempts to transfer the sentiments of primal repression to the object of secondary repression (Kristeva 1982 15). The lapse of the Other, which is caused by the destruction of objects of desire, brings about the subject's narcissistic crisis (15).<sup>84</sup> So depression and melancholia represent 'the hidden face of Narcissus, the face that is to bear him into death, but of which he is unaware' (Kristeva 1989 5). A narcissistic crisis is, therefore, a reflection of the breach between subject and object perspectives in relation to the maternal element. The protagonist's lacking need to see her mother suggests a complete breakdown of their bond. The connection lapses due to the mother's lack of care for the well-being of her daughter, which is interpreted by the daughter as abandonment and negligence on the mother's part. The cold and distant feelings of the protagonist, are only, the natural result of the abject acting as a protective measure against the repeated loss of a love object, attempting to maintain the

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<sup>84</sup> At this point melancholia shows great similarity with abjection, for both operate as a kind of narcissistic crisis (Kristeva 1982 14) (1989 19). The subsequent paragraphs, will discuss the specific circumstances.

sense of 'I' within the subject (1982 15). In regard to the protagonist's mother this assumption is warranted:

Ni humanidad tenéis para imaginar, para aceptar, que vuestra hija puede necesitaros ahora [...] aunque no sé para qué podría servirme tenerte a mi lado, rotos como están desde hace años, acaso desde siempre, los cauces naturales de la comprensión y la ternura, y en definitiva es mejor, [...] [que] ni tú hay[as] cambiado por mí [tus] planes.

(Tusquets 1978 24, 25)

Melancholia in *EMM*, leads to narcissistic depression in the protagonist, due to the separation from the mother. Paradoxically, this separation is necessary for the individual to develop her own identity and ego. In spite of its necessity, the subject will experience and remember it as a loss and will always long for reunification with the mother (Lechte 1990 29). When this proves impossible, Lechte states, a person will attempt to fulfil his narcissistic needs through embracing people that form a part of his surroundings (29), adhering to Kristeva's opinion, of transferring sentiments of primal repression to a secondary source (Kristeva 1982 15).<sup>85</sup> The protagonist in *EMM* has forsaken the desire for the maternal connection, with the desire for a love object in the form of a lover.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Reasons for this have already been given in an earlier section of this chapter. Furthermore, this thesis has only addressed narcissistic depression briefly, because personal observation of related literature on the topic and the novels' plots, have led me to conclude that objectal depression only scrapes the surface of the individual issue at hand. Depression related to love-objects other than the mother bases itself on the conviction that something or someone was taken from the individual out of their external environment. While narcissistic depressed individuals suffer from an intrinsic incompleteness of the self. As the maternal element in *EMM* remains missing, the protagonist seeks the answer 'outside' herself. This is the thought process that leads to the conclusion that narcissistic depression masks as a depression related to love objects other than the maternal element in the outset. The protagonist never reaches introspection in this regard, and she never successfully exits from her narcissistic crisis, for, in order to do that she would have to 'shatter the wall of repression and its judgements [...] [it] is a resurrection that has gone through death (of the ego) [...] that transforms [the] death drive into a start of life, a new significance' (Kristeva 1982 15). The protagonist never accomplishes this resurrection, not with her mother or Jorge and neither with Julio or Clara.

<sup>86</sup> This refers as much to Jorge and Julio as to Clara.

Melancholia is often experienced as a sensation of 'falling apart'. As a: 'disintegration of bonds, a splitting or parcelling of the self' (McAfee 2007 64) that takes place within the subject emphasizing the sensation. Most often, this also comprises a reactivation of the death drive (64).<sup>87</sup> The sensation of 'falling apart' is caused, either by a drive-related non-integration, which obstructs the unity of the self, or by a disintegration that encompasses feelings of anxiety, triggering schizoid splitting of the self (Kristeva 1989 18, 19). While the former, is a sign of biological immaturity, disintegration points towards the individual's attraction towards the death drive (18, 19). In E.'s case, it is the latter as she experiences feelings of anxiety and depression. A reactivated death drive, can cause differing types of destruction: it can manifest as a destructive release of energy that is directed outward, or it can be directed inward, towards the self, causing fragmentation (McAfee 2007 64). Throughout these phases the depressive state neither allows for interest nor access from outside (Kristeva 1989 73). The individual is distraught over 'a nothingness that is neither repression nor simply the mark of the affect but condenses into a black hole [...] the sensory, sexual, fantasy-provoking ill-being of abandonments and disappointments' (Kristeva 1989 87). For the protagonist, the topic of Jorge is veiled with sadness: 'empiezo para Clara la Historia de Jorge como se empiezan casi todos los cuentos – como si así, bajo el disfraz de un cuento, pudiera doler quizás un poco menos' (Tusquets 1978 189). The protagonist is obvious about her intended objective of using fairy tales; she does not want herself to hurt while telling Clara what happened between her and Jorge because losing him to suicide constitutes great pain to her.<sup>88</sup> Only sadness protects the individual from the

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<sup>87</sup> Kristeva's argument concerning disintegration of self is very similar to her point on sadness and for this reason, I have seen it fit, to fuse these points for the analysis here, even though section 2.4.3 analyses them separately.

<sup>88</sup> The following argument bases itself on the assumption made in a previous section of this chapter, which established Jorge as the protagonist's object of primal repression. See section 2.3.2 on abjection for more detail. Oliver comments that 'abjection becomes a kind of perverse protection in the face of primal

death drive when erotisation of suffering takes place, so it can be concluded that Jorge's suicide protected the protagonist from similar action because Jorge was not only her love object but also the object of her erotic desires, which brought about said erotisation of suffering (Kristeva 1989 19). In this way the protagonist is spared the death drive from taking over and destroying her, but still keeps experiencing strong feelings of characteristic depression, 'vagando melancólica por esta casa vieja [...] paseando mi nostalgia de habitación en habitación, acurrucándome herida - ¿herida? - en lo más hondo de la más profunda madriguera' (Tusquets 1978 29). The author, likewise, underscored this by a nostalgic undertone throughout the novel and letting the protagonist be forever concerned with the past; even when she falls in love with Clara, E. reminisces about what has been and is no longer. There is hardly any emphasis on the contemplation of a future. This characteristic is very telling, when we consider the overall definition of melancholia, as one of gloom and thoughtful sadness (Kristeva 1989 73), leading to the conclusion that anxiety and depression prevail in the protagonist's persona and greatly influence her throughout this novel. The loss experienced by E. and the resultant melancholia, Kristeva argues, incite a fragmentation of the self, 'son tantos los yos que en mí murieron - hace ya mucho tiempo: desordenada, caótica, heterodoxa, poco crítica, pero voraz, omnívora y apasionada' (Tusquets 1978 28). The individual experiences trauma and detaches from the experience, which gives rise to a sensation of 'not I' (Kristeva 1989 241). This is illustrated in Tusquets' use of fairy tales in telling Clara about Jorge. E. detaches from the story by replacing her own character with that of Ariadna. While a fragmented

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repression' (Oliver 1993 60), hence, explaining how the protagonists' feelings of negativity protect her from committing suicide too. Her feelings of anger keep her emotional state active enough to prohibit her from becoming indifferent, which is considered a forerunner of the death drive overwhelming the individual. As previously outlined, her own mother's insufficiently performed role caused the protagonist to replace her as the internal object in favour of Jorge.

identity is obvious in E., it is not clear if it has led to a re-unified self and consequent awareness.

A subject also suffers from melancholia, when a partner or lover becomes unfaithful or abandons them and this is directly related to the loss of the erotic object (81). For women, this loss translates into castration because it reverberates a destructive threat to bodily integrity, image and the entire psychological mindset of the subject. Rather than, simply no longer having an erotic object, the loss is experienced as a narcissistic crisis (81).<sup>89</sup> Because the woman does not possess a penis, it is her psychic life that is threatened to become empty, also threatening pre-existing the 'I'. The outer loss is experienced as an inner void. From there on, depression ensues, where she remains 'restrained by an aching psychic wrapping, anesthetised, as if 'dead' (Kristeva 1989 81, 82). *EMM* expresses the scenario of the lost erotic object as a fairy tale 'Teseo se alejó traidoramente en su nave, sin posible retorno, sin dejar tras de sí un adiós o un mensaje, un «ven conmigo», y Ariadna [...] que [ellos] habían sacado de su nido sin enseñarle todavía a volar, quedó abandonada en tierra de nadie' (Tusquets 1978 209). In this quotation, abandonment is evident. Ariadna, who is the mythical representation of the protagonist, has been left with nothing. Kristeva describes, how the psychological comprehension of abandonment causes an insurmountable trauma within the subject that leads her towards the conclusion that 'I' is no longer; has indeed become a 'not-I' (Kristeva 1989 241). This is further illustrated, by Tusquets description of a promised transformation, should Adriadna's love be reciprocated '[no había dicho «ven conmigo»], porque si lo hubiera dicho, [...] yo habría tenido de pronto alas de mujer y hubiera caminado sobre el mar' (Tusquets 1978 210). It illustrates, how E. was

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<sup>89</sup> This is because, as Grosz relates, the Freudian castration concept relegates women to becoming a 'passive object, which seeks not (actively) to desire, but (passively) to be desired' (Grosz 1989 108). For Lacan it is 'limit, lack, loss [...] [that] constitute what [he] refers to as castration' (Fink 1995 101). For Kristeva, it is the loss of the love object (Kristeva 1989 81).

transformed by this abandonment, how the promise of Jorge's love would have retained her 'I' instead of destroying it 'todavía ahora, en las noches sin sueño, me obstino en creer que la vida hubiera podido ser distinta ... La vida iba a ser distinta' (Tusquets 1978 196, 197). Not only, has Jorge left her, but he has also confined her to a life that she had hoped to escape, 'la eligió para mí Jorge [...] la construyó para mí Jorge' (Tusquets 1978 208). Jorge's abandonment is unequivocal, as is the betrayal of his love. The protagonist sinks into depression, marrying another man out of indifference and becoming emotionally 'empty', 'anesthetised' as if 'dead' (Kristeva 1989 82). 'Y es que tampoco Julio existe realmente, más que una institución [...] a nivel nacional, [...] que inventaron para mí al alimón entre mi madre y Jorge' (Tusquets 1978 208). These reactions reflect a woman unstable and in a crisis. Her identity dissolves through her lover's abandonment and she does not know where to turn.

Overall, I would like to make a reference here, that Tusquets' relationship with her mother had been equally fraught as the one Tusquets related in her novel. It had even been a running gag at her book part, where her mother came dressed as the mother figure from the novel (2009 319). Likewise, the pain that accompanies their fragmented relationship was reflected in *Correspondencia privada* (2001), in 'Carta a mi madre' and found further numerous reflections in her autobiographies. They all point towards the very developmental issues that have been outlined in section 2.2.2 and, which, affect the daughter's creative development.<sup>90</sup>

## 2.4 *Varada tras el último naufragio (1980)*

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<sup>90</sup> The specific issues that surfaced in *Correspondencia privada* were related as Tusquets feeling that she had never been 'good enough' for her mother's standards. The theoretical dynamics related to this have already been discussed in section 2.2.2.

The previous section has dealt with Kristevian theory, in regard to *EMM*. This section will now focus attention on *VUN*.<sup>91</sup>

#### 2.4.1 Semiotic Disruptions

This theoretical argument, relates to the unstable nature of a subject's identity (Sellers 1989 132).<sup>92</sup> Unlike in 2.3, theory finds application for *VUN*, in all three instances here. This relates to the instability of linguistic signs, identity of meaning and the identity of the speaker (132).

The unstable identity of linguistic signs is particularly obvious. Elia suffers from writer's block. Any type of literature that is produced by an author, desires to communicate something to the reader. Literature functions within the confines of a system of highly sophisticated signs, which are employed by society to articulate what the subject wants others to know (Blanchard 1980 12). However, this system only functions when the subject is clear on what it wants to communicate. Soler declares that, according to Lacan, speech 'has a creative function' (Soler 1996 47). It also has a mediating one that hopes to create a connection with 'the Other' (42), or in Kristeva's terms, to elicit an exchange between the symbolic and the semiotic, to facilitate speech. But, every once in a while, an individual finds herself alienated by language because the subject is not able to express exactly what she desires and 'words do not suffice' (Chiesa 2007 38). This seems to be the case here. The rapport between linguistic signs

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<sup>91</sup> Due to the comparative nature of these two sections, various theoretical arguments will overlap at times. In such cases, the theory has not been re-explained but instead contains a footnote, referring to the appropriate section in 2.3. Whenever this was not the case, the theory is introduced the way it was in section 2.3.

<sup>92</sup> Please refer to section 2.3.1.

and the protagonist is clearly damaged. Elia does not communicate and she has no desire to talk:

Elia está [...] encerrada en su cuarto, [...] y [...] está en efecto sentada delante de la máquina, [...] pero tiene la mujer este gesto absorto y triste, [...] y parece que le costara un duro esfuerzo reaccionar, concentrar la atención, volver a la realidad, entender sus propuestas, y responder [...] y aunque él y Eva llevan días exhortándose el uno al otro, repitiéndose que no hay que inquietarse demasiado, [...] que antes o después bajará Elia sus defensas y les contará, y podría entonces ayudarla, lo cierto es que van pasando los días y no ocurre nada. (Tusquets 1980 69, 70)

Without Jorge linguistic signs, which produce communication, suddenly appear as obstacles in his absence 'siempre ha tenido dificultades para relacionarse con los demás, siempre ha buscado a otro como intermediario, como puente entre su mundo y el mundo de los otros, y Jorge [...] ha actuado durante todos estos años como intérprete de una sordomuda o una marciana' (Tusquets 1980 71). One may interpret Jorge as an extension of the symbolic realm that facilitates Elia's communication; or, as Kristeva relates it, as a medium that 'transmit[s] a message between a subject and an addressee by using a specific code' (Kristeva 1989b 296). For Kristeva, language is of central significance for communication and for the relationship between human beings (1989 36) and Elia's silence testifies to a greater issue than simply a loss for words.<sup>93</sup> For this reason, I have assumed that Elia's writer's block can be attributed to the same category as her, consequent silence and as such merits the same considerations. To support this, I cite a quotation in *VUN* that illustrates the importance of writing for Elia, 'y se repetía debo escribir, [...] estaré perdida si ahora no consigo escribir' (Tusquets 1980 43). The

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<sup>93</sup> Please refer to section 2.4.3, which will discuss how feelings of depression can provoke a loss of speech and how this can pose a threat to the psychic constitution of the subject (Kristeva 1989 241).

quotation outlines the significance that Elia attributes to her writing. It exemplifies it as a second skin and allows the reader to imagine the desperation that it causes her when language denies itself. Elia becomes a textbook case of melancholia admitting that 'escribir es mi reacción espontánea visceral [...] no sé hacer ninguna otra cosa ni sé defenderme de otra forma' (Tusquets 1980 254).<sup>94</sup> The intensity of Elia's loss is so strong that there are no words for her to describe it, and as a result, she falls silent in speech and writing. This alienation from language can only be overcome by what is termed 'full speech' (Chiesa 2007 39). This is a form of expression that recognises the individual's unconscious desires (39). This, however, takes place much later for Elia. In the meantime, she experiences, what McAfee relates, as a 'lack [of] motivation to engage in the symbolic realm – that is, to speak or write. Words seem pointless, for they are not connected to the subject's affects, desires' (McAfee 2007 63). Elia's suffering activates the death drive shielding her from sadness (64).<sup>95</sup> And this shield further refuses her any access to language or linguistic signs.<sup>96</sup> Elia's resultant writer's block and her silence in front of her friends, signify that Elia's writer-identity, along with her personal identity, are in deep crisis. Her inability to communicate states an intentional figurative imprisonment of her thoughts and feelings regarding her husband's abandonment. The subject stands in direct link to her writing, but she is momentarily unable to break through the wall that protects her from experiencing these feelings.

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<sup>94</sup> The detailed effect this writer's block has on her in melancholic terms will be discussed in section 2.4.3. This section will, later, also focus on how the bond between language and the subject can be re-established, but for the moment this argument, solely seeks to portray, the broken link and the resultant desperation it creates in the protagonist because she can no longer express herself.

<sup>95</sup> Sadness is an element that is also common to melancholia and can also be characterised, by 'a loss of words, of taste for life – [...] despair' (Lechte 1990 34). The theory of melancholia, in relation to *VUN*, is analysed in detail in section 2.4.3.

<sup>96</sup> A linguistic sign is composed of two components: a signified, referring to a conceptual element and a signifier, which is a phonological element. These two, are linked with each other, in an arbitrary way by the speaker. And their association depends on the signs that are directly opposed to them, in this way deriving their individual meaning (Chiesa 2007 47). According to Scholes however, signs do not refer to things directly; they simply signify concepts and are aspects of thought, not reality (Scholes 1982 23, 24). As such they are always subjective interpretations and must be recognised as such.

Chiesa relates that Lacan acknowledges ‘the existence of a (universal) “wall of language” that prevents each subject from fully speaking with the Other [...] [and that this] should be understood both as the subject’s unconscious full speech about his true desires, and as the subject’s speaking to the Other unconscious subject’ (Chiesa 2007 38). As long as this (protective) wall is in place, it blocks any possibility of expression towards Eva and Pablo. In *VUN*, it is only towards the end of the novel that Elia masters the symbolic realm through literary creation once more. Her sadness, finally becomes communicable again as the individual learns to deal with her loss and comes to terms with grief. When grief subsides speech and expression is regained and the symbolic realm provides Elia with a new sense of self, which the depression deprived her of (McAfee 2007 63).

Kristeva states, that a second instance that can put identity in question is identity of meaning (Sellers 1989 132).<sup>97</sup> As related in section 2.3.1 meaning can change according to the person that interprets it. Meaning is full of ambiguity, and fulfils two differing functions, ‘one of mediation between two Others or egos, and another of revelation’ (Soler 1996 47). With regard to *VUN*, I interpret Jorge, as the meaning of Elia’s life. He is the one that confirmed her identity through reciprocating her love, fulfilling Soler’s function of mediation (47).

Naturally, with the break of their marriage, this is forcefully revised. The thought process that leads to this revelation is illustrated, by the following quote, ‘le hubiera gustado preguntar[le] [...] cómo [...] demonios se conseguía desplazar a Jorge [...] que llevaba siendo años y años, tantos años, una realidad omnipresente y total en cuyo interior el mundo se englobaba e inscribía’ (Tusquets 1980 47). It is only towards the end of the novel that Elia comes to understand that through Jorge’s constant

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<sup>97</sup> Please see section 2.3.1 for more detail.

presence she was unable to develop her own sense of self. Jorge, the mediator, had always made this unnecessary, 'como un puente entre su mundo y el mundo de los otros' (Tusquets 1980 71), unwillingly contributing to her feeling of alienation. As she gradually heals, she realises that her identity can no longer derive meaning exclusively from Jorge.<sup>98</sup>

No te fantaseé jamás como una prolongación de mí misma quizás como una prolongación de Jorge quizás lo seguro es que fuiste junto con mi escritura el mejor camino para llegar al hombre que yo amaba [...] lo lamento Daniel incapaz de pensarte a ti en ti mismo de disociar mi amor por ti del amor que había sentido por Jorge porque es incomprensible que a lo largo de todo este verano no se me ocurriera ni una sola vez la posibilidad de llevarte a ti conmigo. (Tusquets 1980 262)

It shows the change of perspective that is affected, when an individual's identity of meaning changes. In Elia's case, she is suddenly able to see her son, as someone other, than as a reflection of her husband. As long as her identity resided in Jorge, the protagonist was bound to experience instability with a shifting centre. But once, her point of view changes to accommodate Daniel the instability becomes rectified.

A further identity that is subject to instability is the identity of the speaker. Elia's emotional constitution comes under heavy fire, when Jorge abandons her: 'existe un grado miserable y extremo del sufrimiento [...] en que pierden sentido las ansiedades referidas' (Tusquets 1980 171). The quote is testament to her pain. Overwhelmed by its intensity she wishes to be a stone, which is a synonym for invulnerability and lacking emotion and demonstrates her desire to escape the pain: 'sólo ella está, parece, [...] fuera

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<sup>98</sup> The following quotation refers to Daniel, her son, and suggests that Elia is about to replace Jorge for Daniel. The replacement strategy is a justified interpretation that coincides with Kristevian theory and which will be discussed in 2.4.3. However, for the purpose of this argument, I would like to concentrate on Elia's decision to let go of Jorge, as a progressive step towards individuation, rather than a conclusive one.

de lugar, y a lo mejor hasta se ha vuelto invisible [...] y sólo aspira a convertirse un día, perdido su existir apenas vegetal, en una hermosa piedra verde' (Tusquets 1980 17). Her instability is apparent. She feels out of place, almost invisible and she desires to become a stone, so she would be beautiful but ultimately invulnerable and cold. As long as Elia's suffering comprises such intensity, she cannot claim her life and act on her emotions to overcome the pain, and her identity remains likewise unstable.

Kristeva insists that an individual's identity is never fixed, but nevertheless appears to arrive at a state of stability in time (Sellers 1989 133). This happens in *VUN*, as Elia takes stock of her marriage to Jorge, in a letter to her son Daniel:

Obstinada en negar que a tu padre [...] le iba pareciendo gradualmente agotadora y excesiva esta forma mía de amar y es que todo estuvo supongo mal montado [...] en los sueños desde el principio o quizás [...] para aquello que yo quería la historia tuvo que ser así porque lo quería todo sabes no me conformaba con menos que la luna y sea cual haya sido luego el precio lo cierto es que la tuve en mis manos la luna y nadie logrará convencerme de que tenerla no mereció la pena. (Tusquets 1980 265)

The quote illustrates that Elia has made peace with her past and her failed marriage. She has recognised that, while the ending was not what she had wished for, it had all been worth it in the end. With this recognition her identity has temporarily stabilised. Semiotic disruptions in temporal sequence occur likewise in *VUN*, when the protagonist makes the decision to run away to her summer cottage.<sup>99</sup> In this scenario, Jorge represents the thetic element, which positions itself between Elia and the world. He provides the bridge, between the emotional and instinctual world of the protagonist and the symbolic, rational world of signs, meaning and other people thus becoming a

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<sup>99</sup> Please refer to section 2.3, for a more detailed account of the theoretical background to this argument. This also applies to the next argument.

'precondition for signification' (Kristeva 1984 48). When Jorge decides to tell Elia that he does not love her anymore and plans to leave her, he invariably draws out the borderline between the semiotic and the symbolic. Kristeva further elaborates that this produces a break causing a diverse functioning of the signifier. Elia's world changes and ultimately causes the semiotic to take over (49). In my interpretation of Kristeva it is the signs that Jorge uses to convey meaning that trigger Elia's feelings and her uncharacteristic behaviour to '[ir] rompiendo con método y sin ira todos los rastros de su vida anterior, cualquier indicio de que Elia haya existido alguna vez, todo aquello que pudiera evocarla' (Tusquets 1980 12). When Jorge tells Elia '¿no se te ocurre que a lo mejor hemos dejado de querernos?, no vamos a pasarnos el resto de la vida jugando a Abelardo y Eloísa' (Tusquets 1980 59), Elia experiences a strange desire to destroy the tracks of her past life. Her actions are entirely deprived of rationality and she blindly follows an emotional urge, which she describes in the following way:

No sabe muy bien por qué lo ha hecho, el porqué de esta destrucción sistemática, parsimoniosa, sin lágrimas, y se pregunta ahora si habrá sido ante todo para castigar a Jorge con un abandono tan total que abarque incluso lo que han vivido juntos en el pasado [...] o si habrá sido acaso un desolado intento de borrarse a sí misma de la historia. (Tusquets 1980 12)

She is overcome by a desire to destroy every trace of herself from the home that she shared with Jorge, as if wanting to erase 'herself'.<sup>100</sup> Her emotional haze, revelation and self-awareness lie in the recognition of Jorge's all encompassing significance in her life.

Theory also states that a subject's state of mind will be dependent on an everlasting power struggle between semiotic and symbolic elements. In the heat of this

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<sup>100</sup> This is, where the death drive becomes re-activated in Elia. However, this relates to the theory of melancholia and will, therefore, be analysed in section 2.4.3.

power struggle, as the semiotic gains the upper hand, language becomes pulverized and the semiotic creates new meaning from language (Kristeva 1984 51). In *VUN* this relates to the writer's block that Elia experiences:<sup>101</sup>

Sentada horas y horas a su mesa de trabajo ante la máquina de escribir, pero sin que se la oiga como otras veces teclear, sin que amanezca el cesto lleno de papeles arrugados, holandesas rotas por la mitad (a veces escritas casi hasta el final, a veces con un par de líneas, porque no le gustan las correcciones ni las tachaduras y prefiere volver a comenzar). (Tusquets 1980 68)

An excess of emotion that takes over and denies her access to language and expression creates Elia's writer's block. The connection, between emotion and language is broken and old meanings are lost leaving her unable to describe how she feels. To regain this bond, the sign must acquire new meaning for the subject. This is where Kristevian theory meets with a major shortcoming of linguistics itself as, Moi explains, language is a reflection of society's 'social code' (Moi 1986 26). Language, therefore, becomes reconstituted. However, according to Kristeva, it is '[a] symbolic function [that] constitutes itself at the cost of repressing instinctual drive' (Kristeva 1980 136). Signs and language become restored and signs employ their characteristic principles of transformation and meaning becomes transformed (Moi 1986 72), as is Elia. While semiotic disruptions occur only in crisis, the semiotic inherent in the subject continues to disrupt the symbolic. When it succeeds, transgressions occur that bring about transformations in the subject's being (Kristeva 1984 62). These transgressions underlie the breakup of thethetic (69), allowing the individual to enunciate difference and meaning and to enter into the symbolic (Moi 1986 13). At this point semiotic

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<sup>101</sup> While Elia's writer's block has already been addressed, this point focuses on how the bond between language and the subject is re-established.

functioning becomes more complex. The *thetic* gathers the instinctual pulsations and transforms them into signifiers, signified and referent facilitating symbolic expression. The transgression that follows makes this process negative because it is viewed as a fraction, a prohibited action that intrudes on the regulated process. It fuses the layers of signified/signifier/referent into a network, which in turn activates the drives (Kristeva 1984 68, 69). This causes the *thetic* to break up and 'a reversed activation of the contradiction that instituted this very position' (Kristeva 1984 69) takes place. In *VUN*, this 'reverse reactivation' (Kristeva 1984 69) takes place through Elia's fear that she may not be entitled to her son's love. This insecurity, manifests in Elia's emotions and expression. Her split from Jorge transforms, Elia's image of her son because Daniel is also Jorge's son. She experiences a complex accumulation of emotions that cause her to feel that she is not entitled to Daniel's love, be his mother or take care of him. These feelings impact on her relationship with him turning it negative. Signifier, signified and referent fuse, whereby Jorge stands for the referent and origin of all complications. Elia's altered perception of her broken marriage, ultimately, causes the clear border between the semiotic and symbolic to be re-activated through her realisation that Daniel, is as much a part of her, as of Jorge:

Y en aquel preciso instante dejaste de ser para mí el hijo de Jorge el niño que yo había amado y cuidado y mimado y situado en el mismo centro de mi vivir pero siempre como el hijo de Jorge siempre en función de Jorge y te transformaste [...] y [...] no era ya que no será ya nunca la risa de tu padre sino tu propia risa. (Tusquets 1980 270)

Elia's self-awareness is increased and her identity restored, through her recognition of her maternal role.

## 2.4.2 Abjection

Julia Kristeva outlines that ‘the abject is neither subject nor object’ (Kristeva 1989 2). It seeks to shatter meaning, and glorifies ‘a weight of meaninglessness [...] which crushes me’ (Kristeva 1982 2). It seduces the ‘I’, into acknowledging a reality, where that very acknowledgement destroys the ‘I’ (2). It causes great suffering that the ‘I’ accepts because it is sweet suffering although simultaneously devastating (2), portraying the self, as ‘radically separate [and] loathsome. Not me’ (Kristeva 1982 2). *VUN* displays this kind of suffering and loss through Elia, who experiences intolerable pain after Jorge, leaves her. Elia battles a reality without Jorge that threatens to destroy her:

Imágenes [...] estallan de pronto en su mente vacía, con la intensidad de las descargas súbitas que preceden a las tormentas en la noche, unas imágenes que son ahora intolerables, imágenes que le causan un grado de dolor que teme no ha de ser capaz de soportar. (Tusquets 1980 30)

And she also battles meaninglessness, ‘porque no se trata de [...] [algo] que [...] puede explicar con frases precisas [...] esa sensación de vacío total [...] esa sensación de carencia para siempre irreparable’ (Tusquets 1980 34, 35), which threatens to destroy her (Kristeva 1982 2). Her desire to become an inanimate object, ‘la profunda querencia de convertirme en piedra o en lagarto’ (Tusquets 1980 31), shows the rise of the death drive, which in this case, seems directed inwards, towards the destruction of the self (McAfee 2007 64).<sup>102</sup> *VUN* portrays the struggle between subject and object that is ultimately reflected in Elia’s choice between Jorge and her. When Jorge makes the

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<sup>102</sup> The death drive is also directly connected to melancholy and will be discussed in more detail, in section 2.4.3.

decision to leave her, she is faced with the very dichotomy of subject versus object. That is, when the subject is first urged towards constituting itself as a subject by relinquishing what can no longer be contained or maintained (Burgin 1990 115). Jorge's loss forces her to evaluate herself, to face a reality that bears meaninglessness but from which she must abstract meaning nevertheless. The abject that surfaced through Jorge's abandonment provides a departure point for a new sense of self. Kristeva outlines that 'it is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order' (Kristeva 1982 4).<sup>103</sup> It is a factor or an experience that 'does not respect borders, positions, rules' (Kristeva 1982 4). Instead, it finds illustration through 'the traitor, the liar [...] Abjection [...] [becomes] immoral, sinister, scheming, and shady' (Kristeva 1982 4). This fits Jorge's role, because Elia believed in the immediate truth of their promise in Venice and sees his abandonment as betrayal 'la amargura desolada de saber que no volverá nunca más ya a Venecia y de que han traicionado los dos arteramente su juramento a los tetrarcas' (Tusquets 1980 35). The betrayal of his promise unsettles Elia's emotional balance and through it, Jorge becomes what Kristeva defines as abject. The protagonist, who had until not long ago seen her husband as a god-like creature, has suddenly recognised his imperfection, his willingness to desert her. This realisation is the first step away from a love that she idealised and which defined her and now 'no hay pasado alguno que ella pueda identificar o recordar como propio, ni hay tampoco un futuro individual que fantasear en ninguna parte' (Tusquets 1980 29). However, the quotation also suggests the possibility of a new future:

Dejó durante unos instantes de pensarle, y, al desdibujarse con el momentáneo olvido  
la imagen absoluta del amor, empezó a concretarse y emerger la realidad como posible

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<sup>103</sup> This point has already been argued in section 2.3 when it discussed, the significance of the dead body in abjection. While this argument does not feature in *VUN*, the theory contains an extension, which will be analysed here.

-, y aunque Elia ya sospechó [...] que un daño tan terrible no podía terminar así [...] y que habría necesariamente recaídas y retrocesos, lo vivió sin embargo como el inicio de una curación. (Tusquets 1980 151)

The abject also ‘simultaneously beseeches and pulverises the subject’ (Kristeva 1982 5) and is a ‘recognition of the want on which any being, meaning, language, or desire is founded’ (Kristeva 1982 5). This is often experienced, at the height of the subject’s strength, when his/her attempts to identify with something on the outside are unsuccessful. Consequently the realisation hits that ‘the impossible constitutes its very being’ (Kristeva 1982 5) and that abjection is inherent in the subject itself. This leads to the conclusion that all desired objects are founded on the condition of lack (5): ‘abjection of self, is its only signified. Its signifier then, is none but literature’ (Kristeva 1982 5). The link between the last two quotes, can be found, when we look at Tusquets in relation to Kristeva’s theories because it suggests that Tusquets’ trilogy could have been triggered by other texts she has read and incorporated into her work. This would also be in agreement with the literary analysis of Tusquets, by Gould-Levine, where she states that the protagonist appeared to be motivated by other texts (1987 203). While I agree with this view I also maintain that this can and should be extended to the author herself and that acknowledgement of the influence of other texts does not invalidate my hypothesis that *EMM* and *VUN* are auto-fictional, as both novels contain personal details and experiences, along with details from other texts. These are not specified, but are referred to as fairy tales and mythological tales from Greek history. As far as Tusquets’ literature is concerned, Jorge impersonates Elia's object of want. The breakup happens during a time when Elia is happy, content and at ease personally, ‘había en torno a Jorge, en la proximidad física y concreta de su cuerpo, algo que ahuyentaba por sí solo toda ansiedad y cualquier miedo, y Elia vivió durante años [...] en esta aureola

mágica' (Tusquets 1980 58). Jorge is the external object of want that she focuses on. Her personality is but a reflection of him 'como si [...] fuera el espejo que me reflejara y yo existiera sólo en el reflejo reducido mi yo real corpóreo macizo tridimensional a un simple pretexto para la imagen' (Tusquets 1980 252). From this, one can deduce that Elia does not see herself as worthy of her own identity.

Kristeva's argument that, 'the abject simultaneously beseeches and pulverizes the subject' (Kristeva 1982 5) can be related to self-fragmentation (McAfee 2007 64) which becomes a logical conclusion, when the protagonist speaks of Jorge as the one who had 'inventado para ella la voz' (Tusquets 1980 98) and who, 'se ha llevado el mundo consigo al abandonarla' (Tusquets 1980 98).<sup>104</sup> Nevertheless, fragmentation is a misconception, because as Eva relates, '«escribías desde mucho antes de que le conocieras», y Elia debe reconocer que sí, que había empezado a escribir años antes de conocerle' (Tusquets 1980 98). This shows that in fact Elia had already had her own voice and, by consequence, her own identity, before she first met Jorge. As already elaborated in 2.3, the abject is characterised, as a paradox double timeframe that Kristeva describes as 'a time of oblivion and thunder, of veiled infinity and the moment when revelation bursts forth' (Kristeva 1982 9).<sup>105</sup> But, it is also a source for jouissance gained from 'straying on excluded ground' (Kristeva 1982 8). The abject is 'a land of oblivion' (Kristeva 1982 8), from which, the subject attempts to separate but never succeeds because it constantly remembers its attachment (8). In this process the once 'sought-after' abject (Kristeva 1982 8) becomes the rejected (8). Kristeva's description of the abject fits well with Elia's vision of life and love because Kristeva's theory demonstrates a dual vision of reality and desire, which *VUN* reproduces in the switch

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<sup>104</sup> This is a point very similar to an argument that will be made in section 2.4.3, on melancholia.

<sup>105</sup> Refer to 2.3.2 for more detail, on why fairy tale references are considered, applicable to this argument.

between reality and fairy tale illustrations. The way she does in the following quotation, where Elia projects child-like dreams from 'Sleeping Beauty' onto her husband:

Y llegaba desde muy lejos, y te subió a la grupa de su caballo blanco de príncipe encantador [...] aunque seguramente tuvo que despertarte antes de tu sueño de cien años [...] y la vistió con su amor como si fuera una túnica suntuosa, y la convirtió en la más amada, en la más feliz, en la más hermosa de todas las princesas de los cuentos...  
(Tusquets 1980 100)

While *VUN* disposes of several fairy tale references, there is one that is particularly telling, in relation to the character of Elia and her situation. Elia sees Jorge, as the prince of her fairy tale. Through this, she falls into the traps that fairy tales present to women; she relinquishes all responsibility of happiness to him and assigns herself an exclusively passive role. Elia inevitably begins to conform to, what Waelti-Walters argues, are patriarchal principles and stereotypes that have governed women for decades (Waelti-Walters 1982 1). Fairy tales are unrivalled in their significance and influence because they provide an extension to the (child's) imagination, a blueprint, so to speak, of what is possible and achievable. The danger of this is that the imagination is confined along a gender-specific guideline that deny girls, all the beneficial aspects of these tales in regard to their own identity formation (7). This is particularly so because:

Fairy tales [...] do not help little girls to achieve autonomy in the way they help boys. On the contrary they hold girls back. They offer only one security: that of being loved by father or his substitute. [This] is a deliberate prolongation of the oedipal stage with its implied substructure of dependency and physical dissatisfaction/sexual immaturity.  
(Waelti-Walters 1982 7)

Elia feeds into this negative image of women because her fairy tales are a source of *jouissance*. She gains a feeling of happiness, when adopting the role of the characteristic woman in the tales.<sup>106</sup> In her relationship with Jorge Elia embodies what Waelti-Walters argues, to be a threat to female individuation 'fairy tales teach girls to accept at least a partial loss of identity, and thus endanger all the relationships in which they must take part in a lifetime' (Waelti-Walters 1982 7).<sup>107</sup> As a result, the protagonist's affinity for fairy tale allusion displays her lack of individuation.

Having reached this point in the analysis of the protagonist's identity formation, I will now look, at the author's motif behind portraying her protagonist in such a way. Language is always also a source of power (Waelti-Walters 1982 140) and the power exerted by these tales, ultimately, impacts on women's identity. As Waelti-Walters' rightly claims, 'all literature must now be regarded with suspicion, analysed for the author's *real* intentions, albeit indirectly expressed, so that the extent of the subliminal pressure women are under constantly, is stated clearly' (Waelti-Walters 1982 140). In Tusquets' case, fairy tales and myths are consistent in her oeuvre and in the choices of books that her publishing house released. In her last book *Pequeños delitos abominables* (2010) she stated, how imperative she finds it that children are told fairy tales in their childhood (69). While this could appear, as if she condoned traditionalist versions that underscore women's inferior social position, this is not at all the case. Her point of view is very much the opposite. This case in point nevertheless shows the power and influence such events have, despite an individual's conscious rejection. She related from personal experience that her mother had subjected her to interpretations that accentuated the traditional feminine virtues that horrified Tusquets but she found that in spite of her

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<sup>106</sup> Incidentally, this role is consistent with the stereotypical woman of the 1940s and 1950s, which Franco propagated. This point will be discussed later in Chapter 4.

<sup>107</sup> The particular relationship that appears endangered in *VUN* is Elia's relationship with her son, Daniel. This will be discussed later in this section.

dislike she had still unwillingly integrated them into her thinking (70). Considering Tusquets viewpoint here we can conclude that her obstinate use of fairy tales in *EMM* and *VUN* portray but an oppositional backdrop against which she measured maybe her very own but definitely her protagonists' identity formation. This coincides with Waelti-Walters' opinion that '[women's] self-definition and description are still created with reference to patriarchal patterns. In a sense, each author and heroine studied [...] is still asking: "Mirror, mirror on the wall, how do I compare with the fairest of us all?" (i.e. men)' (Waelti-Walters 1982 142). But, as already proposed by this chapter's hypothesis, identity formation can be witnessed in both novels, even though; its progress is distinctly more prominent in *VUN*.

The abject as representation of *jouissance*, is also found in this novel (Kristeva 1984 9, 10).<sup>108</sup> This interpretation focuses on the subject and the *alter ego* and how, they play each other off between different existential realms (1982 9). This has a surprising similarity to Kristeva's previous argument that the abject possesses a double timeframe (9). For this very similarity, I have come to interpret the persona of the subject and the *alter ego* to be attributable to the protagonist and its fairy tale personification respectively. With that, I mean, that the abject creates an *alter ego* from the passionate memories of Elia and Jorge's past love. Kristeva outlines, how the abject 'set[s] up its object as inoperative. As jettisoned' (Kristeva 1982 9). Through Jorge's abandonment, Elia becomes the abandoned, what Kristeva calls 'parachuted by the Other' (Kristeva 1982 9). Thus the 'Other', whose place is filled by a fairy tale personification, saves her by assimilating with fantasy, myth and fairy tale, giving rise to the *alter ego*. Kristeva further elaborates that 'the Other no longer has a grip on the three apices of the triangle where subjective homogeneity resides; and so, it jettisons the

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<sup>108</sup> Please refer to section 2.3.2 for more detail on this argument of Kristevian theory. 2.3 focuses on the establishment of the *alter ego* through the 'Other', thereby providing the possibility for the existence of the abject (Kristeva 1982 9, 10). This argument, however, focuses on a different aspect than 2.3.

object into an abominable real, inaccessible except through *jouissance*' (Kristeva 1982 9). But Elia's *alter ego* cannot keep the pain at bay and Elia falls into a state of moral revulsion that is triggered through repeated memories of a time when she and Jorge were still happy. In this way she once more corresponds with Kristevian theory insofar 'that 'I' does not disappear [...] but finds, in that sublime alienation, a forfeited existence' (Kristeva 1982 9). Elia leads a double-life of a sort, living in the here and now with Eva and Pablo, but also demonstrating an absent air about her, never entirely present. The pain and her memories transfer her to an alternate universe where 'the Other' and the *alter ego* reign. Her unresponsiveness is reflected to the outside, to Eva and Pablo, and so 'the subject is swallowed up but [...] the Other, in turn, keeps the subject from foundering' (Kristeva 1982 9). The 'Other' persona in Elia responds with the death drive. Consumed by '[a] blinding intensity of an affect eluding conscious elaboration [...] the 'Other' [becomes the] [...] *alter ego* and a double' (Kristeva 1987 111). It acts as a protective force shielding the subject from destruction. Caught in this ambivalence, Elia's indulgence in her pain 'does not radically cut off the subject from what threatens it – on the contrary – abjection acknowledges it to be in perpetual danger' (Kristeva 1982 9). It becomes a longing for signs, drives and ultimately meaning (10). 'No puede Elia evocar un pasado alterado en el que todo ha cambiado de valor y de signo y en el que no se sabe lo que nada significa [...] es posible que ni exista tan siquiera para ella un futuro' (Tusquets 1980 59). Abjection retains, 'the immemorial violence with which a body becomes separated from another body in order to be maintaining the night in which the outline of the signified thing vanishes and where only the imponderable affect is carried out' (Kristeva 1982 10). This desperation and conflict is what the following quotation identifies, 'en este mes de julio del abandono y de la soledad, Elia ha vuelto a despertar muchas veces [...] sobresaltada en mitad de la

noche, ha vuelto a despertar llorando' (Tusquets 1980 58). The returning pain in Elia is a symptom of this separation. For the abject exists, through *jouissance*, a passion 'one joys in' (Kristeva 1982 9), but which is, simultaneously, hurting the subject (9). Elia's dependence on Jorge caused her to give up her 'I', for the love that he provided. Now she can only experience *jouissance* through Jorge. The abject's condemnation and yearning that she experiences, as a result, comes about because Jorge has settled into the place where her 'I' was supposed to reside (10). Elia has let Jorge into her life, in such a way, that he has transformed into a god-like creature that overshadows her identity ten-fold, possessing her and through that causing her 'to be' helpless without him. While the novel remains vague, on whether Elia has realised, how Jorge has taken charge of her person, it is clear to her that now he is gone. As her life, her fear and neuroticism revert back to a time before Jorge; she is brought face to face with the fact that nothing has changed since her childhood. Jorge and his love were just a temporary interim 'porque lo que precedió a la llegada de Jorge fue sólo prehistoria y lo que sigue a su abandono no puede llamarse propiamente vida' (Tusquets 1980 57).

Abjection also finds expression through sublimation in *VUN*.<sup>109</sup> Kristeva's definition of the sublime is that of '[a] *symptom*: a language that gives up' (Kristeva 1982 11). The novel reflects Elia's loss for words, 'quiero que sepas que a lo largo de todo el verano estuve vacía hueca exiliada del tiempo [...] y tendremos que aprender a comunicarnos [...] sin intermediarios' (Tusquets 1980 270, 271). Kristeva further outlines that it 'is not the same moment on the journey, but the same subject and speech bring them into being' (Kristeva 1982 11). When Elia decides to communicate her grief to her son, she brings about a transformation in herself; a sort of transference that activates sublimation 'in the symptom, the abject permeates me, I become abject.

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<sup>109</sup> For further detail on this argument, please refer to section 2.3.2.

Through sublimation, I keep it under control. The abject is edged with the sublime' (Kristeva 1982 11). The quote illustrates Daniel's transformation, from a compensatory element to the subliminal element. The grief that permeates Elia and causes her loss for words eventually makes her see her son, in a different light, 'tú fuiste para mí ante todo una vía mágica para recuperar a tu padre en el pasado para tenerle niño y fuiste a continuación el mejor medio de que yo disponía de que dispone cualquier hombre para decirle sí a la vida' (Tusquets 1980 260). Kristeva argues that:

The 'sublime' object dissolves in the raptures of a bottomless memory [that] [...] from love to love transfers that object to the refulgent point of dazzlement [...] as soon as I perceive it, [...] the sublime triggers – [...] a spree of perceptions and words that expands memory boundlessly [...] and [I] find myself removed to a secondary universe. (Kristeva 1982 12)

Daniel suddenly transforms into her son and stops being a mere part of his father (Tusquets 1980 270). It is the moment, where Daniel becomes the subliminal element born from Jorge's memories of the past. This realisation causes what Kristeva describes as a split, 'a secondary universe [that] [...] causes us to be both here, as dejects, and there, as others' (Kristeva 1982 12). And Daniel's similarities with his father, become the replacement for 'everything missed' (Kristeva 1982 12) and he comes to retain, all the frustrated feelings of love that Elia showered on Jorge, and Jorge rejected:

Incapaz de sentir incapaz de reaccionar [...] incluso de escribir desligada del mundo porque Jorge había sido el camino por el que todo llegaba hasta mí y yo había quedado desgajada del mundo al perderle [...] y ni una sola vez a lo largo del verano pensé en poder llevarte a ti conmigo segregada de ti como de todo pero entonces

dijiste yo quiero vivir contigo y fue como si tanto amor bloqueado hubiera excavado en un instante nuevos cauces hubiera abierto nuevas sendas. (Tusquets 1980 270)

With this connection, she realises that she has lost Jorge, but gained a substitute, in her own son. She acknowledges that she has a right to her son and that he is also, an extension of her. Through this, she has assumed her responsibility as his mother and also asserted her own person, separate from Jorge.

### 2.4.3 Melancholia

Kristeva describes a melancholic's suffering as a sensation of 'falling apart' (McAfee 2007 64).<sup>110</sup> Kristeva's argues here that disintegration can be brought about by feelings of anxiety and schizophrenia; or non-integration, which comes about from 'biological immaturity' (Kristeva 1989 18). In *VUN*, only the former is concerned, because the death drive is particularly prominent and Kristeva defines disintegration as a concept that 'emphasises the human being's tendency toward fragmentation [...] as an expression of the death drive' (Kristeva 1989 18, 19). Depression can, therefore, be argued to be a defensive reaction against falling apart because it retains the subject's 'affective [self] cohesion' (Kristeva 1989 19) and shields it, from breaking under the effect of the death drive (McAfee 2007 64). As Kristeva argues, sadness and depression function, as a protection against suicide, although, not a particularly strong one (Kristeva 1989 19).<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Please refer to section 2.3.3 for more theoretical detail. This point is closely linked to the loss of the erotic object, which finds expression in a destructive threat of bodily integrity, image (Kristeva 1989 81, 82) and, therefore, relates to the issue of fragmentation of the self. Furthermore, this argument will be fused with the following one of sadness, as has been done for section 2.3.3. And it will also address, the reactivation of the death drive that has already been mentioned twice throughout this section.

<sup>111</sup> This close connection between disintegration and depression, justifies a joint analysis.

Commencing with disintegration and the subject falling apart, Elia's experience is particularly pointed. She literally feels as if her very own body parts were amputated 'nada será todavía irremediable, mientras siga ignorando el hueso gangrenado, el cráneo deshecho, los miembros amputados, mientras se mantenga obstinada en pie' (Tusquets 1980 44). Kristeva describes Elia's state of mind, as the ambivalence, symptomatic of disintegration, 'the [...] ego lacks cohesion, and a tendency towards integration alternates with a tendency towards disintegration, a falling into bits ... the anxiety of being destroyed from within remains active' (Kristeva 1989 19):

Porque la han desgajado, han extraído de ella algo que estaba muy hondo [...] Elia no se atreve [...] a palparse los bordes de la herida, asomarse a la herida y constatar los órganos que la salvaje amputación ha dañado o ha arrastrado consigo [...] y descubrir que han cercenado de ella algo tan vital y tan suyo que no va a poder sin ello seguir con vida. (Tusquets 1980 45)

Tusquets employed the amputation sequence, as a metaphor for the seriousness of the situation and to underline disintegration. The author, thereby, verbalised the hopelessness that the protagonist feels, at the feat of rebuilding her life without Jorge. Ultimately however, as disintegration reaches its peak, the individual experiences the: 'depressive effect' (Kristeva 1989 19), which protects her from the full effect of the death drive (19) and sadness kicks in (19). During the phase of ambivalence Elia's sense of self is fragmentary and unstable. Due to the very symptoms of disintegration, it becomes clear that Elia has never established her own identity and only seen herself as an extension of Jorge. Consequently, Jorge's abandonment causes feelings of great existential anxiety. Depression, as Kristeva outlines, is 'narcissistic support' (Kristeva 1989 19), but it only provides a false unity of the self. Once the pain arrives it shatters

meaning by denying the subject access to the symbolic realm, and thereby, destroys the preliminary protection against the death drive (19). One can observe the deteriorating emotional state of Elia, who feels that 'el antes o el después no tienen demasiado sentido para una mujer que ha sentenciado a sus recuerdos y está intentando asesinar a la esperanza' (Tusquets 1980 42, 43). The wording suggests, how deep her mood has sunk, because words, such as 'sentencing' and 'assassinate' display a strong correlation with punishment and ending one's life. This is further portrayed, when she is described 'sintiendo crecer dentro de ella un sufrimiento que intuía intolerable, presintiendo el inicio de un mal para el que no iban a existir remedios [...] y no le quedará ya nada a lo que agarrarse y que le permita subsistir' (Tusquets 1980 45, 46). This displays the re-emergence of the death drive. This time, its energy, is turning inwards towards the destruction of the individual, suggesting suicide (McAfee 2007 64).<sup>112</sup> The death drive becomes actively visible here:

Si habría sido acaso un desolado intento de borrarse a sí misma de la historia [...] y no dejar tras de sí ni el menor rastro, como si yo no hubiera existido jamás [...] todo roto, quemado, perdido, y no es exactamente tristeza lo que ahora siente. (Tusquets 1980 12)

This anxiety related to disintegration, may show through several symptoms: loss of speech, inability for tactile sensation and feelings of pain (Kristeva 1989 72). Further, the individual: 'embod[ies] death as if it were real' (Kristeva 1989 73). The subject stops reacting to the world around her and becomes totally mindless (73). This manifests in Elia's behaviour, as a result of Jorge's abandonment, 'está [...] llorando, sin poder evocar qué es lo que ha soñado, incapaz de establecer las causas de su angustia,

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<sup>112</sup> This point has already briefly been broached, earlier in this section.

hasta que surge [...] la imagen de Jorge' (Tusquets 1980 59). Elia feels the familiar anxiety of her childhood years and she recalls, 'como había despertado tantas veces hace miles de años, en la infancia, en la adolescencia, en el comienzo de la juventud' (Tusquets 1980 55). With Jorge gone, she once again, faces a phobia of death and her old fears, enduring mental blanks, which Kristeva defines, as symptomatic of the melancholic (1989 87):

Sentada absorta ante la máquina, mirando a veces abstraída por la ventana [...] y es como si la hubiera sorprendido en falta, desnudo el rostro y la actitud en un desvalimiento casi impúdico [...] sigue vagando como un zombi por la casa, encerrándose horas y más horas en la habitación [...] tan ajena a todo que ni cuenta se da algunos crepúsculos de que anochece y debería por tanto encender la luz. (Tusquets 1980 69, 70)

There is an air of mindlessness about her that Kristeva describes as 'a lethal flood [...] for days and weeks on end, allowing neither interest in nor access to any exteriority' (Kristeva 1989 73). Elia's conscious mind seems absent and her actions suggest, the same mindlessness and passivity that Kristeva mentions (73), 'les sigue hasta la mesa, come dócil y distraída lo que le ponen en el plato, y Pablo está seguro de que ni sabe lo que come y de que le da exactamente lo mismo comer que no comer' (Tusquets 1980 70). Elia does what she is told; she does not confront others or complain, she appears to possess no emotion, no force, no life – she is as if dead.

According to Lechte, sadness originates because the melancholic lacks an object. Thus sadness acts as an *Ersatz* (substitution) for the object. The individual attaches and cherishes it when it is confronted with the lack of that vague, indeterminate 'something' that he appears to have lost (1990 34). Kristeva further relates that the subject may not

solely react with sadness but s/he may also try to deny and neutralise the signifier (1989 20) because 'depressed persons do not defend themselves against death but against the anguish prompted by the erotic object' (Kristeva 1989 20), as the previous quotations of *VUN* have demonstrated. We, therefore, return to the loss of the love object and follow an extension to this theory that suggests, that Elia used medication as a method to cope after losing Jorge. Kristeva elicits, the significance of abandonment, as an 'insuperable trauma inflicted by the discovering [...] of the existence of a not-I' (Kristeva 1989 241) and *VUN* demonstrates, the use of medication to overcome this trauma and protect her from the death drive:<sup>113</sup>

Rehuyendo por todos los medios el instante en que antes o después tendrá que enfrentarse a la realidad, y para esto – sólo para esto – para esto sí sirven las pastillitas [...] a impedirle llegar a lo más bajo, tocar de veras fondo, desmoronarse en ruinas, salir acaso de la pesadilla y constatar con cierta lucidez que había sido cierto el daño.  
(Tusquets 1980 48, 49)

Kristeva, unfortunately, does not comment on the use of sedatives, sleeping pills and other medication in dealing with melancholia. Moi, on the other hand, relates that the use of drugs can set free the heterogeneity, inherent in the semiotic and in this way fracture the symbolic code (1986 30), resulting in symptoms, such as an inability to express oneself properly, black outs and other signs of lacking consciousness (Faust 1988 48, 49). As a result, I interpret increased passivity and dissociation from daily life as side effects of antidepressants. It is known that under the influence of such drugs individuals experience temporary relief from issues that burden them psychologically. They may appear farther from the conscious mind, than in a sober state, thereby

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<sup>113</sup> The argument of abandonment will be addressed later in this section.

reducing the intensity, with which these feelings are felt (48, 49). The distance to the problem at hand provides adequate, if only temporary protection from the death drive. These are certainly the effects that Elia hoped to gain, from taking them, as the following quotation outlines: 'se atiborra pues de antidepresivos y ansiolíticos, en unas proporciones y unas mezclas que ha de ocultar forzosamente a Miguel, tragándose píldoras y grageas con unción, cual si realizara un mágico exorcismo' (Tusquets 1980 59). The medication is thought to help her cope, to protect her from hitting her lowest point and becoming too aware of her pain, but the border between the two, eventually, becomes blurred 'ni ella misma sabe si es para adormecerse o para intentar, dejándola al azar, la suerte del morir' (Tusquets 1980 59). It becomes clear that the medication produces a distance to reality that Elia can no longer assimilate to because she can no longer tell the difference, between wanting to live and wanting to die. It is not until the middle of the novel that Elia recognises, what she is doing to herself:

Se ha enfadado con su médico porque la abandona hasta el lunes y porque la trata como a una enferma, [...] y está ante todo furiosa consigo misma, por haber decidido despoblar de sí el mundo, exiliarse del tiempo, resistirse a vivir, sin animarse no obstante al suicidio, demasiado pasiva para matarse. (Tusquets 1980 152, 153)

It is only at this point that she understands how the medication has affected her and this increases her self-awareness.

In this novel, the melancholic suffering that occurs, as a result of the loss of a lover and which finds correlation with the loss of the erotic object, is connected to abandonment (Kristeva 1989 81).<sup>114</sup> For Kristeva abandonment is a hard to overcome trauma 'inflicted by the discovery – doubtless a precocious one [...] of the existence of a

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<sup>114</sup> See section 2.3.3 for more detail, on the theory of this argument.

not-I' (Kristeva 1989 241). Since Elia has defined herself through Jorge, his leaving puts in question, her entire self, 'algo hay en ella que aguarda sin descanso el regreso de Jorge [...] incapaz de comprender – o acaso sólo de aceptar – que su dueño se ha muerto o ha partido en un viaje sin posible retorno [...] abandonándola entre los restos del naufragio' (Tusquets 1980 61). The successful writer that she used to be, is suddenly no more, because she can no longer write. Elia is helpless. Kristeva describes that the loss of the erotic object, culminates in the threat of castration for the woman (1989 81). She explains that 'castration starts resonating with the threat of destruction of the body's integrity, the body image, and the entire psychic system as well' (Kristeva 1989 81). This event gives rise to 'narcissistic anguish' (Kristeva 1989 81), which denounces the erotic object 'as a shameful secret' (Kristeva 1989 82). This may explain why, Elia feels such reluctance to let even her closest friend Eva, know about their separation, 'no quiere que Eva despierte y se levante y acuda a consolarla' (Tusquets 1980 59). The shame Elia feels, is explicit in the following quote '¿cómo contarle a Eva, cómo contarle a nadie [...] sin que suene terriblemente falso, grotescamente rebuscado y pedante y literario' (Tusquets 1980 29). The loss of the love object is felt like the loss of oneself, characterised by 'an inner void' (Kristeva 1989 82). What is considered as a 'shameful loss' (Kristeva 1989 82) is eventually replaced by pain and depression (82). The only resolution to this situation is through friendly support that 'allow[s] shame to be spoken out' (Kristeva 1989 82). And this is reflected, in Eva's attitude 'Eva [...] [está] empezando a barruntar que lo que ocurre ahora puede ser distinto, y tal vez por eso ha renunciado a seguirla [...] resignada a esperar su regreso, a esperar a que Elia por propio impulso hable' (Tusquets 1980 28). In time, the death drive that is activated through depression subsides and the subject is: 'able to integrate [the] loss as signifiable as well as erogenous' (Kristeva 1989 83). This has the advantage that pain no longer

represents a threat to the constitution of the self but becomes a 'stepping stone' (Kristeva 1989 83). While throughout most of the novel, Elia struggles to accept that Jorge does no longer love her, she slowly retrieves her self-esteem and strengthens her identity, 'en toda mi vida he sabido tan poquísimas cosas he estado tan en blanco tan libre y flotante y disponible [...] pero estoy viva y corro en la carrera y seguiré adelante sola o acompañada y es posible que no deje ya nunca de pedir la luna' (Tusquets 1980 271). Elia eventually reclaims her life, acknowledging that she may be alone, or with someone, but her identity has stabilised.

This point is connected to a previous one that argues that, the melancholic will look for a substitution after the loss of the love object (Lechte 1990 34). This argument allows for the interpretation of the child as an antidote (Kristeva 1989 88) and is an extension to Lechte's previous point. The melancholic that uses his child as compensation for the loss of love imposes a great psychological burden on the child (88). The subject's desire for the child, is a narcissistically motivated longing for 'someone who would need me, we would be accomplices, we would never leave each other' (Kristeva 1989 88). While Kristeva extracted these words from her own psychoanalytical analysis (89), the description of the subject's state of mind is identical and applicable to *VUN*. Elia's dependency on Jorge, is uncontested, 'pendiente Elia de su aprobación como pueda estarlo una niñita de su papá al que adora' (Tusquets 1980 98). And so consumed by his loss that 'hasta su hijo parece haber dejado de existir para ella y pasan días y más días sin que se decida a ir a buscarlo, sin que se anime siquiera a telefonarle [...] quizá ni lo recuerda, embrutecida de dolor y de ansiedad, atontada y adormecida por tanto medicamento' (Tusquets 1980 107). Elia's emotional state suggests that her consequent desire to be with her child implicates, at least minimally,

an erotic motive and one gets the impression that the son, then becomes 'his mother's resurrection' (Kristeva 1989 247).<sup>115</sup>

At this point, one may argue two ways: either for Elia and individuation, or against her by citing that Daniel merely replaces Jorge but that the conflict that melancholia poses, is not fully resolved. My interpretation is that neither point is entirely true. This is because Elia's state of mind, at the end of the novel, suggests some unresolved feelings, in regard to Jorge:

Él quisiera tal vez a la postre seguir conmigo o contigo o con los dos quisiera salvar acaso esas realidades tan valiosas tan concretas e irrenunciables que salvan las parejas de los naufragios [...] pero nada de eso importa en mi caso para nada ni siquiera que yo le quiera más o menos todavía que sea más o menos duro proseguir sin él aceptar la definitiva muerte de mis sueños o de mi más hermoso sueño salir arrastrándome de las ruinas y reconstruir sola con uñas y dientes una mínima guarida en la que guarecerme y desde la cual continuar y no importa cuánto tiempo me lleve todavía el asumir de verdad hasta el fondo una vida sin Jorge. (Tusquets 1980 267, 268)

She consciously chooses to live without him, despite him insisting that: 'todo puede reanudarse entre ellos igual, o casi igual, y hay que pensar ante todo en el niño, y en lo que han logrado y construido y vivido juntos a lo largo de más de quince años, en el afecto y el respeto' (Tusquets 1980 218). While this quotation corroborates a newfound strength, it also suggests that Elia, still, has not fully dealt with Jorge's loss. Under these circumstances the mother's connection with her child may prove counterproductive to the child and to the recovery and individuation of the mother (Kristeva 1989 88). Elia's connection with Daniel, seems particularly worrisome, for until recently, Elia was unable to separate Daniel from Jorge: 'lo lamento Daniel incapaz de pensarte a ti [...] de

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<sup>115</sup> This claim will consequently be discussed and illustrated in detail.

disociar mi amor por ti del amor que había sentido por Jorge porque es incomprendible que a lo largo de todo este verano no se me ocurriera ni una sola vez la posibilidad de llevarte a tí conmigo' (Tusquets 1980 262, 263). It could be argued here, that the protagonist has not fully completed her personal development. Daniel is not simply someone; he is a part of his father and he, thus, mirrors aspects of Jorge that Elia has irrecoverably lost and still yearns for. It comes dangerously close to Kristeva's argument that the mother leaves the child's father, to live motherhood, as a vow of celibacy (1989 89). She now has the child to substitute for the loss of the erotic object (Lechte 1990 34). And indeed, Elia then declares that: 'no te fantaseé jamás como una prolongación de mí misma' (Tusquets 1980 262). Kristeva suggests that:

Mourning still remains impossible under the guise of a masochistic triumph. The real work remains to be done, through separation from the child [...] so that a woman might try to face the void within the meaning that is produced and destroyed in all its connections and all its objects. (Kristeva 1989 94)

I retain that Elia's decision, is a step in direction of her full individuation, but that there remain developmental processes to be explored.

In my conclusion to Chapter 2, Kristeva's theory of semiotic disruptions, abjection and melancholia has been used to identify identity formation in the protagonists of *EMM* and *VUN*. At adequate times there have been cross-references to the author's life where it may be possible to argue that the author herself may have been reflected in her narrative. In my conclusion, I would like to first comment on the identity formation process in the protagonists and, only then, add a few words concerning the author and her life to conclude possible parallels.

The literary analysis has used three theories that deal with the instability of the subject in differing situations, differing variables and differing external influences. But despite their evident destabilising properties, they also stabilise the sense of 'I' and, thereby, contribute to the emotional well being of the protagonists. This is because the successfully conquered situations leave the subject beyond doubt of its composite stability. It is these experiences that this section has isolated in the novels, analysed and commented on.

The chapter has shown that the novels contain various moments, where external influences interfere with the subjects, and thereby, contribute to personal growth of the characters. However, personal growth and increased identity awareness were experienced to differing degrees in each protagonist. Joint analysis of *EMM* and *VUN* shows that both protagonists have struggled to maintain an emotional balance in their lives, with differing degrees of success. While in time both novels present an increasingly self-aware and secure protagonist, it is only in *VUN*, that the protagonist actually comes through this phase in her life with strength of conviction and willing to deal with consequences of her new-found understanding and comparison shows a build-up between *EMM* and *VUN*. I would like to now comment, on this build-up in sequence. The protagonist in *EMM* provides the beginning phase, where she first asserts a sense of self-awareness. It is the first time, she comes face to face with her own mortality, through her grandmother's death and she meets Clara, who she becomes infatuated with. In turn, she also recognises Jorge's impact in her life and she thereby, acknowledges her misguided decision to marry Julio and her childish infatuation with Clara. It is the first time that she is shown an alternative way of life, to her marriage with Julio and she realises that it is within her power, to change her own life. The novel closes with the protagonist having realised her responsibility to herself and her life as

well as her power to choose what she wants from it. Consequently, I have identified this as a clear indication of identity constitution, and self-awareness. Despite of this, it is only this revelation and an increased sense of self-awareness that the protagonist takes away with her from this adventure. As the protagonist recognises her responsibility for her own unhappiness, she becomes free and strong enough to make a choice on whether to stay with Julio or leave with Clara. The actual choice she makes and the result, end up being less significant, than the recognition that she has the power to choose, and this testifies to increased agency in the individual.

*VUN* brings about similar revelations to *EMM*, insofar that the protagonist ends up taking responsibility for herself, her own happiness and her son. Jorge's abandonment has caused Elia to recognise that he does not constitute her happiness and that she can be happy without him. However, to achieve this, she must confront her fears and misguided perceptions about Jorge, herself and her life. So, ultimately, it is only in *VUN* that the protagonist finds the courage to combine the previous character's shortcomings from *EMM*. Although Elia clearly suffers from the abandonment of her husband, she finally takes her life into her own hands. She passes through the grieving process, to realise at the end, that she does not want to go back to the past, despite Jorge's offer to pick up where they left off. Instead, she decides to go on alone, with her son Daniel and cuts herself off from Jorge's influence. She, thereby, becomes the character that has achieved some form of emotional independence and identity.

The conclusions I have reached, in regard to the protagonists in *EMM* and *VUN*, have been supported by a separate evaluation of the different arguments made throughout the chapter. This evaluation has identified, fourteen successfully achieved instances of self-awareness in *VUN*, whereby only four, have been identified for *EMM*.

In closing this chapter, I would like to revisit the informal hypothesis, running through it. Due to the nature of the novels, it has been hard to draw a definite connection with the author's personal life. However, there are, of course, outside of what relates to the textual analysis of the novels, some indicators that suggest that the protagonists created by Tusquets shared characteristics with Tusquets herself. While these parallels may seem fleeting and inconsequential, I do believe them indicative of, at least, a partial truth to my hypothesis. Examples include the common habit of not drinking alcohol and the propensity for female lovers. It is also telling, that the intensity with which the protagonists experience emotions of love and passion, found an almost identical literary expression in Tusquets' own experiences in her autobiographies.<sup>116</sup> What can further be observed, is that the male characters of Jorge in *VUN* and *EMM* possesses the same characteristics and is again, described with the same emotional intensity, with which she described, her life partner Esteban Busquets in her autobiographies. And I also see a possible parallel, between the ending of *VUN* and their decision to separate. Ultimately, however, the most telling indication of all, was Tusquets' admission, at a *velada literaria* at the University of Zurich, where she argued that her literature, was very much autobiographic because she did not like doing research and she, therefore, wrote what she knew (Tusquets 2010).<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Although this point relates to Clara in *EMM*, the argument for sexuality between women will be explored in more detail in Chapter 3.

<sup>117</sup> Esther Tusquets made this statement, at a public lecture at the University of Zurich.

## Chapter 3: Erotic and Sexual Experience and Identity

### 3.1 Introduction and Hypothesis

This chapter analyses the novels *AJS* (1979), by Esther Tusquets and *CDC* (2004) by Almudena Grandes.<sup>118</sup> It analyses each novel to determine how the concepts of morality, eroticism, power structures and agency development contribute to the protagonists' identity formation. It addresses the moral constitution of the subject to evaluate how likely the individual is to psychologically benefit from sexual and erotic exploration. For Foucault the nature and motivation behind an individual's sexual impulses are important and determine his sexual morality. He establishes, that the morally sound individual has mastery over her impulses and is, thereby, able to indulge in them appropriately and in a positive and beneficial manner that supports the exploration of the self and the well being of everyone involved.<sup>119</sup> On a larger scale, sexual morality is of importance in identity formation because it encourages a supportive and positive reaction between sexual partners and strengthens the intensity of their emotional bond, whose support is paramount to the self-exploration of the individual.

3.2 and 3.2.1 outline, how Foucauldian theory on sexuality has come to reside at the centre of humanity; how lust and desire are created and what drives us to act on sexual impulses. 3.2.2, then moves on to apply the theory to the novels, to establish, whether the protagonist Elia and Jose, of *AJS* and *CDC*, respectively, are morally sound

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<sup>118</sup> This chapter has refrained from elaborately drawing specific links, between the novels and the author. This is mainly because Tusquets' autobiographies, did not allow to comment any more extensively on her erotic and sexual experiences, other than that she had had lesbian encounters and had disposed of an uncommonly liberal attitude towards sex, than was common at the time.

<sup>119</sup> Foucault does not differentiate between men and women in this regard.

or lacking subjects in regard to their sexual activity. Section 3.3 then presents an extension to the previous section. It discusses the role of eroticism in sexual relationships and its effect on an individual's feelings of desire, pleasure and lust in relation to emotional attachment. And by extension it looks at how eroticism encourages or discourages identity formation. The novels will also be analysed, according to Georges Bataille's theoretical framework, in which he separates, physical from emotional eroticism. 3.3 will therefore proceed to outline whether there is emotional and/or physical eroticism in both novels. The hypothesis that this section investigates is that eroticism in *AJS*, demonstrates an escapist element, which does not pursue a clear developmental purpose. Within this chapter eroticism acts in a similar fashion to 3.4, insofar, that it is regarded as a separate but re-enforcing argument evaluating the protagonists' capacity for identity formation. The remainder of 3.3 then looks at the effect of eroticism in *CDC*, which is included in this chapter as a contrasting component. It underlines the differing characters and potentials of the protagonists' identity formation processes and supports the chapter's overall argument in this way.

Finally, 3.4 investigates the concept of power in connection with agency, self-awareness and concern for self, which Foucault outlines, as the founding elements of morality. This section regards the concept of power, as a separate and autonomous, yet re-enforcing element, in conjunction with sexual morality and eroticism. In the overall quest to demonstrate agency in the protagonist of *CDC*, the sexual constitution of the moral subject, the escapist element of eroticism and the power relations inherent in these relationships, reads much like a formula, where the influence of all three elements results in, or falls short of demonstrating agency and identity in the protagonists. 3.4.3 starts, by outlining the nature of power relations that are at work in *CDC* and *AJS*, and proceeds to assert, why a positive and non-repressive power relation is important for

knowledge of self. 3.4.4 then establishes, how knowledge of self, can be achieved in conjunction with the Foucauldian principles of self-awareness and concern for self and why, it is important in identity formation. Lastly, 3.4.5 evaluates how *CDC* measures up in this regard.

## **3.2 Sex, Power and the Moral Constitution of the Subject**

According to Foucault, the nature and motivations behind individual sexual impulses, determine the subject's moral constitution, as far as sex is concerned.<sup>120</sup> A subject's sexual morality is important because, according to Foucault, the morally sound subject has mastery over her impulses and consciously chooses to follow them in a positive and beneficial manner. This is particularly so, in regard to the self, but also considers others involved (2008 1184, 1185). As a result, the hypothesis for this section is to study sexual morality in the female protagonists of *CDC* and *AJS*. The argument underlying this is that an individual's morality is of importance in the process of identity formation. The morally sound subject, acts with integrity and in her partner's best interest, trying to ensure that no harm is done and doing its best to create a loving, supportive and positive environment, free of repressive power relations and destructive erotic pursuits. It follows, that the morally lacking subject, is not as responsible and does not pursue, a deeper connection between the souls, such as love.

### **3.2.1 Desire, Sexuality, Lust and Sexual Morality**

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<sup>120</sup> 3.2.2 is significant in mapping the individual's sexual motivations, which will be particularly important later, when we proceed to the analysis of the protagonists.

Biological assumptions and Freudian analyses aside, the reason we engage in sexual activity is because we experience pleasure through it. Nature meant for the individual to experience pleasure throughout the act, thereby re-enforcing the cyclical nature of lust and desire. In his studies on sexuality, Foucault has extensively concentrated on Greek mythology in the formulation of his theories. Foucault defers to Plato, to explain the nature of desire, its inexistence if there is an abundance of the desired object or state and a certain degree of suffering that accompanies this state. The sensation of such lack, can however, only be triggered by a memory of that same past experience. As such, Foucault concludes that desire is generated in the soul of the individual alone and that the body can experience the lack, but it can only do so through the memory that the soul initiates (2008 1189).<sup>121</sup> Sexual pleasure, lust and desire, therefore, follow a cyclical movement that mutually re-enforces each element. This cycle presents itself in the following form: the individual desires, she then acts on it, the committed act causes feelings of pleasure in her, these feelings later return her to a state of lack or being without. It is the memory that is left in her consciousness that creates lust once more and causes the re-activation of the cycle (1190). The cycle thereby retains its own dynamic fuelled by memory.

In Greek mythology, the issue of the subject's morality is central to its being. Morality is relevant to every aspect of the individual's life that causes pleasure and, therefore, applies in particular to sexual activity (Foucault 2008 1184). But, morality dictates temperance, when indulging in sexual activity and it demands the observation of Foucault's three defining factors: *aphrodisia*, *chrêsis* and *enkráteia* (1184, 1185).

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<sup>121</sup> The concept of the Foucaultian soul, presents the connection to the Bataillan concept of eroticism. In Georges Bataille's theory, eroticism operates as the element that triggers the experiences that the individual later associates with pleasure, desire and lust. The intensity that eroticism provokes induces the desire for sexual contact and, thereby, further initiates the body's response.

*Aphrodísia* defines what can be considered the ethical substance in sexual activity. It is described as an act, gesture, or touch that causes pleasure to the individual. Since this description is very general in its categorization, Foucault has further broken it down, to define pleasure, as a sensation that ensues when immediate touch with the mouth or tongue occurs. This extends further to touch caused by other parts of the body that induce sexual pleasure. In *aphrodísia*, immorality is reflected in excess and passivity/activity for a male or a female respectively (1186, 1187, 1193, 1194).<sup>122</sup> *Aphrodísia*, in this sense, seems very patriarchal in its constitution. The concept of *chrêsis* follows on from *aphrodísia* and defines the kind of sexual practice, which Foucault deems as morally right. It refers to three factors: needs, moment and status (1198, 1199). *Enkrátēia* is the last consideration, in the constitution of sexual morality. It describes, the necessary self-control and composure that the individual must possess, in order, to constitute a morally sound subject (1184, 1185). *Enkrátēia* relates not only to self-control, but also to mastery of sexual impulses of seduction and temptation. It is a state of being that defines morality, through active resistance to the pleasures of sex. In order to attain mastery of the self, the individual must live in a constant state of tension, abstinence and restraint and limit indulgence in pleasures to the considerations elaborated in *aphrodísia* and *chrêsis* (1207, 1208, 1209).

Naturally, these three factors can cause such intense feelings in the individual that their vitality can seduce her to disregard limitations and hierarchies in a desire to

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<sup>122</sup> Excess is interpreted in greatly opposing ways, by Foucault and Bataille and this is worth noting here. Their perspectives lie on opposite extremes. Where Bataille centres his theory on the individual's needs, Foucault focuses more attention on the collective needs of society. In connection to identity formation, therefore, Foucault's collective viewpoint must be considered as an overall framework. I refer to Charles Taylor here, to fortify my argument. Taylor who is mentioned in detail in section 4.2.2 argues that identity must be acknowledged and validated by society, thereby, re-affirming the connection discussed. Of course, a closer analysis of the novels merits a more individually centred approach and this is, where I would like to refer to Bataille. Apart from being able to provide a more individual evaluation of the protagonists in the novels, his theory works particularly well for *AJS* and the chapter's hypothesis of escapism.

fulfil their immediate need. For this reason, Foucault deems it necessary to impose moral limits on their practice and indulgence (1194, 1196). With consideration of these limitations, Foucault considers only the individuals that adhere to these requirements, as possessing sexual morality. This means that the person is capable of mastering his/her own libido and of refraining from sexual actions that are not in the best interest of all involved.<sup>123</sup>

### **3.2.2 The Constitution of the Moral Subject in *El amor es un juego solitario* (1979) and *Castillos de cartón* (2004)**

As explained in the previous section, *aphrodisia*, *chrêsis* and *enkráteia* determine an individual's sexual morality. The following analysis of *AJS* and *CDC* grades Elia and Jose's behaviour, according to Foucault's theory.<sup>124</sup>

Starting with *aphrodisia*, Foucault states that to fulfil the requirements of sexually moral behaviour, two variables must be fulfilled. The first variable is of a quantitative nature. It requires that sexual contact or intensity be not indulged in excessively. Aristotle, according to Foucault, specifies that any sexual activity is practised in excess when the individuals involved gain pleasure from acts that they are supposed to avoid and, when they gain more pleasure than other people do from acts that are allowed (1190, 1191, 1192). In *AJS*, the former is the case and its illustrations are numerous.<sup>125</sup> Its most obvious illustration is the threesome that occurs between Elia,

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<sup>123</sup> The following section 2.3.2, adopts these theoretical guidelines to analyse the moral constitution of *AJS*'s protagonist Elia and *CDC*'s protagonist Jose.

<sup>124</sup> Since this theory requires the fulfilment of several points, to arrive at a conclusion, it is not expected that each theoretical point stipulated is fulfilled. The overall evaluation is, thus, based on whether immorality outweighs morality.

<sup>125</sup> The numerous examples that I am referring to here will not be elaborated on in detail at this point. This is because these examples can likewise be applied to a later point in this section and under different

Ricardo and Clara. Minding the considerations stipulated by Foucault, in my interpretation of him, a threesome presents excess in the number of participants and, therefore, qualifies as immoral and as an act that should be avoided. The sexual desire relegated to the individual does not require two people to be satisfied. As such, it breaks the condition that Aristotle placed on sexual conduct in exceeding what nature requires (1192). It is biologically impossible for the sexual act to be consummated by more than two people simultaneously and the quote illustrates this by displaying Elia and Ricardo engaged in sexual intercourse, where the third person is in excess: 'Elia suspira y ronronea y empieza a restregarse toda contra él, y le busca y le incita y le conduce hasta seguro puerto [...] y Ricardo la penetra' (Tusquets 1979 140).<sup>126</sup> CDC, likewise, demonstrates sexual activity that is in excess of what nature requires and, therefore, classifies it as immoral behaviour (Foucault 2008 1192):

Jaime estaba a mi izquierda, y me besaba, Marcos estaba a mi derecha, y me besaba, yo besaba alternativamente a uno y a otro, y no hacía nada más, dejarme acariciar, mirarlos, dejar que me miraran [...] y [...] acercó su cabeza a la mía y me besó en la boca, y yo le besé, besé una boca distinta de la boca del hombre que me poseía y a él no le importó, no hizo nada por evitarlo, y seguimos así hasta el final. (Grandes 2004 68, 71)

In both cases, the number of lovers participating means that the protagonists dispose of two sets of lips that they kiss, and two pairs of hands that touch them, when nature

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considerations than *aphrodisia*. Analysis will therefore primarily focus on the sexual threesome, as an example of pleasure derived from acts that are to be avoided (Foucault 2008 1192). A brief description of other examples include the extra-marital affair that Elia engages in with Ricardo; Elia is a representation of a maternal figure for Ricardo and displays the sexual act with an incestuous element. Lastly, Elia's involvement with Ricardo is an illustration of an avoidance strategy on her part that is entirely motivated by her own selfish interest regardless of Ricardo's and Clara's needs.

<sup>126</sup> In this scenario the character of Clara is entirely ignored by the author. One can assume that Clara was pushed to the corner of the bed and is simply watching them.

regards it sufficient to make use of one pair of hands and one set of lips, to achieve the same desired outcome.

The second variable that *aphrodisia* requires is that of polarity. Polarity refers to role consciousness, which is different for each gender. Foucault states, that nature intended for women to be cast into the passive role, while men, are the active counterpart.<sup>127</sup> Foucault also states that in a man, passivity during sexual relations is one of the core forms of immorality (1192, 1193). Polarity expresses a relation between two opposite tendencies; therefore, my interpretation here, assumes that for a woman taking on the role of the active part in sexual relations is equally immoral. In *AJS*, Elia's immorality is reflected in the role she plays in their affair. She is Ricardo's sexual 'iniciadora'; a role that requires her to take charge of the situation and his sexual advances in the bedroom, as well as elsewhere:

Y ahora Ricardo [...] la mira a ella muy serio, rectamente a los ojos, y le pregunta lo que tiene que hacer, [...] y piensa Elia con un estremecimiento que ella ha sido elegida, para tomarle de la mano y conducirlo a través de extraños túneles subterráneos hasta la luz. Y le dice que se desnude y que se meta en la cama.  
(Tusquets 1979 73)

In *Grandes'* novel, Jose does not display signs of activity; instead she conforms to her gender norm and is passive, which assigns her the role of being the moral counterpart to *AJS*. The following quote illustrates that Jaime has planned and prepared for this threesome and that neither Marcos, nor Jose, knew anything about it beforehand, which once more underlines Jose's passivity: '¿lo tenías planeado? – les pregunté entonces, [...] - ¿Qué? – preguntó Jaime. – Lo del trío. – No – me contestó Marcos, [...] – Sí – dijo

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<sup>127</sup> Today this view has modernised, but looking at Spanish society, at the time, the novels were published this view was still commonly accepted.

Jaime entonces, y me eché a reír. [...] – Bueno... Suponía que podía llegar a suceder' (Grandes 2004 68, 69).

The principles of *chrêsis* have to adhere to three variables to be moral. The first variable relates to the physical needs. Foucault argues that the soul allows the experience of pleasure, when the physical needs can be met, without causing anyone harm in the process (1199, 1200, 1201).<sup>128</sup> In *AJS*, this condition is challenged because of Elia's ignorance of Clara's feelings for her. Elia's decision to proposition Clara with a threesome is immoral because Elia had no intention of being physical with Clara prior to Ricardo's input, and still, she lets him flatter and seduce her to engage in it. Elia knew of Clara's feelings for her when she propositioned her; this makes Elia's proposition deceitful and misleading. The following quote supports this assumption by illustrating a conversation between Elia and Ricardo that alerts Elia to Clara's feelings and demonstrates her existing suspicion that Clara felt more for her than she led on: 'y Elia dice que no. [...] yo no la quiero, poeta. [...] ¿por qué has dejado que ella te ame a ti, si sabías que tú no ibas a amarla? Por tantas cosas' (Tusquets 1979 92). Elia's proposition, therefore, becomes potentially harmful, since Elia cannot requite Clara's love emotionally. She can only do so in physical terms. Clara's hurt, therefore, becomes two-fold. Elia causes her emotional and physical harm with her proposition (Ambrosio Servodidio 1986 251).<sup>129</sup> This thesis and Tusquets' novel place variations of sexual explorations at the centre of the quest for identity. These argue that life becomes deferred giving meaning to one's world and the individual an identity in the process.

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<sup>128</sup> Foucault does not define what constitutes 'harm' clearly in his theory. In my interpretation of it, I have understood it to mean that an individual intentionally causes another individual harm by doing something that he or she knows is not in the other's best interest.

<sup>129</sup> Elia only plays at loving Clara, she is jealous of the depth with which the girl feels love for her and on some level hopes to attain a similar feeling through their sexual interaction 'le da tanta rabia y tanta envidia [...] que la otra sea capaz de amarla así, la convicción amarga de que por mal que se le pongan las cosas ha de tener la mejor parte' (Tusquets 1979 94). Elia is ignorant of Clara's needs and causes her hurt believing that no matter how much pain Clara feels, she will still come out on top.

However, Foucault's demand for no harm done superposes the argument for experimentation that lacks an evaluation of risk involved (Hart 1991 86). The following quote illustrates Clara's terror and fear of engaging in the threesome and further displays the pain and disappointment, she feels after it is over:

Clara debatiéndose a su lado entre las piernas y los brazos pulpo de Ricardo, desbordada por el asco y el terror, mientras ella, Elia se demora y tarda tanto, tanto en intervenir y en apartarla [...] Clara [...] arrimada a los muros como un felino que ha sido definitivamente expulsado del paraíso, que ha sufrido tal vez esta expulsión total que se consuma sólo con la pérdida de la fe, porque es seguro que a estas alturas Clara no cree ya en el paraíso de los gatos. (Tusquets 1979 143, 144)

Clara's suffering illustrated here is a surprise to Elia, who had not considered, that the young woman might end up feeling so terrified.

In *CDC*, Jose fulfils Foucault's moral conditions in regard to the principle of *chrêsis*. All three participants engage in this relationship by choice and Jose experiences this relationship as something exciting and enjoyable, 'y cuando logré ponerme de acuerdo con él [Jaime], todo volvió a ser tan bueno, tan divertido, tan especial como al principio' (Grandes 2004 65). The initial hesitation that Jose demonstrates in this quote is solely due to the element of surprise that her first sexual encounter with Jaime and Marcos causes her. The next quotation outlines a more contemplative impression of their encounter hours after it happened, 'lo que estaba destinado a ser un episodio desagradable y convencional se había convertido en un castillo de fuegos artificiales, una explosión que yo no podría olvidar jamás' (Grandes 2004 68). Jose's encounter, therefore, fulfils Foucault's demands for sexual morality, insofar, that sexual activity is carried out without intentionally causing harm to anyone involved in the process.

The discipline of *chrêsis* also requires the individual to choose the right moment to engage in sexual activity. This is connected to incest. Socrates, who Foucault refers to, argues that with incest the principle of the right moment is ignored and sexual procreation occurs, between two people that are related to each other, and where one person is much older than the other. He further relates that procreation, when one is no longer in one's best years, can be equated to reproduction under unfavourable conditions (1202, 1204). Since Foucault has not limited this rule strictly to incest, there is room to interpret and apply, the same regulation to relationships between people, with a large age gap. In *AJS*, this applies to Elia and Ricardo. My interpretation of Foucault for this argument extends even further by calling attention to another problematic that is central to their relationship. Elia presents a mother figure for Ricardo and this makes their relationship, even more debatable. Ricardo describes Elia as: 'materna y suave y protectora, e inequívocamente experta' (Tusquets 1979 45). This quotation illustrates a relationship that is not based on equality. The roles that they play, bear more resemblance to a mother-son bond than an erotic connection between two lovers of equal standing and experience. The roles that are usually attributed between men and women are inverted between Elia and Ricardo. Ricardo is not the traditionally designated active part in this relationship; instead he becomes the child that listens and learns from Elia. Elia, in turn, takes on the role of a teacher and a mother and, thereby, repudiates Foucault's guidelines further. This violation of Foucauldian principle is not surprising. The novel, among other themes, plays out a lost childhood theme for all three participants. As Servodidio argues: in Elia's case 'her serial adulteries are irremediably patterned on [her] originating childhood text' (Servodidio 1991 163), which features at the beginning of the novel and illustrates lacking parental concern

(163). For Ricardo, on the other hand, Elia makes up for the failed mother-son bond that he lacks with his own mother (163).

Grandes' novel, in contrast, illustrates the morally sound counterpart to *AJS*. None of the protagonists are connected to each other through oedipal associations; all three are young and the same age. The following quotation elicits Jose's attitude towards their relationship. It clearly states that there was no better time to engage in this adventure with Jaime and Marcos:

Estábamos en 1984, teníamos veinte años, el mundo todavía caminaba hacia delante, Madrid era el mundo y yo estaba en medio, dispuesta a tragármelo sin tomarme la molestia de masticar ante cada bocado. Diez años antes, aquella escena no habría podido suceder. Diez años después, habría sido igual de imposible. Pero estábamos en 1984 y teníamos veinte años, Madrid tenía veinte años, España tenía veinte años y todo estaba en su sitio, un pasado oscuro, un presente luminoso, y la flecha que señalaba en la dirección correcta hacia lo que entonces creíamos que sería el futuro.

(Grandes 2004 74)

The last variable that *chrêsis* requires is that the individual consider the status of his partner, before engaging in sexual activity. Foucault mentions Christian morals and means to specify that one should not engage in sexual activity with another's husband or wife. And if one is married, not with anyone other than his/her own wife or husband (1204). In *AJS*, however, Elia contradicts this rule because she is indeed married. Her behaviour is immoral because, while her marriage appears happy, she is still lonely, restless, bored and acts on her impulses. Her affairs speak to the fact: 'el matrimonio se redujo a una profesión muy bien remunerada quizá pero que ocupa poquísima atención y menos tiempo, porque es evidente que el marido la quiere y evidente también que no la necesita para casi nada' (Tusquets 1979 64). For Elia, her affairs are but erotic

experiences that act as a self-defence mechanism, against not being needed by her husband. They are as Bellver outlines: 'an escape from frustration, and an avenue of self-discovery. Love [...] is a dream from which [she is] forced to awake because, in one way or another, [she] has been abandoned by the man she loves' (Bellver 1984 13).

Grandes' novel once more attests, to a more moral scenario than *AJS*. Jose is unattached, at the time, that she engages in her relationship with Jaime and Marcos and so is Marcos. The only immoral action is detected in Jaime's behaviour because Jaime cheats on his girlfriend twice by going to bed with Jose and Marcos. Despite it being Jaime's infidelity and, therefore, not the investigative focus of this chapter, it can be argued that Jose should have refrained from sexual contact with him, at both times. Regardless of their sexual encounters a week before, they handle their budding romance very responsibly from that moment onwards. The following quotation outlines this process: 'dos semanas después, empecé a tomar la píldora. Un par de días más tarde, Jaime dejó a su novia. Cuando se acabó el curso, aquella era ya la primera y la única historia seria, intensa, verdadera, que yo había tenido en mi vida' (Grandes 2004 87).

Lastly, the individual that aspires to act morally has to fulfil the principle of *enkráteia*. The variables that constitute *enkráteia* are interdependent and relate to the attitude that the individual maintains, when confronted with sexual temptation. The principles demand mastery of one's impulses and abstinence from inappropriate actions. The aim is not to eradicate the impulses altogether, but merely, to control them according to the individual's will (Foucault 2008 1207, 1209, 1210, 1213). *AJS* defends its only moral conviction here. Elia, does indeed, follow this moral guideline when she masters her sexual impulses with the young man: 'cuando el muchacho – ansioso y asustado – se ve casi obligado a empezar a quitarse los pantalones, lo detiene ella con un gesto [...] no, todavía no, hoy todavía no, y él le pregunta cuándo, y ella contesta el

lunes' (Tusquets 1979 45). Elia sees that Ricardo is not ready yet, so she postpones their first sexual encounter. However, it is not merely Ricardo's anxiety that influences her decision. As previously noted in section 3.2, Elia enjoys prolonging this encounter to fan its intensity. She appears highly proficient in her conduct; enjoys the sensation the excitement and yearning it creates in her body, and engages in what Socrates points out to be, the behaviour of delay and mastery of impulses (Foucault 2008 1202). The anticipation and deferral of sexual intercourse, are likewise, narrative strategies employed by the author to prepare for sexual and narrative climax (Servodidio 1991 174), and they also intensify the pleasure felt by the protagonist and make it a memory worth preserving (Foucault 2008 1202). The result of these two strategies is, as Hart argues, a deferral of meaning and an open interpretive space between the 'now' of Elia's yearning and the future of the actual act (Hart 1991 89).

As far as mastery of impulses and abstinence in *CDC* are concerned, Jose engages in actions that are immoral because neither does she abstain from indulging in her impulses, nor does she master them. As a result excess and weakness of will are found everywhere in the novel. The following quotation outlines the feelings of shame that she battles with years later as a result of her sexual excess during her younger years:

Trabajé tanto que dejé de advertir que mi vida ya no era otra cosa que puro trabajo, un feo simulacro de mi vida, y seguí trabajando hasta [...] hasta que logré avergonzarme de ellos, de mí misma, de todo lo que amó mi corazón, trabajé sin cesar, sin pensar, sin pararme jamás a descansar, trabajé hasta agotarme y no sirvió de nada. (Grandes 2004 189)

Whenever she thinks back Jose finds it hard to understand how she could live a life that now appears so immoral, shameful and wrong to her. The excess of two bodies for Jose's sexual desires is evident here, as is the shame she feels for taking advantage of it:

Después, cuando me quedé sola, confundí aquella rara armonía con un vulgar desorden, y aquel orden perfecto con la más turbia variedad del caos. Después, cuando no me quedó otro remedio que convertirme en una mujer como las demás, me dio vergüenza haber vivido así, sin hacerme preguntas, sin necesitar respuestas, siempre con un hombre a cada lado, dos bocas, dos cuerpos, dos sexos para una sola boca, un solo cuerpo, un solo sexo que era el mío. (Grandes 2004 98)

The principle of *enkráteia* also outlines that an individual will fail to master his impulses when the necessary power structure to steer and control these impulses is missing (Foucault 2008 1215).<sup>130</sup> In *AJS*, the lacking force that societal norms and the presence of her husband exhibit represents this power structure. Elia's immoral behaviour is facilitated by his absence, which allows her to engage in her affairs with other men. The following quote corroborates the argument: 'un marido [...] que cuando est[á] en la casa parec[e] estar [...] meramente de paso, siempre a punto de emprender vuelo hacia Nueva York en viaje de negocios' (Tusquets 1979 50). Societal convention, which Ambrosio Servodidio points out, designates Elia as both a; 'part of', and: 'apart from' society and thereby exemplifies her as an exception to the rule (1986 239). Elia yields to these societal expectations by appearing at exhibitions and functions but alternately breaches the rules by engaging in serial love affairs (239) and this is facilitated, by her husband's and her children's absence.

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<sup>130</sup> Here, Foucault's theory indicates how important power structures are in an individual's development. Section 3.4 will analyse its implications in more detail.

Grandes' novel also misses the appropriately forceful power structures to induce abstinence and control. As Jose still lives at home, the only power structure capable of controlling her behaviour are her parents. However, they leave her to her own devices, despite seeing less and less of her during months, 'hacía ya meses que mi actitud tenía menos que ver con las etapas de un noviazgo que con las fases de una deserción sistemática' (Grandes 2004 105). The parental power structure is only laxly enforced and this allows Jose to engage in this triad relationship. Had this not been the case and had parental supervision been more rigorous, this may not have been the case.

The principle of *enkráteia* also outlines that it requires practice. For, if we do not practice, we become unable to do what needs to be done or avoid what needs to be avoided to remain moral in our behaviour (Foucault 2008 1215, 1216). This theoretical approach is adequately displayed in *AJS* because the absent power structure makes it impossible for Elia to remain faithful to her husband and seduces her to act immorally: 'los amigos que merodean por la casa y la rodean en las fiestas han sido o son todavía sus amantes' (Tusquets 1979 52). It is the absence of her husband and children and her regular dis- and re-connection from the societal world that cause her to retreat further into herself and deeper into her narcissism. It is her resulting depression that enforces the need to commit serial adultery to escape feelings of sadness (Ambrosio Servodidio 1986 239), because affairs are, but, 'un mero pretexto para escapar durante unas horas al vacío que la devora' (Tusquets 1979 52).

As far as *CDC* is concerned, in regard to this last principle of *enkráteia*, Jose is aware that Marcos' sudden ability to perform in the bedroom, will initiate a fundamental change in their triad dynamic: 'yo deseaba que sucediera lo que acababa de pasar, y sin embargo, deseaba al mismo tiempo que nada cambiara [...] mientras el desequilibrio comenzaba a acecharnos desde el mismo corazón del equilibrio' (Grandes

2004 111, 112). Since the missing power structure has caused her to get involved in the relationship, she is now unable, to extricate herself from it. In spite of her intuition, she remains bound, by each of her lover's needs and expectations. The following quotation outlines this dilemma and explains how her resulting infidelity with Jaime contributes further to maintaining the threesome:

El secreto de aquella noche actuó como un bisturí capaz de rasgar mi vida por la mitad, de partirme en dos mujeres a las que cada vez les costaría más trabajo aparentar que eran una sola. [...] Estaba enamorada de Jaime y lo sabía, y sabía también que no podía ser, que sin Marcos nunca sería. (Grandes 2004 126, 127)

Jose remains bound without being able to do, what is necessary to save herself and avoid immoral behaviour: 'estaba esperando, solamente eso, no hacía otra cosa que esperar, pero yo no lo entendí, no conseguí ver tan lejos' (Grandes 2004 129).

This section has outlined the importance of sexual morality in identity formation, and has come to the conclusion that the novel *CDC* is the only one that shows a protagonist that possesses sexual morals.

Out of nine actions that Foucault has stipulated, Jose has fulfilled seven. Sexual morality, has further supported Jose's exploration of self in this triad love relationship because it has provided her with a loving, supporting and encouraging environment, in which Jose could explore her sexual likes and dislikes. Examples of this are her difficulty to orgasm and the ability to establish her first committed romantic relationship.<sup>131</sup> *AJS*, on the other hand, demonstrated a protagonist lacking in sexual morals. Of Foucault's nine stipulated elements, Elia fulfilled only one. The character of

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<sup>131</sup> The novel, therefore, illustrates that development is a paramount theme in *CDC*. This is particularly relevant for section 3.4.4 and 3.4.5, where this development is analysed in more detail.

Elia is developmentally stagnant throughout the novel in regard to the exploration of the self through sexual experience. The character remains set in her ways and does not learn from her mistakes. Elia repeats her pattern of affairs, over and over again, and is unable to break it. The following quote illustrates this:

Y se reanude una vez más la ronda de médicos y viajes y curas de reposo [...] y vengan luego las semanas o los meses en que pasee su malestar por la ciudad [...] hasta que por fin sucumba una vez más [...] hasta que al fin, algún día, deje de producirse definitivamente el milagro, y la triste historia tonta, la sucia historia solitaria, termine felizmente para siempre. (Tusquets 1979 149, 150)

In this way, she remains bound by a loveless marriage and a lover, who uses her for his own selfish desires and rapes her, when she denies herself to him. Elia is missing the emotionally supportive and positively encouraging backing that a relationship would provide, were it built on sexual morality. Morality, here, assumes the ability to judge right from wrong, harmless from harmful. Its subsequent evaluation, in the protagonists of both novels, contributes directly to the later analysis of individuation potential. This is because the line of argument that follows presumes that immorality leads to harmful acts, if only based on circumstantial ignorance of the needs of others. Harmful, or narcissistic acts and attitudes fracture or even destroy interpersonal relationships, which negate the chance for emotional attachment. But emotional involvement forms the basis of identity development.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> This has already been underpinned in Chapter 2, and will repeatedly be mentioned, throughout this present chapter. The following section now investigates the concept of eroticism and its effect on an individual's feeling of desire, pleasure and lust that encourage sexual experiences, contact and emotional attachment and how eroticism can encourage or discourage identity formation.

### 3.3 Eroticism and Identity Formation

#### 3.3.1 Introduction and Hypothesis

This section discusses, how eroticism can impact an individual's feelings of desire, pleasure and lust, and how it is linked to identity formation. The latter question is particularly relevant in the argument that eroticism contributes to identity formation. Georges Bataille cites two types of eroticism, however, only one contributes to individuation.

The hypothesis of this section, therefore, establishes that emotional eroticism is the type that contributes to individuation and acts as a developmental tool. As such it is more closely related to Foucaultian eroticism, and therefore, disposes of a more philosophical approach to the nature of love (2008 1349). Contrary to this, physical eroticism possesses a superficial, volatile and highly subjective nature, which, in turn, makes it more suitable as an escapist tool where the benefit lies within the instantaneous reaction to the situation rather than the long-term result.<sup>133</sup>

#### 3.3.2 Eroticism in Sexual Morality and Identity Formation

According to Georges Bataille, eroticism is a sensation that triggers sexual thought, act and feeling in the individual. Although it is often the forerunner of reproduction and sexual relations, eroticism is also a sentiment that is ever present in

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<sup>133</sup> The section commences with an outline of Bataille's theory on eroticism within the argument for sexual morality. In Almudena Grandes' novel *CDC*, physical eroticism has not been noticed, and, therefore, it is ignore here. Section 3.3 primarily focuses on *AJS* and the illustration of the escapist argument. 3.4 will then be able to look more closely at *CDC* and the individuation argument.

relationships and does not always necessarily involve tactile sexual pleasure. For Bataille, eroticism is in its nature an inner, solitary experience (2001 252). It is veiled in secrecy and commits the individual to silence because its content is bound by a taboo (252). Through its intangible nature, eroticism resides exclusively within the realm of fantasy and the imagination and is sometimes considered to have religious and sacred properties (29). Condensed in this description, eroticism is a highly subjective and volatile concept, whose cause and effect, shift according to circumstances. It is a borderline condition that gives rise to a range of emotions that are of extreme intensity (252, 253). Eroticism has little to do with tangible bodies or objective qualities. It is instead defined as a psychological quest that is accomplished, in addition, to the most obvious and natural goal of reproduction (11). It is an experience that an individual indulges in, for sheer pleasure, and solely in the quest for lust and desire.<sup>134</sup> Fascination is central to its experience and it is fuelled and accentuated by its intimate connection to violence and death (13). This is further closely linked to taboo and is suggestive of its perilous nature. Freud, like Bataille, had analysed the function of taboo in his book *Totem and Taboo* (1940) and, like Bataille, attributed central significance to it. To better understand the history and origin of taboo, I would like to refer to Freud here because his study coincides with Bataille's. Freud believed that the taboo's central purpose was a protective one. To him, observation of taboo promised a variety of protective functions, of which some, but not all, are relevant to my research. One of the most fundamental and relevant ones, here, were that it promised protection from dangers,

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<sup>134</sup> Please refer to section 3.2 on sexual morality, to understand how the cycle of lust, desire and sex is linked to eroticism. Additionally, Foucault draws a further distinction between Bataille's idea of love and sex and his own beliefs that there are two types of love. One that only desires the completion of the physical act and derivation of pleasure from it and one that seeks to put the soul to the test (2008 1347). Foucauldian understanding of the erotic is, therefore, very different to Bataille's because it is directly linked to a philosophical understanding of love (1349). For the purpose of section 3.3.2 and the analysis of *AJS*, I will only consider Bataille's definition of eroticism because the novel does not relate more profound feelings than lust and desire, and therefore, makes a Foucaultian analysis unyielding. This section is an extension to the previous analysis on sexual morality and tries to identify further, how the protagonists of *AJS* and *CDC* emotionally relate to their sexual experiences.

such as the overindulgence in power in its various forms (1940 28).<sup>135</sup> Ultimately eroticism seeks to fascinate, spellbind and bewitch to such an extent that it strikes the innermost core of being causing its heart to stand still and convey proximity to death (Bataille 2001 17). Eroticism, much like sexual experiences, seek to break down established patterns and orders of basic social existence to fulfil the desire for unity with another person in a manner that cannot be attained in daily life. They challenge what the individual knows of its discontinuous existence and repeatedly put its being in question by seducing and tempting it to believe in its continuity beyond death (18, 19, 31).<sup>136</sup> Seduction and temptation are presented by taboo and prohibition. The taboo in force is often a social imposition of rules and order, and as such, the experience or sensation only gains erotic momentum when it violates the taboo (31). This violation of the taboo is called transgression. For Bataille, 'organised transgression together with the taboo make social life what it is. [For] the frequency and the regularity of transgression do not affect the intangible stability of the prohibition since they are its expected complement' (Bataille 2001 65). Taboo is central to eroticism and morality is often juxtaposed to taboo and shame, as the origin of eroticism (31) and a pre-requisite for its existence. To objective intelligence, eroticism can therefore be a monstrous thing because despite the primary bliss of happiness that it promises, fulfilled passions often provoke sensations so intense that they feel more like violent agitation, turmoil, distress and suffering (37, 19).

For Bataille eroticism can take three forms: physical, emotional and religious (15). The following section, illustrates how eroticism comes about in *AJS* and *CDC*.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> As later sections in this chapter will show, power relations are particularly prominent in *AJS* and contribute to the protagonist's frustrated identity development.

<sup>136</sup> Here, its nature falls in alignment with the theory of SIP and supports this thesis' distinguishing feature that identity formation seems to be a developmental process that is paved with moments of instability and crisis, regardless of the theory used, or the topic examined.

<sup>137</sup> See footnote 140 for more detail.

Later, it analyses the implications of physical and emotional eroticism in both novels and outlines how physical eroticism acts as an escapist tool, while emotional eroticism acts as a developmental one.<sup>138</sup>

### 3.3.3 Physical Eroticism in *El amor es un juego solitario* (1979)

*AJS* plays out on the edges of two taboos: that of animalism and, on the patriarchal power structure whose effect acts as a fuelling agent contributing to the intensity of the erotic moment (Bellver 1984 17). In *AJS* physical eroticism manifests itself in various instances. Firstly, Bataille outlines that eroticism manifests in the instant of the male's active pursuit of the female (2001 17). In *AJS*, this scenario is re-enacted when Clara transmits Ricardo's message that he has chosen Elia as his sexual 'iniciadora' (Tusquets 1979 14). Transgression occurs, when the roles of male and female become inverted between Ricardo and Elia. At this point, the author begins to play out oppositional principles that are characteristic of patriarchal culture, 'male/female', 'active/passive' and 'powerful/submissive' (Gould Levine 1987 211), and transgression takes its full effect in the novel causing the emergence of physical eroticism between the protagonists. The transgression *per se* does not impede the prohibition that the taboo establishes; as Bataille outlines, 'the compression is not subservient to the explosion, far from it; it gives it increased force' (Bataille 2001 65). In regard to *AJS*, disrespecting the established boundaries of 'male/female', 'active/passive' respectively (Gould Levine 1987 211), does not take away from the intensity of the experience, on the contrary. The following quotation describes the

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<sup>138</sup> The religious aspect of eroticism does not feature in either novel and is, therefore, excluded in the analysis.

primal nature of the emotions that the transgression causes in Elia, which constitutes another transgression in itself:<sup>139</sup>

Sentía que algo estaba moviéndosele muy adentro, en lo más hondo, [...] el recuerdo de cierta novela de aventuras donde se hablaba del aroma, o quizá del hedor, que despiden los sexos de las hembras en celo, y de cómo los machos [...] las eligen, las separan y las cercan incansables para las oscuras frondas del deseo. (Tusquets 1979 14)

For the male, the pursuit promises the anticipated fusion of both lovers and the promise of sex (Bataille 2001 17). The erotic experience seeks the eventual dissolution of the partner's individuality; that is, it seeks the dissolution of any self-contained character, as it would exist in everyday life (17). This state of progressive dissolution heightens in intensity, up to the moment of sexual climax (17). By subverting patriarchal definitions and vocabulary in the relationship between Elia and Ricardo, Tusquets allowed for the first step in the dissolution of the lovers' self-contained identities that are vital to the erotic experience (Bataille 2001 17, 18).

For Bataille nakedness plays an important role in the process of dissolution (2001 17, 18) and has become, almost, a universal and decidedly significant taboo in western society (50) regulating society's sexual liberty on its most superficial level (50). However, for Bataille it is significant because it illustrates the opposite of self-possession or discontinuity of existence by opening the body up to obscenity for the observer. It is a form of communication that often conveys a delicate state of uneasiness and a desire to hide, what the individual stripping feels naked in front of that same

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<sup>139</sup> See the third instance of eroticism, discussed in this section.

observer (17, 18). While the following quotation outlines that this is not strictly the case for Elia, she nevertheless feels uneasy taking of her clothes in front of someone:

Elia avanza ahora enteramente desnuda hacia él, porque no la ha avergonzado nunca su propia desnudez ni la de otros, pero sí la cohibe y la incomoda desnudarse [...] en presencia de alguien. (Tusquets 1979 73)

Although nakedness is not indecent *per se* (Bataille 2001 216), it becomes obscene in certain circumstances. It is a transgressive act that, according to Bataille, can be a simulacrum of something as grave as killing. Particularly when the sexual act follows (17, 18). This is the case for Elia and Ricardo because the quote above, presents the prelude to their first sexual encounter. Bataille sees transgression in the fusion between animal and human behaviour, 'genesis refers to nakedness, linking the birth of modesty with the transition from the animal to the human' (Bataille 2001 216). The transgressive effect would, therefore, once more, be linked to the animalistic component inherent in the sexual encounter, related in the previous page's quotation.<sup>140</sup>

A further transgression resides in the age gap between Elia and Ricardo. Elia is twice his age, more experienced with sex and filling the role of his 'iniciadora' (Tusquets 1979 14). This creates the allusion of a maternal figure, which makes their involvement almost incestuous (Ambrosio Servodidio 1986 241), 'y a Ricardo la evoca – está segura – extrañas imágenes maternas, nunca conocidas [...] maternal y suave y protectora' (Tusquets 1979 45). Ricardo's allusion to Elia, as a mother, illustrates an incestuous element in their relationship, of which the protagonists are not aware, but which influences this analysis. Since incest is a particularly strongly observed taboo that

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<sup>140</sup> Please refer to a later point in this section, for more detail on the discussion of animalism and bestiality in the erotic experience. This footnote merely intends to draw a connection, between various points, but at this moment, does not intend to explore it.

possesses universal proclamation (Bataille 2001 199), its transgression has a powerful effect in this analysis. 'Incest is the first proof of the fundamental connection between man and the denial of sensuality, of the carnal and animal' (Bataille 2001 216) and this defines and increases its value and power (218). Accordingly, Bataille makes a reference to Levi-Strauss, suggesting that observing this taboo is what distinguishes us from animals (198). Therefore any breach relegates man back to the animal kingdom. It is a taboo that Tusquets repeatedly transgressed in her novel (94) and which suggests that she saw man, or at least her protagonists in this novel, not all that far removed from animals in their behaviour, in this way diminishing their humanity. Her description of Ricardo's and Elia's courting ritual as 'animalistic', falls in line with definitions of 'primal' and 'animal' and equates their relationship to the mating of animals infused with human passion. The use of this narrative strategy presents a transgression because it reduces human sexuality not allowing for its merit of emotional profundity (Bataille 2001 94). For Bataille, 'human eroticism [in particular] differs from animal sexuality precisely in this, that it calls life into play. In human consciousness eroticism is that within man which calls his being in question' (Bataille 2001 29). Instead Tusquets placed their encounter in the realm of animalism and bestiality, disregarding all human characteristics, as the following quotation will illustrate:

Hasta que llega un día en que Clara, [...] le transmite el mensaje del simio, [...] y entonces Elia sabe definitivamente que sí hay alguien allí, un ser concreto [...] un simio que ha venteado con cuidado el aroma inconfundible que segrega el sexo de la mujer, para aislarlo luego de los aromas posibles y distintos, y elegirla así. (Tusquets 1979 13)

Tusquets divests the protagonist's interaction of all human emotion leaving, how Bataille argues, 'the animal with a blind convulsion of its organs. So also with the erotic convulsion, it gives free reign to [the] extravagant organs whose blind activity goes on beyond the considered will of the lovers' (Bataille 2001 92). This narrative strategy breaks the taboo, creating an erotic effect, both, in the literature and the protagonist. The process of dissolution finds its completion, with the consummation of the sexual act. Bataille describes, how the excess of the bodies induces alien reactions in the lovers and how a rush of blood upsets the balance of life within them causing a feeling of madness to possess one another (2001 106). In this respect, eroticism comes to resemble: 'the feeling of something bursting, of the violence accompanying an explosion' (Bataille 2001 93), as the distinct characters cease to exist, losing themselves in momentary continuity (18). The following quotation, outlines this boundless passion:

Elia cabalga febril, sin bridas y sin estribos, sobre el cuerpo tan joven, lampiño, sudoroso, doblemente excitada ella cuando oye a Ricardo gemir muy quedo [...] y Ricardo le pregunta entre gemidos, con una voz nueva que Elia no conocía, que acaso él tampoco se conocía [...] si ha llegado el momento. (Tusquets 1979 75)

Elia transitions from a normal, everyday state, to that of erotic desire, experiencing a partial dissolution of her person, as the erotic intensity surrounding their lovemaking intensifies. It appears as if Elia loses herself in the sexual act, forgetting altogether that she is sharing that moment with someone. She remains contained, but loses herself, in what can be defined, as the Bataillan realm of discontinuity. Until she silently hears him moan underneath her (2001 17). She retreats into a fantasy world, in search of what Bataille describes as a kind of sensuality that harbours: 'a wish to lose one's footing but without falling irrevocably, and this could not be so without a certain fraudulence for

which we are blindly responsible but which takes us in nevertheless' (Bataille 2001 244) and which leads to gratification. This occurs at the moment of climax, where a minor rupture, suggestive of a small death, spurs sensuality (107). Tusquets' choice of the word 'cabalgar' (Tusquets 1979 75), draws another connection to the animalistic nature, inherent in sexual activity and the overall tone of passion that the quote relates insinuates another transgression of this nature. Elia relinquishes herself to the will of the flesh and the ensuing violence, which Bataille deems as 'responsible for the urges of the organs of reproduction' (Bataille 2001 93). This leads us to another quote in which he outlines: '[that the lovers'] will is followed by the animal activity of these swollen organs: they are animated by a violence outside the control of reason [...] and suddenly the heart rejoices to yield to the breaking of the storm. The urges of the flesh pass all bounds in the absence of controlling will' (Bataille 2001 92) as gratification ensues. 'Los cuerpos de los dos se mueven ya como un solo cuerpo indivisible [...] hasta que el tiempo se inmoviliza en un vértigo que parece no ha de tener fin' (Tusquets 1979 75). Eroticism achieves its goal, when both bodies become one in climax, leading to the deceiving notion that both lovers have shared something very intimate with each other, although their fusion was only momentary and physical.

### 3.3.4 Emotional Eroticism in *El amor es un juego solitario* (1979) and *Castillos de cartón* (2004)

Emotional eroticism is more natural and spontaneous than its physical counterpart. Although it often acts independently from physical impulses, it nevertheless derives from them. The passion that defines emotional eroticism is of a spiritual nature and occurs exclusively in the imagination of the individual (Bataille 2001 19). Its symptoms are, therefore, often very similar to that of feelings of love.<sup>141</sup> In spite of that, Bataille notes that an emotional connection can also be established, even if its foundations are not love and tenderness. He argues that two individuals that have a relationship with each other can also form a bond that bases itself on a narcissistic goal and thereby, develop an emotional connection that lasts only until the goal is achieved (21). This is particularly relevant in regard to *AJS*, which features a connection of emotional eroticism that is entirely dependent on the successful interplay of erotic fantasies and power in their affair. To effectively contrast the escapist nature of *AJS* based on the previously mentioned argument the following analysis will show how *CDC* features emotional eroticism that contributes to the development of the protagonist. It will show how emotional eroticism manifests itself in passion that is not sparked by sexual impulses. It will also show how desire in the individual is often experienced as anguish, suffering, turmoil and distress, and how it exhibits an urge of possession of the love object in a desire for continuity and connection with the other person (19, 20), which ultimately culminates in a justification for emotional eroticism.

The following paragraphs will elicit how, in spite of the fact that *AJS* does not show any form of emotional connection divorced from physical pleasure, emotional

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<sup>141</sup> See the introduction to 3.3.2 for its connection for Foucault and his understanding of the erotic.

eroticism still occurs. It specifically looks at how an emotional connection based on the achievement of a narcissistic goal manifests in a novel (Bataille 2001 21). Elia engages in her relationship with Ricardo and Clara to seek pure physical gratification and does not establish an emotional relationship with either character throughout the novel. This supports Ambrosio Servodidio's opinion that '[although] joined sexually, the three nonetheless remain emotionally apart' (Ambrosio Servodidio 1986 241). Elia seeks to see herself reflected as desirable in the eyes of her lovers. However, even though her motivations are exclusively narcissistic (242), emotional eroticism does occur. For Bataille passion can be experienced by two lovers through shared egotism and habit (2001 21). This does not make for a connection in emotional terms *per se* since it does not involve feelings of tenderness and love. However, the pursuit and achievement of a mutual goal, which in Elia and Ricardo's case is a love affair, still establishes a bond between the two characters. In such a way, transgression sets passion free through violating the individual's loneliness (21). While eroticism is an effect that seeks continuity with another person, it is euphoric illusion that momentarily catapults oneself out of one's solitude, as Bataille argues (262). In Elia's case the prolonged periods of passivity and depression confine her to a state of solitude. Although she never establishes an emotional connection that does not thrive on sexual pleasure, she nevertheless regularly revives an erotic illusion through another sexual relationship to escape from her boredom:

Se encuentran enfrentados por tanto sus impacencias y su descontento y sus hastíos a resolverse en el oficio [...] único y obsesivo de amar [...] un mero pretexto para escapar durante unas horas al vacío que la devora. (Tusquets 1979 52)

Elia's only break in her solitude occurs when she engages in a love affair. During that time she passionately and anxiously desires her lover. Experimenting and playing with his absence or unavailability, she heightens her desire for him. Her desire for the man himself, however, is not real. The emotional eroticism that results is of her own creation and independent of her feelings for the man. Elia creates the passion she feels for Ricardo herself, by postponing their first sexual encounter. Waiting for Monday, she feels a delightful bliss that turns into intolerable anxiety as the days of the weekend wear on. In this way, Elia is and remains her own object of desire (Servodidio 1991 171). The following brings various, previously mentioned, elements together in a quotation:

La cita pospuesta [...] perversamente para la mañana del lunes, tal vez en un intento [...] [de] mostrarse ella menos ansiosa, en su supuesta no impaciencia, [...] para mimar y prolongar – para su propio placer, para su propia tortura – esta ansiedad deleitosa e intolerable [...] esta intensidad pues de la imaginación y de los sentidos – sólo muy remotamente relacionable con el sexo – que constituye la única embriaguez, la única evasión de la que Elia ha sido desde siempre capaz. (Tusquets 1979 62, 64)

Desire to escape her boredom and daily routine forms the foundation of Elia's actions in the novel. In her behaviour towards men and sex, Elia is auto-erotic (Ambrosio Servodidio 1986 248) and the physical act does not stand at the centre of her erotic experience. Despite the illusionary nature of Elia's desire and her inability to transfer her emotions onto Ricardo, she requires the man to be of flesh and blood, to give her erotic fantasies a realist edge (Servodidio 1991 171). Her inability to establish an emotional connection based on sincere love and appreciation for the partner leaves her

untouched by emotion and may explain why her character is stagnant and does not develop throughout the novel.

*CDC* portrays a contrast to *AJS* illustrating a strong emotional connection based on love and friendship between the protagonist and her lovers. This is countered by a relatively weak physical connection, which determines its developmental nature. In *CDC* all three conditions of emotional eroticism based on tenderness and love are fulfilled and the novel establishes an emotional connection outside sexual pleasure 'porque también vivíamos juntos fuera de la cama' (Grandes 2004 93). This emotional connection has sexual desire at its core, but the violence inherent in sexual attraction has grown into tenderness, which represents the lasting form of love (Bataille 2001 241). On this level it also resembles Foucauldian principles of eroticism and love. As previously related Foucault distinguishes between love that merely seeks physical pleasure and love that is indeed interested in the loved object. This type of love classifies as a type that is based on and eventually grows into a profound friendship (Foucault 2008 1349). The following quotation outlines the deep connection between the lovers:

El sexo es el sexo y el arte es el arte, y en nuestra historia había mucho de ambas cosas y muchas cosas más, deseo, lealtad, confianza, complicidad, dependencia, armonía, necesidad, seguridad, humor, y también amor, distintas clases de amor que circulaban en direcciones diferentes y convergían en una sola. (Grandes 2004 97)

As the quote illustrates, the lovers' relationship to each other is more than just physical attraction. Jose renders a good description of their relationship where sex and feelings associated with profound friendship mingle.

Despite the 'less constrained' (Bataille 2001 19) aspect of emotional eroticism and the fact that it can in certain circumstances be regarded as independent from physical eroticism, the transgressive element also features here. It often manifests itself as anguish, where the intensity of happiness experienced can turn into suffering and distress (19). In their triangular relationship every feeling and sensation is felt, equally, by all three, until the moment Jose realises that their apparent sentimental equilibrium is beginning to unhinge. This occurs when she finds that her feelings for Jaime are stronger than those for Marcos. Bataille remarks that often a calm and secure sensation precedes the 'anguish of desire' that marks emotional eroticism (19). This may be associated with the point in time when Jose acknowledges her feelings for Jaime. This leads her to experience 'the long storm of suffering' (Bataille 2001 19). Her desire for Jaime and her desire to maintain her relationship enter in competition with each other and suffering becomes inevitable. These conflicting feelings are a sign of transgression and the taboo that is in force (64). The following quote relates this experience:

Yo abrazaba a Jaime, me apretaba contra él como si más allá de la frontera de sus brazos sólo existiera el vacío, y sentía, recordaba, presentía lo mejor y lo peor. Era demasiado amor. Esto va a acabar muy mal, pensé un instante antes de dormirme, pegada a Jaime, mientras él me besaba sin cesar, [...] y ningún día, ninguna noche acabó jamás mejor que aquella. (Grandes 2004 121, 122)

As Jose admits to the magnitude of her feelings for Jaime, it feels like the worst and the best moment because these feelings signify the fusion of their two characters through feelings of love, but they also mean the simultaneous destruction of the triad relationship. In the face of this threat and suffering, the conflicting emotions threaten transgression and the destruction of the previous unity of three (2001 64). Faced with

the likelihood of losing both of them Jose develops the Bataillan urge to possess the loved object(s) in an attempt to prevent their loss (20). Her suffering and anxiety confront her with the triad's discontinuity and she experiences, what Bataille explains: '[as suffering] from [...] isolation in [...] individual separateness. Love reiterates: If only you possessed the beloved one, your soul sick of loneliness would be one with the soul of the beloved' (Bataille 2001 20). But Jose and Jaime's betrayal of Marcos has broken the previous unity of three and Jaime and Jose stand together while Marcos stands alone. Jose feels anxiety in response to this change and tries to recuperate their unity through sex with Marcos alone. In her mind, Jaime's absence re-establishes the imbalanced equilibrium. And so Jose comes to betray one of her lovers for the other: 'Lo hice por él [Jaime], porque mientras tuviera a Marcos, le tendría a él, y cuando perdiera a uno, me quedaría sin los dos' (Grandes 2004 136). Ultimately the attempt is futile for possession of the loved one(s) and continuity with them is but an erotic illusion and this realisation eventually initiates change and development in the protagonist. Jose faced with the loss of both her lovers, is left to re-define herself, her life and her choices.<sup>142</sup>

This section has discussed eroticism in its physical and emotional form. In its analysis of Elia and Jose, it has proven the stipulated hypothesis that *AJS*' protagonist takes advantage of the erotic as a way to escape from her detested routine. By analysing the character of Elia, I have reached the conclusion that the mere presence of eroticism in itself is not a determinant for identity formation in the protagonists. It is important to analyse the foundation on which desire and eroticism are based. As outlined by Georges Bataille, eroticism can be founded on shared egotism and habit or it can be based on

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<sup>142</sup> This very realisation and development lies at the heart of my argument for agency in identity formation, which is analysed in more detail in 3.4.

love and tenderness (2001 21). Both types of eroticism can create a bond between the lovers. It is the quality of the bond created that differs and it is that difference that is decisive in regard to the effect that eroticism has on the protagonist's identity formation. While Elia appreciates eroticism in her sexual adventures, she never establishes an emotional connection with either Clara or Ricardo. Elia is autoerotic. She is her own object of desire and creates this sensation for herself. Emotion, for Elia is self-contained and she lives out her fantasies by making use of its physical aspects with Ricardo and Clara. Consequently her persistent refusal to form a connection with her sexual partners may explain why her identity is stagnant throughout the novel.

*CDC* presents *AJS*' counterpart. In *CDC* the emotional connection between Jose, Jaime and Marcos is based on friendship and love and this forms the underlying foundation of their sexual activity. In comparison I therefore conclude that the bond created through love impacts more strongly on an individual's development because of its close connection to the emotions of the individual.<sup>143</sup> This is particularly significant for women because women are relational in nature and derive more personal benefit from sexual experiences, where the value of emotions is appreciated by their partner (Chodorow 1989 184). This is true for *CDC*'s protagonist whose growth and maturation is reflected through various extracts in which the author reflects back on the past.

This section has provided an extension to the previous section in evaluating the versatile effect that eroticism can have in sexual relations and identity formation. The section on *AJS* has shown that the novel disposes of a protagonist that has superficial motivations when engaging in sex. Even when evaluating emotional eroticism, the analysis concludes with the findings that the protagonist has indulged in selfish motivations when pursuing sexual experiences with Ricardo and Clara. My

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<sup>143</sup> Here, I would again like to establish the connection that exists between Chapters 2 and 3 and identity formation. In both chapters, emotions and their impact provide the basis for identity development and this is also what I would like to distinctly accentuate in this chapter here.

interpretation therefore suggests that denial and sex are merely coping mechanisms that propose an alternative way of dealing with a lack of love and boredom. The consequent analysis of *CDC* makes the fundamental difference between the novels distinctly visible. *CDC* relates how emotional eroticism possesses a developmental aspect that can be linked to identity formation in the protagonist.<sup>144</sup>

### **3.4 Power, Agency and Identity in Sexuality**

#### **3.4.1 Introduction and Hypothesis**

This section investigates the concept of power and its connection to agency, which in this thesis is understood as a personal power that comes about through self-awareness. It is the presence of mind to make difficult decisions because of experience and knowledge of self and therefore represents a type of power. 3.4.2 therefore introduces the theory behind the concept of power and its connection to sexuality according to Foucault. Even though I refer to Foucault and his work on power relations here, the concept of personal power or agency is not contained in Foucault's work. Foucault has specialised his research on the state and its population. Nevertheless I believe, along with others such as Elworthy (1997) and Bührmann (2008) that some of Foucault's principles can be applied to a personal context as well and this is reflected in this section 3.4. Subsequently, 3.4.3 elicits which type of power structure the relationships of Elia and Jose fall under. These are categorised as either positive and productive or negative and repressive and are evaluated as either encouraging or

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<sup>144</sup> Section 3.4.5 will then pick up this argument again and analyse it in more detail in connection with the concept of agency.

restricting the protagonists' sexual and emotional development. And 3.4.4 introduces the concept of agency for identity development and connects it to Foucault's founding principles of morality: self-awareness and concern for self. Lastly, 3.4.5 evaluates *CDC* according to these guidelines and demonstrates how agency has developed in the character of Jose.

### 3.4.2 The Concept of Power in Sexuality

Power is a concept that is imminent in everyday life. It is a force that is constantly on the verge of being acquired, taken away, shared, preserved or lost by someone in its grasp (Foucault 2008 1099). It is a causal concept and it is often assumed that it equates to one individual having power over another. However, even though that can be true, possession and use of this power are not the same and one does not automatically imply the other (Detel 1998 19, 20). Power is not an absolute. Being powerful or having power over someone does not mean that the other person does not have any power. Power relations are reciprocal, continuous as well as everywhere, and every individual possesses a bargaining edge that can exert power over someone else (Foucault 2005 239). Western society equates power to a concept that is restrictive, poor and negative in nature (222), and because of that individuals in possession of power often veil its existence and advertently or inadvertently render it more effective (2008 1093). History outlines that for the very first time during the XVIII century, an individual's life and his/her body became objects of power. Foucault relates this as the departure point from where on sexuality came to be linked with power.<sup>145</sup> Consequently

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<sup>145</sup> The purpose of this comment is to introduce the connection that exists between sexuality and power. The effect is common in men and women, even though this research concentrates on women exclusively.

this intersection between power and sexuality also became the intersection point for the individual disciplining of the body and the regulation of the population through reproduction. It became the area that facilitated control over the individual and an instrument of control (2005 231, 232). As such an instrument, power is very useful since it functions through prohibition and derives its influence from wielding its authority by saying 'no, you are not allowed' (Foucault 2005 221). The downside of the power-sexuality connection is that power has no influence over sexual impulses other than prohibiting them. Power operates under a rule of law that he categorisation of sex as either allowed or prohibited, proper or improper. To control sexuality, power demands that sex renounce itself and that this renunciation should take the form of assertion, prohibition and negation in sequential order. The struggle to make sexuality submissive, however, is futile because sex and the reproductive function are at the basis of human existence. We only need to refer to Freud on this. Therefore while power enforces by imposing threats and providing alternative solutions to the prohibition, in the case of sexuality, it fails. By demanding self-renunciation it asks for sexuality's inexistence in both instances (2008 1090, 1091). It demands a denial of human nature. As a result, sexuality remains power's oppositional point. And by connecting the input of the body's stimulus, its feelings of lust, its realisations, its discourse and its control and resistance it succeeds to form a functioning network of knowledge and power strategies (1108) that bases itself on sexuality. Thereby sexuality becomes powerful enough to execute its will through all levels and from the top to the bottom of every structure or system (1090, 1091, 1092).

But sexuality is not a driving force that opposes and provokes power relations out of principle. It is also the intersection point that connects men and women romantically. And within this construct, power relations are at their most variable and

versatile (Foucault 2008 1106). Power relations exist between every member of society but particularly between a man and a woman (2005 130). Disproportionate and changing relationships are breeding ground for power relations that grow from divisions, disproportions and inequalities in all relationships; but romantic relationships are particularly susceptible to it (2008 1099). Foucault argues that any individual that is bound by a romantic relationship is equally bound by a very complex power structure that imposes rules on him and her (2005 241) and classifies the relationship between power and sex as negative (2008 1090). Despite this negative outlook, Detel relates that Foucault identifies power in its most basic nature as non-repressive (1998 39). It follows that power does not necessarily have to be negative. Particularly, when it creates lust, it can have a very positive effect without being masochistic or sadistic (Foucault 2005 238). Desire is therefore one more element that is also inextricably linked to power relations and sexuality. Foucault argues that where there is desire, power is always already present and that these are opposing forces that continuously counteract each other (2008 1089).

This section has introduced the concept of power and its connection to sexuality. In Foucault's research he has devised power models that enable the researcher to render power relations visible and to evaluate their nature accordingly.<sup>146</sup>

### **3.4.3 Power Relations in *El amor es un juego solitario* (1979) and *Castillos de cartón* (2004)**

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<sup>146</sup> The following section 3.4.3 applies three of these models to the protagonists in *AJS* and *CDC* to assess the nature of their triangular relationships.

This section aims to establish whether power relations are inherent in the relationships of *AJS* and *CDC*. This is of importance in the following section 3.4.4 on agency, where a positive or negative power relation can be used to argue for or against the development of agency. For this section however, the focus is only to establish first that power is present and to determine whether it is positive, supportive and encouraging or negative, restricting and repressive.

In order to establish whether power is present, power theories by Foucault entitled (M), (MRP) and (MRR) are used. (M) determines the existence of power in the relationship and thereby forms the foundation of (MRP) and (MRR). (M) is therefore a prerequisite to (MRP) and (MRR) given that (M) is a neutral concept that is free from repression (Detel 1998 27). (MRP) relates to the extended analysis of power structures and determines a positive power that is free of repression (59) and disposes of a beneficial aspect (20). (MRR) is its counterpart and defines negative and repressive power, which, when in effect, causes social sanctions for the individual that does not act according to its conditions (59). Further elements within this analysis are labelled P<sub>1</sub>, P<sub>2</sub> and X, where P<sub>1</sub> is represented by either protagonist, Jose or Elia. P<sub>2</sub> is constituent of the lovers, Jaime and Marcos and Ricardo and Clara, respectively. Finally, the term X relates to the sexual act, the sexual threesome and the ensuing relationship, in the case of *CDC* (59).<sup>147</sup>

My hypothesis for this section is that (M) is present in both novels. I further argue that positive power (MRP) is only evident in *CDC*, while negative power relations (MRR) are evident in *AJS* (Detel 1998 17, 18).<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> The term X relates to the collective notion of sexual activity because this thesis discusses and views all sexual activity and romantic attachments as valuable and contributing to the search for identity in the protagonists.

<sup>148</sup> This section purposely lacks further theoretical support of the argumentation as to why a positive or negative power relation is significant because section 3.4.4 on agency will bring this argument and others that have been outlined parallel to this chapter together.

To determine (M), Foucault stipulates that an individual  $P_1$  has power over another  $P_2$  and is able to influence this person strongly enough to induce  $P_2$  to do X when conditions (a) – (f) are fulfilled (Detel 1998 26).<sup>149</sup> Power is therefore exerted over someone else by not necessarily demanding consensus (Foucault 2005 255).

Condition (a) is fulfilled if  $P_1$  has the opportunity and the means to induce  $P_2$  to engage in action X (Detel 1998 26). In *CDC*, condition (a) is therefore fulfilled if Jose has the opportunity and the means to induce Jaime and Marcos to have a triad relationship with her. And Jose does. She is young, unattached and wants to have fun, as the following quotation illustrates: ‘cuando conocí a Marcos y a Jaime estaba en una de esas etapas de indiferencia sentimental en las que no necesitaba a nadie, sólo pintar y divertirme’ (Grandes 2004 62). Furthermore, Jose is represented as ‘the only one’ for Jaime and Marcos, which makes her exceptional and gives her an influential edge in this triad relationship. The next quote outlines the status that Jose enjoys in the eyes of the two young men: ‘Jose, eres la única que está a nuestra altura, la única...’ (Grandes 2004 77).<sup>150</sup>

In *AJS*, condition (a) is fulfilled because Elia, like Jose, has the opportunity to engage in sexual activity with Ricardo because of her husband’s and children’s lengthy and numerous absences. The quote illustrates that, ‘un marido y unos hijos que cuando están en la casa parecen estar [...] meramente de paso’ (Tusquets 1979 50). Elia, furthermore, possesses the necessary experience and knowledge to seduce Ricardo, as well as Clara. But she also happens to meet further criteria that Ricardo views as indispensable ‘había elegido ahora a Elia [...] seleccionada entre otras por su posición

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<sup>149</sup> The theories discussed by Wolfgang Detel are a reconstruction of the debate that Foucault started with *History of Sexuality* (2008) and are, hence, based and intimately connected with Foucault’s original work.

<sup>150</sup> Detel outlines that Foucault did not regard condition (b) as sufficiently necessary to prove the existence of a power relationship between two individuals (1998 27). For this reason and for lacking evidence to prove condition (b) in *CDC* as well as *AJS*, this thesis will ignore its relevance in this context.

social, por su prestigio, por su encanto, por su ingenio, no por amor' (Tusquets 1979 121). For Ricardo, Elia is simply 'right' for the part. This asserts that power has a causal disposition and that people who are considered to be powerful are often perceived as such because of their social standing or assumed roles (Detel 1998 20), as is the case for Elia. Bellver supports this assumption by agreeing that 'Elia [...] assumes a dual role of nymph and priestess, becoming both the embodiment and master of sensuality, a mysterious force and a superior authority, thus asserting her leadership' (Bellver 1984 19) as well as her power.

Condition (c) outlines that because of the influence that  $P_1$  has over  $P_2$ ,  $P_2$  often engages in  $X$  as a result. In spite of that  $P_2$  is not forced by  $P_1$  (Detel 1998 26). In *CDC*, an adequate interpretation of this condition may be that Marcos and Jaime have engaged in the threesome and the ensuing relationship because of Jose's influence, but without her forcing them. In fact, it was Jaime's proposition to have a relationship in the first place and Jose's initial response was one of refusal. The following quotation attests to that: '-no –le dije, [...] -¿Por qué no [...] porque es una salvajada, [...] Porque no es normal.' (Grandes 2004 72, 73). This quote proves that force was not necessary for Jose to achieve the sexual act and the relationship. This example also illustrates that consensus is not a necessity for the creation of power relations. However, it can be a determining factor in its continued duration (Foucault 2005 255). The example of *CDC* supports that consensus acts as a stabilising element in power relations.

In Tusquets' novel, interpretation of condition (c) leads to the conclusion that neither Ricardo nor Clara has ever been forced into the sexual act with Elia. On the contrary, the following illustrations of Ricardo's attitude outline how adamant he was about Elia being the one to initiate him into the sexual realm outlining clearly 'dice que sólo tú, sólo contigo...' (Tusquets 1979 14). His specificity displays his willingness to

engage in the sexual relationship without force being applied by Elia. Clara's case is less obvious. Tusquets described Clara's longing for Elia's tenderness as that of a girl who is so hopelessly in love that she is unable to show her admiration: 'si Elia en lugar de darle un beso de buenas noches y salir de la alcoba se acuesta a su lado, ella tendrá forzosamente que morir [...] es tan grande el deseo y tan terrible la confusión y el miedo y la vergüenza' (Tusquets 1979 103). Clara is too afraid and confused to tell Elia how she feels. This quote therefore supports the argument that Elia does not force Clara into a sexual encounter but it also supports Clara's desire for the sexual encounter to take place. Nonetheless, this example is particularly useful to illustrate the presence of power in the relationship. This is because power relations are defined by actions that do not directly affect the individual power is exerted over. Instead it affects their actions (Foucault 2005 255). In Clara's case, Elia's mere presence and the interaction between her, Ricardo and Elia are powerful enough to influence Clara's response to Elia's sexual advances. This is a telling sign since Clara herself seems entirely ignorant of the sexual aspect of her feelings for Elia, which are reflected all too clearly in Clara's numerous fairy tale references.

Condition (d) requires that  $P_2$  does not carry out action X without the influence of  $P_1$  (Detel 1998 26). This requires that sexual activity would have never taken place without Jose's influence, which is proven in the following quotation, 'y sólo lo puedes solucionar tú, porque no hay ninguna otra que nos guste a los dos' (Grandes 2004 73). Jose's status in their life is unique and supports the interpretation that without her, the event would have never taken place because there is no one else that both boys like.<sup>151</sup> In Tusquets' novel, this condition is fulfilled with the strong effect that Elia's influence

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<sup>151</sup> Condition (e) has been viewed as irrelevant. Foucault's condition (e) requires for  $P_1$  not to be identical with  $P_2$ , without excluding the possibility of  $P_1$  equating  $P_2$  (Detel 1998 26). Since this thesis evaluates individuals and their actions in this section, this condition, although valuable in its own right when applied to other examples, appears irrelevant here and is therefore omitted altogether from this analysis.

has over Ricardo and Clara. For Ricardo, Elia's existence is paramount to his becoming a man. As the following quotation shows, he regards Elia as 'made' for this adventure: 'Ricardo piensa [...] que ella [...] que ninguna otra mujer en el mundo [...] – podría ajustarse con tanta precisión e inteligencia, mimar con tales lujos sensitivos, con tantos matices, el papel asignado' (Tusquets 1979 36). For Ricardo, there is no one else 'in the world' capable of taking Elia's place and as such there is no one else he could indulge in this adventure with either. This clearly underlines Elia's significance and power over Ricardo since it makes her irreplaceable. The dynamic also outlines that power is constitutive for sexual desire and such desire functions as a trap. The power relation in question resides on the premise of one of two conceptions, in this case the law of desire (Foucault 2008 1090). Desire is intrinsic in the relationship because Ricardo lusts for the component of (sexual) power that Elia's presence introduces to the affair and thus the affair functions as a trap for him (1090). His relationship to desire and power is further complicated by what Ambrosio Servodidio argues is Ricardo's need for the mediation of the 'Other' 'for Ricardo desire implies a third term for it is triangular rather than linear [making] his ego [...] powerless to desire by itself' (Ambrosio Servodidio 1986 241). This makes the elements of power and desire in the affair indispensable. Clara's attitude to her relationship with Elia is very different to Ricardo's. For her it is 'un ensueño' (Tusquets 1979 100) 'y ahora Elia ha dicho 'no me gusta quedarme sola, no te vayas', [...] y es como si a partir de estas frases se iniciara, o se reanudara, el ensueño, como si se pusiera nuevamente en marcha el mecanismo del milagro' (Tusquets 1979 100). As the events with Elia unfold, Clara's sense is one of surrealism, of fantasy and dreams. It becomes clear that Clara would have never imagined this could happen to her, which further reinforces the idea that without Elia's influence the sexual act would, likewise, never have taken place. Both novels illustrate

another of Foucault's stipulations about power; that power seduces, tempts, facilitates and provides incentives or hinders them. Power extends opportunities or restricts them, it increases or decreases the probability of actions, and in a borderline case coerces or inhibits these actions. Despite that, it always directs itself at active subjects (2005 256). In the cases of *CDC* and *AJS*, power exerts a facilitative and seductive effect without applying its repressive element.

Condition (f) elicits that just because  $P_1$  has power over  $P_2$  it does not automatically imply that  $P_2$  also has power over  $P_1$  (Detel 1998 26). *CDC* establishes the argument of condition (f) through the following quotation: 'porque me gustas mucho, más que a éste, pero sin él de por medio nunca te habrías acostado conmigo' (Grandes 2004 70). This shows that Jose disposes of power over Jaime because he likes her and he likes her more than Marcos does. Her power over him is further accentuated through his reasoning that without Marcos, she would have never gone to bed with him, which is an assumption that holds true since she was interested in Marcos first and the very first sexual encounter of the novel took place between Jose and Marcos alone. In regard to condition (f), *AJS* establishes that Elia has power over Ricardo and Clara. However, *AJS* diverges from the example of *CDC* in that the final sex scene in the novel illustrates that Ricardo has physical power over Elia.<sup>152</sup> Despite the fact that condition (f) asserts that reciprocity of power is not automatically a given, this case allows me to make an exception to the rule. This is because Foucault has provided an interpretive gap in his theory for the dynamic of power relations, as they are experienced between lovers. He describes a love relationship as asymmetrical, supporting condition (f)'s first argument, but also allows for the assumption that while the love relationship is

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<sup>152</sup> This point will momentarily not be elaborated on further. This is because the argument of physical power will be analysed in detail under the power model (MRR) condition (3) at the end of section 3.4.3.

asymmetrical, it does not deny or negate reciprocity in power relations (Detel 1998 26, 27).

In conclusion to this sub-section (M) I have, hereby, established that both novels possess power relations at the centre of their relationships.

In this next step, the principles of (MRP) are applied to *CDC* to prove that the power relations inherent in this novel are positive and non-repressive (Detel 1998 59).<sup>153</sup> Condition (1) of (MRP) requires that all conditions of (M), (a)-(f) be fulfilled (Detel 1998 59).<sup>154</sup> Condition (2) states that engaging in action X supports and advances the realisations, desires, needs and interests of P<sub>2</sub>, by extending his/her available range of action possibilities (59). In regard to Grandes' novel, a possible interpretation may be that the threesome and the ensuing relationship advance the realisations, desires, needs and interests of Jaime and Marcos by extending their possibilities of action to something more than a single sexual encounter. As Detel outlines, power relations do not necessarily have to be repressive. They can, in fact, be in the interest of the person on whom power is exerted (1998 20). This is the case for Marcos and Jaime. Marcos derived benefit from the sexual act and the relationship is a cure for his impotence. The following quote illustrates its significance: '-estás empalmado... [...] –Sí –confirmó, sin darle mucha importancia, pero la tenía, porque nunca hasta aquella noche había logrado mantener una erección verdadera durante tanto tiempo' (Grandes 2004 110). Particularly in Marcos' case, the dynamic nature of power relations has had a positive effect. Every power relation is woven into a social structure that is dependent on outside social forces (Detel 1998 25). For Marcos, his impotence seemed a weakness as long as he felt that society and his father judged him for it. Once his self-confidence increased,

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<sup>153</sup> For (MRP), as well as (MRR) the definitions of P<sub>1</sub>, P<sub>2</sub> and X remain constant in line with the previous analysis of (M).

<sup>154</sup> This has been the case and does not apply to the exceptions related earlier in (M).

his physical capabilities shifted and his impotence disappeared. The theory attests to this change by stating that once one of these social factors changes, the remaining power relations require reformulation (25). The same happens in their relationship once Marcos no longer suffers from impotence.

Jaime's experience, on the other hand, is one of love with Jose, '-te quiero, Jose. -Y yo te quiero a ti' (Grandes 2004 126). This experience, he however argues, he cannot claim credit for himself. He owes it to Marcos instead because his friend is handsome and makes him attractive and desirable by association. The following quote elicits this: 'hace muchos años que lo sé. Por eso me gusta tener amigos guapos, para aprovechar sus sobras' (Grandes 2004 70).

This section on (MRP) has proven that the power inherent in *CDC* is of a positive and non-repressive nature, which agrees with the hypothesis of this section.

The last segment argues for the presence of (MRR) in *AJS*. Condition (1) of (MRR) requires likewise all conditions of (M), (a)-(f) to be fulfilled (Detel 1998 59), as has already been asserted.<sup>155</sup> Condition (2) requires that action X either frustrates the wishes, needs or interests of P<sub>2</sub> and that it sometimes even hinders P<sub>2</sub> to acknowledge his/her own wishes needs or interests (59). In regard to *AJS*, frustration of needs and wishes is fitting. The threesome is a frustrating encounter for Clara and Ricardo, albeit for different reasons. For Clara, the *ménage à trois* is a very painful experience on a physical and an emotional level. The following quote attests to Clara's feelings after the event:

Conserva todavía la confianza en el infierno, [...] de los gatos vagabundos que han perdido la fe y han dejado de esperar y, peor todavía, han dejado también de desear un

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<sup>155</sup> This does not apply to the exceptions related to earlier.

imposible paraíso, en esa carencia total que incluye la muerte del deseo, y éste es el infierno que Clara debe de estar descubriendo ahora, [...] ninguno será ya nunca la carroza de la imposible Reina de los Gatos. (Tusquets 1979 144, 145)

For Clara the world of dreams collapses with the threesome. She expected a re-enactment of a fairy tale. And Elia was the 'little queen of the cats' (145) to her. But the sexual mishap destroys the fairy tale and takes away her innocence and hopefulness; this finds reflection in the metaphor on the fate of the little stray cats.

For Ricardo the threesome has a similar effect. While he imagined that being in bed with two women simultaneously would be the ultimate gratification, the actual act frustrates his fantasies. His feelings are illustrated in the following quotation:

Y es ahora imprevistamente Elia la que le golpea y le desmonta y aparta a Clara hasta el extremo más remoto de la cama, '¿no has visto que no quiere?, ¡déjala de una vez, déjala ya!', y Ricardo siente multiplicadas por mil [...] la impotencia y la frustración y la rabia de siempre, centrada hoy la ira en estas dos mujeres tan estúpidas pero tan hermosas, [...] capaces de conseguir [...] que el mundo entero, el mundo de los hombres, gire en torno a ellas. (Tusquets 1979 138, 139)

As Gould Levine states, instead of being desired by two women, Ricardo ultimately suffers rejection by both. A power relation that has previously been based on consensus turns against him when Elia and Clara unexpectedly bond in solidarity (1987 211).

The final condition of (MRR), (3) states that a rejection or refusal on the side of  $P_2$  to engage in action X will lead to social sanctions in the form of guilt, legal retribution or the infliction of physical harm (Detel 1998 59). I would like to refer back to (M), condition (f) here to remind the reader that when power is present in a relationship, this power may function reciprocally (26, 27). Foucault's interpretative gap

justifies the application of these sanctions by P<sub>2</sub> to punish P<sub>1</sub>. As far as *AJS* is concerned, the sexual relationship frustrates Clara's and particularly Ricardo's expectations and desires. Ricardo's resulting feelings are so intense, however, that he takes matters into his own hands. To him the threesome presents an act he feels entitled to. Clara's rejection and Elia's subsequent support of Clara angers him so much that he decides to make use of his own power. Ricardo subverts Foucault's condition (3) of (MRR) and moves from the victim's position into the offender role by taking advantage of his physical strength counteracting Elia's seductive influence and power over him. Here, the novel once more illustrates a battle of the sexes, where both characters are equally powerful. Both emerge victorious having defeated the other in their own way (Bellver 1984 17, 18). But, as Servodidio rightfully states, the struggle for power is a solitary one and leaves them separate from each other and ultimately alone (1991 164). This attests to its negative and repressive nature. His physical strength becomes the means to convey the physical sanctions. The following quote outlines the form that these sanctions take:

La golpea varias veces con la mano abierta en plena cara, y la muerde en el cuello y en la boca [...] Ricardo la penetra con tal fuerza, con tal deseo, con tal rabia, que siente que esta vez ha llegado y golpea con embestidas brutales el mismo fondo de la ciénaga. (Tusquets 1979 140)

Through violent sex, which resembles a rape, the novel demonstrates the violence inherent in the relationship and the obvious abuse of power that Elia suffers retribution for. The only opposition to violent power is passivity, for when violence meets resistance its only choice is to break it (Foucault 2005 255). As the above quotation has outlined, through Ricardo's physical violence he punishes Elia for rejecting him and

protecting Clara. Manifestations of such violent and abusive reactions indicate repressive power structures. However, Foucault's theory supposes that  $P_1$  influences  $P_2$ , while in *AJS* these roles are reversed and  $P_2$ , in fact, influences  $P_1$ . I believe, however, that given the circumstances that the novel describes, it is not advisable to argue that the simple inversion of Foucault's principle also means that the argument itself becomes irrelevant.<sup>156</sup>

This section has evaluated the power relation (MRR) in regards to *AJS* and has come to the conclusion that the power inherent in *AJS* is negative and repressive in nature, which is also in agreement with the proposed hypothesis of this section.

Section 3.4.4 will elaborate on the implications of these power relations in identity formation.

#### **3.4.4 Self-Awareness and Agency**

This section discusses agency as a form of power, essential in the quest for identity. Agency is regarded as personal power that enables the individual to make her own decisions and live according to them, even when these do not conform to societal standards. It marks the change from one definition of a 'subject' to another 'superior subject'. For Foucault, the term subject has two definitions. One defines the subject that is submitted to someone else and is dependent on him/her, the other defines the subject as an individual that possesses consciousness and self-awareness and has established her own identity (2005 245). In this thesis, the latter is the desired state of being, for it creates a competing power source to the institutional. The definition referred to here

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<sup>156</sup> Within the context of this section, which is only looking to prove that the power relation inherent in the novel is negative, I regard this argument sufficient.

also sheds light on today's altered individuation dynamic. Foucault posits that it is no longer about finding out who you are but about rejecting who you are not. He argues that the origin of this behaviour lies in today's strong political coercion inherent in power relations (250). Social processes form the individual, but these processes today are regarded as obstacles to a free unfolding of the individual. It results in the current problematic that the individual when confronted with difficulties can no longer reach back to a traditionally anchored behavioural code but must develop her own (Bührmann 2008 136, 137). Since, as Foucault declares, power relations are everywhere (2005 239) and are a constitutive element of identity formation, more weight is attributed to individual characteristics such as reflexivity of self and compliance with an existing power structure (Detel 1998 38).<sup>157</sup> As far as compliance with an existing power structure is concerned, we must return to the core of the argument by addressing the relativity of desire and the intransigence of freedom that constantly interfere with the constitution of self (Foucault 2005 257). It culminates in the general conviction that one can no longer be satisfied with an identity that is built on and inherited through a traditionally determined status. Thereby identity becomes an entity that the individual has to discover, construct and actively maintain (Bührmann 2008 135). To discover her own identity however, the individual must first figure out how he/she sees, experiences and conceives him- or herself and others (133). Self-awareness comes from working on the self and living through new experiences (Elworthy 1997 114).<sup>158</sup> Furthermore, for the individual to learn to accept and love him-/herself and others, as it has been related in *CDC*, one must know oneself. This knowledge of self is the building block of moral courage (119), and an essential element in identity formation. Given the circumstance of being unable to fall back on traditionally anchored behavioural codes (Bührmann 2008

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<sup>157</sup> The latter is particularly important because paradoxically it is necessary in the individuation process.

<sup>158</sup> I would like to refer here to Chapter 2 and Julia Kristeva's SIP, which exemplifies the same process on an emotional level.

137), working on the self becomes an essential part of the developmental process that leads to power through agency (Elworthy 1997 123).<sup>159</sup> Accordingly, the personal developmental process accordingly instructs the individual on how to promote and present herself in an economic and private setting as well as in her emotional life. This, Bührmann states, is an essential capability of the individuated self (2008 135).

The theoretical framework that finds application in this argument is once more provided by Foucault, who refers to the two fundamental and re-enforcing principles that present the foundation for morality 'concern for the self' and 'self-awareness' (2007 290). As a result, the aim is to analyse *CDC* and to show how Jose's newly gained self-awareness and concern for self results in the ability to choose her own happiness over someone else's.<sup>160</sup> To relate these Foucauldian principles in more detail, it is worth noting that initially the argument for self-awareness was secondary to the concern for self. However, in more recent history, the chronology of these two dictums has become inversed (2007 293).<sup>161</sup> To briefly introduce the principles: concern of self is located where ambition and motivation intersects with love and emotion (294).<sup>162</sup> It manifests itself in the choice of one over the other (295), for concern of self is related to an activity and not linked with the concept of soul as a substance, the way self-

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<sup>159</sup> This is discussed in detail in section 3.3 – sex and the moral constitution of the subject.

<sup>160</sup> As explained earlier, this section on agency will disregard the novel *AJS* in its analysis because Elia is stagnant in her development as has been proven by previous sections within this thesis. Furthermore, this thesis' primary focus is to demonstrate the developmental process of the protagonists. Having successfully concluded that Jose of *CDC* has developed on a personal level and Elia of *AJS* has not, I herewith justify my exclusion of *AJS* from this section.

<sup>161</sup> Despite Foucault's claim for the inversion of these principles, I argue that the original order is still relevant, particularly in regard to *CDC*, as section 3.4.5 will show. The reason for the proposed change, Foucault argues, has been a fundamental transformation in the mind set of western society and the rising significance that individuation and self-awareness, through philosophers such as Descartes and Husserl, has been attributed (2007 291, 292, 293). Much of this change in mentality has been brought about through society's increasing faith in from Christian religion and its moral guidelines. Christianity has always viewed altruism as the ultimate desirable characteristic in an individual. Given that mind set, considering oneself as ultimately more important than others, seemed a paradox in regard to altruism and Christianity (293).

<sup>162</sup> In regard to *CDC*, Jose's concern for self is located where her love for Jaime and Marcos meets her artistic ambition.

awareness is (296).<sup>163</sup> Concern for self is found, not in the activity *per se*, but in the attitude that initiates and motivates the activity (296), in other words the feelings that accompany the activity. If the subject can adequately choose what contributes to his/her well being, he/she manifests concern for self.

Self-awareness comes about through the soul's attempt to recognise itself through a reflection.<sup>164</sup> Foucault argues that in the process of gaining self-awareness the individual's attempt to recognise herself is motivated by the desire to do the right and moral thing (2007 296). To accomplish that, he needs to observe himself and his soul through a reflection similar to a mirror, so as to recognise himself through someone else's eyes (296). Foucault relates this thought to the idea of God (292, 296). However, in times less religious a substitute for God may well be another person of similar character or a scene similar to the one experienced, since this novel lacks any religious links.

### 3.4.5 Self-Awareness and Agency in *Castillos de cartón* (2004)

Foucault speaks of 'truth games' (Detel 1998 16) when he talks about the process in which people reflect on their own existence and self and he states that these 'truth games' are intrinsically linked to the constitution of self-awareness, power relations and moral self-awareness (16). In agreement with the previous sections, the nature of power relations has an influence over the individual caught up in them. Since power relations are everywhere, the interpretation that these power relations leave their mark on the individual becomes a given (Foucault 2005 239, 245). It therefore follows

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<sup>163</sup> Therefore, in Jose's case it marks the choice of her ambition over her relationship because it is her relationship that appears to negatively affect her.

<sup>164</sup> Despite this analysis of the differing principles, the goal of this section is not for the evaluation of self-awareness or of concern for self in the novel.

that in a sexual relationship the man, the woman is sexually intimate with, partially defines her identity.

In the case of *CDC*, the triad relationship between Jose, Jaime and Marcos gives Jose an identity and this identity is different to the one she holds at the close of the novel. However, this is a process that she first needs to live through. In the beginning of their romance she believes that she is finally coming into herself. As she realises that she can no longer maintain their relationship, she searches for a way of coping with her loss. Having realised that Marcos and Jaime give her life meaning (an identity) she is now forced to betray that identity to cope with the pain of their loss and the pressure of conformity. For her the only way forward, is to forbid herself to acknowledge their relationship as something real and meaningful. This is what the quotation illustrates:

Por eso los traicioné, me traicioné con ellos, y quise confundir el riesgo con la arrogancia, la ambición con la locura, el placer con el vicio, el amor con el cálculo, la suerte con la desgracia. [...] lo desterré con mis propios recuerdos a un país oscuro y sucio donde nunca habíamos vivido juntos. Miré mi vida con los ojos de los otros y me inventé una vergüenza, un escándalo, una degradación que jamás existió. Porque los había perdido y el mundo no era más grande que una miga de pan entre mis dedos.  
(Grandes 2004 98, 99)

For Jose her world, her perception of it and of herself changes with Jaime and Marcos' presence and transforms once again with their absence. The reader begins to realise that Jose's identity as a twenty year-old is dependent on her lovers. It defines her as the Foucauldian subject that is submissive to and dependent on someone else, which is not the desired state for consciousness and self-awareness (2005 245).<sup>165</sup> Since the

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<sup>165</sup> The process that describes the transition of Jose from one Foucauldian subject to the other will be pursued later on in this section. This is because to arrive at the conclusion that she had grown beyond her

Foucauldian subject specified here is dependent on others, its stability becomes threatened whenever someone that defines its identity undergoes changes himself. In *CDC* this is the case, when the first signs of the odd quality of the number '3' manifest themselves. One of these signs are Jose's curious parents. Jose realises that she can no longer hide away from reality and sees herself forced to introduce one of her partners to her parents. This implies that she has to choose between her lovers. This results difficult because it questions the odd quality of the number '3' and the very nature of the triad relationship, 'yo intentaba dividir mi atención entre los dos, algo que nunca me había resultado difícil y ahora me parecía casi imposible, porque se habían separado, los tres nos habíamos separado, estábamos solos, sentados juntos, [...] no éramos tres, sino uno, y otro más' (Grandes 2004 107). Since it was their relationship that created her identity in the first place; her stability becomes threatened when the relationship is. This marks the point at which Jose first experiences her resistance to the power relations inherent in their relationship. Foucault states that where there is power, there is also resistance (2008 1100). And the power relation in this relationship attempts to keep the '3' united. This is reflected in the feelings of guilt she experiences and her helplessness in the face of this situation: 'la culpa era mía. Yo había roto el equilibrio, la armonía, sin querer, sin pretenderlo, pero la culpa era mía' (Grandes 2004 108). This obvious conflict manifests as the forerunner to her subsequent development of agency and thus the effect that this realisation has on her questions the status of her individuality in relation to Marcos and Jaime (Foucault 2005 244).

Faced with the impossibility of this choice, the relationship deteriorates further putting her entire identity in question. She has to choose rationally or for love. However, in either case she is still unaware that she will never choose herself. If she

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relationship with Jaime and Marcos it takes years of experiencing life and other relationships and this is only illustrated at the conclusion of the novel.

chooses Marcos, she chooses rationally. She chooses to be with someone who loves her but whom she does not love in return; as Marcos relates in the quotation, 'de quien sí estoy enamorado es de ti, Jose [...] y tú estás enamorada de él, y yo lo sé, y sin embargo, y a pesar de todo, sigo estando enamorado' (Grandes 2004 158). Despite this, they know that their relationship is doomed without Marcos. Marcos sees Jose's dilemma clearly. In response he draws a clear picture of the impossibility of their love affair in an attempt to make her realise it too, as this quotation illustrates: 'te dejará, porque [...] contigo me seguiría viendo a mí, me seguiría teniendo delante, tú serías mi testigo y él no quiere. No se lo puede permitir [...] Más te habría valido enamorarte de mí' (Grandes 2004 166, 167). What Marcos is referring to here is Jaime's lack of talent but fierce ambition. Marcos relates further:

No sabe pintar como él mismo [...] ahora pinta como yo. [...] Antes, pintaba como tú.  
 No me digas que no te diste cuenta. A veces, hasta pienso que has dejado de trabajar por eso, porque te importa más conservarlo que pintar, porque prefieres que te chupe la sangre a demostrarle que eres mejor que él... (Grandes 2004 164)

Through Marcos' words, Jose begins to realise that in order to stay with Jaime she would have to give up herself, her talent and her desire for art. This relates directly to the definition of concern for self, related earlier. It occurs at the intersection between love and ambition (Foucault 2007 294). The choice thereby becomes, what she describes as 'cuatro caballos [que] me despedazaban, tirando de mí a la vez hacia los cuatro puntos cardinales' (Grandes 2004 164). It is a choice that threatens to destroy the identity she has known and leaves her alone between the two. She knows that what Marcos has told her is the truth:

Sabe, por ejemplo, que ella y yo, solos, no llegaríamos a ninguna parte. [...] a lo mejor os estoy dando la única posibilidad que vais a tener para seguir estando juntos. A lo mejor ... Puede que nunca logréis estar juntos y bien sin mí. (Grandes 2004 155, 161)

And with this statement Marcos seals their fate. Marco's words initiate the last developmental step that leads to agency. Faced with an impossible situation she realises that her choice is not limited to Marcos and Jaime, but that there is a third alternative. Agency occurs in Jose the moment she realises that she cannot sustain her old identity defined by her lovers; it occurs the moment when she acknowledges the impossibility of making them both happy and taking notice that she cannot do right by both. This is when she also becomes aware of the responsibility to herself. Her individuality becomes inevitably bound up with the responsibility of self and freedom of consciousness leading to individuation (Bührmann 2008 136). Assuming this responsibility is what creates personal power (Elworthy 1997 114). At this point, the nature of the relationship's power structure becomes relevant because this section argues that only a positive power relation provides an opportunity for the individual to develop beyond the immediate relationship.<sup>166</sup> By stepping outside her old identity and the influence of both men, she chooses her own life style and becomes more and more the driving force of her own development and identity (Bührmann 2008 140). The following quotation outlines this change in her: 'aprendí a ser una mujer como las demás y al principio me asombré de lo fácil que parecía. [...] Descubrí que el sexo podía ser sano, limpio, libre, adulto, maduro, razonable, trivial' (Grandes 2004 184, 185). Of course, here can also be homed in on the extract of 'ser una mujer como los demás' (Grandes 2004 184), which would suggest that she is conforming to peer pressure and that their relationship in fact

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<sup>166</sup> As has already been explained in 3.4.3, (MRP) is the only form of power that supports and advances the needs and desires of the subject by extending action possibilities (Detel 1998 59).

was not real or serious. But that would contradict the hypothesis of this section and I do not consider this interpretation to be a truthful reflection of their triad relationship. Instead I would like to propose that it was merely the constellation of their relationship that is based on the number '3' and is related directly to this extract.

A further step in her transition to agency takes place the moment Jose does no longer desire to be defined according to old norms and exits the old power structure altogether (Foucault 2005 245). Jose's decision to leave Marcos behind and try to find her own path is exemplary of this moment. It signals identity development through the recognition that the old identity no longer holds true. Jose's action is particularly telling because Foucault relates that most struggle or resistance to power occurs not against the institution, groups or classes but against a particular power technique or form (245). In *CDC* the power of the threesome, the intensity of these emotions and her longing for Jaime exert such an influence that for a while it holds her captive in a relationship with Marcos. The motivating emotion behind her decision is illustrated in the following quotation:

Jaime ya no estaba, pero a veces aún podíamos fingir que no lo sabíamos [...] a veces todavía lográbamos entendernos sin hablar, pero [...] yo era más consciente que nunca de que mi cuerpo tenía un lado izquierdo, [...] y cada poro de mi piel [...] deseaba a Jaime, preguntaba por él, le llamaba a gritos. [...] y sin embargo se repitió varias veces, porque no podíamos hacer otra cosa, porque no teníamos nada más. (Grandes 2004 177, 178)

As the realisation hits that nothing is ever going to be as before, conscious resistance ensues. While Marcos wants to keep Jose in this relationship for his own selfish reasons, Jose acknowledges that she has to leave to be able to move on and find closure

to the past: 'yo también intenté encontrar un camino. [...] Me largué [...] estuve más de dos años viviendo en Londres' (Grandes 2004 184).

The power form that Marcos tries to exert over Jose attempts to bind her individual identity and desires to channel it into a particular direction. He attempts to dictate her identity, which the independent subject objects to (Foucault 2005 245), and Jose does by leaving. When she returns years later, she tries to pick up the pieces of what she knew before. But her abandonment has inevitably broken Marcos' and her bond and she finds herself truly separated from both men. She resorts to numbing her pain by working excessively and it is only in time that closure finally ensues. One night in the company of friends, the group stumble across a pornographic film portraying a threesome that reminds Jose of their love affair. It is this experience that finally completes her individuation by bringing closure to the past. The following quotation exemplifies a unity between these two Foucauldian principles:

Nunca había visto nada tan parecido y tan distinto a la mejor época de mi vida, [...] y era todo verdadero, todo falso, los gritos y las palabras y los gestos y los suspiros, era todo tan verdadero, todo tan falso que me encerré en un cuarto de baño y me puse a llorar. Cuando salí [...] había recuperado la memoria, el recuerdo de otra vida mejor y verdadera, [...] y mi memoria decidió que las dos estábamos tan cansadas que no volveríamos a trabajar nunca más. (Grandes 2004 190, 191)

It can be argued that the pornographic reproduction of their relationship led to the ultimate act of self-awareness in Jose. The film becomes what Foucault describes as the soul's confrontation with its own reflection (2007 296). It further supports the assumption made earlier in regard to *CDC* that the order of these two principles is not inversed, as Foucault originally suggested (291, 292, 293). As Foucault argued, in

modern times self-awareness has come to dominate the concern for self. Today's changed understanding of what constitutes morality, which Bührmann argued is no longer anchored in tradition (2008 136, 137) further supports this. Ultimately, the individual is left to define her life for herself and to do that self-awareness is paramount.

This chapter has discussed sexual and erotic individuation in the protagonists of *AJS* and *CDC*. It has done so by looking first at the underlying moral constitution of the protagonists for that predicts, among other factors, whether the protagonist has development potential. The analysis was then concretised by an analysis of eroticism, which much like morality or immorality can be divided into two types where one supports identity formation and the other hinders it. Once power structures were analysed the erotic element became fused with the concept of power and its illustration in the novels. The same principle as with morality and eroticism could also be followed with power, because positive power and negative power could likewise be clearly separated into either supporting or hindering identity development. In a general way it can be argued that the analysis of morality, eroticism and power has resulted easily categorisable in their benefit for identity formation, as was its application to the novels. As proposed in the hypothesis morality, emotional eroticism and a positive power structure creates an environment in which the protagonist can achieve personal development. And this has been reflected in *CDC*. The subsequent section on agency only drove home the argument that personal power is founded in moral principles and can only be achieved through emotional eroticism and a positive power structure. In contrast it has also shown that absence of these factors results in a protagonist like Elia, who is stagnant in her identity and cold in her demeanour.

## Chapter 4: Esther Tusquets and Identity Formation

### 4.1 Introduction and Hypothesis

This chapter focuses on the ideological development of Esther Tusquets, with particular attention paid to parallels between her own life and her trilogy. To better be able to assess the identity question for women that Tusquets had broached in her trilogy, this chapter intends to put her in context with patriarchal theory to show an ideologically sophisticated identity with regard to the most significant life choices for women: motherhood, the combination of motherhood and career, and the conventional expectations of femininity in Spain, such as love, sex, solidarity, individuality and independence. This section addresses two fundamental questions. It looks at the definitions of femininity and at its application in Tusquets. This is because the clarification of femininity later contributes to a better understanding of the identity formation process in women and Tusquets.

Esther Tusquets' personality will be reflected through her autobiographic works. *Prefiero ser mujer (PSM)* (2006), which is a collection of articles from the 1970s and 80s that exclusively focus on her thoughts and opinions on and around being a woman. *Confesiones de una editora poco mentirosa (CEM)* (2005), which is an account of her career as an editor and experiences in the editorial world; *Habíamos ganado la guerra* (2007), an account of her childhood and adolescence, and, lastly *Confesiones de una vieja dama indigna (Confesiones)* (2009), which is an exceptionally frank and detailed account of her romantic adventures, in her professional but also familial and private life.

4.2 focuses on the historical background of the Franco dictatorship and draws appropriate connections to patriarchal theory by Millett (1971), French (1985) and Lerner (1991). The section is further broken down into sub-sections that evaluate the six conceptual elements of patriarchy, relevant to the Franco dictatorship. Thereby, it methodically evaluates Tusquets' background and the most significant impact this had on her development, introducing relevant experiences from her childhood and adolescence.<sup>167</sup>

Section 4.2.3 engages with the significance of gender identity and the notion of femininity. It explores the patriarchal idea of femininity with the help of scientific and biological research and addresses the effect that cultural and sociological influences have had on society, taking into account the various historical and political influences. This section adds to 4.3 insofar that the representation of femininity in 4.3, and the previous chapters' literature analysis can be better understood.

Section 4.3 engages with the author. To portray a comprehensive picture, 4.3 discusses how Tusquets had dealt with the fundamental issues regarding womanhood, such as motherhood, career, individuality and solidarity in her own life. It also analyses how she had used her experience and intellect to advance her knowledge of self to live according to her own convictions and ideological beliefs. For the purpose of structure, 4.3 is also divided: firstly, it discusses how Tusquets diverged from traditional role expectations for women; secondly, it treats the issue of motherhood and/or a career; thirdly, it evaluates individuality to close with the topic of solidarity and friendship between women.

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<sup>167</sup> The conceptual elements of patriarchy are ideology, biological and sociological considerations, class considerations, education, religion and the psychological effect.

## 4.2 Esther Tusquets' Socio-Historical Background and Traditional Femininity

Section 4.2.1 investigates the theoretical model of patriarchy and its similarity to the actual Franco dictatorship. Research by Kate Millett, Marilyn French and Gerda Lerner provides a socio-historical and personal context for the later author analysis. Spain's socio-historical context is divided into sections already specific in footnote 161 and methodically evaluates Tusquets' background to determine the factors that have impacted her development throughout the years. The analysis primarily concentrates on the years between 1940 and 1960 because these relate to Tusquets' childhood, adolescence and young adulthood and are among her most impressionable years in individual development.<sup>168</sup>

Section 4.2.2 discusses the significance of gender identity and how patriarchy has greatly influenced the notion of femininity. It illustrates how femininity has been mistakenly defined as inferior to masculinity and the reasons for it. This section adds to a better understanding of 4.3, so that discussions of femininity and the identity formation objective in previous chapters can be better connected with femininity and gender identity, as investigated in *EMM*, *AJS* and *VUN*.

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<sup>168</sup> As mentioned in previous sections already, this chapter will draw on the information and details provided in the autobiographies. While the information is taken seriously as a basis for analysis, this research will allow for a margin of scepticism regarding the truthfulness and reliability of this information. This scepticism is applied particularly to her opinions. This is because, while this chapter also cites historical detail from the autobiographies, this information is not considered disputable, since it is refuted in other publications too.

### 4.2.1 The Spanish Case: Franco and Patriarchy

The section investigates the effect that the dictatorship has had on the Spanish population, particularly its female population. According to Millett's theory of sexual politics, patriarchy can be classified into eight categories. These include an ideological, biological and sociological orientation (1971 26, 33, 36), also taking account of class, economics, education, force, anthropology and psychology (39, 43, 46, 54), which the following sections now look at.<sup>169</sup>

#### 4.2.1.1 Francoist and Patriarchal Ideology

For totalitarian regimes, of which Franco's government was one, ideals and ideology are absolutely central to their functioning (French 1985 543).<sup>170</sup> French cites C. J. Friedrich's who defines these regimes as possessing a single ideology that is usually enforced by a dictator, a secret police and a monopoly of power over communication media of all sorts. Many of these systems also enforce a strict separation of the public and private sphere, which is reflected in the institutionalised control over marriage and family (539, 540). Because of their great regard for ideology, their aim is often to establish a morally superior image of men, achieved through the very traditional use of force if need be (543). They are exceptionally idealistic and seek a transformation of human nature through implemented guidelines (564). Similarly,

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<sup>169</sup> Although most of these patriarchal elements find application in Franco's dictatorship, this section will exclude the element of force because it is not evident. It will also fuse the points of sociology with biology since both characteristics are very similar in their illustrations during the Franco regime.

<sup>170</sup> Patriarchy is a sociological concept that is often linked to totalitarian regimes because these operate according to patriarchal guidelines (French 1985 541). It can be argued that Franco's regime was totalitarian in nature because of its many structural characteristics. It needs to be noted however, that this does not strictly need to be the case because many regimes share surprisingly similar features to totalitarian systems without being classified as such. Fascism is one such example (539). And evidence shows that Franco's regime was affiliated with the fascist doctrine through Nazi Germany between 1937 and 1943 (Simkin 2009 3).

patriarchal ideology demands that all its laws and regulations are met without exception (Millett 1971 26). One of the most basic components that constitute systems of patriarchy is status, which requires male supremacy (26). This is once more similar to totalitarian regimes because the natural consequence envisioned by these regimes is to masculinise society through the implementation of patriarchal thought patterns (French 1985 564). Another basic component of Millett's theory relates to temperament and demands of stereotypical gender guidelines that represent the convenient complement to the reigning class. Lastly, role is an extension of the element of temperament and extends to behavioural principles and attitudes that again complement the superior individual that is man (1971 26).<sup>171</sup> All these find agreement with the idealised aspirations of totalitarian regimes. As Lerner argues, it is these culture-specific, and by patriarchy propagated definitions of femininity, that ultimately end up dictating the position of women and their according role expectations in society (1991 40). The following paragraphs give examples of how Franco went about achieving it.

During Franco's dictatorship from 1939 to 1975 the government and society's regard for women regressed to cultural values prior to the second Republic (Folguera-Crespo 1997 527). Particularly severe were their conditions between 1940 and 1950.<sup>172</sup> Paradoxically though, the condition of women was of central importance to Franco, who sought their help in the establishment of a cultural framework to facilitate and support his political dominion (Davies 1998 177). The role of women in society was crucial when it came to building a strong and united Spain (Folguera-Crespo 1997

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<sup>171</sup> Patriarchal considerations of status, temperament and role are not restricted to ideology nor are they an exhaustive illustration of further factors that considerably impact patriarchy (Millett 1971 26). They have been incorporated here to better orientate the reader. However, strictly speaking, considerations of status are tied to political issues, later discussed in the section on class considerations. Temperament is of psychological importance and role constitutes the sociological aspect (33, 36, 54). The concept of ideology is limited to strict ideological obedience and all examples that follow in this section are interrelated and illustrate how they enforce and strengthen Franco's ideology of *nacionalcatolicismo*.

<sup>172</sup> It bore great resemblance to the condition of Afghan women under the regime of the fundamentalists (Torres 2002 73).

528).<sup>173</sup> To achieve this he sought to create a national culture, which he named *nacionalcatolicismo*.<sup>174</sup> Davies cites Geraldine Scanlon's exact words by describing the aim of the Nationalists 'to build and strengthen the Christian [Catholic] family as the perfect and natural basis of the nation' (Davies 1998 177). Franco was particularly intent on enforcing an ideology and took advantage of numerous official bodies to do so. The most significant of which was the *Falange Española (Falange)*.<sup>175</sup> Even though it later became a political party, for Franco, it always remained a mere instrument to ensure the integrity of the state and to keep his enemies under control. But most importantly, it proved to distract young idealists from publicly questioning the regime, which Franco feared, would undermine his power (Payne 1961 200). Thus the control, Franco was able to exert over the *Falange's* members conferred stability, which he needed in order to secure the survival of *nacionalcatolicismo*. This was particularly the case when he made it clear that being a member would guarantee safety and convey status (201). An extension to the *Falange* was the *Sección Femenina*. It was a branch split off from the original *Falange* that played an important part in girls' school education where members enforced the dominant role expectations for girls (Tusquets 2007a 203).

The *Sección Femenina* of the *Falange* was established as a support system to the official movement that was to ensure that family life was and remained protected in

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<sup>173</sup> An approach similar to America in colonial times (Lerner 1991 48) and elaborated on in detail later in this section.

<sup>174</sup> Please refer to a later part in this section that explains that *nacionalcatolicismo* featured a close connection between the state and the Catholic Church.

<sup>175</sup> The *Falange*, fascist in nature, was initiated by José Antonio Primo de Rivera but did not gain in importance until November 1933 when it became the official fifth party of the radical Right (Payne 1961 41, 42). These elections stood out because of their great violence, which may have been attributed to the official introduction into politics of the *Falange* on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November (Payne 1990 277). While it was an official political party, it increasingly seemed to impact the political rhetoric and the conflicts between the *Falange* and the Left came to be known for their violence (277, 278). But the movement was structurally and tactically weak (1961 142). As a result, the loss of its leader Primo de Rivera impacted the *Falange* greatly and led to its first association with Franco, who could give it renewed structure and saw it as a potentially useful ally in his attempt to seize power (140, 144). In 1936, Franco thus proposed the fusion of civilian militia with the *Falange* and the latter became an official body of the Nationalist army that supported Franco's cause (144).

years to come. It was an issue of particular importance to Franco after the end of the Civil War, because the war had cost many men their lives in battle and Spain had suffered from a very low birth and high infant death rate. To re-structure the economy, Spain needed foreign support, but even more urgently, it needed a dense, strong, young and productive population. These facts underlay Franco's pro-natalist measures and condemned the Spanish woman to the home. Her duties were to create a home that would provide shelter for her husband and children so that Spain's next generation of men would grow up to become mentally strong and physically healthy and their women supporting wives and mothers who did not aspire to be anything more.<sup>176</sup> To facilitate this objective, Franco sought the division of the public and private sphere that solidified the cult of 'true femininity' and became the dominant ideology (Lerner 1991 48) controlled and mediated by the *Falange*.<sup>177</sup>

For Tusquets, the *Falange* seemed a very confusing concept because she especially related 'esta era la gran ventaja que me ofrecía, o que creí que me ofrecía, la *Falange*: militar a la izquierda, muy a la izquierda, oponerme al franquismo, y seguir al mismo tiempo siendo creyente' (Tusquets 2007a 255).<sup>178</sup> Considering this massively misunderstood concept of the *Falange* is very unsettling and illustrates the success of Franco's strategy of misinformation, discussed at a later part in this section. Additionally, Tusquets had joined the *Falange* movement at a time where nobody did so anymore; at the end of the 1950s (255);, and this, although her parents and all their friends and acquaintances had been *franquistas*. It, therefore, remains a very strange contradiction, and while Tusquets attempted to explain her motivations they did not

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<sup>176</sup> Franco was not the first ruler to employ this approach. During colonial times the United States were likewise trying to create an American nation by attributing the maternal role to women so that they would raise children that carried their work into the next generation.

<sup>177</sup> Please refer to section 4.2.2, which relates all the misconceptions propagated about femininity.

<sup>178</sup> Please refer to a later part in this section that explains how Tusquets came to believe that the *Falange* was an organisation of the Left.

seem to follow a clear political purpose, but were rather influenced by short-term and temporary goals of a typical twenty year-old. What however, surfaced throughout the book was that despite Tusquets' 'flirtation' with the Right she seemed to be of Leftist orientation (252). This was a further paradox discovery, because when this research was initiated, it was started with the image of Tusquets in her 40s or 60s and judging from her trilogy and her later autobiographic works Tusquets never seemed very conventional, and her decision to become a part of the *Falange* seemed surprising because it presented a very traditional choice. However, this said, looking at her family history on key issues such as ideology, religion and politics; one soon realised that her family, their ideology and actions, were often as contradictory as Tusquets herself. One might draw the conclusion that during these times it was best to remain inconspicuous and appear agreeable to the reigning regime; this would certainly explain the contradictions, of which there are several, and which are mentioned further along in this chapter.

To further strengthen and retain his ideological structure, Franco's regime practised the suppression of information through strict censorship regulations (Rioja-Barrocal 2010 3). As French argues to control communication media was a very common method of control (French 1985 555). Franco's regulations were fairly effective throughout his forty years in power, and it seems particularly so in regard to Tusquets' political decisions during her adolescence, such as her desire to belong to the *Falange*. It points to a double standard. In any case, censorship regulations were applied to 'public discourse, such as [in] education, literature and the mass media [...] to protect the dominant ideology against any potentially harmful ideas coming from abroad' (Rioja-Barrocal 2010 3). Censorship was often employed explicitly (French 1985 555). A specific example, where communication to the public was tampered with, was

Franco's attempt to portray the country's Civil War as an 'international war' in history books in an attempt to foster a feeling of unity. His goal was to present Spain as a country that did not suffer conflict within its midst (Jiménez-Vicioso 2008).<sup>179</sup> The negative effect of this has already been partially illustrated through Tusquets' example regarding the *Falange*. However, to elaborate more on this: during her teenage years, Tusquets had laboured under two misconceptions. Firstly, she believed that 'the common people had taken to the streets and had begun killing and sacking, against an established system' (Tusquets 2007b 3). Until well into her twenties, Tusquets believed that it hadn't been 'her people', the Nationalists that had started the war (3). This statement raises an interesting issue. The description of 'her people' confuses because she did not subscribe to the Nationalist doctrine, as *Habíamos ganado la guerra* (2007) shows, but she obviously still felt herself a part of it. It illustrates that her political positioning is unclear, even though her family's was not, as she described:

En el mundo en que yo me movía durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial, el mundo de mis padres, de mis tíos, de los amigos de mis padres, todos – menos tía Sara, claro – estaban a favor de los alemanes, en gran medida porque habían apoyado a los nuestros durante la guerra civil, y todos ellos eran [...] fervientes franquistas. (Tusquets 2007a 49)

Born right into the Civil War, Tusquets' political dilemma bears testimony to the kind of indoctrinating power the regime had exerted and outlines how difficult it can result to learn the truth through the restrictions of censorship, and to form one's own opinion. A further misconception was her belief that the *Falange* was an organisation of the Left.

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<sup>179</sup> This statement was made at a public lecture by Dr. Juan Ramón-Jiménez-Vicioso of the Universidad de Huelva, Andalucía, Spain in Feldkirch, Vorarlberg at the *Pädagogische Hochschule* under the title *El sistema escolar español* on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2008.

The fact that she ended up becoming a member of the *Falange* may, once again, may be attributed to the lack of information that prevailed during the dictatorship and which, it may be argued, had the desired effect on Tusquets. Tusquets' intention by becoming a member of the *Falange* had not political, but rather caused accidentally by a strong friendship with Mercedes and a desire for something she could believe in, after religion proved unsuitable to explain the social inequalities that existed (2007a 254, 255). She also explained, that during these times it appeared almost like a rite of passage: adolescents of the *bourgeoisie* turned against Franco and towards the Left at university and this often occurred to the desperation of their parents (252).<sup>180</sup> And although Tusquets appears to have gone through this rite of passage too (252), she did not remain very consistent in her political orientation. She related that she supported Franco during her last two years of the *bachillerato*, and then again, in her last two years at university right before she transferred to Madrid (249). As a result, the summer before she left for Madrid she decided to do her *servicio social* in Begur and became once more familiarised with the *Falange* and its policies (249). At the end of summer, in the late 1950s, Tusquets then became a member of the *Falange* (255). As already mentioned, this was a strange move because by the late 50s, children of the *bourgeoisie* did no longer appoint themselves to the *Falange* and even their parents had often had their names erased (255). This was mainly because contrary to the expectations raised, after the victory of Franco in 1939, being a Nationalist of the Right had become highly unpopular. This trend even caused a small, but selected group, to found a Left-wing *Falange* movement in opposition. The timeline of this falls in between the last two

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<sup>180</sup> As section 4.2.1.4 on education will show it was primarily the upper class that went to university. This fact may further underscore the initial reluctance of the Franco regime to allow the extension of the curriculum to a humanistic approach. After all that would only increase the number of students registering at university, would ensure more women too and increased ideological development for which the humanities sector is most renowned for. This is because subjects such as literature and philosophy particularly encourage reading and reflexion and could eventually make censorship law problematic and undermine the authority of the regime.

years of high school and university for Tusquets (252). Tusquets had been a member of it before she became an official *Falange* member. The Leftist movement had nothing to do with the official movement that remained of right-wing orientation (253). Tusquets did not go much more into detail about the 'unofficial' movement; she did however explain that it had existed since the Civil War. The movement was anti-Franco and supported the ideology of Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera, which was contained in *Obras completas* and represented the proverbial 'bible' (253).<sup>181</sup> Tusquets supported his vision, which proposed a social and economic revolution and did not include religion as one of its key principles. It did, however, contain a strongly patriotic message that 'ser español es una de las pocas cosas importantes que se puede ser en el mundo' (Tusquets 2007a 254) and, which must have impressed greatly onto the younger generation, who had lived through the war and had only experienced destruction and repression, and who were hungry to believe that there should be a better way.

#### 4.2.1.2 Biological and Sociological Considerations<sup>182</sup>

To strengthen Spain's structure Franco re-established the 'family' as an institution.<sup>183</sup> This involved a widespread encouragement for marriage, large families, a punishment for voluntary sterility among men and abortion among women through arrest (Folguera-Crespo 1997 528).<sup>184</sup> Within the family, life operated hierarchally 'adults ruled children, men ruled women. Women stayed in the home, the men outside'

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<sup>181</sup> Here, the connecting and explanatory reason for her subsequent membership of the 'official' *Falange* becomes clearer although, as no other documentation has proven that such an organisation existed, one must wonder whether the information regarding the oppositional *Falange* movement has been subversively inserted.

<sup>182</sup> For ease of analysis these two components of biology and sociology are treated together.

<sup>183</sup> Refer to section 4.2.1.4 for detail on the structural consequences of the Republican years for Franco's dictatorship.

<sup>184</sup> These measures supported Franco's natalist strategy, please see section 4.2.1.1.

(Davies 1998 179). This view was identical to Millett's research that showed how 'the principles of patriarchy appear to be twofold: male dominate female, elder male shall dominate younger' (Millett 1971 25).<sup>185</sup> The institution of family was to guarantee 'la cohesión interna de la sociedad' and provide refuge and shelter from the outside world (Folguera-Crespo 1997 529). Within this hierarchy women's tasks were to be 'el cetro del amor, [...] que se ofrece voluntariamente y respetuoso a la autoridad incuestionable del varón' (Folguera-Crespo 1997 530). The female principle was seen to encompass nature, reproduction and physicality. It was to be the pole of emotionality and sensibility. Love was feminine and represented moral flexibility, spontaneity and creativity (French 1985 143, 144) and the Church's and Franco's understanding was that education other than domestic classes was wasted on women because they were not graced with intellectual faculties (Folguera-Crespo 1997 529).<sup>186</sup> Consequently, women were only regarded most effective in re-building Spain's population and national pride through the family.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> While this structure was observed throughout all classes, section 4.2.1.3 will give details on how women of the upper classes were sometimes able to sidestep these structural impediments.

<sup>186</sup> In the Spanish context, particularly in regard to the Catholic Church and Franco himself this meant that in regard to women, the Catholic Church was free to impose its structure and thereby in time became designated 'la responsable central de la frustración insondable y la desgracia unánime y perdurable de la mujer en la España franquista' (Gracia 2006 1) to the extent that 'nunca nadie va a hacer pasar cuentas suficientes y justas a la Iglesia católica por el daño, la tortura, el dolor que ha infligido con su modelo de mujer infantilizado y subsidiario a centenarias de miles de mujeres y hombres de este país' (Gracia 2006 1).

<sup>187</sup> To enforce 'true femininity' the *Sección Femenina* developed a perfect strategy. Set up in 1934, by friends of the Primo de Rivera family, the end of the Civil War saw its great success. Pilar Primo de Rivera was made the *jefe nacional* and by 1940, its activities had proved of greater benefit in structuring Spanish life, than the regular *Falange* (Payne 1961 203). With the practical enforcement at the hands of the *Sección Femenina*, the individualism stimulated by the II Republic was repressed and destroyed. Women became what Torres elicits, in Drieu La Rochelle's words 'dulces animales domésticos' (Torres 2002 86). Their attitude was to be so passive, docile and opinionless so that it appeared as if they did not exist and live so quietly that their existence went virtually unnoticed (74). The *Sección Femenina* in one of their speeches explicitly stated this: 'mientras menos se les vea y menos se les oiga mejor' (Torres 2002 86). The treatment of women as invisible, indoctrinated them with a sense of contempt for themselves and their own sex (French 1985 134). For Moi, this has therefore, led to an inferiority complex and to 'internalise the standards of their oppressors, and [...] identify with their own persecutors' (Moi 2002 29). And this is indeed what Tusquets described in section 4.3.1 on role expectations. For the time being, I would merely like to relate the tricky aspect associated with patriarchy and female identity development, and the problematic associated with Millett's claim, that women need only recognise their oppression and then shed its influence to be liberated (Moi 2002 29). The issue here is, that when we take

In her book *PSM* (2006) Tusquets related what is so typical of patriarchally orientated regimes; they seek to portray a new ideological image of men/women and seek to enforce this vision by any means at their disposal (French 1985 541). Tusquets elicited how the government sought to propagate gender difference and femininity for the women of her generation:

En las chicas la belleza es un valor casi absoluto, al que siguen [...] la bondad, la delicadeza, la ternura, la paciencia, la compasión; nunca, en cualquier caso, la audacia, el espíritu de aventura, la inteligencia. La inteligencia es –por mucho que los padres se esfuercen en ocultarlo, se obstinen en negarlo- una peligrosa desventaja, algo que debemos ocultar. Lo reconocen algunas de nuestras tías, más sinceras o más ingenuas, cuando nos previenen: ¿Por qué estudias tanto, por qué lees tanto? ¿No ves que si eres tan sabia no vas a encontrar a nadie que se case contigo?”. Porque los chicos las prefieren, de eso no queda duda, guapas y no excesivamente listas, dulces y sometidas, prudentes y menos informadas que ellos. (Tusquets 2006 22)

This is an issue that raised indignation in Tusquets, particularly when she recalled what she was told as a child during the 40s and 50s:

¿Por qué se nos han dicho de niñas tantas veces que ser mujer no constituye una desventaja, que no somos para nada inferiores? [Pues,] si no existieran dudas ni problemas, no se subrayaría algo que parece evidente y que debería darse por sentado. (Tusquets 2006 19)

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account of the psychological effect of such indoctrination in 4.2.1.6 and 4.3, we quickly realise that it is a lengthy process that is adequately reflected in Tusquets and section 4.3. For patriarchy biological gender differences are conceptually significant, particularly in regard to what is considered inherently feminine or masculine (Millett 1971 26, 27). As far as the sociological component is concerned the element of family, is patriarchy's most significant structural component (33).

But under Franco's dictatorship power was asserted over women's lives in an unheeding fashion. Tusquets remembered further experiences of how society restricted women's intellectual development by not teaching them subjects such as Mathematics, Latin and Greek because they were considered masculine (2007a 107).<sup>188</sup> For Millett the separation of masculine and feminine subjects, where humanities and selected social sciences are assigned exclusively to girls, is cultural programming (1971 42). For young women, school during the Franco years was merely a means to raise them to become good housewives and mothers (Folguera-Crespo 1997 419) because patriarchy considered the female principle as sub-standard (French 1985 143, 144). Girls were taught how to please their future husbands, avoid arguments and discussions (Tusquets 2007a 107, 108). Dux argues, that the consequence of patriarchy is often a claim for power and possession stemming from the original agrarian societies, which were founded on patriarchal principles (1997 357).<sup>189</sup> So they were told that their sphere was in the home and any other areas that were connected to the domestic and private life (Folguera-Crespo 1997 531). Additionally, article 57 of the Civil Code made it impossible for women to leave home before the age of twenty-five, only if they were married was their legal age reduced to twenty-one (Torres 2002 80).<sup>190</sup> Ultimately, this

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<sup>188</sup> Refer to section 4.2.1.4 for more detail on education.

<sup>189</sup> Please refer to section 4.2.1.4, which discusses the effect this has on women, who discover that their interests extend further than their family and husband.

<sup>190</sup> The only additional freedom they enjoyed was the requirement to enrol in the *Sección Femenina's servicio social* for a period of six months. There they would get involved in physical education, youth work, health services and cultural work (Payne 1961 203). Tusquets fulfilled her *servicio social* in the summer of 1954 in a convent in the mountains in Begur. It was an experience that was very pleasant. She enjoyed the moments that she could swim, be around girls her own age, act in theatre plays and take part in political debates. Oddly, the *servicio social* granted her the space and opportunity for ideological development that she was normally deprived of (2007a 249, 250). Tusquets' integration into the *Falange* presents a controversy which has already been mentioned but which will subsequently be discussed again in 4.2 when it addresses the strategy of information and misinformation that the Franco dictatorship practised. Tusquets had been strangely fascinated by the classes on *formación del espíritu nacional*, imparted by her, from her then on, life-long friend Mercedes (2007a 251). Unfortunately Tusquets did not give further details on her and it can be assumed that it was probably because of Mercedes and Tusquets' strong personal bond that her fascination persisted.

did not change their freedom much because they were still passed from one man to another, from father to husband.

The government's ardent desire to increase birth rates signified that for many women marriage became the only way out of a life that showed little chance for self-fulfilment (Folguera-Crespo 1997 528). But the decision to marry also often became a trap. Performing wifely duties meant that they had to attend to their husbands' every wish because the role models that the traditionalists enforced were those of Isabella I and the devoutly religious Teresa of Ávila (Davies 1998 174). While this may have been the common norm in the lower classes, judging from Tusquets' experience in the upper classes this was slightly different.<sup>191</sup> Marriage in the upper class meant that particularly for women there was less financial urgency and they therefore disposed of more freedom in pursuing their own interests. This is, what can be concluded from Tusquets' autobiography. Tusquets also disposed of the freedom to cultivate her own interests due to her family's financial situation. This is adequately represented in her career as an editor and writer. Although she acknowledged that she may have never chosen this job, had her father not bought the publishing house for her (Tusquets 2005 11), it can nevertheless not be disputed that it reflected her talents and interests. In regard to marriage, Tusquets' example is once more, unconventional. She married only once, Jordi Argente. It was a hasted marriage, which did not last longer than one and a half years (2009 143, 146), which she admitted she entered into for all the wrong reasons. This later contributed to its demise. Nevertheless the circumstances surrounding the marriage indicate how very different her motivations were for getting married. The key points to emphasise here, are that in her situation there were no financial pressures or domestic duties that bore her down. All common expectations on

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<sup>191</sup> Please refer to section 4.2.1.3 for more detail on the importance of class difference.

newly married brides could be resolved financially and made to disappear providing her with personal freedom.

The man's duty, meanwhile, was that of protecting his country and his family against the enemy, and his home symbolised a safe place that his wife provided for him. She was to care for him, his needs and those of the family, and be 'el alma de la casa' (Folguera-Crespo 1997 534). She was further to make use of her motherly qualities and accept a passive and submissive role in her relationship with her husband and men in general (529). The man was the 'defens[or] de las costumbres cristianas' (Folguera-Crespo 1997 530) and reminded that he was responsible for his wife's behaviour and appearance (530). As a result, a strict dress and behaviour code was demanded of her:

Los vestidos no debían ser ceñidos ni señalar las formas del cuerpo, los escotes no podían ser pronunciados, no estaba permitido usar transparencias, las jóvenes no debían mostrar los muslos al desnudo, ni debían admitirse familiaridades, ni los jóvenes coincidir en lugares comunes como piscinas o playas. (Folguera-Crespo 1997 530)

The dress code became the embodiment of virtue as an extension of virginity (Folguera-Crespo 1997 561), which meant that women's task was to strictly guard theirs, until they got married (Torres 2002 85).<sup>192</sup> This facilitated the view that boys and young men where, as Tusquets related:

Lobos hambrientos buscando a quién devorar y nosotras cándidas ovejitas a las que se debía a toda costa proteger, no porque anduviéramos hambrientas y ansiosas de devorar o de ser devoradas – las niñas y las mujeres decentes no andaban hambrientas

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<sup>192</sup> Please refer to section 4.3.1 for more information.

de nada, las niñas y las mujeres decentes no tenían, obviamente, sexo. (Tusquets 2007a 69, 70)

The strategy of misinformation, or lack of information, was in this way applied to sexual activity. According to the Catholic Church, sexual activity, if not orientated toward reproduction, was sinful and to be avoided (Folguera-Crespo 1997 529).<sup>193</sup> In support of this perspective sexual education was abolished (Torres 2002 14) and the Spanish youth of the time knew little or nothing about sexuality (78, 80). Furthermore the government's and the Catholic Church's cult of virginity established that 'lo español era lo puro, lo decente, lo casto, lo virginal, lo grato' (Torres 2002 18). And the strengthening of the Church as an institution was a sign for an exceptionally strong sexual repression (French 1985 560). This and the decided lack of sexual education led to two problems, as Torres relates: frigidity and the idealisation of the love-experience (2002 80) and these two variables re-enforced each other. The idealised image of love and marriage often led to disappointment and disillusionment to which the reaction was often frigidity. As a result, the number of women that became sexually unresponsive and were even afraid of men greatly increased (80). Torres refers to Martín Gaité's *Usos amorosos de la posguerra española* when he/she argues that he supports her opinion, that sexual education was ignored in Spain because love and maternity were regarded as incompatible because it presumed sexual intercourse (78, 79). While this appears logical, it should also be considered that fear of men, which some women experienced in the sexual realm, was carried over into the emotional and domestic sphere and ensured female obedience and solidified patriarchal control, which Franco's regime

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<sup>193</sup> 'Patriarchy has God on its side' (Millett 1971 51) and this fact presupposed that everything that was remotely unpleasant or only loosely related to the female came to be her fault, particularly when it related to sexuality (51). This re-enforcing connection between state and Church was very common. Both regarded women's sexual liberty as an indicator of the moral decay of society or the breakdown of a particular class or state because sexual liberty could not have come about without decreasing masculine power and failing control over women (French 1985 147).

sought. Patriarchally-orientated regimes propagate a strong masculine figure and a healthy amount of respect to function efficiently but one must give due consideration to French's statement that sexual repression, authority, order and power of the father figure are not signs for a strong and healthy culture, but indeed a foreboding of its decay (1985 560). This is particularly the case when we consider that the Civil War had left the Spanish population with a larger female to male ratio, which led to a painful regression in independence for women. While their men had been at war they had to take over most of their work at home. In the process they had to rise to their level and their development was greatly stimulated. With the instauration of the dictatorship all progress made was taken away. However, returning to the realm of sexuality that Torres relates it appears that all these issues were common problems in Spain. However Tusquets once more diverged strongly in this respect, as did the people that she associated with.<sup>194</sup> Therefore the biggest advantage Tusquets had had in this respect was her mother's and her maternal family's liberal influence. It is widely known that their relationship was fraught with issues, nonetheless Tusquets described that 'todo lo que amo aprendí a amarlo de ella [mamá]. El mar, los animales, el arte, los libros' (Tusquets 2007a 79).<sup>195</sup> According to Tusquets, her mother had been exceptionally talented in many ways except housewifely duties, in which she just did not seem interested (20). She had also been well read, although that did not mean that she disposed of more liberty than any other conservatively brought up woman, just because her parents let her read Voltaire (163). Tusquets portrayal of her mother in her autobiographies and narrative sheds light not only on their relationship but it also predicted the kind of

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<sup>194</sup> Please refer to section 4.3.1 for specific details on what that means.

<sup>195</sup> The specifics surrounding Tusquets' difficult relationship with her mother have been addressed in section 2.2.2. This declaration by Tusquets was, however, an interesting one, considering that most of what is known about her mother is negative. In this way, it corroborates what Rich has described as a 'sort of psychic osmosis' (Rich 1995 231), that is, a powerful connection between mother and daughter that contains at its origin a strong desire of daughter to identify with what the mother loved too (231).

woman Tusquets was likely to become. This does not mean to suggest that she had become just like her mother with her negative connotations. The positive elements that she described in the previous paragraph indicate a distinct view of the role of women in their class and with consideration of this research, I can confirm that in intellectual terms Tusquets had very much become like her mother.<sup>196</sup>

Returning to the topic of liberalism and sexual repression on Spanish society, Tusquets described the effect this had, with an example of the famous *guateques* of the 1950s in Spain. They were 'auténticas orgías [...] de lascivia frustrada y reprimida' (Tusquets 2006 30). The issue in her opinion here was that they were 'la peor de todas las lascivias. No se me ocurre apenas un camino de aprendizaje más siniestro de la sexualidad, un modo más nefasto de establecer los primeros contactos entre ambos sexos' (Tusquets 2006 30). The pressure of girls to please boys was great. They were expected to appear a little stupid but pretty, to act caste and were required to decidedly hold back the excitement they, paradoxically, sought to provoke in these boys (29, 30). A demanding task for young girls, who until previously had been denied all contact with the male sex and had never received any sexual education. Consequently, these factors often contributed to many Spanish girls growing into highly confused young women, and as Tusquets believed, it encouraged them to consolidate their chastity and conditioned their conduct (32). While a behavioural code was exceptionally important

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<sup>196</sup> One is reminded of the possible similarities between Elia in *AJS* and Tusquets' mother. Unfortunately there are no clear indications for this. However Tusquets related that the time when *EMM* was published, the character of the mother was somehow liked by her own mother (Tusquets 2009 318). It is unknown whether she had seen herself reflected in her daughters' description, although the assumption seems justified since she had asked her daughter whether she should come dressed as the mother in the novel to the novel's release party. Naturally, it was a joke and as Tusquets affirmed 'naturalmente seguí el juego y afirmé que como la del libro. Y mamá apareció en mi fiesta vestida de largo, envuelta en gasas y con plumas de aves del paraíso surgiéndole del pelo' (Tusquets 2009 319). Specifically in terms of *AJS*, Tusquets did not confirm her mother's influence in the main character and only marginally her own. For all three characters she related 'había rasgos extraídos de personas reales distintas, pero ninguno era el retrato de nadie. Y los tres se ajustaban a la historia que quería contar' (Tusquets 2009 222).

for girls, the social class that she belonged to had further impact on her personality and her life. The following section will now look at this.

#### 4.2.1.3 Class Considerations

Patriarchy relies on a strict hierarchy to run smoothly because the determinant of male supremacy can often be misinterpreted in regard to social class considerations (Millett 1971 36). Therefore, within the patriarchal system, status, role and temperament are closely affiliated with social class and this is no different for women. With women however, there is an additional variable that impacts her social status and this lies in how she deals with her sexuality.<sup>197</sup> Women are titled 'decent' when belonging to a certain social class, which they ascend to through associating with their father or husband. Should she however demonstrate 'indecent' behaviour men will automatically expel her. Sexually deviant behaviour will attribute the lowest social status. This has been the case throughout the entire history of the Western world up to the XX century and is still enforced in many developing countries today (Lerner 1991 267). Nevertheless, the opportunity and privilege for women to share economic and political power with men is particularly common to the upper class (52, 53), and women in these classes are often attributed more freedom and liberties than women of lower classes. While these privileges are varied in nature, I would like to refer here to one specifically related to sexuality. As Tusquets related:

Una señora de la alta sociedad podía acostarse sin recato con unos y con otros, coleccionar amantes, sin que nadie o casi nadie, por mucho que se la criticara a sus

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<sup>197</sup> For more detail on the dialogue between the different theories, please refer back to the discussion of morality and sexuality in Chapter 3, as well as to the introduction.

espaldas, se animara a dejar de tratarla, pero, si esta señora se separaba de su marido, ya podía despedirse del golf del Prat, de los clubes y sociedades realmente selectos, y aceptar que la enorme mayoría de amigos, que seguían tratando como siempre al marido, le cerraran las puertas de sus casas. (Tusquets 2007a 163)

The same was, however, also the case for men. As long as he kept his wife sexually satisfied and allowed her, her whims, society did not judge and neither did the Church, at least the majority of priests did not (Tusquets 2007a 162, 163).

Furthermore, class restrictions for women of the upper or upper-middle classes were never as severe as for working class women. Their role was in fact very ambiguous in many areas of daily life (Alós 2007 1). While the working class woman was required to conform to the ideal of being a housewife, in the Catalan *bourgeoisie* the role of the traditional housewife did not conform to the same characteristics. Tusquets' mother presented the exemplary antithesis to what Franco deemed as the norm:

Papá había abandonado sin resistencia cualquier veleidad de poder [...] En parte lo hizo, pienso ahora, por sentir cierta pereza, por andar sobrecargado de trabajo; en parte porque era habitual en el grupo social al que pertenecíamos (el marido cedía a la mujer, y la mujer delegaba en mayor o menor grado en el servicio, el cuidado y la educación de los niños). (Tusquets 2001 10)

And this state of affairs underlay the wide gap that existed between the rules imposed on the working class and the upper-middle class (Tusquets 2001 10). These scenarios were common to the sexual and family realm, but the benefits for the upper classes abounded in other areas too. In general terms, class distinctions had become most aggravated after the Civil War (Folguera-Crespo 1997 533) and with the rigid structure

that the dictatorship established life for the upper-classes was often a balancing act in regard to morality and consciousness. This situation was further complicated by the post-war years that sparked the newly rich, people who had made their fortune under, often, dubious circumstances during the war or shortly after (Tusquets 2007a 24). Additionally, the upper class also considered the working class to be of lesser value and sensibility. Their hunger was considered to be 'a different hunger', as was their pain (33). Tusquets recounted a key event in her childhood that made her realise that 'algo iba mal' (Tusquets 2007a 25). When she was told by her mother that losing a child was the worst pain imaginable and in no way comparable to the loss of a husband, the female service personnel told her the exact opposite. They responded that if a child died they could have another one, while if their husband died they would be left with nothing, no means to feed their family (34). This answer was surprising to her and solidified her perception. And even though class distinction was enjoyed by all the upper and middle classes, it needs to be remarked here that the *bourgeoisie* enjoyed the benefits in particular if they had supported the Nationalists during the war, as had been the case in Tusquets' family.<sup>198</sup> While there were different levels of being well off within these classes, the combination of being *bourgeois* and *nacionalista* usually meant even more means and status. This is particularly well reflected in the example of Tusquets' father, who felt that after the Civil War their financial situation was lacking:

Muchos años más tarde, papá – cosa extraña en él, porque solía ser ecuánime y sensato – me comentaría en una carta que, después de nuestra guerra, se había enfrentado a una situación durísima y se había visto obligado a partir de cero. Tal vez sí, pero la situación durísima incluía un piso de más de doscientos metros cuadrados en Rambla de Cataluña, dos chicas fijas de servicio, más otra que venía a repasar la

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<sup>198</sup> See previous section for detail.

ropa, coche, casita de veraneo en la costa, abono en el Liceo, salidas a esquiar, colegio extranjero y de pago para los niños, más una *Fräulein* que venía a enseñarme alemán y una señorita que se ocupaba de nosotros los domingos. Era una miseria bastante relativa y tolerable, sobre todo en una Cataluña y una España donde mucha gente pasaba auténtica hambre. (Tusquets 2007a 26)

Tusquets had on numerous occasions drawn attention to the fact that she never supported or felt at ease with this special treatment, but that it was certainly the case (Tusquets 2007a 25). She also remembered that for her family, this implied exceptions such as police visits to the houses, to hand over identity cards, and not having to wait in line for vaccinations or official documents at an office (25). And this although for the rest of the population there had been 'cartillas de racionamiento' and hunger (24, 25). Additionally, as has already been mentioned Tusquets had felt uncomfortable about being associated with the Catalan *bourgeoisie* and this may explain why all her narrative is written in Castilian instead of Catalan. Catalan was the language of the upper classes in Barcelona, as Tusquets related, and was often used with the service personnel from other parts of Spain (Tusquets 2007a 25). This is particularly curious when we consider that her parents talked to her in Catalan (24), even though, with her brother she and her family had always spoken Castilian. This switch in language would occur even in the middle of a dinner table conversation when a sentence was directed at her brother (24). And Tusquets herself could not truly explain this behaviour (24), though to me it suggests a certain desire to distance oneself from Catalan culture. Additionally, to the various other liberties that were open to the financially better-off classes, was the opportunity to be exposed to foreign languages and cultures. As related earlier, Tusquets was taught German from the age of three (68) and attended foreign

language schools, which exposed her to different cultures.<sup>199</sup> She was further fortunate to travel abroad on annual summer trips and various other excursions with her family (249). This allowed her to use these languages learnt and would later be a key competence that allowed her to read books and watch films that were banned in Spain, which she enjoyed considerably (252).<sup>200</sup>

#### 4.2.1.4 Education

Patriarchy was also cautious with the amount and the kind of education it made available to women, for knowledge gave power to the one that possessed it (Millett 1971 42). As a result, the restrictions and requirements that were imposed on education were strict. Franco required subjects known as *enseñanzas del hogar* to become obligatory in all public schools by 1939. By 1944 he had introduced an examination that functioned as a compulsory qualification for the entry to university (Davies 1998 177). This meant that all young girls had to attend classes that specialized and educated them in craftwork and domestic tasks intending to prepare them for their lives as housewives. The program indoctrinated them with a strong sense of nationalism supported by Catholicism and the hierarchic conception of the socio-political environment and condemned any kind of liberal or ideological expression or judgement (Folguera-Crespo 1997 538).<sup>201</sup>

Despite the strict hold that was exercised on girls and women, when their education was concerned regulations were lax and neglected. Like many other girls of

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<sup>199</sup> The different schools will be discussed in detail in section 4.2.1.4.

<sup>200</sup> The attainment of this material was made difficult by strict censorship rules. Among the material in question was Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1997).

<sup>201</sup> The state, in turn, instructed the *Sección Femenina* to ensure that these goals were met and maintained. Consequently, it doubled in size and influence and it became virtually impossible for a woman to obtain a passport, work or any other official document without its permission (Folguera-Crespo 1997 535).

her age, Tusquets attended craftwork and domestic classes at the *Colegio del Real Monasterio de Santa Isabel* (2007a 107). She remembered that during those three years, no one seemed to care about their whereabouts or their grades (109). It underpins the impression that Franco did not view education for girls as a priority.

In addition, families who disposed of sufficient financial means and status were able to circumvent traditional teaching methods. This refers in Tusquets' case to the issue of co-education, which was usually prohibited. It is highly likely that this was also enforced for laic schools, for the argument that drove the prohibition of co-education was that it was 'a system entirely contrary to the religious principles of the glorious national movement [...] to be suppressed absolutely as counter-pedagogical and counter-educational' (Davies 1998 177).<sup>202</sup> Nevertheless, these prohibitions were only mildly enforced.<sup>203</sup> After the Civil War, Franco saw it necessary to implement educational reforms (Folguera-Crespo 1997 536) because during the Republicans' time in power they had relied on their own system of education to strengthen and solidify their regime and declared the national school system laic (Sánchez 1934 181, 182). This in turn may explain why Franco was so adamant to prohibit laic and co-educational school because the Republican regime had succeeded in establishing a solid fundament for Republicanism in the younger generation. To undermine this development Franco sought support from an already established institution: the Catholic Church (536).<sup>204</sup> In the end all secular and co-educational schools were frowned upon and children of good families attended Catholic schools (Tusquets 2007a 67).

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<sup>202</sup> Currently, I am unable to find a reference that supports this argument for laic schools. But due to the similar nature of issues that led to their prohibition in the first place it appears highly likely that laic schools were subject to the same restrictions as co-educational schools.

<sup>203</sup> As far as education was concerned it was not sufficient for the dictatorship to impose restrictions based on gender, class considerations were also an important denominator.

<sup>204</sup> The educational sector was one of the many areas in Spanish life that Franco wanted to re-structure and for which he accepted the help of the Catholic Church. However, this section only briefly broaches the Church's involvement; its influence in the dictatorship is discussed at a later point in this section.

During the 1940s and 1950s the dismantling of the Republican schools meant that the new system that was implemented in its place was of a religious nature (Folguera-Crespo 1997 536) and the schools that were not, were considered inadequate and dangerous, especially for girls (Tusquets 2007a 67). This was for two fundamental reasons: firstly, their laic nature and inclusion of numerous protestant pupils and teachers among their staff signified according to Tusquets that they impersonated 'en aquel entonces [...] casi el mismísimo diablo' (Tusquets 2007a 69). The second dangerous element was the fact, that girls and boys shared one classroom and Spanish society of the 1940s believed that boys and girls should be separated at all times, except for special occasions and never, under any circumstance, without supervision by an adult (69). The following anecdote illustrates how seriously this was handled. While Tusquets was at the *Real Monasterio de Santa Isabel*, five or six girls were playing with a ball during break time. Then a boy entered and tried to steal the ball away from them. In an attempt to not have him escape with the ball, one of the girls locked the door (123). In that instant a teacher caught them and was horrified that five girls and one boy had locked themselves in a classroom (123) 'armaron una tragedia. Ni preguntaron para qué nos habíamos encerrado, [...] ni atendieron a nuestras explicaciones, que supongo coincidían, aunque nos hubieran tenido vigiladas y separadas durante todo el día' (Tusquets 2007a 123, 124). She further related that the situation was worsened by the exaggerated belief during these times that if people sinned, even only in thought, they would be suffering repercussions into eternity (125).<sup>205</sup>

In terms of schools, Tusquets attended several different ones in a relatively short time span. This started with the *Colegio Alemán de la calle Moià*, which Esther Tusquets attended between the ages of five and nine. It was a co-educational school as

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<sup>205</sup> Although this was not believed in the same way within the Tusquets family. Please refer to 4.2.1.5 for more detail.

all other schools that Tusquets attended (Tusquets 2007a 67). The *Colegio Alemán* and the *Liceo Francés* were amongst the few co-educational schools reserved for the upper classes. The conservative paternal Tusquets family strongly disapproved of her attending it and considered it nothing short of a scandal (67). This was because most girls from a good family attended Catholic schools (67). Tusquets however, apart from a short stay of a few months at *Santa Elizabeth* never studied with nuns (68). Tusquets was very happy during her studies at the *Colegio Alemán* and acknowledged that the chance of enjoying co-education made an important difference and that she had been extremely lucky (68). Furthermore, the school disposed of excellent installations, a state-of-the-art library, modern and innovative teaching methods and competent staff guarantying excellent academic results (74, 73). In spite of that the school unfortunately remained a scandal, confirming the fears of her conservative paternal family (67, 69).<sup>206</sup> With the end of WWII and Germany's defeat, the *Colegio Alemán* was closed (74) and Tusquets attended the *Escuela Suiza* (100). There however, she was neither happy nor did she stay long. And after one school year, she and her brother changed schools again to the *Real Monasterio de Santa Isabel* (101, 104). This school was considered to be the follower of the *Colegio Alemán* although its discipline was missing and the classes were in Castilian and co-educational in nature (104).

Returning to educational policy under Franco, the school reform had also caused the realisation, that while the ideology of the regime was to return the woman to the domestic sphere, not all women could actually do so. Many had lost their husbands during the war and were now left to raise a family on their own. As a result, the ministry created professional schools in an attempt to solve the problem (Folguera-Crespo 1997 536). However, the education women received, was tailored to specifically feminine

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<sup>206</sup> Please refer to section 4.2.1.5 dedicated solely to the significance of Catholicism in the Franco regime to find a further explanation of why a co-educational school was so scandalous in nature.

professions (536), such as teaching, secretarial, health sector work and other work for banks and businesses that involved sedentary positions (542).

Higher education was also a point of dispute. Although women were allowed to attend university, educational politics during Franco's regime were designed to effectively repress women's emancipation and their access to higher education (Folguera-Crespo 1997 537). This suggests that the government feared that the education women received at university threatened the stability of the family hierarchy so heavily promoted by the national-catholic doctrine. The target was to discourage women from developing the skills of masculine intellectuals and learning to think abstractly by excluding their emotions in theoretical thinking (Lerner 1991 277) because this strongly conflicted with patriarchal role expectations for women. Should women try to appropriate masculine principles and pursue power, they would become monsters in their eyes (French 1985 144). This attitude presented a dilemma for women who discovered that their interests and capabilities expanded further than their family and husband. And it is this desire for knowledge and education that posed the greatest obstacle to patriarchy. It suggests that possession of factual information and knowledge threatened to reverse women's subordinate position (42), indicating a shift in their social position by levelling the playing field. The thinking went that once they were on equal intellectual standing they were able to assert the same power over men (43). Although this re-distribution of power between the sexes does not necessarily indicate the destruction of patriarchy because society can still function when women possess relatively strong or equal positioning to men (Dux 1997 357), it does however, mean that patriarchy has always been reluctant to grant women more voice or control. And this was also reflected in Franco's regime. The dictatorship functioned on the basis of what French describes as the need of men to control women, where this desire for

control functions as the central reference point for men's and the state's self and masculinity concept (1985 857). This is further reflected in Spain's feminist movement, which increased in popularity just before Franco's death. This popularity in my eyes mirrors this very change in the power balance that has just been mentioned. Further proof is the fact that after Franco's death the feminist movement developed even more and has in time become so powerful and potent that its principles have become incorporated in Spanish life and have made a collective movement unnecessary. Consequently, its radical form of the early years has disappeared and made room for a feminist doctrine that seems almost like a solitary struggle that each female individual engages with alone (Pastrana-Álvarez 2008 2). One may argue that after the great transformation that Franco's illness and death had initiated, the feminist cause no longer encountered any significant opposition. Today, the feminist cause is no longer a collective issue but has increasingly become an individually centred concept (*Historia del feminismo en España* 2008 4).<sup>207</sup> And this will later be illustrated through Tusquets' very own understanding of feminism and its significance in a woman's everyday life. However, more on that in section 4.3.

Between the concepts of patriarchy and feminism, class considerations also still had an impact. And government policies adequately, although reluctantly reflected these. It meant that educational reform of the *bachillerato* was implemented simply to appease the *bourgeoisie* (Ruiz-Berrio 2006 1). This was a very typical reaction; higher social standing has always significantly impacted on opportunities and on women's educational opportunities in particular. Furthermore, her chances were significantly increased when she was a part of the upper class.<sup>208</sup> In fact this was considered to be women's most significant class privilege throughout all historical eras (Lerner 1991

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<sup>207</sup> Examples include *Feminismo de la igualdad* and *Feminismo de la diferencia* (*Historia del feminismo en España* 2008 4).

<sup>208</sup> Section 4.2.1.3 explains why this is the case.

272). And it is reflected in Esther Tusquets' and her parents, who did not object to her decision to study for the *bachillerato*. Her father was content when she passed her exams and her mother was one of the few women who believed that marriage was not the only thing a woman should accomplish in her lifetime (Tusquets 2007a 188).<sup>209</sup> Between 1940 and 1960, higher education remained only available and accessible to the elite (Ruiz-Berrio 2006 1). This explains why it was possible for Esther Tusquets to start her university education in 1954, where she initially registered at the University of Barcelona and the *Instituto del Teatro*. But following a disruptive two years she transferred to the University Complutense in Madrid (Tusquets 2007a 226, 249). This transferral was primarily because she had met a boy at the *Instituto del Teatro* with whom she fell in love with (225). Her love for José caused upheaval and irritation in the family because José was rumoured to be gay and Tusquets, with her eighteen years, was going through a rebellious phase, which thereby considerably threatened the image of the Tusquets family (228).<sup>210</sup> After the conflict was resolved Tusquets left the *Instituto del Teatro* (237) and started working at the *Cotolengo del Padre Alegre*, which would also represent her first serious encounter with religion (238).<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Tusquets' opportunity to do her *bachillerato* and receive a university diploma is a class issue and related to her being part of the *bourgeoisie*. As Ruiz-Berrio explains the new plan for the *bachillerato*, which disposed of particularly humanistic content was approved because of the upper-middle classes' initiative and its influence. The humanistic content was unusual for Spain so shortly after the Civil War, because Spanish society was so heavily orientated towards agriculture and required to re-build many of its buildings after the destruction that the war left, that little attention was paid to the development of the mind. Nevertheless, it was thanks to this new plan that Tusquets was able to study philosophy and literature with a major in history at university in Barcelona and Madrid (Ruiz-Berrio 2006 1) (Mora 2000 1) (Esther Tusquets – Ficha del autor 2008 1). Please refer back to the section on class differences in Spanish society during the dictatorship to learn more.

<sup>210</sup> Disregarding José's ambiguous sexual orientation, his character and Tusquets' feelings for him resemble greatly the description of Jorge in *EMM*. This relates in particular to the class difference that was both common to Jorge in *EMM* and José (Tusquets 2007a 228). As she related in her autobiography 'le amé también por lo que para mí representaba. A mis dieciocho años de burguesita inconformista, nada segura ya de poder considerar como míos a aquellos que habían ganado nuestra guerra, esperaba que alguien – un rebelde, un proscrito, un desertor, no ya un príncipe azul – hiciese estallar mi mundo, o mejor dicho el mundo de los míos' (Tusquets 2007a 228).

<sup>211</sup> Please refer to section 4.2.1.5 for more detail.

#### 4.2.1.5 Religion

When considering the importance of ideology for patriarchal regimes, the association between the Catholic Church and the state becomes relatively predictable. As an institution, the Church believed in the difference between men and women and in their complimenting strengths and qualities, which could maintain a healthy functioning society (Folguera-Crespo 1997 529).<sup>212</sup> Although the religious question was not originally part of Franco's plan, this changed once he got married in the early 1930s (Payne 2006 228, 230). Franco then approved the re-implementation of religion into Spanish tradition (227). The ease of its implementation can be attributed to the fact that religion had always been deeply ingrained in Spanish life and the II Republic did not last long enough to change much in that regard. The Church's willingness to affiliate itself with the government and the upper classes, in turn, was largely due to a deep crisis that had befallen it during the mid-XVIII century, and to which was added a crisis of faith provoked by the Anarchists in the 1860s (Peers 1945 88, 89).<sup>213</sup> In order to secure the Church's support Franco made large concessions to Rome in return for unwavering support in the construction of 'una simbiosis parcial entre la Iglesia y el Estado' (Payne 2006 227).<sup>214</sup> Franco involved the Church in the organisation of Spain's social life and distributed duties and roles between women and men alike (Folguera-Crespo 1997 530). This was reflected in the Civil Code 'el marido ha de proteger a la mujer y ésta obedecerle' (Torres 2002 80).<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Please refer to section 4.2.1.2 dedicated to the institution of family, for a detailed description of the role of women in society.

<sup>213</sup> The Catholic Church, had been befallen by crimes and injustices often propagated by liberal governments who robbed the Church of its valuable possessions to distribute among the poor. As a result it was struggling for its survival by the mid XX century (Peers 1945 88).

<sup>214</sup> Please refer back to section 4.2.1.1 for more details on national Catholicism.

<sup>215</sup> Please refer to section 4.2.1.1 to find more information on their influence and their responsibilities and duties within the Franco regime.

Within the Tusquets' family the role of religion was greatly influenced by Tusquets' maternal and paternal families. Tusquets' paternal family was very religious and charitable, qualities, which found expression in their decision to send their nanny of many years into an old-people's home when she became too old to be useful at home (Tusquets 2007a 13). This was a very uncharacteristic move of any *bourgeois* family, in the light of class considerations.<sup>216</sup> Tusquets' maternal family on the other hand, presented a contrast. Her mother's father was considered a mason and a liberal and did not feature among the prestigious names of the *bourgeoisie*. And Tusquets' mother had been a liberal of doubtful religious faith, an avid reader of books that were forbidden by the Church and clearly did not fit the model of the ideal wife of the time (11, 14). As a result, in Tusquets' more intimate family life, religion did not play any significant part.<sup>217</sup> Her father had stopped believing in God (67), while her mother had always been Atheist, despite being a Nationalist (2007b 2). Paradoxically, the family regularly attended Church on Sunday supposedly in an effort to keep up appearances (Lech 2007 1) and because the earlier generation of the paternal Tusquets' family were so deeply religious. Her father's mother was adamant on becoming a nun before she married and her father's brother, Juan became a priest (Tusquets 2007a 92, 148).

The religious and political positioning of the Tusquets family is best represented through her paternal uncle Juan Tusquets. He descended from a family of Jewish bankers and although his father was pro-Catalan, when Juan grew up he turned to Catholic religion, became anti-Semitic and a committed Franco supporter who developed a hate for masons (Tusquets 2007a 147, 148, 149). The ideological mixture that resulted here can only be imagined. A brother, who had stopped believing in God (67) and married an atheist, whose father had been a mason (11, 14). Tusquets herself

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<sup>216</sup> Please refer to section 4.2.1.3 for more detail.

<sup>217</sup> This refers to Tusquets herself, her brother and her mother and father.

does not position herself clearly in relation to Juan Tusquets because at the time of his politically most active years she was still too young to fully understand the significance of what Juan Tusquets was doing and her relationship with him was primarily personal (149). What Tusquets relates about Paul Preston's research into her family is therefore mostly only commented on in her autobiography, which suggests that Tusquets does not dispute the political past of her family (149). Preston's research also outlines just how closely the family was connected to the Franco regime and how far to the Right her family positioned themselves (150).

Tusquets' own relationship to religion had been, according to her, a very individualistic and personal one (Tusquets 2007a 247, 248). She spent a few months working for an old people's home that was run by nuns during her late teenage years. During those months Tusquets found herself in an emotionally volatile state, suffering from heartache after a breakup with José (237).<sup>218</sup> As she continued working at the *Cotolengo del Padre Alegre* she became friends with one of the nuns and after many conversations about religion and God, Tusquets agreed to enter into a convent to complete some spiritual exercises (238, 246). This however was much to her mother's dislike, who accused her of becoming 'una rata de sacristía' (Tusquets 2007a 244). Even though she only stayed a few days and left early because she was suffering from its oppressive atmosphere, she remained, until her death, an avid reader of the gospel and a practising Catholic who is fascinated by the figure of Jesus Christ (247, 248).

#### 4.2.1.6 The Psychological Effect

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<sup>218</sup> See page 217 for more detail.

The psychological effect that Millett refers to is 'the interiorisation of patriarchal ideology' (Millett 1971 54). In Franco's Spain this interiorisation has taken place in two significant aspects: the first refers to women's belief that motherhood and career are not compatible and that motherhood demands self-sacrifice the way that the role expectation of the ideal woman requires it.<sup>219</sup> The second is closely linked to the former and relates to the constitution of femininity.<sup>220</sup>

The following section will now look at the validity of femininity in patriarchal theory.

#### **4.2.2 A Falsely Perceived Gender Identity**

This section also provides further context for 4.3 in addressing the notion of femininity in the Spain of the 1980s.<sup>221</sup> It attempts to outline answers to some of the most fundamental questions on femininity that have been researched and discussed in the XX century and led to a revolution in its definition.

When in the beginning of the XX century, Sigmund Freud argued that woman's intellectual, physical and psychological shortcomings were the result of biology (Salzman 1973 203); his reflections only seemed to reinforce prominent patriarchal knowledge. It only became clear in the 1930s that limited factual, theological and cultural knowledge were to blame for such apparently misogynist opinions (202, 203)

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<sup>219</sup> I will cut my elaboration short here because the issue at hand will be argued in detail in section 4.3.

<sup>220</sup> Please refer to the subsequent section 4.2.2 for more detail. 4.2.2 discusses the validity of the classic patriarchal notion of femininity outside the patriarchal framework and in the light of biological and cultural research and influences. This section is deliberately brief because the points discussed will be taken up again in more detail in the following sections. The aim of section 4.2.2.6 was merely to draw a connection between the effects of the Francoist regime, patriarchal theory and Tusquets ideological development.

<sup>221</sup> The analysis will focus on its most influential thinkers since the 1900s because they are most relevant to the study of Tusquets' novels.

and Freud himself receded on his previous stance on femininity. He admitted that his knowledge was 'incomplete and fragmentary' while also at times unfriendly (1971 135). He also conceded that a woman should be studied in her own right and that he was currently unable to answer any further questions that exceeded women's biological functions (135). While Freud concentrated on the psychoanalytic implications that biology had on the individual, concessions like these, illustrate the great mystery that still surrounded women in the 1930s and beyond.

Concessions like Freud's were rare and surely had a powerful effect at the time, but the intellectual's lack of information did not undermine the uncontested superiority of men. The person that succeeded at it was Mary Jane Sherfey. When she published her findings on female sexuality in 1966, the results threatened to fundamentally rock the patriarchal system's principles. The findings revealed, among other things, that 'women's inordinate orgasmic capacity did not evolve for monogamous, sedentary cultures' (Sherfey 2000 276) and that the pre-civilised female, 12 000 – 18 000 BC, enjoyed a polygamous sex life (277). Biology further proved that in fact 'the penis [was] an exaggerated clitoris, [that] the scrotum [was] derived from the labia major, [and that, therefore] the original libido is feminine' (Salzman 1973 208). The latter specifically makes the female sex primal. Before these findings became common knowledge the consensus usually was that women were 'biologically inferior to the male' (Salzman 1973 213). Women possess 'a more labile nervous system and a more responsive autonomic system' (Salzman 1973 213), that allows them to deal more effectively with the many typically female physical indispositions such as menstruation, pregnancy and childbirth (213). With hindsight, Freud's mistake was to link biological with psychological findings and psychosexual evidence with an individual's character structure disregarding entirely that women's apparent weaknesses may have partially

sprung from social conditioning (204). As such these biological misconceptions were carried over into the cultural domain. The overpowering pressure exerted by patriarchy, the lack of critical evaluation of these assumptions and the lacking contestation from the female population eventually led to them becoming facts and were received in society and culture with a total disregard for the validity of femininity divorced from the accepted norm.<sup>222</sup> It is this attitude that leads me to argue for erroneously perceived gender identity. This is particularly well reflected in the Spanish case because they have appropriated the intellectual, sexual and emotional restrictions placed on women and consequently they have mistakenly defined them as feminine.

Gender identity plays an essential role in any individual's life and particularly in the case of women because it confers disadvantages such as the social restrictions placed on girls' and young women's sex lives during the 1950s in Europe and the United States (Thompson 1973 72). Women were treated differently than men and its reasons appeared to have been propagated by biological misconceptions that were then accordingly enforced in the cultural realm (70). Until the onset of puberty they were able to follow their own interests and were free to play with boys and enjoy an equal status with them, when puberty set in, this was radically taken away and they became men's inferior counterparts (74). Particular care was taken that they did not expose themselves inappropriately in public or to romantic rejection. Their sexual development was observed closely, because a single account of unwanted pregnancy was powerful enough to ruin the entire life of a girl and her family. As a result girls were taught that menstruation was something they should be ashamed of and sexual overtures were

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<sup>222</sup> This point presents a connecting axis for the argument on the significance of psychoanalysis for women, which is discussed in the introductory section 2.2. In the light of this section the argument is valid insofar that it concedes to women the freedom and space to discover who they are outside of the patriarchal framework. It is also a significant argument in relation to Tusquets, who had defined herself outside of the same, as section 4.3 will argue.

something they were to deny at all cost (74). Thus they did not look favourably upon becoming a woman, because it implied the loss of freedom.

Today however, due to the changes that the last sixty years have brought, it has become clear that the old notion of femininity is out-dated and that its propagators had been culture and not biological predisposition. For the better part of the XX century feminine personality traits were mistakenly considered to be narcissism, emotional neediness, a rigid mind set, a 'weaker superego' and a passive and masochistic attitude in relationships with others (Thompson 1973 75, 76). But in the light of scientific evidence innate femininity or masculinity appear unfounded. Nevertheless, Nancy Chodorow does argue for 'a sense of femaleness and maleness' (1989 182) that is constituted in the first years of the child's life (182), but this appears to bear no resemblance with the patriarchal definition of innate femininity/masculinity. Instead, Simone de Beauvoir's famous words apply more than ever 'one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman' (1997 295).

With the knowledge that gender identity is no longer dependent on biological factors, the influence of interpersonal ones takes on increasingly more relevance. Excluding biological factors such as sex and sexual preference, it leaves object relations and self-perception as equally influential factors in determining a woman's femininity (Chodorow 1989 182). By taking account of the influence that object relations have on the development of gender identity we embark on a discussion of the importance of psychoanalysis, the various theories that constitute it and its numerous possibilities.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> I would like to refrain, at this point, from exhaustively discussing the importance of psychoanalysis in regard to women's development and refer back to the introduction of chapter 2 instead concentrating on the relationship between mother and daughter, as well as the 'Other' within object relations theory.

The mother-daughter relationship is regarded as the most important in female development.<sup>224</sup> The mother's image functions as a role model for her daughter and mirrors femininity. Consequently the daughter learns all that she knows about herself and more from this first relationship. In essence, the theory sees the relationship of the self with others, such as the primary caregiver, as the most influential in the development of the self. It assumes that when primarily her mother parents a girl she develops a different perception of her gendered self and identity (Chodorow 1989 184). I do not entirely agree with this because it suggests that should primarily her father parent a girl, she would develop decidedly masculine characteristics. I, however, agree with the following Chodorow argues:

Through their early relationship with their mother women develop a sense of self continuous with others and a richly constructed, bisexual, Oedipal-oscillating-with-pre-oedipal inner self-object world that continuously engages unconscious and conscious activity: 'The basic feminine sense of self is connected to the world'. [...] They grow up with the relational capacities and needs, and psychological definition of self-in-relationship. (1989 184)

Although one would rather argue for a meaningful and steady relationship, between mother and daughter, than exclusive interaction in their younger years. This is because I believe, as Smith and Watson do, that it is the mother, who introduces the daughter into a world of fluid ego boundaries and who teaches her how to relate to the world providing her with a model on how to interact with herself and others later in life (1998 16, 17). The mirroring that takes place between mother and daughter illustrates the 'possibilities of becoming' (Stanton 1998 138) more than she is now (138). This is

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<sup>224</sup> Please refer back to section 2.2 to find out more on the developmental connection between the mother and the daughter.

significant for her self-perception later. However, it is also a very fragile situation for the young woman to find herself in because qualities such as empathy, nurturance, affiliation and relatedness are also considered decidedly feminine in patriarchal culture and have been belittled and distorted when compared to masculine faculties, as Miller argues (Chodorow 1989 185). Patriarchal influence has distorted femininity and destroyed women's belief in the value of their own sense of femaleness and thereby indirectly forced them to assimilate to a more masculine approach if they seek success and acceptance outside the domestic sphere.<sup>225</sup> This is not a bad change *per se* as long as it is a natural consequence. This previous point however, suggests that women need to behave like men if they want to be successful.<sup>226</sup> It has led to women believing that femininity is always less than masculinity and exclusively what patriarchy dictates it to be. One can thereby re-trace the significance of behavioural conditioning that takes place during childhood and the effect it has on the individual's subsequent development.<sup>227</sup> But identity also relies on other variables, as Charles Taylor affirms in his article 'Ursprünge des neuzeitlichen Selbst' (1995). Identity is composed of three aspects: morality, individuality and group pressure.<sup>228</sup> This means, that within the moral continuum, a woman's identity is defined according to the principles that she chooses (11). But the definition *per se* is volatile and remains subject to repeated revisions throughout her lifetime depending on her experiences (11). In this sense, it is similar to Kristeva's theory of SIP.<sup>229</sup> Femininity and what constitutes it, remains a personal

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<sup>225</sup> This relates to two arguments that will be made in section 4.3. Firstly, that the distortion of femininity has been encouraged by denying women to learn of their own history and secondly the fact that a more masculine approach in women has been actively discouraged.

<sup>226</sup> I prescribe to the belief that gender identity is becoming more fluid over the years and this is also what I argue in 4.3. There is no longer and should no longer be a decided distinction between what is male and female. In spite of this, I cannot actively escape the terminology of femaleness and maleness.

<sup>227</sup> It also provides answers to a later argument in section 4.3 that women have come to believe that family, career and self-fulfilment are mutually exclusive.

<sup>228</sup> For reasons of relevance this note will only include morality and individuality because they relate directly to the example.

<sup>229</sup> For more detail please refer back to Chapter 2.

experience and one that is different for every woman. Taylor's theory presents a bridge that connects Kristevian discussion on identity, with Foucault's argument of morality and sexuality, and it also outlines how individuality is important in regard to identity formation, even though it does not take particular account of female identity, which may at times make its application here more difficult, but not less valid. Taylor's approach to identity is different from Kristeva's, I believe, primarily, because Taylor is a man and looks at identity from a male perspective.<sup>230</sup> Although Kristeva is not particularly feminist in her thinking, I still consider it significant for women's identity constitution to concede validity to Carol Hanisch's statement that 'the personal is [still] political' (2006 4). What can be said about Kristeva's theory is that it is centred on the female individual, while Taylor's seeks a collective perspective of the world as a whole, which obviously includes men, who are different from women. Taylor proves the typical distinction between men and women 'women are concerned with the context, while men are forever trying to ignore it for the sake of something they can abstract from it' (Juhasz 1978 664). For feminist critics Taylor's approach is tricky because 'others' always includes men and it is men's acceptance of women that feminist criticism often wants to escape from. Nevertheless, his approach is not less valuable especially if we argue for the dissolution of gender characteristics that patriarchy has solidified over the years. So in my opinion Taylor's theory disposes of relevance for feminism because he affirms that for an identity to become valid, the individual's chosen identity has to first be acknowledged by "*bedeutsamen Anderen*" (significant others) (1995 15), which finds application for feminists too and eventually also includes men. While he concedes that it must first be acknowledged by oneself and can be valid even when it is divorced from common norms, identity is nevertheless, never totally at the individual's discretion (13,

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<sup>230</sup> With this viewpoint I do not mean to be depreciative of his efforts. I would merely like to suggest what Stanford-Friedman has already pointed out 'that woman forgets far less often the fact of being a woman than the man of being a man' (Stanford-Friedman 1998 72, 75).

14, 15). I agree with this, because if we are to talk of the collective acceptance of an identity and all the definitions and conditions it encompasses, such as the acceptance of women's work outside patriarchal guidelines in Catalan upper-class society, we cannot ignore a group so significant, although so oppositional, as men and their view point. My argument here is therefore for a margin of error for both sides and some leeway in the re-definition of female identity outside of patriarchal restrictions. But before this can be the case, identity must be accepted and real to the woman who claims it. This is, I believe, the advantage that Kristeva's theory has over Taylor's within this specific context. This is because it is a theory that engages extensively with the female individual. It discusses in detail the events in the individual's life that solidify or weaken her identity and allow for the individual to know herself. Taking into account the strengths of Taylor's theory, it confirms the effectiveness of the official Franco propaganda to re-define femininity after the II Republic with the help of political discourse, laws and media illustrations where deviations from the norm were regarded as 'unfeminine'. Therefore, while I concede that individual identity may not need to be approved by all humankind, the question of the constitution of femininity however does need approval within the societal framework where it finds its application. And in the Spanish case this was within its government and society.

Society plays a significant part in constructing and enforcing the obstacles that women encounter on the road to emancipation. And while scientific evidence has done away with the preconceived notion that women are the 'weaker' sex, it still remains undisputed that these attitudes continue to exert influence on women and society. Elaine Showalter refers to a criticism by Gerald Massey from 1862 that still appears fitting in illustrating the discouraging attitude that ambitious women met with in the 1940s and 1950s: 'it is very doubtful if the highest and richest woman can ever be unfolded in her

home life and wedded relationships, and yet at the same time blossom and bear fruit in art or literature with a similar fullness' (Showalter 1982 76). While there is clearly a gap in time of one hundred years between Thompson's observations and Massey's opinion, in reference to the Spanish case, Massey's attitude is not as far off the mark as it may have been for the rest of Europe or America and it has been incorporated for this reason. During the 1940s and 1950s in Europe and the United States, it resulted most difficult for women to admit that they were not entirely fulfilled with being housewives and that they still possessed the imaginative talent and drive to accomplish something independent from their family. But in the Spain of the 1940s and 50s this was not only a given fact of mutual exclusivity, for many women it was unthinkable. It may therefore explain why women in Spain thought, for a long time, that a career or any other professional undertaking was unrealistic and not worth their time. And, as this section has outlined, the dictatorship has greatly impacted Spanish women's mind-set in this regard.

The following section engages with the character of Tusquets and analyses the author within the context that this introductory section has provided.

### **4.3 Esther Tusquets Through the Eyes of Patriarchy**

This is an extension to 4.2, which has looked at Tusquets' experiences under the influence of the Franco dictatorship. This section now looks at Tusquets' ideological mindset in regard to the most fundamental issues of womanhood such as role

expectations, motherhood, career, individuality and solidarity and how she had applied her convictions in her own life.<sup>231</sup>

The first argument concerns women's behavior and the corresponding role expectations and situates Esther Tusquets in this same context.

### 4.3.1 Role Expectations

4.2.1.2 has looked at the expectations of women's role and behaviour under Franco, now we will look more closely at how Tusquets had dealt with these in her own life.<sup>232</sup> This section will show an individualistic woman, who contributes to a new model for femininity after Franco and towards the XXI century. Tusquets had outlined personally in one of her autobiographies:

Ahora ha llegado la vejez, que, no entiendo por qué, me ha pillado desprevenida, [...] y que intento vivir a mi aire, sin atender a normas ni formalismos, sin pretensiones de respetabilidad, disfrutando con voracidad y sin vergüenza de los placeres que restan.  
(Tusquets 2009 157)

And asked in an interview with Marcia Morgado, whether she believed she had lived her life in her own way she responded:

Sí, no creo que nunca haya renunciado a algo que me pareciera prometedor por sacrificarme a otra cosa, o sea no hubiera sacrificado los hijos al trabajo, ni el trabajo a

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<sup>231</sup> This section can also be regarded as a particular case study on Tusquets analysing the psychological effect briefly introduced in 4.2.2.6. This is because the themes addressed here appear particularly relevant in regard to what Kate Millett has called 'the interiorisation of patriarchal ideology' (Millett 1971 54).

<sup>232</sup> This section 4.3 will look not solely at Tusquets' life from 1940s – 1960s but will also consider her life experiences to date.

los hijos, ni los hijos a los perros, ni los perros a los amigos. No he sacrificado nada por nada. (Morgado 2007 5)

Starting off with this admission of Tusquets personally, it becomes clear how greatly her attitude contrasted with that of the 'ideal' woman of the 1940s, as portrayed in 4.2. But more importantly it illustrates individuality, the ideological independence from convention that Beauvoir, French, Lerner and Millett address in their works.

Ultimately, a woman in her mid-seventies made these statements by Tusquets. As an adolescent this was, of course, a different story and discrepancies in this respect are therefore easily observed when it comes to love and sexuality. As has already been outlined in 4.2.1.2, the Spanish youth's decided lack of information led to numerous disappointing idealisations that reality could not meet (Torres 2002 78). Torres relates that women's sexual repression was driven by the belief that the Spanish woman's seductive aura 'daba miedo [...] con sus piernas, sus senos, sus sobacos, sus espaldas y su conciencia' (Torres 2002 75). The consequences were strict behavioural guidelines, whose personal implementation into a real-life context, Tusquets described in the following quotation:

En mi estilo romántico-adolescente, una mujer enamorada debía hacer lo posible por cubrir el ideal con que sueña su caballero. Y yo lo tenía de veras difícil. No era especialmente guapa [...] y, para colmo de males, ni siquiera era ya virgen, lo que me situaba en un terreno muy próximo al de las furcias. Impresentable. (Tusquets 2009 104)<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> This argument is closely related to the Spanish woman's desire to please that will later be referred to in this section.

The requirement to remain a virgin until one was married was a further stumbling block and refers to the cult of virginity discussed in 4.2.1.2. This played the sexual responsibility right into the hands of women.<sup>234</sup> While this move was very characteristic of patriarchy (French 1985 561, 562), it was experienced differently according to mentality, social class or political orientation and Tusquets exemplified this very well through her experiences (Torres 2002 78). While families of the Left usually disposed of more information and liberty (Torres 2002 78), Tusquets related that in Barcelona in the 1960s, all people she met with and maintained contact with were progressive, very liberal and almost all 'defensores del amor libre' (Tusquets 2009 107, 108). In the *gauche divine* group 'el sexo era uno de los juguetes preferidos' (Tusquets 2009 108).<sup>235</sup> This explains how Tusquets came to write a novel like *AJS*, which illustrates this very statement that defines the *gauche divine* – a group of people that all felt that 'hacer el amor libremente, sin barreras, todos con todos' (Tusquets 2009 108), was its ultimate objective and where many carried a list in their pocket with the names of all the people that they had been and still wanted to be with, including people of their own sex (108). This information shows the stark contrast between the different social classes as well as the accentuated double standards apparent in society between what is 'expected' and what is actually 'done'. The liberty that Tusquets described is also apparent in her very first sexual encounter. She was twenty-four years old when she lost her virginity on a business trip with a work colleague. At that point, she related, she had already left religious and moral taboos behind her and the only thing that still prevented her from indulging in the experience was her fear of becoming pregnant (88). The event and the

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<sup>234</sup> Please refer to 4.2.1.2 for more information on this phenomenon for Tusquets' experiences do not reflect this here.

<sup>235</sup> The *gauche divine* group was a social group, composed of intellectuals. People, who belonged to this circle were often renowned for being less than conservative in their intellectual and political thinking, sexual practices and gender roles. It was a group that was active in the later 1960s and early 1970s and coincided with a time of change and upheaval in the social structure of Spain (Stovall 2009 89).

motivation behind it were neither romantic nor premeditated and occurred with someone whom she believed to be a womanizer (88). Tusquets' understanding of her affair with Oriol Maspons is succinctly paraphrased in the following quote: 'me enamoré de Oriol, [...] como era previsible. Casi diría inevitable' (Tusquets 2009 90). With this she related to the attitude of Spanish women of the 1960s and before. Young women then, had received a very precise 'sentimental education' via cinema illustrations and novels (90) which instructed them that 'para nosotras cualquier sentimiento, cualquier experiencia compartida con un hombre, era amor' (Tusquets 2009 91). Encouraged by her mother's identical point of view, sex without love became degrading and a thing of animals and Tusquets consequently had concluded that she must have been 'in love' (91). Another perspective was not acceptable because physical desire and erotic caprice were not proper for well brought-up girls and to be hidden at all cost (91). It is not hard to understand that as a result the notion of love was particularly hard to grasp for many women. And Tusquets had been no different from others in her younger years. Until well into her twenties, she believed that love could last a lifetime. It was only when she got involved with Oriol that her understanding of love and its connection with sexuality changed. She related:

Con Oriol, [...] comprendí que el amor tal como yo lo entendía [...] no podía durar para siempre. Y, por otra parte, empecé a sospechar que algo en mí me incapacitaba para transformar este amor delirante y total en otro tipo de sentimiento más sosegado.  
(Tusquets 2009 125)

For Tusquets, this relationship presented a turning point in understanding herself, love and sexuality. It marked a transformation that she described as 'una etapa de experimentación. Buscaba la emoción de las aventuras, el placer del amor, pero también

pretendía, a través de experiencias nuevas, ampliar mis conocimientos sobre los demás, sobre mí misma, sobre [el] sexo' (Tusquets 2009 123, 124). This was an attitude she related as habitual in young men of the 1960s, but not in women of the time 'al menos en mujeres como nosotras' (Tusquets 2009 124). And with this she referred to girls of the upper classes, who were well educated. She conceded that her way of looking at love and sexuality appeared masculine to her at the time and that this resulted difficult for men to understand and assimilate (124, 125):

Estaba convencida de que la muerte significa la bajada definitiva del telón, resultaba que los humanos sólo disponíamos del espacio que estábamos viviendo aquí y ahora [...] y me parecía importante acumular el máximo de experiencias, de conocimientos, de intensidad. Descubrí, [...] que, [...] yo preferiría, [...] no la felicidad, sino la intensidad. (Tusquets 2009 126)

As *Confesiones* shows Tusquets had many affairs during her time with Oriol, but also afterwards, in spite of various relationships (Tusquets 2009 126). This seemed to imbue her with an objective and realistic view of life, love and sexuality that seemed unusual for a woman in those times.<sup>236</sup> For her, love always carried an expiration date (141). A seemingly rational remark, that however, is not as deprived of emotion as it appears. Rather it originates from the intellectual understanding that love, the way it is conceived in the beginning of a romance, cannot be sustained indefinitely. It testifies to Tusquets' courage to admit to herself, and to the public that the conventional notion of a life-long union is not something that she aspired to or believed in.

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<sup>236</sup> Please refer to section 4.2.1.2 on how affairs of women were treated during these times and the double standard that applied to men and women of the upper classes equally.

### 4.3.2 Motherhood and/or Career?

Aside from the consideration of the socio-political circumstances of the 40s and 50s, her career also showed Tusquets as a person, who forged her own path and embraced unconventionalism. My impression is foremost solidified by her being one of the first women in Spain to head a publishing firm and eventually two. This was once more unusual for the time, although it had become more common by the time that Tusquets entered the labour market.<sup>237</sup> One must also mention that the decision to forbid women from working had the consequence of making them financially dependent on men and thereby impacted on the relationship and its power structure (French 1985 561). This is because when women are allowed access to education and to work, one of two previously unrivalled power sources for men are threatened to become eroded (Lerner 1991 272). This in turn signifies that the relationship between the sexes becomes increasingly equal.

A recent career research project entitled *Vienna career panel project – change in managerial careers?*, shows how changes in a society's power balance can manifest in more equally distributed gender characteristics between the sexes (Bauer 2010 K1).<sup>238</sup> The result of this study suggests that power relations are re-distributed on a more equal basis, but concentrated power, as it still stands, remains in the hands of men and the patriarchal institutions for the most part (Millett 1971 43) and this was certainly the case during the dictatorship. Jobs and careers in the sciences, technology and business sectors were almost exclusively male and visibly reflect a predatory and aggressive masculine personality (43). This may furthermore explain why it was so unusual at the

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<sup>237</sup> The reason for it being uncommon is related in section 4.2.1.4 in detail.

<sup>238</sup> Unfortunately the study lacks a Europe-wide scope and only uses a graduate sample of the *Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien* graduates and polytechnic institutes (*Vienna Career Panel Project 2000 25*). But it nevertheless shows that such changes can have a significant effect on sex stereotypes and this is the reason I have included it here; it acts as an illustration.

time for Tusquets to run a publishing house. Nevertheless, the before-mentioned fact is not necessarily condemnable because patriarchy is a natural social constitution in all societies. The only issue that makes patriarchy doubttable is the degree with which it is used to make women submissive (Dux 1997 358). Additionally, as a natural consequence of patriarchy, almost every woman has at least one 'grand man' in her head that encourages and pushes her to achieve more (Lerner 1991 281) and this may explain why women assimilate so well to the masculine way of doing business (Bauer 2007 K1). The research results of the *Vienna career panel project* show that an aggressive 'masculine' personality is still relevant in the new millennium. What the article by Bauer unequivocally voices is that demonstrating masculine characteristics such as being unrelenting, immune to high pressure and ruthlessness are particularly beneficial in achieving professional success (Bauer 2007 K1). So for the first time in women's historical development, their empathic abilities facilitate her emancipation and the consciousness that emerges in relation to her 'self' and her insight, represent new ways of perception and change (Lerner 1991 273) in the professional world. This stands in stark contrast with José Antonio Primo de Rivera's opinion in the early XX century, that Catherine Davies quotes 'real feminism should not consist in women wanting to carry out men's roles, [...] but in imbuing themselves increasingly with the human and social dignity of feminine roles' (Davies 1998 178). Or with what the Catholic Church in the 1940s and 1950s defined as being 'el corazón, la intuición, el instinto [...] la abnegación, la humildad, la piedad, el espíritu de sacrificio y la entrega a los demás' (Folguera-Crespo 1997 529). The previous study's conclusions stand in opposition to the distribution of power according to Franco's *nacionalcatolicismo*. In fact, they suggest a new model of femininity towards the XXI century and Tusquets presents a reflection of this 'new woman' who re-defines femininity according to her own

convictions. She possessed an out-spoken and controversial tone that is reflected in her newspaper articles and novels. Her most notable ones, in this respect are *PSM* and *AJS*, because, in these, she questioned and commented on habitual opinions and convictions of Spanish life during the later part of the XX century. Ultimately, Tusquets appeared to appreciate an emotionally and rationally balanced approach to life and its problems. This proved her insightful assessment of Adela Turín's character, who she admired for her mixture of intelligence, structuralism, rationality and emotion:

[Adela es] una de las personas más inteligentes, más creativas y más suyas que he tenido la suerte de encontrar. Detecta el índice más alto de ideas por minuto imaginable. Un nivel de exigencia elevadísimo. Una visión personal de casi todo (sin que se lo proponga ni lo sepa). Dice, con vocecita inocua y educada, verdades terribles. A veces es agotadora, a veces te parece dura y te asusta lo que tomas por intransigencia. Pero luego descubres su delicadeza, su eficacia para cuidar de ti cuando estás mal o la necesitas, su capacidad para comprender en la práctica lo que en el plano teórico no aceptaría jamás, la exacta proporción de inteligencia y de ternura que pone en la amistad. (Tusquets 2005 165)

Her leadership style reflected an emotional approach paired with a critical and rational component, which may have contributed to her success.<sup>239</sup> The following anecdote reflected Tusquets leadership style, indicating that she was well liked and commanded a workforce based on loyalty. Although the publishing firm that she ran was not focused on maximising profit (Tusquets 2005 163), on the day when there was supposed to be a national strike, the workforce came into work even after having voted to participate in the strike. Although they did not answer the telephone, all of them were there and

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<sup>239</sup> I say this because I personally admire her work for these very elements. Her writing style is emotional without being sappy, rational and matter-of-factly without being cold. To me, it has an edge I have not been able to find in another author yet.

working (163). This is an action that demonstrates an emotional connection and loyalty to the work place and their boss. And incites me to conclude that, within Lumen, the work ethic successfully met with an empathic leadership style, which may have further been supported by having the freedom and luxury of editing 'lo que nos gustaba y de trabajar a nuestro aire. No menos que en otros lugares, en ocasiones más, pero a nuestro aire' (Tusquets 2005 163), as Tusquets affirmed. It ultimately also attested to her ability to lead. What adds to the argument is a curious fact: Editorial Lumen was the only publishing firm in Spain during the 1980s, which was run by women (161).

The above example showed Tusquets as a very progressive woman because, as she related, women, neither in the 1970s or today headed many firms. This relates in particular to publishing houses although, she concedes, that it is quite probable that it is replicated in many other sectors too because very few women reach positions above the glass ceiling and even fewer make it into the financial departments of companies (Tusquets 2005 161, 162). She further conceded 'cuando una editorial era llevada por una mujer, se trataba casi siempre de un negocio familiar o se debía a que alguien la había montado para ella. Era el caso [...] de las tres editoras que estábamos aquel día en la mesa' (Tusquets 2005 162). Women in such positions clearly presented a trust issue.<sup>240</sup> This, once more, illustrates unambiguously the double standard that patriarchy employed to hamper women's independence (Lerner 1991 268). The fact that Lumen was the only publishing house run by women points towards a prejudice in regard to women's professional capacity and intelligence. Tusquets thought that it resided in '[el] hecho de que muchos hombres se sienten incómodos y heridos en su vanidad si reciben órdenes de [mujeres]' (Tusquets 2005 161). Millett mentions how in time this double standard can even come to have a psychological effect on women; leading them to feel

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<sup>240</sup> Refer to section 4.2.2 and 4.2.1.4 for justifications that underline why patriarchy believed women were unfit for these responsibilities.

continually obliged to seek the approval of men for survival or professional advancement (1971 54). Particularly since it is very common for women to adapt to specific gender stereotypes in order to avoid disapproval and disdain (Lerner 1991 281).<sup>241</sup>

A further argument that is likely to illustrate Tusquets' unconventional personality is also of central significance in many women's lives. This is the concept of motherhood and the mutually exclusive notion that it propagates in regard to her career aspirations. It is a controversial topic for many to broach because motherhood and mothering are duties that patriarchy has deemed feminine (Davies 1998 178) and supposedly do not tolerate any other obligations on the side. According to patriarchy, women's greatest ability lies in their reproductive function, which presents the core of their existence. Consequently, women who may not desire to become mothers demonstrate a behaviour that deviates from the norm (Lerner 1991 35). This statement is believed to be true by many women and is as I believe in many cases the symptom of the psychological effect mentioned in 4.2.1.6. It is also underpinned by the argument that one cannot be good at two so significant tasks in one's life. Tusquets herself had contended for the validity of this point in her article 'Ser madre' (2006), where she quoted Beatriz de Moura, at one time her sister-in-law, who felt that for her this was indeed true. De Moura explained 'el dilema para mí siempre fue muy claro: el trabajo o ser madre. Creo que no hubiera sabido cumplir seriamente con las dos funciones. Tuve que elegir. Elegí el trabajo y ahora no lamento mi decisión' (Tusquets 2006 119). It is this belief of having to choose between one or the other that ultimately becomes the fundamental stumbling block that convention has established for women aspiring to a career. During the 1940s and 50s, working women were penalised by a loss of family

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<sup>241</sup> Please refer to 4.2.1.6 for more detail of its effect.

aid and working mothers were therefore entirely unthinkable (Folguera-Crespo 1997 528). During the 1960s and 70s, this attitude slowly started to change and the initial law that prohibited women from leaving the home before the age of twenty-five was increasingly ignored (Davies 1998 179). Nevertheless, society continued to attach a stigma to working mothers, the same way that it still occasionally does for stay-at-home fathers today.<sup>242</sup> And this in spite of it being scientifically documented that neither child nor mother experience any harm when the child is not raised by its mother but instead by its father. There is no hormonal or biological determinant that suggests a difference between motherly or fatherly love (French 1985 853).<sup>243</sup> In fact, taking part in child rearing would be beneficial for men because it would extend their horizon and would equally give women the chance to realise themselves in their private, professional and public life, as French argues (855). Lerner supports this view. She mentions research by E. O. Wilson that has established that our behaviour, and therefore also the aspects that concern mothering a child irrespective of the individual being male or female, forms part of our genetic make-up. These psychological and physiological characteristics are selectively developed and genetically selected according to the gender-specific social arrangement in our society (Lerner 1991 38), which incites me to conclude that active paternity should be encouraged.

On the issue of maternity, Tusquets did not follow the conviction of the masses. The author never really thought she wanted children, until one day she wondered why she should not. This hesitation to have children may have been influenced by her

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<sup>242</sup> Women's emancipation has re-defined men's traditional role within the family dynamic. Is it this revolution of traditional norms, which often results problematic for men. It also leads one to believe that this new situation may be hard to adjust to. Men's task in this time is one of re-defining themselves and their roles in relationships and family life with the added disadvantage of often truly being on equal footing with women in regard to education and personal ambition, as well as having to accept an actual down-grade in their power and influence (Johnen 1994 196).

<sup>243</sup> Additionally, it is not proven that being mothered is more advantageous or beneficial to the child than being raised by a group of selected people (French 1985 853).

ambivalent relationship with her own mother. When she did decide to have them, it was a swift decision, she related (Tusquets 2009 255, 256). In many ways Tusquets did not show the over-careful, sensitive and over-protective behaviour during her pregnancy that is often common to many women. She actually found this attitude rather bothersome and elaborated: 'como yo era una pedante y no tomaba en serio el número que se montaba en torno a las embarazadas, sus molestias y sus 'antojos' (me fastidiaba, eso sí, un montón que en la clínica me calificaran de 'primípara tardía' (Tusquets 2009 259). The author further recounted that it never occurred to her that her pregnancy might interfere with her work or cause sufficient upheaval in her life for her, to consider changing her daily routine in any way for a prolonged period of time (261). An attitude that she admitted may have been facilitated by the amount of times she had been told: 'tú puedes con todo' (Tusquets 2009 261). The fact that people in her surroundings believed her so capable is an unusual attitude in the Spain of the 1970s where women were still regarded as the inferior sex. However, Tusquets appeared as the best example to illustrate that sexual attributes are biologically pre-determined facts, while gender-specific role behaviour is a product of our historical development (Lerner 1991 40). So, in spite of suffering from physical exhaustion after two subsequent pregnancies (263), she still stated that:

Estoy absolutamente convencida de que la mujer debe compaginar su profesión y la maternidad, de que ambas son irrenunciables, aunque en algunos momentos no resulte fácil. Y, [si] me he reprochado a menudo no haber sido una buena madre [...] tengo presentes varias ocasiones en que les fallé [los hijos] y por las que me siento profundamente culpable, pero lo curioso es que no son éstas las que me echan en cara (ni siquiera las recuerdan), sino otras de las que yo no guardo memoria y que a veces juraría no son ciertas. (Tusquets 2009 261)

It is also telling that Tusquets should have ignored her own mother's influence facing motherhood. There are two possible reasons for this, which are not mutually exclusive. First, Tusquets may have simply been successful at what Rich argues all daughters think: 'I too shall marry, have children – but not like her. I shall find a way of doing it all differently' (Rich 1995 219) and, by becoming a mother herself, come to see her mother in a different light and with a renewed understanding (Rich 1995 220, 221). Just like Rich states 'the experience of giving birth stirs deep reverberations of her mother in a daughter [...] some daughters feel a womanly closeness with their mothers even where the relationship is generally painful and conflicted' (Rich 1995 220, 221). In such a way, it is quite possible that Tusquets felt different about her mother, after her own birth, as well as, feeling at peace with her, finally.

The author believed that a woman, who dedicates herself solely to motherhood, twenty-four hours a day, sacrificing her personal and professional life, will have difficulty being a good mother. She outlined that she feared that a self-sacrificing mother, who transferred the centre of her very being to her children would in turn expect to realise herself through her children, which would give rise to feelings of guilt, dependence and frustration in her children (Tusquets 2006 120). While this opinion was most probably published in the late 1970s, early 1980s, Beauvoir had already maintained a similar viewpoint in the 1950s, when she wrote that she believed that the child did not gain significantly more motherly love from a mother's excessive and devoted time spent only on him or her (1997 529, 530).<sup>244</sup> French agrees. She claims that collective child rearing benefits the child because it develops a stronger sense for community, solidarity and a decreased level of individuality, which cultivates reduced

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<sup>244</sup> The opinion that has been recited about Tusquets and motherhood could only be restricted to the timeframe from the late 1970s to 2006 since the book is a collection of articles that had been written between the 1970s and the 1990s. The book was then published again in 2006 with minor additions and modifications.

competition and the formation of less possessive relationships (1985 855). The following quotation provides a partial explanation for the conflicting relationship between maternity and career aspirations. Beauvoir puts women's situation and maternity in the appropriate socio-political context of the 1950s, but I believe that particularly the second half of these observations still remain true today:

The great danger, which threatens the infant in our culture, lies in the fact that the mother [...] is almost always a discontent woman: sexually she is frigid or unsatisfied; socially she feels herself inferior to man; she has no independent grasp on the world or on the future. She will seek to compensate for all these frustrations through her child [...] [she] makes herself the slave of her offspring to compensate for the emptiness of her heart and to punish herself for her unavowed hostility. Such a mother [...] gives up all diversion, all personal life, thus assuming the role of victim; and she derives from these sacrifices the right to deny her child all independence. This renunciation on the mother's part is easily reconciled with a tyrannical will to dominate [...] her displays of resignation give rise to guilt feelings in the child which often last a lifetime: they are still more harmful than her displays of aggression. (Beauvoir 1997 529, 530)

Comparing Beauvoir's opinion with Franco's *nacionalcatolicismo*, one is reminded of the stark contrast between France and Spain during the 40s and 50s. For Beauvoir the type of woman that Franco propagated disposes of great shortcomings in contrast to the one who has her own life and is not consumed by mothering, her husband and her home. She argued 'an independent woman – thanks to her solitary state, her freedom from care, or her authority in the house – will be much more serene in mind than one subject to domineering demands to which she must accede willy-nilly in forcing the child to accede' (Beauvoir 1997 529, 530). It therefore remains, and I agree with Beauvoir here, that 'a mother can have her reasons for wanting a child, but she cannot

give to this independent person [...] his own reasons, his justification, for existence' (Beauvoir 1997 514). It is the gift of preoccupation that a woman's career provides her with, and it is precisely this preoccupation that affords her child the necessary freedom for his or her development. And as this section illustrates, this is also Tusquets' perception.

The combination of motherhood and career is therefore still, a socially tricky topic, which has long remained stuck in an argument of biological and cultural proportions.<sup>245</sup> The main issue resides in gender, which dictates what is to be considered feminine and masculine. The co-existence of these two definitions provokes a battle between the sexes that leads away from the actual topic of motherhood and brings us closer to the more general topic of femininity and its constitution. There is no valid evidence that suggests that women are less capable than men and that joint goals of career and motherhood are unachievable, but patriarchy is threatened by this assumption because successfully combining these challenges also challenges the patriarchal power base threatening its entire structure and stability - a stability that is only held in place by what Millett calls 'temperamental distinctions' because patriarchy has no primal origin in human nature. Biological differences between the sexes have only been used by culture to shape behaviour (1971 26, 27).<sup>246</sup> But patriarchy obstinately insists that maternity, along with menstruation; pregnancy and menopause make women unsuitable for higher education and certain professional functions. It argues that these conditions are weakening and hindering obstacles that propagate illness and abnormal conditions that ultimately make women unsuitable to deal with the pressure that higher education and a profession will exert on them (Lerner 1991 37); assumptions that were also supported by Freud as 4.2.2 elicits in detail. Tusquets' case is a good example to help

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<sup>245</sup> These influences have been discussed in section 4.2.2.

<sup>246</sup> Refer to section 4.2.2 that discusses gender identity.

dispel such misconceptions. Her perspective illustrates that motherhood does not present the 'be all end all' of a woman's existence and professional potential. Her approach is not absolute, but maximises the achievement of both desires and formulates a fitting conclusion to this argument:

Reconozco que para mí siempre ha sido difícil renunciar a unas cosas en favor de otras y que no he superado por entero esa avidez adolescente que hace que lo quieras todo y que nada sustituya a nada. Pero ocurre que, en el caso de la maternidad y el trabajo [...], ambas cosas me parecen irrenunciables. (Tusquets 2006 119)

The following argument addresses the issue of female individuation, its implications in romantic relationships and the conflicts that cause a struggle of power between the sexes. French argues that limiting women to freely practise sex by enforcing prohibitions on contraception, abortion; the ostracism generated by having children when unmarried and the pressure to get married and have children make it unbecoming to work and raise them. It is also these pressures that turn a previously equal love relationship into a struggle for power (French 1985 562).

### **4.3.3 Individuality**

Among the many things that constitute individuation in a woman's life is the development of her own voice, as an opinion independent from external influences. Such a development is often problematic because opinions differ and cause friction and this had to be suppressed in Franco's Spain. In patriarchal societies female emancipation is particularly difficult because the three institutions of family, society

and state are interrelated and rule women by imposing their structure and rules, regardless of their opinion and convictions (Millett 1971 33). Franco was especially intent on this by enforcing a strong structural, bureaucratic and ideological framework through the *Falange* and the *Sección Femenina* (Folguera-Crespo 1997 535).<sup>247</sup> The thoroughly developed ideological education imparted by the *Sección Femenina* made it even harder for women to develop their own ideological mind set and thereby facilitated the imposition of patriarchal rule. However, the greatest obstacle for Spanish women was the element of status that dictated male superiority (Millett 1971 26), which came to represent the main stumbling block in women's quest for identity development because its premise was to disregard women's own perception of the world and its issues. The resulting dilemma is expressed by Tusquets in her article 'Cuando el placer de gustar a los demás se convierte en una obligación incómoda', which illustrates the unspoken rules to be observed by women when dealing with men:

Por lo general [...] no les gusta que les llevemos la contraria. Las mujeres no debemos crear situaciones tensas, incómodas, ni decir cosas provocativas. Y sobre todo – esto es primordial – nunca, nunca, en el curso de una discusión, debemos aplastar al oponente, sobre todo si se trata de nuestra pareja, a base de buenas razones y de lógica: una mujer no puede permitirse jamás la demostración – acaso involuntaria, pero incontestable – de que su compañero de unas horas o de toda una vida se está comportando como un majadero. (Tusquets 2006 41)

The quote illustrates the power constitution and the struggle that follows the moment a woman challenges her subordinate position.<sup>248</sup> It outlines patriarchy's desire to

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<sup>247</sup> Please refer to section 4.2.1.1 for more detail.

<sup>248</sup> This refers to a previous argument made in this section on knowledge being power and power also being knowledge and an educated and intelligent woman's potential to threaten a man with her ability to wield power over him (Millett 1971 42).

destabilise women's intellectual power and influence by demanding their undisputed submission. Millett elicits further examples of such behaviour when she relates how patriarchy assigned women behavioural guidelines, which today have become common stereotypes of what it means to be male or female. She further explains that these were dictated by what men deemed convenient in women as their inferior counterparts (1971 26). Tusquets related an anecdote in her article 'Algunos amigos las prefieren jóvenes y bellas, líricas y sumisas...' that successfully contends with the concept of female submission in patriarchy and what it means in a real-life context:

Cuando le pregunta [a un hombre] la cualidad que prefiere en la mujer, contesta: 'Si se la considera como ser humano, [...] la independencia; ahora bien, si se distingue entre uno y otro sexo, lo que prefiero en la mujer es la sumisión, pero no una sumisión triste, sino una sumisión alegre. (Tusquets 2006 46)

This example of the 'double standard' within patriarchal structure causes women intent on maintaining their relationships with men to feel obliged to view and treat men as those who hold all the power (Millett 1971 54), for if they did not, Tusquets related, women were hated for not accepting the male point of view as superior. But this presents a lose-lose situation because when the double standard is successfully evoked their submission earns them nothing but men's contempt in turn, as Tusquets elicited (Tusquets 2006 49). This point is also argued by French, who states that women appear to have two possibilities: either to dispose over a certain degree of freedom and be hated or dreaded by men for it or to be hated or dreaded but dispose of no power at all (1985 857). While French may have been justified to describe women as having no power at all, I disagree with her statement and lean towards Lerner's perception that women could always claim their own decisions, in spite of their freedom always being more

restricted than men's, this has remained so until today (Lerner 1991 265) and is also demonstrated in Tusquets.

Therefore, in accordance with the argument above, I argue that only some of the psychological effects of this oppression can be attributed to society. Tusquets had rightly spotted that women have a covert motivation and sometimes an innate desire to please (their) men. She further related that she was no different in her younger years: 'hice lo que pude, [...] Adelgacé un par de kilos, me unté la cara con unas cremas pringosas [...] fui a la peluquería [...] y permití por fin que mi madre me comprara todo la ropa que tuviera ganas' (Tusquets 2009 104, 105), all in an attempt to appeal to her lover (105). Therefore arguing for the origin of this desire to please becomes tricky. It appears partially to be conditioned through patriarchy but it also manifests as an innate and legitimate characteristic in women that catapults them into these circumstances. What is certain is that patriarchy can only function when women participate in it and honour these imposed restrictions (Lerner 1991 269), and that their participation is encouraged through indoctrination according to gender-specific expectations (269), as Tusquets argued in the following quotation:

El afán de ser aprobadas por los machos de su especie condiciona el comportamiento de una inmensa mayoría de mujeres. No dicen lo que piensan, ni tal como lo piensan: dicen lo que imaginan que ellos quieren oír [...] En muchas de las parejas que aparentemente funcionan, la mujer no tiene sencillamente opinión propia [...] porque hay que gustar a los hombres. (Tusquets 2006 40, 41)

Patriarchy also enforces distance between women by defining their (sexual) behaviour as honourable or deviant (Lerner 1991 269). This is because patriarchy still reserves an unrivalled monopoly in regard to defining norms and standards (272). The results can

be seen in Esther Tusquets, who admitted that in her youth, when her behaviour did not reside within the norm, she would lose sleep over it (Tusquets 2009 59). This suggests the already discussed desire for acceptance. While this never took on the extent illustrated in the previous quotation, she admitted that she was never 'una mujer entregada totalmente' (Tusquets 2009 219) and that this may have been the reason why her relationship with Esteban Busquets ultimately failed. What I would like to illustrate here is that the quest for individuality is not contained in becoming what others expect you to be but is contained in Tusquets' aspiration of becoming an indignant, old lady. This is not to be taken literally but can be better understood by connecting back to the mother-daughter relationship. What I would like to tentatively argue is that Tusquets' own motherhood may have contributed to closure regarding her own mother and a reconnection with her own history and a sense of determined individuality described in the following quote that describes the characteristics of the indignant, old lady in more detail:<sup>249</sup>

[Son] comprensivas, y tolerantes, y la indignidad a la que aspira[n] va contra muchas normas, es irreverente, insumisa, descarada, impertinente, a menudo políticamente incorrecta, pero no [les] autoriza a creer[se] en posesión de la verdad ni a mimar una imagen halagüeña de [ellas] mismas. (Tusquets 2009 312)<sup>250</sup>

As such, she disposes of the admirable characteristic that French classifies as a masculine principle: individuality (French 1985 142). While Tusquets may have been able to conserve her individuality not all women were as lucky to not feel impacted by outside circumstances. One such example is Tusquets' housekeeper, who was left by her husband. Tusquets explained that when he wanted to return, years later, the

<sup>249</sup> The argument about female history and patriarchy will be developed in section 4.3.4.)

<sup>250</sup> Please see section 4.3.4 for more detail regarding this argument for individuality.

housekeeper took him back only so she would be able to affirm, in front of her friends and relatives, that her husband had returned to her. This was because even in the 1980s a woman who was separated from her husband and of lower class or who did not have a man by her side was considered to be nothing (Tusquets 2009 277).<sup>251</sup> This was the typical attitude that resulted from a nation whose head of state proclaimed for 36 years that the duty of a woman was one of dependency and submission. Magazines affirmed that the life of every woman, whether she conceded to it or not, was nothing more than a continued desire to find someone who she could submit to (Folguera-Crespo 1997 528, 529). Of course, in time such indoctrination exerts sociological pressure on women and incites them to define their role in society accordingly. If they refused to adjust, the most common consequences were disadvantages in regard to education opportunities, regulation or open coercion by discriminating their access to financial resources or political power and withheld class privileges (Lerner 1991 269). Patriarchy demanded a code of conduct and outlined acceptable gestures and attitudes for each sex, which conditioned women according to its requirements. The consequences were that women were assigned their domestic and motherly tasks (Millett 1971 26), although, as section 4.2.2 has outlined, Millett rejects this view as Freudian 'biological essentialism' (Moi 2002 27) and French agrees by stating that motherly behaviour is learnt very early, which may explain why many believe that it is genetically programmed (1985 853, 854). With consideration of the struggles individuation poses, it may be argued that it is not worth the sacrifice. Particularly, when we consider that in the past women needed to decide between life as a woman, with friends, daily chores and routine or the life of a man with the pleasure of intellectual work and study. This choice was exceptionally cruel and women paid a high price for it (Lerner 1991 278). But not having to choose

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<sup>251</sup> See section 4.2.1.2 for more detail.

anymore has not solved the problem. Tusquets remarked that for a woman it remains difficult and exhausting to fulfil all demands put to her: the professional duties, the house chores on top of the expectation of always being pretty, good humoured, partying with her husband and fulfilling her 'wifely' duties (Tusquets 2009 151). Patriarchy pretends to solve this dilemma by suggesting that women move outside the patriarchal system. However, the consequence then to be contended with is much more severe because exit from the patriarchal school of thought can often cause women to be confronted with a sensation of 'existential nothingness'. This is particularly painful because it threatens the loss of communication, recognition and love from men in their lives. And as such, it has been a successful masculine method to discourage women from intellectual development (Lerner 1991 280, 281).

In spite of the evident struggle that individuation poses, Tusquets outlined the joy that ideological independence and individuality concede as 'acumular el mayor número de experiencias posible, sin otra finalidad que el placer de descubrirlas' (Tusquets 2009 169). Women's greatest challenge in their search for intellectual fulfilment is to leave behind their desire for security and approval, and to develop the most unfeminine attribute of all: intellectual arrogance (Lerner 1991 283). But this results difficult because women seek emotional dependency. They are relational in nature and seek a connection beyond the intellectual level (Chodorow 1989 184) and it is this feminine desire that causes women to attempt to live up to a fairy tale that Tusquets believed to be the perfect illustration of the exemplary masochistic characteristic that women have been taught by patriarchy to exalt in their relationships with men (Tusquets 2006 53). Thompson argues that it is this behavioural trait that has added to the condition of what are today considered typically feminine personality traits, which include a passive and masochistic attitude (1973 75). The fairy tale

mentioned is entitled 'Grisélida: virtuosa reina, perfecta casada, masoquista ejemplar' and speaks of the apparent unworthy virtues and moral inferiority of women (Tusquets 2006 53). The tale exalts women as lesser beings, who only by passing tests prove worthy and morally sound. For Tusquets the story was 'un ejemplo perfecto de misoginia, de la relación sadomasoquista entre hombre y mujer, de la imagen de pareja ideal que alimentan muchos varones y a la que muchas mujeres intentan, con mejor o peor fortuna – nunca con la sublime perfección de Grisélida-, adecuarse' (Tusquets 2006 53). While the author's standpoint was clear, she did, however, acknowledge that women's behaviour in relationships and in literature often suggested that women had a tendency to suffer for what they consider to be love. One need only recall the plot and subsequent conclusion to *EMM*, or the character of Elia in *AJS* and Elia in *VUN*. Elia suffers under Jorge's loss all through her marriage to Julio and later in her affair with Clara. Elia in *AJS* is no different, her prolonged states of depression and repeated affairs re-enforce her feelings of sadness and do not resolve it. And Elia in *VUN* struggles with the abandonment of her husband throughout the entire novel. There is a connection here to her personal life and her relationship with Esteban Busquets. Busquets had been suffering greatly from jealousy. Tusquets related here herself that she separated from Esteban just before she started writing *EMM* in 1978 (Tusquets 2009 313).<sup>252</sup> The reason for this separation was in fact his jealousy. I would like to make the observation here that this characteristic is common to every person who is in love, but that suffering for love is a characteristic that is exalted in women and thereby becomes a dominant role expectation, while this is never supposedly so for men. The following quote illustrates Tusquets' opinion in this respect:

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<sup>252</sup> A few months later he died of cancer and so did Tusquets' father (Tusquets 2009 316). These tragic events, of which the latter one was unexpected (316), may explain why suffering for love abounds in the trilogy.

Es [...] sorprendente hasta qué punto mujeres supuestamente liberadas, que nos enfrentamos al mundo con lo que a veces califican absurdamente de actitud viril, nos sabemos en el fondo de nosotras mismas tan propensas a la sumisión, tan vulnerables a los sentimientos de culpa, tan irremediamente masoquistas, tan tentadas a representar el papel de Grisélida. (Tusquets 2006 58, 59)

I do not dispute Tusquets' opinion here because it can certainly be observed and she was decidedly justified in voicing it by merit of her own experience. In her case it was Esteban who had been terribly jealous so that it eventually led to the demise of their relationship. Tusquets set herself apart from the norm here insofar that she was the one who did not want to be monogamous any longer. In *Confesiones* Tusquets conceded that their relationship had always been an open one from the start. When they first met their agreement was that they could have other lovers (2009 218). Their relationship was an unconventional one, from what Tusquets revealed in her autobiography; this, of course, for Tusquets related as much to women as to men (217). Seeing how her personal relationships were structured it may explain the transgressive content of the trilogy too. Nevertheless, as Esteban became older he was no longer willing to share his life partner with other suitors and his jealousy flared up. Of course, one cannot exactly argue that the circumstances and definition that the relationship underlay did not present an ideal breeding ground for jealousy. But paradoxically it was not the type of relationship that caused the upheaval. As Tusquets declared in the following quotation:

Había constatado que seguía queriendo muchísimo a Esteban, que me encantaría vivir a su lado hasta el final, que no podía imaginar pareja mejor, pero también había constatado que no estaba ya *perdidamente* enamorada de él. Y empezaba a entender que para mí, me gustara o no, sólo el enamoramiento comportaba la exclusividad, y que mis amores nacían con fecha de caducidad. Y sabía también que una de mis tres

graves limitaciones [...] era no poder separar el sexo del amor, de modo que, de surgir alguien – y claro estaba que iba a surgir -, no sería una aventura sin trascendencia, un placer circunscrito a una parte de mí, sino una historia desmesurada. (Tusquets 2009 204)

Given these circumstances and her love for Esteban, it took seven years for the two of them to separate (216), in which Tusquets admitted ‘caímos en una situación siniestra, en el tipo de indignidad que una vieja dama indigna no se puede en absoluto permitir [y] además de convertirme en una mujer mentirosa, me convertí en una mujer sometida’ (Tusquets 2009 217). Furthermore, judging from the intensity of their seven difficult years, one could also assume that it is highly likely that Tusquets used parts of her trilogy to vent or at the least write out her frustrations, particularly since she related these in the following quotation:

Por las mañanas, [...] Mercedes, Ana y Vida – me telefoneaba con cualquier pretexto para asegurarse de que seguía viva. Claro que seguía viva. Era impensable que Esteban me pusiera la mano encima. Pero sí me mantuvo noches enteras sentada por la fuerza en un sillón, escuchando sus insultos y sometida a un interrogatorio absurdo. (Tusquets 2009 215)<sup>253</sup>

#### 4.3.4 Solidarity and Friendship between Women

Feelings of solidarity build feelings of social cohesion and equality within a group and strengthen it as well as the individual. One way of doing this is by learning about one's own history. Patriarchy exerted power over women by hindering them to

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<sup>253</sup> Having outlined Tusquets' individuality, the following section discusses the importance she attributed to friendship between women and the feeling of solidarity between them.

learn of their own history (Lerner 1991 269). One of the origins of patriarchy's unwillingness to grant women access to their history may be found in the mother-daughter relationship. As Rich states, the relationship between mother and the female child has been understated and ridiculed in patriarchy because the intense bond between these two women is greatly threatening to men and has, among other things, led to the cult of the male child being valued above the female (Rich 1995 226). In turn, this suppression of female bonding and history is responsible for the internalisation of their own inferiority (271) throughout the 2500 years that it took to create the patriarchal system (263). The fact that women suddenly disposed of no history of their own meant that they had to accept the one given to them by patriarchy (276) and this meant their own fundamental downfall. This is because history has an important function, it allows people to recall their collective past and re-interpret the present accordingly. It allows them to define their potential and explore the borders of their capabilities. We learn from the past not only about the mistakes and actions others have made, but also about how they failed and were mistaken (273, 274). To know one's history means that revolutionary ideas can surface because the oppressed have been presented with alternatives that will revolutionise their future (275). Revolutionary thinking is always based on the appreciation of the oppressee's experiences (282).

The first highly consequential move of patriarchy was to exclude women from public life and this can be pinpointed as the origin of patriarchy's power potential and history, culminating in women having no influence over the development of the state and history (Dux 1997 364). Women's ignorance of their own history has led them to become 'invisible' in history because they cannot claim a place in it without having a clear understanding of it (French 1985 134). The re-integration of women into history, as Lerner argues, has only taken place in the XXI century (1991 280) and is still an on-

going process at which end we are still left to interpret the results it has yielded (274). However, the worst consequence of all is that it has hindered the development of solidarity between women (French 1985 134). Women feel obliged to represent their role and temperament according to patriarchal requirements (Millett 1971 26) often exhibiting high dependency on men. This meant that they were to stay at home and look after the children and rarely if ever had the chance to meet with other women alone. The only contact that was encouraged was with her children, her husband and family and occasional visitors. In these circumstances Tusquets argued that women often viewed fellow women as a threat to their relationships with men 'mientras en la vida de una mujer el primer mandamiento sea (como lo viene siendo desde hace siglos) seducir y agradar, esto la llevará a ser en cierto modo enemiga y rival de las otras mujeres, que pretenden también [...] ser atractivas y seductoras' (Tusquets 2006 95). For the argument of identity and intellectual development, this attitude is destructive because it renders friendship and solidarity between women impossible. Additionally patriarchal structure, which required women to stay at home, made the development of solidarity and peer cohesion even more difficult for women (Lerner 1991 271). Nevertheless, according to Tusquets, friendship between women should no longer constitute '[una] aventura[s] que parecía[n] reservada[s] durante siglos casi en exclusiva a los varones' (Tusquets 2006 97). Especially when it can be considered as something 'apasionante, magnífica, fecunda, [e] irrenunciable' (Tusquets 2006 97).

Solidarity and friendship between women as a group is the building block and supporting network that ensures their development and it starts at home with mothers and daughters. It is from a basis of solidarity that women can develop a profound understanding and appreciation of the situation of other women, which resides outside the 'please-seduce' scenario. Tusquets affirmed this herself: 'no sabría vivir sin

amistades femeninas, y me costaría mucho prescindir del ambiente relajado, entrañable, cómodo, divertido, que se da únicamente en las reuniones, en las comidas o en los viajes de mujeres solas' (Tusquets 2006 92) and she underlined this by stating that friendship was one of the few things she took seriously (2009 11). French also attests to this, by outlining that many documents, diary entries and letters are still found today that verify how important friendship between women has already been in the past (1985 134). Female solidarity will enable women to see themselves within other women's lives and identify with their situation and problems. This in turn will support them in finding their own voice and transform their relationships and lives. Increased participation in public life alone will not be sufficient to overturn out-dated patriarchal notions, but an increased historical consciousness may go a long way in the recognition that the world is constituted of both sexes and that their experiences, thoughts and insight must be represented equally (Lerner 1991 273) in all areas of life. Mere improvements in the legal realm only improve women's life style conditions and facilitate their emancipation but they do not change patriarchy and its fundamental constitution (269).

In spite of Tusquets' view that friendship is paramount, the trilogy lacks the element of female friendship except for *VUN*, in the friendship between Elia and Eva. But even in that instance the friendship takes a backseat to the love stories contained in the novel and Tusquets did not accentuate it particularly. What that meant to Tusquets is unclear, but it may simply have occurred because the focus of the novel was on love not friendship.

This section has outlined the socio-historical background in which Tusquets was brought up and elaborated on her family, childhood and adolescent experience. In so

doing, section 4.2 has established what femininity meant during the times of Franco and how it impacted women in general, with particular attention paid to Tusquets' identity formation process. The subsequent section, was then able to look more closely at Tusquets' development over the years and discussed how she dealt with the fundamental issues such as motherhood, career, individuality and solidarity in her own life. While, of course, some experiences should probably be regarded with a little skepticism, her opinions, do indeed, fully reflect her personal experiences, as related in her autobiographical works and other publications. And in my conclusion I have found that the same words, that Tusquets once used to describe Umberto Eco, can also be used to describe her:

Quedan – me parece a mí – pocas personas que sirvan como punto de referencia, que nos marquen una pauta a seguir. Eco es una de ellas: toma posiciones – comprometidas, honestas e independientes – ante los problemas que se plantean hoy en el mundo, y creo que ésta es la función más importante del intelectual en la sociedad, el máximo servicio que puede prestarnos. (Tusquets 2009 285)

My research into her persona has shown that in regard to individuality, ideology and personality, Tusquets took on much the same type of positioning as Eco. She challenged pre-conceived notions, traditional views, and honestly and courageously positioned herself within controversial arguments. In sharing her life experience, she guided others and at times functioned as a reference point.

## Conclusion

My research proposed to look at the question of identity formation in Tusquets' trilogy in connection with the author's personal development and maturation over the years.

My research has focused on the protagonists in Chapter 2 and 3. It was my intention to show a progressive increase of self-awareness from *EMM* to *VUN*. In the process my hypothesis has become confirmed. Joint analysis of *EMM* and *VUN* has revealed how both protagonists have struggled to maintain an emotional balance in their lives and have done so with different degrees of success with the latest publication achieving its most marked achievement regarding identity formation. It reflects a new perspective and presents an appraised reflection of all the varying degrees of identity formation that have been traced in this chapter. As previously outlined, for the purpose of my hypothesis I had assumed that Tusquets had on some level let the novels reflect her own personal experience. I then went on to analyse the protagonists diachronically between *EMM* and *VUN* to confirm that they had indeed progressed from the first to the last novel as well. I am convinced that this progression is a reflection of the author's own identity formation process as she was writing these novels over the course of four years. Further reasons supporting this assumption have been elaborated on in Chapter 4.

Returning to the specific result of the literature analysis of Chapter 2, the protagonist in *EMM* provides the beginning stage of individuation where the author, and thereby the protagonist, assert an initial sense of awareness. E. meets Clara and becomes infatuated with her marking the first indication of an alternative way of life to her marriage with Julio. She comes to realise that it is within her power to change how

she lives and, whom she loves but it is only this revelation and an increased sense of self-awareness that the protagonist takes away from this experience. As E. acknowledges responsibility for her own unhappiness, she becomes free and strong enough to make the choice of either staying with Julio or living with Clara. Ultimately the conclusion of *EMM* cannot hold what it promises and the protagonist eventually returns to Julio. The result is disappointing but of little significance in my hypothesis because of the recognition that she gains. Despite choosing to return to Julio, E. has recognised that she has the power to change her life and select a different outcome should she want to. Ultimately she does not but it is a conscious choice and it testifies to increased agency of the individual, thus marking the beginning of a different sense of self.

It is, therefore, only in *VUN* that the protagonist finds the courage to combine the previous character's shortcomings and failings. While clearly suffering from the abandonment of her husband, after a long and drawn out grieving process Elia, nevertheless manages to take her life into her own hands and cuts herself off from his influence. She has finally achieved emotional independence and identity. While there are also limitations to this novel as far as identity formation if the protagonist is concerned, the novel nevertheless strongly indicates a successful individuation process. This conclusion has been supported by Kristevian analysis, which identifies fourteen instances where Kristevian self-awareness is achieved in *VUN*, and only four in *EMM*.

In connection to Tusquets, here the interesting aspect that finds reflection in the protagonist's individuation is that only two years previously Tusquets had split from her life partner. Again, I am convinced part of her own developmental process after leaving Esteban had found its way into *VUN*. The particular circumstances surrounding their split can, once again, be found in Chapter 4.

Chapter 3 proposed to address the identity question, from the angle of sexuality. *AJS* and *CDC* addressed identity that originated from sexuality, eroticism, power and morality. Although Tusquets' second novel was fundamentally different in narrative structure, it keeps a similar story background and character descriptions to the other two. At first glance it seemed that it may be tricky to incorporate *AJS* into the thesis' overall theme of identity formation because the novels' main focus lay on sexual games, power struggles and triad relationships that appeared to have little to do with individuation. In spite of this initial stumbling block, closer examination of the topics that abounded in *AJS*, it soon became clear that this novel too would find resonance along with another, *CDC*. The chapter's underlying theoretical framework was that of Michel Foucault and Georges Bataille, which facilitated the interrelation between the more complex issues of sexuality, power and morality that the novels portrayed. And my research has shown that these concepts were needed for the individuals to develop identity and agency. The analysis of *AJS* and *CDC* has therefore exposed what has supported identity formation and what has limited it and confirmed that morality; emotional eroticism and positive power structures create an environment in which the protagonists could achieve personal development that facilitated agency. In contrast, Chapter 3 has also demonstrated that the absence of these factors resulted in a stagnant identity formation process that has been identified in *AJS*.

Ultimately, as far as Tusquets was concerned, this chapter could not be as easily connected to her personally. The autobiographic works may have been revealing in their content regarding Tusquets' romantic life, but aside from what she revealed about her lesbian affairs and one account of a threesome, which was very little and decidedly lacked specifics. Suffice it to say that indications for the novels being a reflection of her personal life were, nevertheless, given. It remains, however, unclear to date how far

these assumptions are justified. As far as the protagonists are concerned, the analysis of Elia paints an interesting picture of a protagonist that pursues an escapist strategy through sexual experiences. Her character in the book does not yield much in terms of identity formation. Nevertheless, by way of exclusion or negation, she provides an adequate example of the circumstances that hinder individuation and *CDC* is able to provide the contrast in this respect.

Chapter 4 addressed the author directly. Tusquets' recent wave of autobiographical publications had made it possible to re-address the novels in conjunction with her life by analysing factors such as love, sex, motherhood, career, solidarity, individuality and independence to get a better look at how far Tusquets' personal experiences had impacted on the storyline of her trilogy. To be able to determine this, the chapter looked at two fundamental questions: the definition of femininity according to patriarchal guidelines and the different key issues of womanhood in direct connection with Tusquets' own ideology. The first part framed Tusquets within the socio-historical circumstances of the time, separating Spain's socio-historical context into sections of ideology, biology, sociology, class, education, religion and psychological effect, and methodically evaluated Tusquets' background to determine the factors that had greatly impacted her development throughout the years. My research has confirmed that these factors influenced both her youth and her behaviour. By looking at gender identity and how patriarchy managed to so greatly influence femininity, it has provided an evaluative framework for the analysis of the author. The analysis, I looked at her personal convictions in regard to role expectations, motherhood, career, individuality, solidarity and her socio-historical background.

The first argument in this section revolved around women's behavior and corresponding role expectations. Here, Tusquets came across as a very individualistic

woman, who created a new model of femininity by re-defining it according to her own convictions. By addressing the author's perspective on motherhood and career and discussing, its, often, problematic connection for women, who desire to have both, it was confirmed that career and motherhood, although considered incompatible during the best part of the XX century, were both equally desired and undeniable objectives in Tusquets' life. Individuality was addressed in terms of the ideological development of one's own voice and the production of opinions independent from external influences such as society and men. Once more Tusquets' convictions, primarily extracted from her autobiographical works, confirmed that she stood her ground and was independent and strong enough to defy public opinion, whenever she considered the issue worthwhile. The fact that she did not subscribe to feminist views was an even stronger indication of her individuality. Particularly in connection with the subsequent point, on the solidarity between women. This is so because it takes a particularly strong individual to stand her ground independently from such an established movement, as the feminist one and the peer pressures that it entails. The last point that I addressed in my thesis was therefore about solidarity and friendship between women as a way of strengthening the social group 'woman' and by extension the individual. I investigated Tusquets' in relation to her understanding of the responsibility that women should acknowledge in learning about their own history, whose worst consequence has been the hindered development of solidarity between women, which made women as a group particularly vulnerable under patriarchal rule. In this respect, this thesis confirmed that Tusquets' attributes high importance and value to female friendships.

To conclude my research at this point here, and to once again, draw on the connection between the narrative and the author, I would like to remark that throughout my research, parts of Tusquets personal life had been traced in the novels. These

instances were many, even though subtle. Parallels have been remarked particularly in connection to the protagonists and the plot content. In this regard, I refer particularly to the life style choices of the protagonist. The lesbian encounters found in the novels as well as in Tusquets' life; her way of living love affairs seemed as intense and excessive as her literature described it; and her protagonist's love relationships appeared modelled on experiences in her own life. These variables were, merely, the framework that enclosed the most fundamental aspects of the novels, but in my opinion regarded collectively they were highly significant, although insufficient to draw up a whole argument that sustained the entirety of this thesis. Unfortunately, there was not much to be done about that, since Tusquets' trilogy can be considered auto-fiction and as such results particularly hard to separate and distinguish the fictional from the autobiographical. Nevertheless, Tusquets' admission of having incorporated personal experience in her fiction meant that it is auto-fiction. I never expected to find an entire overlap between her fiction and her real life or personality and indeed, this thesis proves that Tusquets' novels remain foremost fiction infused with auto-fictional elements but this thesis has succeeded at distinctly outlining the shape of the author behind the novels and that was the underlying purpose of it. And what I have discovered is that Tusquets challenged pre-conceived notions and traditional views and honestly and courageously positioned herself on controversial topics. In sharing her life experience, she guided others, and at times even functioned as a reference point. As proven by this thesis, the connection between the author and the protagonists is what made Tusquets' trilogy and personality unmistakably unique.

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