Women and Children First : Spanish Women Writers and the Fairy Tale Tradition

María Elena Soliño

WOMEN AND CHILDREN FIRST:
SPANISH WOMEN WRITERS AND THE FAIRY TALE TRADITION

In memoriam

Agustín Soliño (1935-1990)

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PREFACE

> A literary work can actually no longer be considered original; if it were, it could have no meaning for the reader. It is only as part of prior discourses that any text derives meaning and significance. (Hutcheon 126)

Intertextuality, the embedding of texts in other texts, is not an unusual phenomenon. Julia Kristeva writes of it as, "an insight first introduced into literary theory by Bakhtin: any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another. The notion of *intertextuality* replaces that of intersubjectivity, and poetic language is read as at least *double*" (1986, 37). The present study examines intertextuality in the works of the late twentieth-century Spanish novelists Carmen Martín Gaite, Ana María Matute, and Esther Tusquets. Although all three authors are sophisticated intellectuals, they have chosen surprising intertexts for their novels. These are fairy tales and texts from other marginalized genres such as *novela rosa* (Spanish romance novels) and the Hollywood Women's Picture, all of which were originally produced for female consumption. In addition, they have all published non-traditional and award-winning literature for children which revises many of the same intertexts that appear in their novels. Informed by feminist theory and recent critical studies of fairy tales and children's literature, I study the works of these authors as "gendered texts," since they engage with works that were primarily intended to educate their female target audience.

Alongside connections to the consecrated canon, in many of the works of Martín Gaite, Matute, and Tusquets, the magnetic pull of fairy tales remains a constant feature. The reader could not follow the plot of Martín Gaite's *La Reina de las Nieves,* Matute's *Primera memoria,* or Tusquets' *El mismo mar de todos los veranos* without first reading the most famous fairy tales of Hans Christian Andersen. Thus, their work raises three main questions. Why do women authors with vast literary educations choose texts such as *Peter Pan* and *The Little Mermaid* as their most recognizable intertexts? What effect has their constant reading of these texts from marginalized genres had on them as women trying to break into the male dominated literary world? And finally, how do these three novelists use intertextuality not in the banal sense of the study of sources, but rather as a means of exploring the elements that distinguish their texts from those of their male colleagues and make them

"feminine" texts?

Numerous feminist critics have explored the issue of whether a "feminine" text can exist. Do women write differently than men? Perhaps the most commented theory of literary gender difference has been the notion of *écriture feminine* which theorizes a practice through which the female body, with its different drives, structures and rhythms, is inscribed as text. Yet, this practice was proposed more as a utopian metaphor than as a description of actual textual production. As Hélène Cixous states, "with very few exceptions, there has not yet been any writing that inscribes femininity." Instead she finds in an "immense majority" of women writers "workmanship [which is] ... in no way different from male writing, and which either obscures women or reproduces the classic representations of women (as sensitive-intuitive-dreamy, etc.)" (878). Nancy Miller, on the other hand, affirms that, "If, however, we situate difference in the insistence of a certain thematic structuration, in the form of content, then it is not true that women's writing has been in no way different from male writing." (1988, 27)

Miller goes on to say that the literature women write is not about "life," but about "the plots of literature itself, about constraints ... on rendering a female life in fiction" (1988, 43). It is against these plots that women authors must struggle since up until the middle of this century, female protagonists were mainly male creations trapped in a patriarchal system. The same is true of female characters in fairy tales, the earliest texts most readers enjoy, and that for many women authors offered an unforgettable childhood literary apprenticeship. Martín Gaite, Matute, and Tusquets have all written on the impact that reading fairy tales has had on their literary careers. Although literary fairy tales were not originally conceived as a genre specifically for females, more girls than boys have been attracted to these stories in part because in printed collections, the female protagonists predominate. Aside from the romance novel (a form of adult fairy tale), the fairy tale is the genre with the greatest number of famous female protagonists. According to Steven Swann Jones, "Given the disproportionate number of heroic legends that feature male protagonists, female audience members might have a greater need for role models in the fairy tale genre to compensate for the dearth of legendary heroines. This generic discrimination, however, reveals an implicit sexist bias in Western culture. The genres of legend and fairy tale are not equal" (11). While the protagonists of legend are culture heroes, fairy tales speak more to personal needs in the family environment. As Jones points out, "Try as Cinderella or Snow White might, they are not

heroic figures who benefit the entire community through their actions the way Beowulf does" (64). Like the patriarchal society that produced them, fairy tales limit female agency to the quotidian.

To achieve success, a fairy tale heroine must be beautiful, silent, and passive; the only active option is the role of the wicked witch. Yet, although fairy tales often serve as texts of foundation which clearly establish both social and textual gender patterns for young readers, they are not taken seriously as literature. Like women and their texts, fairy tales are simultaneously in and out of culture, and thus are ripe as producers and subjects of postmodern parody as defined by Linda Hutcheon:

> ... "parody" ... is *not* the ridiculing imitation of the standard theories and definitions that are rooted in eighteenth-century theories of wit. The collective weight of parodic *practice* suggests a redefinition of parody as repetition with critical distance that allows ironic signalling of difference at the very heart of similarity ... Parody seems to offer a perspective on the present and past which allows an artist to speak *to* a discourse from *within* it, but without being totally recuperated by it. Parody seems to have become, for this reason, the mode of what I have called the 'ex-centric,' of those marginalized by a dominant ideology." (35)

To include parody and play is not to exclude seriousness in art, as is evident in much feminist parody which is not just a literary game, but also a tool for questioning the world, and the word.

Feminist parody does not aspire to tell the Truth, but rather questions whose truth is being told. In the case of literary fairy tales, we have been taught that they portray life as it should be and as it always has been. The tales may not be "real" but the gender patterns portrayed have lasting effects on their young readers, as their authors intended. By writing parodic revisions of fairy tales, women authors are often attempting to create alternate possibilities in the portrayal of female characters in literature, and to normalize the image of the woman writer. According to Susan Rubin Suleiman, "Extrapolating a bit, we arrive at the contemporary — and contemporary feminist — insight that the stories we tell about reality *construe* the real, rather than merely reflect it. Whence the possibility, or the hope, that through the rewriting of old stories and the invention of new forms of language for doing so, it is the world as well as words that will be transformed" (143). What better target for a transformative intertextuality than the anti-feminine literature aimed at chil-

dren and that still grips us in adulthood? As Linda Hutcheon has pointed out, intertextuality may point to an entire structure, and not just individual words or texts. The postmodern fairy tales Carmen Martín Gaite, Ana María Matute, and Esther Tusquets produce do not so much imitate as transmute a standard genre so that the clash of discourses will potentially produce new meanings. In challenging an established literary genre, these three authors join the ranks of women writers from all over the world in allaying their distinctively feminine anxieties of influence. As Gilbert and Gubar remind us:

> In short, like the twentieth-century American poet H.D., who declared her aesthetic strategy by entitling one of her novels *Palimpsest*, women from Jane Austen and Mary Shelley to Emily Brontë and Emily Dickinson produced literary works that are in some sense palimpsestic, works whose surface designs conceal or obscure deeper, less accessible (and less socially acceptable) levels of meaning. Thus these authors managed the difficult task of achieving true female literary authority by simultaneously conforming to and subverting patriarchal literary standards. (73)

Thus we shall read the works Martín Gaite, Matute and Tusquets have written for adults as palimpsests whose surface structures rest upon the base provided by their questioning of the fairy tale genre. While some stereotypical images of female characters are effectively exposed in the re-visions of fairy tales by Carmen Martín Gaite, Ana María Matute, and Esther Tusquets, the results are often pessimistic. For example, neither Matute's protagonist from *Primera memoria* nor Tusquets's heroine from *El mismo mar de todos los veranos* escapes the pre-ordained literary fate that assigns fairy tale females passive and silent roles. Worse yet, as in fairy tales, other female characters fail to love and guide them. Instead they bring about the heroine's downfall, in keeping with another fixed feature of fairy tales: the absence of mother figures and wise, older females to guide the young protagonists. In fact, fairy tales seldom portray women engaged in positive relationships, of any kind, with each other. The mothers are either dead, or they are so evil that part of the pleasure of the text comes from destroying them.

Thus, I also examine a rather striking phenomenon: for texts written in a society in which the Franco regime and the Sección Femenina de la Falange so fervently instilled the cult of the "good" self-sacrificing mother, these novels routinely fail to portray positive maternal figures.

According to María Tatar, "The many faces of female evil in fairy tales represent the obverse of all the positive qualities associated with mothers" (1987, 140). Thus, women writers chose these intertexts as a form of protest that rejects the idealized image of the perfect, self-sacrificing mother, as well as the mother's role as main instiller of society's repressive codes. Referring to fairy tale mothers is a way of portraying the opposite of the ideal womanhood the Regime imposed.

After centuries of being represented mainly by male authors, how can the female writer break out of the patterns established for her gender by others? In the case of these Spanish authors, the answer seems to be to tackle these foundational texts of childhood head on, and thus they incorporate the fairy tales that initiated their literary educations into their mature works to show the pernicious effects of a sexist education. A number of critics have written on the effects that "children's" and "women's" literature have on their intended audiences. Yet only recently have these studies been approached from a feminist perspective, and little work has been done to date on the intertextualities of post civil war women novelists and their battle with the common Western cultural tradition. As Andrea Dworkin has so eloquently pointed out:

> We have taken the fairy tales of childhood with us into maturity, chewed but still lying in the stomach, as real identity. Between Snow-white and her heroic prince, our two great fictions, we never did have much of a chance ... Despite ourselves, sometimes unknowing, sometimes knowing, unwilling, unable to do otherwise, we act out the roles we were taught. (33)

What does this continuous barrage of "classical" children's stories do to both girls and women, as well as to the men with whom they share their world?

In order to explore these issues, in this book I examine similar patterns of intertextuality in the works of Carmen Martín Gaite, Ana María Matute, and Esther Tusquets. I have chosen to work on these three particular authors not only because of their tremendous success in the Spanish literary market, but also because in their works the use of fairy tales is not only an occasional feature, it is almost a trademark. The book opens with an introductory chapter that first traces the historical development of the fairy tale genre and its reception in Spain. Inspired by the work of critics such as Jack Zipes and Marina Warner, I pay close attention to the participation of groups of female intellectuals, such as the *Précieuses* in

seventeenth-century France and the girls and women of the *Kaffeter* in nineteenth-century Germany, in the development of the literary fairy tale genre. However, unlike the works of their male contemporaries, Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm, respectively, the works of these women have not become canonized, precisely because their feminist visions ran counter to the ideals of their increasingly conservative societies. And thus, the second part of the introduction focuses on the didactic intent of the fairy tale genre which beginning in the eighteenth century was increasingly used to teach children their gendered roles within their societies. The final section draws on recent feminist work that critiques the images of women in the fairy tale genre.

The second chapter draws on archival work that I conducted at the Hemeroteca Nacional in Madrid on fiction produced for girls and young women during the Second Republic and in post-war Spain. Here I was inspired by the many excellent books and articles that have appeared in recent years in the field of Spanish Cultural Studies. In particular I followed the model provided by Carmen Martín Gaite in her pioneering work *Usos amorosos de la postguerra española.* Unlike Martín Gaite, I focused primarily on the use of fairy tales in periodicals for children in order to analyze how fairy tales were used as a tool for indoctrination during the formative years of these Spanish authors. Since fairy tale motifs remain a constant feature in periodicals for young women, and especially in the mini *novelas rosa* they publish, I re-examine some of the same magazines researched by Martín Gaite. Finally, this chapter presents some of the great, but often forgotten, Spanish authors of children's fiction of the twentieth century by highlighting the often politicized writings of Antoniorrobles, Elena Fortún, Borita Casas, and Nuria Pompeia.

These introductory chapters are then followed by individual chapters devoted to Martín Gaite, Matute, and Tusquets. In each of the last four chapters, I study the connections between the literature these authors published for children and the novels they penned for an adult readership. With the exception of Carmen Martín Gaite's *El cuarto de atrás* and *La Reina de las Nieves,* the novels for adults have unhappy endings for the protagonists who are avid readers of fairy tales. These unhappy endings expose the fairy tale genre's complicity with the ideologies of a patriarchal, Christian tradition that oppresses women. In contrast, the postmodern fairy tales these authors published for the juvenile market offer images of strong female characters who subvert the paradigms, both artistic and social, that the fairy tale genre has helped to instill. Whether the individual works have happy endings or not, in the process of questioning the fairy tale tradition, Carmen Martín Gaite, Ana María

Matute, and Esther Tusquets have succeeded in transforming a Spanish literary establishment that is now ready to accept new and more varied portrayals of female characters.

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INTRODUCTION
FAIRY TALES AND THE FEMALE IMAGINATION

The Evolution of the Fairy Tale Genre

As many critics outside the field of Hispanic Studies have noted, the literary fairy tales of Charles Perrault, the Brothers Grimm, and Hans Christian Andersen (as well as Walt Disney) offer their female readers stifling images of femininity meant to initiate girls into a bourgeois ideal of subservience, passivity, and — most damaging for the budding female writer — silence. It is this literary, and social, paradigm that Carmen Martín Gaite, Ana María Matute, and Esther Tusquets encountered when at a very young age they initiated their careers as both readers and writers, and against which they continued to struggle as successful, mature authors. Thus, before beginning an in-depth study of the impact of fairy tales in the works of these authors, we must pause to study the intricacies and contradictions of the genre. Although Spain has a rich folk tale tradition, this chapter will focus on the tales of Charles Perrault, the Brothers Grimm, Hans Christian Andersen, and Walt Disney since their fairy tales are the ones with which Martín Gaite, Matute, and Tusquets engage intertextually. First, however, the term "fairy tale" must be defined in order to better understand the effects of this genre on female readers.

There is an important distinction, both in style and intent, between "folk" and "fairy" tales. It is widely accepted that the fairy tales we all know today originated when writers of the ruling classes appropriated folk tales to create a genre that was not only amusing to adults and children alike, but also didactic in character. Jack Zipes summarizes the difference in the following manner:

> The folk tale is part of a "pre-capitalist people's oral tradition" which expresses their wishes to attain better living conditions through a depiction of their struggles and contradictions. The term fairy tale is of "bourgeois coinage" and indicates the advent of a new literary form which appropriates elements of folklore to address and criticize the aspirations and needs of the emerging bourgeois audience. (Zipes 1979, 27)

In addition to the social/political context that created the meanings of these texts, we must also keep in mind the modes of transmission of any

particular tale. As part of an oral tradition, the folk tale is a fluid text, continually adapted to both the needs of the teller and the audience. Folklorists define this vibrancy as the "emergent quality" which contrasts sharply with any notion of an "authoritative text."[1] While masterful oral narrators are always to be found, the vast majority of common people who tell tales cannot equal the gifted writer in capturing the attention of an educated public. The composition of many folk tales is often haphazard, and characters are little more than clichés who lack psychological plausibility. As Bo Gronbech states, "everything that an educated literary public would expect was missing: clarity of composition, logical coherence of plot, nuanced characters, a clear picture of the environment and setting, and, underlying everything, some basic idea" (96). No collection of folk tales faithfully recorded from the "folk" has ever achieved great success among the general reading public. Instead, the literary fairy tales that I shall study here are all bestsellers and they are all associated with individual authors imposing their authoritative and definitive versions of tales that advance certain clearly defined upper-class agendas.

Although the genre eventually was dominated by male authors, a number of women seeking respect and privilege were instrumental in the birth of the literary fairy tale genre.[2] Aristocratic French women, known as the *Précieuses*, began meeting in the 1630's Parisian salons where with time they developed the fairy tale genre as a vehicle for exhibiting their wit and inventiveness. Eventually they participated in the famous "Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns" (1687-96), writing in open opposition to Nicolas Boileau, who championed Greek and Roman literature. Instead, the *Précieuses* defended the use of folklore and medieval traditions in establishing a French literary canon of "high culture."

Their tales were usually based on known stories, but the *Précieuses* produced their own highly sophisticated versions in which, as Marina Warner points out, they "developed a latent aspect of the oral folk tradition to the point that it voiced open, partisan claims on their own behalf" (1994, 168). The term *conte de fée* gained wide usage during this period and stressed the fact that in many of the stories the power of utopian metamorphosis was in the hands of females. The inclusion of powerful, magical good women was an important counterpoint to a male-dominated Church hierarchy, which throughout the course of the previous two hundred years had killed thousands of women charged with witchcraft (Zipes 1999, 13-14). The *Précieuses* were also concerned with portraying *tendresse*, the natural feelings that can develop between a man

and a woman; the lovers prove their nobility through their manners and the ways in which they uphold the notions of *civilité*. In conjunction with their social and political context, the tales placed strong emphasis on highlighting invention in conversation and writing and on exhibiting the writers' innate talents. Although they were deprived of access to schools and universities, the prose of these women writers is far more elegant than that normally associated with fairy tales, and especially with the oral folk tale. Elizabeth Harries points out that:

> These tales, in all their glitter and artificiality, actually contest the emerging association of fairy tales with the primitive, with the "folk" and with the "oral" as they were beginning to be understood, with illiterate and anonymous female tellers of tales, and with children. And their tales, rather than existing in the supposed "timeless space" of folk culture, are consciously invented as a complex and ironic comment on the historical moment in which they were produced. The style, length, and timeliness of their narratives do not fit the ideology of the fairy tale as it has been constructed in the last three centuries. They have been effectively "written out" of the history of fairy tales, an erasure that began even before the Grimms. (153-54)

In the increasingly closed atmosphere of the French court of Louis XIV, whose tyrannical policies were stifling cultural expressions and lowering the standard of living for all social classes, the *Précieuses* textualized themselves, their social manners, and ventilated their opinions on love, freedom of choice in marriage, fidelity, and justice. For these *conteuses*, fairy tales were far from an escapist genre, but rather, as Zipes has argued, vehicles for political, moral and ethical critiques that at the same time offered a vision of a utopian world ruled by equality, justice, and love. (1989, 5-6)[3]

But in the decades that followed, at court the intellectual ideal of *préciosité* was overshadowed by the partriarchal use of fairy tales as agents of socialization for children, especially in the eighteenth century after the publication of didactic fairy tales written for the Dauphin by his tutor Fénelon, the Archbishop of Cambrai. Following this new, more conservative trend, in 1756 Madame Le Prince de Beaumont published *Magasin des Enfants* which contained fairy tales with strictly inscribed gender-specific roles and class codes. This collection of fairy tales became a bestseller almost instantly, not only in France and in England, where it was originally published, but all over Europe thanks to its many translations.

In 1775 *Magasin des Enfants* was translated into Spanish by D. Matías Guitet as *Almacén y Biblioteca completa de los niños*. This was followed in 1787 and 1790 by the publication in four volumes of another translation by D. Plácido Barco López as *Almacén y Biblioteca completa de los niños o Diálogos de una sabia Directora a sus nobles discípulas*. The *Magasin/Almacén* is structured as a series of twenty-nine dialogues between a governess and her charges, who range in age from five to thirteen and who are from well-off, well-respected, but not noble families, whom she instructs on all aspects of proper behavior using fairy tales which function as parables. The translation by D. Plácido Barco includes an interesting prologue in which he explains the need for a translation of this particular work. Barco states that in translating the *Magasin* he serves the nation ("hacer a la patria un servicio útil e importante") because in its pages young people will learn the rules of socially accepted behavior at the same time that they are amused since the work is an "Almacén bien proveído de luces para el entendimiento, de impulsos para el corazón, y de sainetes para el buen gusto" (Olalla Real 16). According to Beaumont's own Prologue, since the work, although written in French, was originally published in England, the simplicity of the style would help a young lady practice her French instead of using texts whose style would still be too difficult for her. Barco informs us that in Spain the *Magasin* was similarly used to teach French when in his prologue he states that the work is approved by "personas de la primera distinción, siendo rara la casa de la grandeza que no la posee en francés" (Olalla Real 17).

The *Magasin* is clearly destined for a female audience in spite of the word *niños* in the title. First, because all the pupils are girls. Moreover, in her prologue to the work Leprince de Beaumont defends a certain type of education for girls:

> Sí, hombres tiranos, que pensáis así, yo he de sacar a las niñas de esta ignorancia crasa a que las habéis condenado. En efecto, tengo ideado sacarlas lógicas, geómetras, y aun filósofas; quiero enseñarlas a discurrir y a pensar con método para lograr vivir bien. Si yo no tuviese esperanza de conseguir el fin que me he propuesto, desde ahora para siempre renunciaría al oficio de escribir y de enseñar." (Olalla Real 21)

Yet despite her defense of female education, Leprince de Beaumont stresses the importance of preparing her readers for marriage, above all else, and of curing them of such stereotypical female defects as gossip-

ing and curiosity. Of all the collections of fairy tales already on the market, she only approves of Perrault's *Mother Goose.* From that collection, she recommends *Blue Beard* because when girls read this tale, they understand "los inconvenientes que hay en un casamiento hecho por interés, los riesgos de la curiosidad, los males que pueden suceder en no dar gusto a los caprichos de un esposo, la inutilidad de una mentira para evitar el castigo ..." (19). In Spain, as in France and England, the highly successful *Magasin* was followed by her publication of works intended for young ladies approaching marriageable age. The sequels appeared in Spain as *Biblioteca completa de educación e instrucción para las Señoritas Jóvenes en la edad de entrar ya en la Sociedad y poderse casar. Instruye una sabia Directora a sus nobles discípulas...* translated by Joseph de la Fresa, and published in Madrid by Imp. de D. Manuel Martín in 5 volumes in 1779-1780, and again in 1787 as *Almacén de las señoritas adolescentes o diálogos de una sabia doctora ... Para servir de continuación al Almacén de los niños,* translated and published by D. Plácido Barco López in Madrid and in four volumes.[4] These texts for older girls were used to prepare them for their more immediate entry into adult society and have been compared to Fray Luis's Christian marriage manual *La perfecta casada.* (Kitts 139) Most of her texts remained in wide circulation well into the nineteenth century and one is still immensely popular. The only female-authored fairy tale widely known today is Madame Leprince de Beaumont's version of *The Beauty and the Beast,* originally published in the *Magasin.* At present, in Spain, there are at least two translations of Leprince de Beaumont's original, one by Carmen Martín Gaite and another edited by Esther Tusquets, two of the authors who are the major focus of this study, in addition to the many books put out by Disney after the success of its film version.

Yet, we must note that Mme Leprince de Beaumont's *The Beauty and the Beast* is much more conservative in its didactic intent than the female-authored fairy tales that had preceded the *Magasin des Enfants.* The *Précieuses* of the previous generation had often created contests in which different authors wrote variations on the same theme to better exhibit their individual styles and creativity. In the case of their cycle of tales similar to *The Beauty and the Beast,* they were engaging the myth of Cupid and Psyche. Another version in this cycle was Madame D'Aulnoy's *Le Mouton* in which the beast dies and we are given the female protagonist's exclusive version of this story in which all the female characters dominate. Part of the social intent of these animal/groom tales for the *Précieuses* was to address the fears that young women faced

when entering into an unfairly forced marriage. Seventy years later, when the fairy tale for children had already become an institutionalized genre, Mme Leprince de Beaumont's tale was instead promising her young readers that if they did not question their gender roles, marriage to a beast would not be so bad after all. Scholars of French literature are the most familiar with *Le mouton* today, but millions have *The Beauty and the Beast, Sleeping Beauty* and *Cinderella* firmly lodged in their subconscious.

Predictably it is a man, Charles Perrault, a contemporary and colleague of the *Précieuses*, who has survived to be the best known of the French fairy tale writers. His versions of *Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Little Red Riding Hood, Blue Beard,* and *Puss in Boots* dominate the fairy tale market, in part because with their simplified style and moralizing (sometimes ambivalent) endings, they were meant to teach children the rules of an emerging bourgeois society that needed "a type of literary discourse about mores, values, and manners so that children would become civilized according to the social code of that time" (Zipes 1983, 3). In the Preface to his 1695 *Contes en Vers* Perrault clearly states the socializing function of his work:

> Sometimes there are children who become great lords for having obeyed their father or mother, or others who experience terrible misfortune for having been vicious and disobedient. No matter how frivolous and bizarre all these fables are in their adventures, it is certain that they arouse a desire in children to resemble those whom they see become happy and at the same time a fear of the misfortunes which befall wicked characters because of their wickedness. Is it not praiseworthy of fathers and mothers when their children are still not capable of appreciating solid truths stripped of all ornaments to make them love these truths, and, as it were, to make them swallow them by enveloping them in charming narratives which correspond to the weakness of their age? It is incredible how avariciously innocent souls whose natural rectitude has not yet been corrupted receive these hidden truths. (Zipes 1983, 17)

The "hidden truths" of Perrault's stories survive mainly because, unlike those of his female colleagues, they do not challenge, but rather affirm the dominant sexist ideology of their time. In fact, for a time it was part of Perrault's charge to hide from the public all other ideologies that might challenge the absolutism of the Sun King, for Perrault was a French Academician and, as official author at the court, he worked at codifying

and promoting a culture acceptable to the King. In 1687 it was Perrault who inaugurated the "Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns" against Nicolas Boileau and Jean Racine, with the poem "Le Siècle de Louis le Grand." Although the King ended the "Quarrel" in favor of Boileau and Racine, in 1796 Perrault continued arguing for the incorporation of his more modern ideas through the publication of his versions of folkloric and medieval tales in *Histoires ou contes du temps passé.* This collection of literary fairy tales was published under the name of Pierre Perrault Darmancour, his son, so that Perrault senior could not be accused of reopening the quarrel that had been silenced by the King. Thus, Perrault's famous collection of fairy tales was not created in a vacuum, but rather appeared at a time when the French state was seeking to define its place in the modern world, a space that left little room for female voices, for it must also be noted that not only were the tales of the *Précieuses* silenced by time and customs, but Madame D'Aulnoy and others were actually banished from court because their writings were too subversive for the King.[5] The ostracism publicly suffered by the *Précieuses* is reflected in Spain even in the *sainetes (*short one-act plays) of Ramón de la Cruz who in 1767 had written *Las preciosas ridículas* mocking them in a style similar to that of Racine and Molière.[6]

Similarly, less than two centuries after Perrault had published his works, the Brothers Grimm brought their classic *Nursery and Household Tales* to print in what is today Germany during another instance of cultural debate that culminated in the formation of a modern nation. The *Nursery and Household Tales* have important ties to German nationalism and the stabilization of a more homogenous German bourgeois culture. The study of the "folk" first became fashionable through German Romantics such as Novalis, for whom Germany was not the underdog of Europe, but rather the cradle of the most brilliant European culture. Inspired by Herder's 1773 essay "Ossian and the Songs of Ancient Peoples," a movement that paralleled the earlier French "Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns" developed in which intellectuals fomented an interest in Germanic folk culture that involved collecting such "authentic" materials as folktales, legends, and songs, as well as a rediscovery of the glorious literature of the Middle Ages. Originally the movement surfaced as an antidote to the pedantry of neo-classicism by regarding the unpolished quality of folk expressions as a more direct conduit of genuine feeling.[7]

Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano published the first collections of folksongs and tales between 1805 and 1808. These were clearly

polished adaptations that lacked the unschooled qualities so cherished, in theory, by the movement. Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm, who were very much a part of this intellectual circle, initially began recording their tales at Brentano's request. The Grimms were searching for the spirit of the German people in the stories of the "folk." The Grimms, however, projected a very different image, presenting a less stylized text.

The image of the Grimms roaming the countryside, gathering the tales directly from the "folk" is as much of an enduring fairy tale as any story contained in the collection.[8] In the preface to the first edition, published in 1812, they claimed that their tales were exact transcriptions of oral tales being told by peasants at that time and that they viewed their work not so much as a collection of children's stories, but as a scholarly and nationalistic quest:

> We have tried to collect these tales in as pure a form as possible ... No details have been added or embellished or changed, for we would have been reluctant to expand stories already so rich by adding this kind of analogies and allusions; they cannot be invented. (Tatar 1987, 210)

In reality the Grimms' first informants were the young ladies of their bourgeois circle in Kassel. Not only were they collecting the tales from well-educated women, but many of the tales derived from the French courtly tradition. A number of the wealthy families were of Huguenot origin and spoke French at home, plus these tales were readily available in German translations.

After 1815, the Grimms also incorporated more bawdy sources such as the German *Schwank* chapbook narratives from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The *Schwank* contained coarse tales with such misogynistic conventions as the nagging wife who, to the delight of the reader, is "comically" silenced by her brutal husband. These crude changes in the plot structure reflected the Grimms' desire to appear more "folk" while writing for a bourgeois public for whom the "folk" was becoming fashionable to the point that even the aristocracy began collecting and displaying "rustic" furniture and decorations. The popularity of the "folk" in nineteenth-century Germany was part of a movement to promote German nationalism in a century that had begun with the Napoleonic occupation. By the end of that century, the separate principalities and dukedoms had grown into the Prussian Empire, which like all empires required a canon to help establish its cultural legitimacy. As we shall see,

the Grimms' *Nursery and Household Tales* became an important part of that canon. While the first edition had certainly not been a success, by the 1860s they enjoyed tremendous popularity, and from the end of the century right up to the present, in Germany the *Nursery and Household Tales* are second in sales only to the Bible. Part of their success can be attributed to a change in marketing schemes, as well as to the political climate of the time.

As also happened in Spain after the Napoleonic occupation (1806-1813), the Germans experienced increased instances of nationalism, and especially strong francophobia. As an employee of different state organisms, Jakob Grimm was at the center of these cultural shifts. First Jakob held the post of private librarian and then secretary to King Jérôme when Napoleon set up the Kingdom of Westphalia with his brother as ruler. This post allowed him the time to compile the first edition of the tales while simultaneously meeting the family's pressing economic needs. From 1840 to the time of their deaths, the Grimms were in the service of the King of Prussia at the most important moments of building the Empire. During this period the Prussian state instituted a centralized secular elementary school system that introduced the *Nursery and Household Tales* as part of the curriculum, despite continuing protests over its coarseness, thus giving it instant status as part of the new German cultural canon.

It is reasonable to conclude that the presence of the Grimms in the council chambers in Berlin and Jakob's many years of political experience influenced the decision to insert this particular text in the school curriculum. At the time, Ludwig Bechstein's collection of fairy tales (*Deutsches Märchenbuch* 1845) was more popular in part because these tales were more gentle, especially in their treatment of women.[9] Yet, German schoolchildren and their parents were told that the once unified Germanic peoples spoke through the Grimms' tales. The theme of Germanic unification was a constant in the lives and works of the Brothers Grimm who contributed much more to the cause than just their fairy tales. Both brothers were in the process of creating the most comprehensive *German Dictionary* of the nineteenth century, and their philological and literary studies made them pioneers in the establishment of German literature as a new field of university studies. Politically, German unification was a longstanding goal for the Grimms, who in 1837 were dismissed from their professorships at the University of Göttingen for refusing to pledge allegiance to King Ernst August II who proposed to further solidify Hanover as an independent, absolutist state. (Zipes 1999, 67-68)

If we compare the different editions of the tales that appeared throughout the century, it becomes clear that Wilhelm's re-writing techniques made the tales appear timeless, and specifically German, although many of them were found throughout Europe and had already been published by Basile and Perrault.[10] The Grimms, as well as the German Romantics in general, were also greatly influenced by the Spanish medieval ballad tradition. Renewed interest in the tradition of Spanish *romances* arose from the German Romantics. They saw in the popular *romance* an especially meaningful instance of their theory, according to which the work of art arises out of a spontaneous, inexplicable inspiration. They thought that the *romance* had burst forth from the primitive folk-soul, that it was the origin of the epic, and had gone on to serve as the foundation for the rest of all literature. With the *romance* they thought they had discovered the root of European literary culture. Jakob Grimm himself published the first modern collection of old Spanish *romances* in Vienna in 1815, in the original language as was fitting for the Romantic school's recourse to origins.[11] Prior to Jakob's edition, English and German imitators of the *romances,* such as Percy, Herder and Schlegel were familiar with the Spanish form chiefly through Gines Pérez de Hita's 1595 historical novel *Guerras civiles de Granada.*[12] Clearly the Grimms were not looking solely at the Germanic tradition throughout the writing of their collection of fairy tales.

Yet, the Grimms steadfastly insisted that their tales were entirely German in nature. Apart from promoting the image that they had roamed the countryside listening to peasants, the Grimms invented specific informants of unquestionable German roots. Wilhelm's son, Herman, created the myth of "Old Marie," the thoroughly Hessian informant, and Dorothea Viehmann's portrait introduced the collection for more than one hundred and fifty years. In Spain, even today, the German character of these tales is emphasized in the illustrations by the blondness of the characters, most of whom are still pictured wearing *lederhosen* and *dirndl,* even in tales such as "Snow White" whose origins folklorists have traced to Italy and Spain.

Wilhelm also eliminated all specific time and place references. He standardized the structures and messages of the tales to make the patterns appear to be second nature so that the morality presented in the tales supported the cultural aims of the bourgeoisie. Thus, we all expect fairy tales to begin with the phrase "once upon a time" as if the tale were ancient instead of a fairly recent cultural invention. As Jack Zipes states:

> the "contagious" charm of the Grimms' fairy tales emanates from the compositional technique and ethics developed by the Brothers Grimm to stress fundamental bourgeois values of behavior and moral principles of Christianity that served the hegemonic aspirations of the rising middle classes in Germany and elsewhere. As various critics have noted, these values and principles are also oriented toward male hegemony and patriarchalism. (1988, 63)

Folk tales offer many variations and are not as thematically oriented, especially for female characters. Instead, in the fairy tales, roles became standardized so that a male proves his merits and attains success through cunning and the practice of a Protestant work ethic that stresses diligence and industriousness. The tales reflect the narrowing options for women who in this society were increasingly admonished to be silent and passive.

An important shift occurred when the tales were institutionalized in the school system, and the *Nursery and Household Tales* were aimed specifically at children. While the first generation of readers received the tales in adulthood when they had the maturity to question their contents, after 1850 the intended readers were still at a vulnerable age. The Grimms would have their new audience believe that the tales were pure beauty and timeless wisdom, and that children would learn fundamental truths from hearing them read:

> These stories are suffused with the same purity that makes children appear so wondrous and blessed to us. (Tatar 1987, 206)

In the preface to their 1819 second edition of the tales, the Grimms added to this above paragraph the following clear statement of their didactic mission:

> That is the reason that we wanted, through our collection, first of all to serve the cause of the history of poetry and mythology, but it was also our intention that the poetry living in it bring pleasure wherever it could, and also that the book serve as a manual of manners. (Tatar 1987, 217)

Many have objected to the way in which the Grimms sought to socialize German youth with their "manual of manners." A number of the tales certainly are brutal and grisly, and have often been declared unsuitable for children by educators.

In fact, after World War II, as part of the explanations for the atrocities committed by the Nazis, the Grimms' *Nursery and Household Tales* were believed to have passed on these "manners" so well that all the editions of the tales were banned as "nourishers and reflectors of a cruel, perverse national mentality."[13] The British military authorities believed that the brutality found in many tales prepared the German people to accept the monstrosities of the Nazis. Banning the Grimms was also a direct attack on a text the German people considered an integral part of their cultural legacy. The Nazis had encouraged xenophobic readings of some tales. For example, they considered Cinderella worthy of her good fortune because she was of pure Aryan blood while her evil stepsisters deserved to have their eyes pecked out by birds at her wedding because they belonged to an inferior race. (Bottigheimer 1988, 194) The ban on the tales lasted only one year and never affected the use of the tales since there already were so many copies in circulation, and they were swiftly restored to their usual place in the school curriculum. But the ban did promote a discussion of the value of the Grimms' tales that structured how the tales were critically and pedagogically received in the second half of our century, not just in Germany but throughout the Western world.

From the early 1950s to the mid 1960s, four main schools of thought evolved to prove the healing and educational values of the tales. The Jungians stress the archetypal/mythic values of the tales through which readers learn to become whole by their absorption of tales that identify the harmony of the anima and the animus. The tales are believed to reflect the collective unconscious. Rudolf Steiner and the Waldorf school focused their anthroposocial readings on the value of fairy tales in recapturing childhood innocence and our connections to nature. The structuralists overlooked the importance of content and history to focus on the morphological structure of the tales, which they claimed were universal statements about the nature of humanity and of narrative. Finally, and most important to our discussion, the moralists emphasized content that contributed to building character. By emulating favorite characters, it was thought that children would develop the gender-specific traits that would bring them success in life.[14] Thus, it would obviously be unfair to demonize the Grimms for the continued success of their text in reinforcing the values of a narrow-minded bourgeois society. We must remember that the first two editions of the *Nursery and Household Tales* sold poorly. They only achieved great success after changing the tales to make them more didactic in response to the criticisms they received. Influential members of society chose the tales of the Brothers Grimm over many

other options. The more sexism they showed, the greater their success.

Between 1845 and 1900 more than two hundred fairy tale collections by women appeared in German-speaking countries, yet these suffered a silencing worse than that of the tales of the *Précieuses*. It was not until the late 1960s that the cultural conditions in Germany, and elsewhere, became more open to the rebellion and anti-authoritarianism that led to the increased availability and popularity of anti-Grimm criticism and the production of more liberating fairy tales. Along with the production of new, more feminist fairy tales, critics such as Shawn Jarvis have begun to study the female contemporaries of the Grimms, especially the salons of the *Kaffeterkreis* (Coffee Circle). Jarvis states that:

> Just as the women of the Versailles salons — excluded from the mainstream male discourse — had explored the compensatory nature of fairy tales as a world of wish fulfillment, and just as the German saloniéres combined public and private spheres, so the girls and women of the *Kaffeter* found in their collaboration the possibility of playing out roles that seemed or were impossible in real life. (105)

The order of the *Kaffeterkreis* was formed by the girls and women of the Berlin aristocracy and emerging bourgeoisie in response to the male *Maikäferbund* group, intellectuals who met weekly to discuss their literary productions which they then published in their own privately printed journal. These women were actively engaged with the fairy tale tradition, both by personal choice and by absorbing the examples set by other female members. The women of the von Arnim family were leading members of this group. The mother, Bettine, wrote and collected her own fairy tales even as she encouraged (and probably served as a source for) the Brothers Grimm. The daughter, Gisela, was the self-labeled "Märchenkind" of her father, Achim, and her uncle Clemens Brentano, who were among the first to publish fairy tales in Germany. In 1857 Gisela married her long-time friend Herman Grimm, Wilhelm's son. However, the tales from these women that survive today are radically different in their world-view from those written by the males.[15] In fact, they seem to have totally reversed many of the gender patterns found in the tales of the Grimms, where women are systematically punished for speaking out. Instead, in the tales by the women, the heroines are loquacious, and are actually encouraged to be curious and to learn. Instead of witches and evil stepmothers, the women write of female mentors who guide girls through puberty by sharing their knowledge and positive magic.[16] But while the girls of the *Kaffeter* were at first encouraged to

perform their musical compositions and fairy tale plays for illustrious audiences (they performed for the Prussian monarch Friedrich Wilhelm IV at the home of the Minister of Justice), the increasingly conservative powers of the Prussian Empire after the revolution of 1848 rendered them silent as the males dominated a now canonical genre that was increasingly more influential and economically rewarding.[17]

At this same time, the business of publishing fairy tale collections specifically for children began to flourish, in part because of the popularity of translations. The most ground-breaking was Edgar Taylor's 1823 rendition into English of a selection of the Grimms' tales specifically aimed at children. This English edition was the first grand success enjoyed by the *Nursery and Household Tales* which in turn inspired Wilhelm, for the first time, to publish a small children's collection two years later. Now the Grimms were truly on their way to international fame.

The fame of the Grimms is also closely tied to the Danish market. As early as 1816, the romantic poet Adam Oehlenschläger (whom Wilhelm greatly admired) translated and published six of the Grimms' tales in a collection of stories. An edition of eighty-six of the tales, translated by Chamberlain Lindencrane and his daughter, appeared in 1823. Less than ten years later the tales of the Brothers Grimm were a staple in the Danish educational system (before the same phenomenon happened in Germany) when in a move to update the schools through the introduction of improved reading materials, Christian Molbech translated the tales in the form of a Danish children's school primer. This text became so popular that it was reissued seven times in thirty years. From 1835 to 1840 Molbech introduced more of the Grimms into the market to nourish the Danish tradition of publishing small collections at Christmas and New Years, aimed at juveniles.

At this point in the marketing scheme, the then young, economically struggling Hans Christian Andersen joined in the Christmas moneymaking venture. His first small collection from 1835 contained tales from folkloric sources, *The Tinder Box, Little Claus and Big Claus,* and possibly *The Princess and the Pea,* plus a story entirely of his own invention, *Little Ida's Flowers.* Andersen continued publishing fairy tales throughout his remaining years.

In contrast to the Brothers Grimms' tales, Andersen's were marketed towards children from the beginning. From 1834 to 1843 all his collections of tales included the words "For Children" on the cover page. According to scores of biographers and Andersen's own description of

himself in autobiographies, letters, and diaries, Andersen maintained certain childish personality traits all his life. Andersen felt comfortable around children, and is remembered by friends as entertaining the children of the many houses he visited with stories that he would either invent or base on well-known tales. His manner of expression appealed to children in a way unequalled by any narrator of the time. As Bo Grønbech, one of his many biographers, points out, Andersen would never just say, "The Children got into the carriage and drove away" but "The children got into the carriage, good-bye Daddy, good bye Mummy, the whip cracked, snick, snak, and away they went, giddy up!" (89). It was this success with the children of Europe's bourgeois circles and the eavesdropping of the adults that originally encouraged Andersen to publish the collection of 1834. He only dropped the "For Children" from the title in 1843 to indicate that there was also something there for adults.

The stories of the Grimms and Andersen ended up promoting each other, and also Perrault, by creating markets for children's books. As these markets grew, the popularity of the genre superceded the importance attached to authorial identity. The sales were further increased by the work of the best illustrators of the time. This publishing success was not limited to Germany and Denmark, but rather spread throughout Europe, including Spain. Andersen helped promote his own works through repeated public appearances and readings outside Denmark. For a man of his time, in very delicate health, Andersen traveled to an extraordinary number of European countries. He even visited Spain in 1862. In translation the nationalistic undertones of the tales of the Brothers Grimm lost most of their significance as their fame spread throughout Europe, especially since versions of Cinderella, Snow White, and Sleeping Beauty were not indigenous to the Germanic peoples. Andersen never had put forward a nationalistic agenda. His tales were often based on stories heard, or published, all over Europe. In his commentary to the 1862 edition of *Eventyr og Historier* (*Fairy Tales and Stories*) Andersen mentions that he is indebted to Don Juan Manuel for the idea of *The Emperor's New Clothes*. Andersen universalized the tale of a Moorish king who purchases a fabric that cannot be seen by any who is not the son of his presumed father. In Andersen's rendition, the clothes cannot be seen by anyone unworthy of his post, or who is simply stupid. The tale is thus transformed from a reflection of Iberian medieval society to a universal cautionary tale with a lesson that applies to any place or time.

A few Spanish intellectuals at this time participated in the general European vogue for writing fairy tales. The most notable of these was

Juan Valera, best known for writing the popular nineteenth-century novel, *Pepita Jiménez.* In 1860 Valera made his first contribution to the genre with *Florilegio de cuentos, leyendas y tradiciones vulgares* and later some of the stories, especially "El pájaro verde," reprinted in *Cuentos y diálogos* in 1871. In the promotion of "El pájaro verde" Valera is clearly inspired by his Northern counterparts in that he dedicates it to the romantic writer the Duque de Rivas, whose mother he claimed as the source. Again the source of the peasants' folklore is an upper-class woman who passed on what Valera refers to as that "cuento vulgar" which he claims to have merely transcribed "procurando competir con Perrault, Andersen y Musaus" (García Padrino 94). In 1894, during his stay in Vienna as a diplomat, Valera composed three fairy tales inspired by folkloric elements: "La muñequita;" "La buena fama;" and "El hechicero." Valera was extremely interested in the recuperation of stories told by the common people following the false model of the Grimms. He states in his 1895 prologue to *La buena fama*:

> A veces lamentaba yo que escritores extranjeros se nos hubiesen adelantado en coleccionar y en poner por escrito con primoroso adorno los cuentos que corren en boca del vulgo. Los mejores a mi ver, eran los mismos, con raras variantes, en Alemania y en Francia que en España, de suerte que nos habían robado lo más hermoso y rico de aquella materia épica difusa, sin que pudiéramos darle forma original en nuestra lengua castellana. (García Padrino 96)

Valera need not have worried that the Spanish people had been robbed of access to the stories he considered the mutual property of all Europeans, for the fairy tale as the most suitable form of literature for children was now widely accepted in Spain.

The last quarter of the nineteenth century saw the rise in popularity of the translations into Spanish of Andersen and the Grimms. The first translation of the Grimms was done under the title of *Cuentos escogidos de los hermanos Grimm* by José S. Viedma for the Madrid publishing house Gaspar in 1879. That same year Gaspar also published the 368 page version of *Cuentos escogidos de Andersen*, translated by R. Fernández Cuesta. But the rise in a market of literature specificaliy aimed at children in Spain can be attributed in great part to Saturnino Calleja and the publishing empire he established in Madrid. The Calleja version of the *Kinder und Hausmärchen* also appeared in 1879 and strongly influenced the work produced by the writers who worked for Calleja. The elder Calleja himself supervised most of the work, often imposing his