Esther Tusquets:
Scholarly Correspondences

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Edited by

Nina L. Molinaro and Inmaculada Pertusa-Seva

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To Esther Tusquets *in memoriam,*
and to her past, present, and future readers.

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INTRODUCTION

ESTHER TUSQUETS IN OUR TIME

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1. Beginnings

Once upon a time a graduate student journeyed to Barcelona to interview Esther Tusquets, the subject of her doctoral dissertation on Peninsular narrative. The student had been repeatedly advised that her job prospects would improve if she could inform potential employers that she had talked to the famous author, so she dutifully contacted a publisher who, in turn, contacted Tusquets who, in turn, wrote to the student on elegant embossed stationery. The two women arranged to meet at the writer's summerhouse in Cadaqués, a two-hour trip by train from the capital city of Cataluña. When the nervous student arrived, Tusquets met her at the door in the company of Vida Ozores, two imposing dogs, and two equally imposing teenagers, one of whom was subsequently introduced as Néstor, the author's son.

The student and the writer dutifully commenced the interview; questions were asked and answered and, after a time, Tusquets suddenly announced that she and Vida had planned to spend the afternoon on their boat and that the interview would resume there. And so off the three women went on foot to the dock where the boat was moored. The interview continued several miles off the Mediterranean coast in decidedly unorthodox fashion, between motoring, swimming (swimsuits optional), and floating in the ocean. The student went on to complete her dissertation, get a university job, publish a book on Tusquets, and enjoy an academic's version of "happily ever after."

But those first impressions inevitably remained, impressions of an eloquent and powerful woman thoroughly at home in her own skin, of a hesitant (though thoroughly unrepentant) member of Barcelona's *gauche divine*, of a writer and editor who combined the two vocations as if they

were born together, of a lover, friend, mentor, mother, colleague, and fellow traveller who made no apologies for who and how she was and what she wrote.

I was, of course, that long-ago graduate student, and it seems remarkably fitting and appropriate that, nearly three decades later, I have the happy task of introducing and co-editing the current volume of essays. I did not speak again in person with Esther Tusquets after that fateful summer, and many superb interviews have subsequently appeared in print[1] and superseded, in my memory and in reality, our distant conversation. My doctoral thesis also quickly made way for scores of fine dissertations on Tusquets[2]; academic criticism on her work now encompasses several single-authored monographs, Mary S. Vásquez's edited volume, and some one hundred essays and book chapters. And there is still, tantalizingly, more to say, as the essays that follow my Introduction attest.

2. Afterwords

And now Esther Tusquets, the woman, is no more. Upon her death on July 23, 2012, just five weeks shy of her seventy-sixth birthday, she had published seven novels for adults,[3] two children's books, three collections of short stories, seven volumes of essays and memoirs, and scores of journalistic articles and other brief and extended prose texts. As the creator of *El mismo mar de todos los veranos* (1978), *El amor es un juego solitario* (1979), and *Varada tras el último naufragio* (1980),[4] Tusquets revolutionized Spanish prose and turned the previously taboo subjects of lesbian desire and bisexuality into novel-worthy and publishable

[1] See, for example, interviews by Stacey L. Dolgin, Mercedes Mazquiarán de Rodríguez, and Geraldine Cleary Nichols listed in the Bibliography that accompanies the present volume. For additional interviews, see the Bibliography in Barbara F. Ichiishi's *The Apple of Earthly Love: Female Development in Esther Tusquets' Fiction* (1994).

[2] According to UMI (University Microforms International), there are some forty dissertations and Masters theses devoted in part or in sum to the work of Tusquets. The first of these was authored by Lucy Lee-Bonanno in 1984, and in 2013 at least three dissertations included substantial sections on Tusquets's prose.

[3] Scholars are divided as to whether to tally *Siete miradas en un mismo paisaje* [*Seven View of the Same Landscape*] (1981) as a novel or a collection of short stories. I count it here as a novel.

[4] The first of these has been translated into English, with the title of *The Same Sea as Every Summer*, by Margaret E.W. Jones (1990); the second has been translated into English, with the title of *Love is a Solitary Game*, by Bruce Penman (1985); and the third volume has been translated by Susan E. Clark as *Stranded* (1991).

commodities. As the director of Editorial Lumen during four decades, she definitively shaped Spain's reading public by steadfastly championing children's literature, literature in translation, and women writers, among other causes. And as an inveterate (she would say "irreverent") observer of and commentator on the vicissitudes of history, culture, ideology, politics, and literature in and about Barcelona, Cataluña, and Spain, she put great stock in memories, opinions, and relationships, and she left behind ample written testimony to the enduring value of all of these.

Our collection of essays is and has, since its inception, been a labor informed by affection and respect, recollections and futurity, and a genuine sense of community and sorority. Our contributors have generously rewarded us, and future readers and scholars of Tusquets's work, with a medley of lucid and engaging essays on a startling range of topics. The number of colleagues invited to imagine an essay for the current volume far exceeded those who agreed to participate. Some of the eminent experts on Tusquets's published corpus have retired, some of them were unreachable, some have moved on to other areas of research, some were unable to join us because of illness, previous commitments, or timing. In ways both large and small, their previous efforts have made this text possible, their voices enrich and sustain our own, and we are grateful for their collegiality.

The eleven essays included here, complemented by the Comprehensive Bibliography, reflect and expand upon current scholarship on Tusquets's fiction and non-fiction. We have arranged the critical essays into three sections with the goal of highlighting the diversity of both the primary texts analyzed and the theoretical approaches employed; readers will further note that the essays contained within each section are vigorously heterogeneous.

Tusquets's earliest novels have garnered a majority of the critical attention, and the five essays that comprise "Section I: Looking Anew at Tusquets's Tetralogy" are devoted in the main to the quartet of novels for adults that she published between 1978 and 1985: *El mismo mar de todos los veranos*, *El amor es un juego solitario*, *Varada tras el último naufragio*, and *Para no volver* (1985) [*Never to Return*]. In particular *El mismo mar de todos los veranos* has inspired intense and persistent scrutiny since its appearance, and it is therefore appropriate that two of the five contributions focus exclusively, although from radically divergent intellectual perspectives, on this first novel. Maureen Tobin Stanley's essay revisits the gendered symbolism of canonical fairy tales in the now-canonical initial novel. Inmaculada Pertusa-Seva, by contrast, analyzes the myriad ways in which Santos Sanz Villanueva's 1997 edition of *El mismo*

mar de todos los veranos dramatically rewrites Tusquets's original text, with significant consequences for both form and content. Like Tobin Stanley and Pertusa-Seva, Laura Lonsdale elects to concentrate on a single novel by Tusquets. In "The Gift: Love and Aesthetics in *El amor es un juego solitario*," she attends to the second novel of the tetralogy in order to explore the ways in which aesthetics imply an alternative economy based in relational exchange.

Section I also features two essays that discuss multiple novels. Stacey Dolgin Casado applies a Jungian model of subjectivity to the four novels that traditionally comprise the tetralogy. And the final essay in the opening section could be productively included in any of the three sections (or could in fact comprise a fourth category) because Abigail Lee Six successfully brings together Tusquets's novelistic tetralogy, her short fiction, and her autobiographical texts. Her essay titled "Spinning Straw into Gold: Blond Hair and the Autobiographical Illusion in the Fiction of Esther Tusquets" claims new terrain for scholarship on Tusquets with Lee Six's exploration of the racialized (and therefore ideological) connections between the author's self-presentation and her fictionalized characterizations.

As is well known, Tusquets did not limit her creative activities to writing novels for adults, and the three essays in "Section II: Looking After Tusquets's 'Other' Fiction" examine some of the author's less-studied fictional texts. First, María Elena Soliño offers a wide-ranging and carefully researched discussion of Tusquets's literature for children, and she also examines Tusquets's considerable editorial contributions to the publication and dissemination of children's literature in Spain. Second, Mayte de Lama also departs from Tusquets's long fiction to investigate the themes of psychological instability, revenge, and subversion in three of Tusquets's short stories: "Olivia" (1980), "La niña lunática" ["The Lunatic Girl"] (1988), and "Las sutiles leyes de la simetría" ["The Subtle Laws of Symmetry"] (1982). And finally, in "*Siete miradas en un mismo paisaje* and the Function of the Gaze," Catherine G. Bellver interrogates the gendered nexus between looking, knowledge, and subjectivity that infuses the seven interrelated short stories that make up Tusquets's fourth fictional text for adults.

The three essays that comprise our third section, subtitled "Looking Towards Tusquets's Non-Fiction," delve into Tusquets's journalism, her editorial career, and her relatively recent interest in memoirs. Rosalía Cornejo Parriego foregrounds Tusquets's intellectual contributions to the documentation of Spain's political transition via the journalistic essays that appeared in *Triunfo*, *Destino*, and *La Vanguardia* between 1968 and

1983. In "Editar con firma: Las confecciones y creaciones de una editora autorizada," Meri Torras Francès reads *Confesiones de una editora poco mentirosa* (2005) [*Confessions of a Slightly Dishonest Editor*] in light of Tusquets's position as the Director of Lumen. And, as a suitable finale, Mary S. Vásquez lyrically rehearses Tusquets's convergent and divergent rememorations in *Correspondencia privada* [*Private Correspondence*] (2005) and *Tiempos que fueron* [*Times Gone By*] (2012). Tiffany L. Malloy's Comprehensive Bibliography provides a second aptly academic conclusion for and to our collective endeavor.

3. Last Words

All of the scholars who contributed to our volume have devoted significant periods of our academic careers to reading and analyzing texts by Esther Tusquets. We have all published previous studies of her work, and we offer our words in the hope that they will inspire future generations of students, scholars, and readers to look at Esther Tusquets-the-writer again and afresh.

Finally, I would like to thank the Dean's Fund for Excellence at the University of Colorado at Boulder for a grant that contributed to the completion of the Bibliography for *Esther Tusquets: Scholarly Correspondences*. Most important, I am indebted to my co-editor, Professor Inmaculada Pertusa-Seva, for envisioning this project, for her enviable powers of persuasion, and for her enduring memory and friendship.

SECTION I:

LOOKING ANEW AT TUSQUETS'S TETRALOGY

CHAPTER ONE

FAILED FAIRY TALES AND FEMINIST RE-VISION IN ESTHER TUSQUETS'S *EL MISMO MAR DE TODOS LOS VERANOS*

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1. Introduction

In *El mismo mar de todos los veranos* [*The Same Sea as Every Summer*], Esther Tusquets subverts phallocentric[1] children's stories in order to present what Adrienne Rich has termed a "re-vision," a new way of seeing. Rich writes,

> "Re-vision—the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction—is for women more than a chapter in cultural history; it is an act of survival." (2002: 11)

Ways of seeing and modes of depicting imbue meaning to or divest of significance that which is portrayed. For the woman writer, such as Tusquets, the world that she has been presented and has internalized, adopting as her own, is purportedly neutral and objective, yet in actuality it is gendered and hierarchized. Within this hierarchical, binary oppositional paradigm, Woman (or that which is deemed feminine) is the Other. By seeing with new eyes, by revisiting universally familiar texts, and re-

[1] Throughout the chapter, phallocentrism should be understood as follows. The phallus is the symbol of male power and privilege utilized to uphold and perpetuate patriarchalism. By extension, phallocentrism is the view that all should revolve around masculine/masculinized privilege. Essential to this is hierarchical, binary, oppositional thinking: good vs. bad, superior vs. inferior, male vs. female. Ultimately, then, the masculine can never be viewed in a negative light, as it is the ideal. The feminine can never be seen positively of its own accord and can only be deemed "good" if associated with the idealized masculine.

visioning them, Tusquets de-inferiorizes and ultimately vindicates the feminine; she subverts the phallocentric worldview that posits Woman as a lesser and lacking construct. The Catalonian author's title, *El mismo mar de todos los veranos*, connotes lack of novelty and stagnation rooted in that which is destined to repeat itself cyclically. Yet, as Audre Lorde observed in "Poetry Is Not a Luxury,"

> "there are no new ideas waiting in the wings to save us as women, as human. There are only old and forgotten ones, new combinations, explorations and recognitions from within ourselves—along with the renewed courage to try them out." (1984: 38)

The old fairy tales and children's stories re-visioned, explored, recombined, and rewritten by Tusquets attest to her courage in recognizing and subverting the insidious, crippling ideology instilled through apparently innocuous children's fiction.[2] The works of children's fiction,[3]

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[2] Tusquets's re-appropriation of canonical (male-biased) children's fiction has a doubly feminist result: 1) it legitimizes a literary work by a woman by infiltrating the lines of male-centered, male-dominated literary canons and 2) the re-contextualization subverts the phallocentrism inherent in the original works.

The surge of scholarship in the 1980s and 90s on works by women bears witness to the sustained effort to prove that women's literature is "serious" literature. Mary Ellen Bieder, in the Forward to the *Indiana Journal of Hispanic Literatures* special issue on women writers delineates the clear existence of an "'other' canon of Spanish literature that includes Rosalía de Castro, Emilia Pardo Bazán, Esther Tusquets, Carmen Gómez-Ojea, Paloma Díaz-Más, and Ana Rossetti" (1993: 6). Kathleen McNerney, in *On Our Own Behalf*, notes that the Constitution of 1978's lifting of Francoist suppression of the Catalan language coincided with a Catalonian literary renaissance and feminism (1988: 1). Mirella Servodidio contended in 1993 that "Esther Tusquets [had] already carved out a prominent niche in the pantheon of Spanish letters" (1993: 502). Nearly two decades after the first publication of *El mismo mar*, the vast amount of criticism generated on Tusquets attests to Servodidio's assertion. As Geraldine Cleary Nichols indicates, within the decade between 1983 (the publication of the first article on Tusquets, written by Mary S. Vásquez) and 1993, critics produced 18 journal articles, 10 chapters in Vásquez's *The Sea of Becoming*, 24 conference papers, two M.A. theses, three doctoral dissertations, four long interviews and one book (1993: 160). The fact that Tusquets reedited and published *El mismo mar* with Castalia provides ample evidence that this work has obtained its "niche within the pantheon of Spanish letters."

[3] Tusquets incorporates countless allusions (characters, plots, motifs) to children's fiction. Just a few examples include the Enchanted Forest, Hansel and Gretel, Alice in Wonderland, Snow White, Cinderella, *Arabian Nights*, and the Ugly

seamlessly woven throughout *El mismo mar*, that I shall explore are Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Mermaid" (1836) and "The (Emperor and the) Nightingale" (1843), Jeanne-Marie LePrince de Beaumont's "The Beauty and the Beast" (1756),[4] and J.M. Barrie's novel *Peter and Wendy* (1911, later known as *Peter Pan*).

Tusquets's *El mismo mar* and the children's fiction alluded to are what Virginia Woolf has termed "looking-glass likenesses to life" (1929: 123) and, as such, reflect the reality of patriarchy and its concomitant injustice. With its seemingly infinite literary allusions and interweaving of ancient, canonical characters and stories into the central plot of the novel, *El mismo mar* mirrors life in the last quarter of the twentieth-century in bourgeois Catalonia; it also exposes an intrinsically female experience through narratives that cross the boundaries of temporal, spatial, ethnic, and geo-political origins. Tusquets's first novel reveals both what it means to be a woman and how Woman has been represented in a variety of narrative genres (including ancient Greek myths, didactic stories for girls in the French Enlightenment, and early twentieth-century British fantasy fiction). At first blush, this literary work—which reflects life through other literary works that also reflect life—appears to be a fragmented and confusing, multi-mirrored mosaic of female experience, but the image that emerges in this *mise-en-abyme* "looking-glass likeness" is singular; through Tusquets's fractured mosaic, the reader discerns that internalization of and capitulation to prescribed phallocentric expectations adversely affect female development.

María Elena Soliño states that Tusquets, through constant intertextual references, has "questioned the lessons and promises children receive from texts like *Peter Pan*" (2005: 177). I assert that works based on a self-sacrificing female character (who ultimately suffers as a direct result of her effacing actions) propagate and reinforce misogynistic expectations. Tusquets's intertextual allusions spring from patently gendered works in which unmitigated phallocentrism is presented in a frank and unapologetic fashion. Ultimately, we need ask ourselves what lessons these children's stories teach and what archetypes they reinforce.

Duckling. The present chapter is not a study of the totality of Tusquets's allusions to children's literature, and is limited to texts listed in the Introduction.

[4] Although "The Beauty and the Beast" was first published by Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve in 1740, LePrince de Beaumont's version simplified the tale. I reference the latter version in this essay.

2. Feminist Literary Strategies within a Post-Franco, Middle-aged Context

Before analyzing Tusquets's intertextual rendering, we must first underscore that she participates in feminist literary strategies. The repetitive, circular, and elliptical structure inherent in the novel concurs with Hélène Cixous's metaphor of wandering as the emblematic disruptiveness of *l'écriture féminine* ("Castration," 1981: 53), as noted by critics such as Nina L. Molinaro and Akiko Tsuchiya and described by M.J. Marr as Tusquets's "literary walkabout" (2004: 218). Cixous comments on woman's insurgent writing; autonomous gendered expression is characterized by "ruptures and transformations in her history," is "marked by a woman's *seizing* the occasion to *speak*," and to write as a woman is "to forge herself the antilogos weapon" ("Laugh," 1981: 250). Tusquets and her first-person narrator create a new feminist metaliterary expression (from the threads of phallocentrism) and thus transform the phallo-literature that had previously served to erase or silence the feminine. The protagonist's re-visioning is rooted in a gendered, ontological form of expression: her recently deceased grandmother's storytelling.[5]

Critics such as Catherine G. Bellver, Estrella Cibreiro, Biruté Ciplijauskaité, Barbara F. Ichiishi, Linda Gould Levine, Mercedes Mazquiarán de Rodríguez, Ana María Moix, Dorothy Odartey-Wellington, Elizabeth G. Ordóñez, Mirella Servodidio, Soliño, and Tsuchiya, among others, point to what I will refer to as a new gynoptic (intertextual or archetypal) narrative. This may be understood as a way of rewriting that 1) discerns the fact that and the manner in which accepted and known tales are presented through a masculine-biased lens, 2) underscores its crippling effects on the feminine psyche, and, finally, 3) provides a new and authentic way of seeing as Woman, in other words, what could be understood as a gynoptic re-vision.

Intertextuality can certainly be a feminist literary strategy. In "La reelaboración de los cuentos de hadas en las novelas españolas contemporáneas," Odartey-Wellington analyzes the prevalent allusiveness to and rewriting of fairy tales in canonical literature by Spanish women.[6] Soliño refers to post-Civil War women's narrative that incorporates,

[5] "abuela . . . tiernísima que narra[ba] historias" ("a most tender grandmother who narrated stories") (Tusquets, 1978: 146).

[6] Odartey-Wellington (2000) notes that "Cinderella" is referenced in Carmen Laforet's *Nada*, "The Snow Queen" in Carmen Martín Gaite's work by the same name, "The Little Mermaid" in Ana María Matute's *Primera memoria*, and "Little Red Riding Hood" in Matute's *Caperucita en Manhattan*.

juxtaposes, or compiles canonical children's fiction or women's popular romance novel (*la novela rosa*), resulting in a "mosaic of these familiar texts" (2005: 178). Hence, like her literary contemporaries who include Adelaida García Morales, Laforet, Ana María Moix, Martín Gaite, Matute, Rosa Montero, and Montserrat Roig, Tusquets, to return to Soliño's mosaic metaphor, reconstructs a new image by repositioning the familiar tiles. By deconstructing and decontextualizing, the author re-structures and re-views, through a twentieth-century, post-Franco gaze, the female experience perhaps not of coming-of-age, but rather becoming-middle-aged, facing the lost aspirations of youth and re-visioning one's place in a newly democratic world.

Although *El mismo mar* was published in 1978 (the year of the current Spanish constitution that grants equal rights to all regardless of class, gender, and political leanings), contemporary readers cannot lose sight of certain factors: Tusquets, born in 1936, was raised in Barcelona during the earliest years of Franco's regime when all of Catalonia felt the brunt of the new order; and the middle-aged protagonist of her 1978 novel would have been socialized under the influence of the *Sección Femenina*, a staunchly repressive force that aimed to nullify female autonomy and self-definition.[7] In other words, Tusquets and her protagonist share a similar background. Although Franco died in 1975, those who lived and became adults during his administration will always be haunted by the ghost of all he represents. Tusquets's compatriot Montserrat Roig has stated that those educated under fascism cannot overcome "el Franco . . . [que] tienes dentro"[8] (Nichols, 1989: 164-165). Tusquets is aware of this paradox given her declaration of feminist beliefs (Ross, 2005: 214) and her denial of producing feminist novels (Ross, 2005: 217). As a middle-aged character indoctrinated in the Francoist feminine ideal of wifedom, motherhood, and dependency on a male figure, the quest for autonomy by Tusquets's protagonist is, at best, quixotic.

[7] Arguably, Catalonia has historically been the most feminist region of Spain. Let us recall that Federica Montseny, the Minister of Health and Social Services, legalized abortion in November 1936, attempted to abolish prostitution, and favored free love (Scanlon, 1976: 308-309). Tusquets grew up under the regime that had vacated the progressive laws benefitting women instituted by the II Republic.

[8] "the Franco . . . you have within."

As a perimenopausal *bildungsroman,*[9]or a tale of "becoming middle-aged" rather than coming of age, the protagonist finds herself "al otro lado de la juventud" and facing "ya muy tarde, demasiado tarde"[10] (1978: 122) her sense of alienation, of feeling unloved by the three individuals with whom she should feel most connected: "un marido fatuo . . . una madre remotísima . . . y una hija . . . sabihonda . . . que me lanzan su amor al abismo"[11] (1978: 122). The narrator-protagonist E delineates her purpose as a need to find herself:

> "he venido a reencontrar mis viejos fantasmas, o a encontrarme a mí misma en aquella niña, que, aun triste y solitaria, sí existía, anterior a la falsificación y al fraude de todos los papeles asignados y asumidos."[12] (1978: 30)

In her crisis, "en esta soledad sin esperanzas, emerge de otro mundo, de otro tiempo . . . una muchacha . . . un poco patito feo"[13] (1978: 123), Clara. Tusquets's protagonist strives to make sense of her middle age from the tangled threads of European children's fiction, unraveling the belief system inculcated in her and reweaving her present with strands from the past. Having accepted (or been recast in) socially prescribed heteronormative and patriarchal female roles, the narrator-protagonist, betrays her own need for self-fulfillment. The intertextuality between the fairy tales and Tusquets's work implicitly juxtaposes the metafictional characters' development (or stagnation) and the paths that the protagonist and Clara, the homoerotic object of the former's desire, have taken and might take. In returning to the childhood summer home, rediscovering the child she had been, loving a childlike partner in whom she sees herself reflected, and reliving, retelling and re-visioning her life through children's literature, the narrator-protagonist gains agency in her own story. Although ultimately she is not freed from the societal strictures that

[9] As Marr points out, the narrator's awareness of her own mortality is symptomatic of middle-agedness (2004: 222), especially with the narrative that relates to the grandmother's passing (Tusquets, 1978: 141-148).
[10] "on the other side of youth"; "already very late, too late."
[11] "a fatuous husband . . . a most distant mother . . . and a know-it-all daughter . . . who cast their love for me into the abyss."
[12] "I've come here to reencounter my old ghosts, or to find myself in that girl, even if sad and solitary, who did exist before the falsification and fraud of all the assigned and assumed roles."
[13] "in this hopeless loneliness, from another world, another time, emerges a girl . . . an ugly duckling"

bind her, her subjective re-appropriation of fairy tales places her in a position of authorial-agential power.

El mismo mar is not about Clara as the object of E's desire; the narration represents E's subjectivity, her desire (as she sees herself reflected in the young lover), and her psychological machinations while she works through the current crisis in order to face who she has become. Having been a great reader and now as a literature professor, the protagonist comes to realize that she was an obedient, dutiful, deferential, and submissive sort who never managed to transgress the texts or scrutinize their underlying toxicity. Molinaro notes that Tusquets's work closely explores "issues of power as it affects gender relations . . . as it imposes itself on the processes of writing, reading, and narrating" (1991: 19). The protagonist's approach to reading perfectly parallels her approach to life. She passively and quietly accepts direction in order to fulfill the expectations of those who represent and uphold the phallocentrism that, by definition, marginalized her. Feminist literary critic Mary Eagleton underscores that "For many women writers what cannot be easily overcome is an awareness of an oppressive male presence" (1986: 40); hence, the woman writer balances or juggles "apparent conformity to certain patriarchal literary norms and a trenchant critique of those same standards" (Eagleton, 1986: 41). Tusquets ambiguously conforms to and yet critiques elements of canonical children's fiction, a genre deeply rooted in misogynistic ideology that, through implicit and explicit didacticism, aims to perpetuate the rule of the phallus.

The novel begins and ends circularly, repeating an allusion to Barrie. The epigraph and the concluding sentence, an utterance by Clara, read, "Y Wendy creció."[14] Notably, the latter is one of the few articulations not contained in E's inner monologue. By speaking, Clara gains her voice. As we explore the highly intertextual overlapping and rewriting of characters such as Clara, the nightingale, Beauty, Little Mermaid, and Wendy, we must question the significance of the Barrie quote that opens and closes the novel. By investigating the literary allusions and analyzing them within their intertextual and metafictional context, we readers must ponder whether this best-selling, groundbreaking work can be considered feminist if the protagonist capitulates to phallocentric, heteronormative expectations.[15] In other words, is there hope in the Conclusion? I purport

[14] "And Wendy grew up."

[15] Nichols states that once she read *Para no volver*, the author's "fiction could no longer pass for feminist, [nor] be seen as committed to bettering the lot of women. Indeed, her works seem to go beyond neutrality on the gender issue to verge on being masculinist" (1993: 162).

that if fairy tales boast a morally or behaviorally didactic purpose, then the protagonist's internalization of those lessons and her subsequent personal failure (self-sabotage and acquiescence to phallocracy) ironically attest to the *success* of the children's narratives on her psyche. Yet, as we will see, it is Clara's transgressive reading of these texts—in other words, her refusal to self-efface and thereby emulate the fairytale heroines and her lover—that bears witness to the fact that failed fairy tales subvert the phallocentrism, misogyny, and heteronormativity that inferiorize Woman and all that is deemed feminine. Tusquets liberates her secondary character, Clara, who represents the future. The implication, then, is that the next generation of women will (or might) see the past with eyes from which the scales of masculine-bias have fallen.

Tusquets's literary references exquisitely and poignantly unveil the "anthropticism" of children's fiction. The plots are insidiously presented through the gendered lens of male privilege and power, and crafted so that the reader identifies and associates with the (abuse of) power, elevated social status, wealth, (the right to) egotism, youth, attractiveness, the ability to choose, and freedom conferred on the male character who is the object of the heroine's affections. The reader is supposed to learn from, and not identify with, the self-sacrifice of the "good" (young, female) heroines and therefore disdain the power, selfishness, evil, advanced age, ugliness, class consciousness, and/or vanity of the "bad" female characters.

In the fictional world of the novel, E identifies with the texts and, in an odd version of the pathetic fallacy, displaces onto literary figures (rather than nature) her emotions:

> "lo único que irremisiblemente habrá de hacerme llorar no son . . . los abandonos de Julio ni mi propia soledad . . . sino los tontos cuentos para niños con princesas infelices y muchachas abandonadas."[16] (1978: 133)

She articulates her loneliness by means of known texts and sees herself as reliving and beginning to question the clichéd literary patterns and previously scripted roles of self-sacrificing Beauty, silent and nullifying Little Mermaid, and, ultimately, "grown up" Wendy. Linda Gould Levine notes,

> "Reading for women thus becomes rewriting, an act of 'literary warfare' designed at changing not just one text, but 'the whole system of texts' it is

[16] "The only thing that incontrovertibly makes me cry are not . . . Julio's abandonments or my own loneliness . . . but rather silly children's stories with unhappy and abandoned princesses."

> immersed in. . . . [It is] a powerful exorcism of 'the male mind implanted in us' . . . . Tusquets' protagonist possesses the ability to become a 'resisting' reader. As such she is capable of discerning the ways in which she has been forced into complicity with a male tradition antagonistic to her individuality as woman. She takes a leap into the looking glass of herself and literary history and recognizes that she must first 'shatter' the reflection created by the male voice if she is ever to find a mode of self expression." (1987: 204)

Levine's metaphor of shattering the mirror that reflects the "anthroptic" construction of Woman perfectly contextualizes and modernizes Woolf's "looking-glass likeness to life" and particularly applies it to Tusquets. The female author identifies the pervasive and repetitive archetypal patterns of systematic inferiorization of the feminine in the literary universe in order to subsequently transform the pernicious underlying ideology. Hence, *El mismo mar* exemplifies Cixous's theory that women's writing is an "antilogos weapon." Let us now turn to the four tales against which Tusquets wages what Levine has termed a "literary war." Ultimately, we must determine if the author successfully vanquishes and exorcises Andersen, LePrince, and Barrie's ghostly protagonists.

3. Children's Fiction[17]

"The Nightingale" is the tale of an Emperor who prefers the predictable and unchanging song of the jewel-encrusted version of the living songbird. Yet on his deathbed he is restored to health upon hearing the live song, for which he concedes the bird's freedom.

"The Beauty and the Beast" is the story of the youngest and sweetest daughter of a merchant who loses his fortune. Following complex circumstances, he enters into an agreement with the wealthy Beast to exchange his own freedom for the captivity of his youngest daughter. While captive and living in luxury, Beauty agrees to marry Beast, thus breaking the evil spell and revealing that the monstrous captor is a prince. LePrince's version concludes with a strong moral for the five to thirteen-year-old girls for whom it was destined: when accepting marriage, one

[17] I offer a note on the names of the fairy tale characters versus the titles of the fairy tales. Curiously the characters do not have human names, but rather are referenced by their roles in the original works. LePrince capitalizes Beauty's name, thus, making it a proper noun. For the sake of consistency, I refer to the protagonist of "The Little Mermaid" as Little Mermaid (the capitalized, proper noun without the definite article). The titles of the tales have a definite article, while the names of the characters do not.

must not be greedy, arrogant, or vain (like Beauty's sisters whose draconian punishment was to become sentient statues who bore constant witness to Beauty's marital bliss). A prudent girl must discern beyond the beastly, unappealing superficial traits of suitors to find virtue in a husband.

"The Little Mermaid" is the story of a young mermaid whose only aspiration in life is to love and be loved by an earthly prince whose life she saved in a shipwreck. She enters into an agreement with the Sea Witch that she will forsake everything that is dear to her (her home, her connection to her family, her literal tongue and voice, and her fishtail) in order to convince the prince to love her and thus gain her immortal soul. She feels excruciating physical pain from the tail-leg surgery/amputation and experiences emotional pain at the fact that the prince loves her as if she were a child or a pet. When he chooses to marry another, Little Mermaid has one more chance to save herself, by killing him. She refuses to harm him and becomes an airy spirit who, in the future and after three hundred years of good deeds, might earn an immortal soul.

Peter Pan is the tale of Wendy, the oldest of the three Darling children who are visited by the eternal child Peter Pan and enticed to leave the nursery in their London home and fly to Neverland. After a series of adventures, Wendy, her brothers, and some of the Lost Boys return to the Darling home. Mrs. Darling adopts the boys. Wendy returns once to Neverland to do Peter's spring cleaning. She grows up. He does not remember her and confuses her with her daughter Jane. The story ends with the assertion that only children can fly because adults (or "married women" like the now adult protagonist) cannot be "gay" and "innocent."

There are many similarities among the tales. The three stories with heroines (rather than with an androgynous creature) are certainly more parallel. In all three fairy tales, superlatives abound in the descriptions of the representatives of phallocracy and the metonymic extensions of them as well as of the heroines and the nightingale. Beauty and Little Mermaid are *huérfanas de madre*[18] while Wendy's mother is absent during the girl's time away. The three heroine stories, and especially the two fairy tales, portray misogyny to and by women. Each main character self-sacrifices and somehow saves, redeems, or refuses to harm her phallocratic counterpart. For the heroines, sacrifice is to their detriment, while for the androgynous bird it is liberating.

[18] The term *huérfana de madre* literally translates as "(female) orphan of mother." Although in English, an orphan refers to a child who has lost both his/her parents, Spanish permits the loss of one of the parents to constitute orphanhood.

4. The Nightingale

In Andersen's "The Nightingale," the phallocentric ruler exerts unequivocal control over all his inanimate and animate possessions. The bird rests on a "golden perch," stays at court, and has "his own cage" (1843: n.p.). The latter is an oxymoron. A cage symbolizes the lack of freedom, choice, and decision-making ability in one's own life. The possessive adjective underscores the ironic tension between the noun "cage" and the possessive adjective that modifies it, for the antecedent of the adjective (the nightingale) is what is possessed, not one who possesses. The life of luxurious captivity is further exacerbated when the emperor hangs from the bird's neck his golden slipper. Regardless of its fine material, the metonymic slipper further inferiorizes and marks the bird as chattel lowlier than the autocrat's sole.

The emperor receives as a gift a mechanical, jewel-encrusted bird that sings as exquisitely as the real bird, but is "much prettier to see" and is praised for its flawless performance and mechanical interior. Once the machine is chosen over the bird, the latter returns to the forest. When the mechanical bird breaks down, the emperor is near death. The real bird returns, sings for the emperor (whose health is now restored), and, as an expression of the autocrat's gratitude, is allowed to fly away.

In *El mismo mar*, Andersen's tale is referenced in two disparate yet linked circumstances: the inauguration and the conclusion of the amorous relationship. E and Clara's intimacy commences on their "double date" with "*el ruiseñor*" (the nightingale, a trophy wife married to "*el emperador*" [the emperor]) and her young French friend, "*la chica pepsi*."[19] The bored, beautiful, bisexual housewife is a bourgeois version of the coveted, mechanical, bejeweled bird from Andersen's tale. Tusquets's nightingale-trophy-wife "[Es] un objeto rarísimo y exquisito, tremendamente costoso . . . traído hasta aquí desde lejos para recreo y ornato de un falso emperador"[20] (1978: 101). In sleeping with "*el emperador*," in the denouement of the novel, and in leaving by plane, Clara is linked to the androgynous creature of flesh that maintains its authenticity and freedom after visiting the emperor's bedchamber. Whereas the artificial songbird exists only to please the patriarch, Clara, like the androgynous bird, is free of the emperor's absolutist control at the end of the tale. This bird of flesh is not feminine, it is not a woman. Perhaps the creature's androgyny in Tusquets's recontextualization

[19] "the girl with the Pepsi-bottle figure."

[20] "[Is] a rare and exquisite, exorbitantly expensive, object . . . brought here from afar for the recreation and adornment of a false emperor."

signifies that the young lover might ultimately break free from the fetters of gender roles.

5. Beauty and the Beast

If the bisexual friend of Tusquets's protagonist is an overt nod to Andersen's jewel-encrusted robot, E also reveals a likeness to LePrince's heroine in "Beauty and the Beast." The motherless Beauty, portrayed as a victim of her sisters' animosity, is civil and loyal to her father even when he loses his fortune. Phallocentric approval is key to both the protagonist and the moral of the story. The explicitly didactic purpose is to inculcate "female" traits such as humility, patience, industry, dutifulness, the silent fulfillment of domestic responsibilities, and assent to expectations, all of which are sanctioned by paternal figures.

Female sacrifices (and complicity in the sacrifices) are essential to the tale. The first example establishes patriarchal collusion in and expectation of female sacrificial volunteerism. The Beast will pardon the life of Beauty's captive father on the condition that a daughter comes willingly to suffer and possibly die in his stead. The second example of sacrifice reveals a type of ventriloquism in which Beauty mouths, like an unthinking doll (or like the mechanical nightingale), the phallocentric desires for her detriment as if they were her own. In response to her father's predicament (and her supposed culpability in requesting the rose that he took, which unleashes the Beast's fury and, thus, places his life in danger), Beauty assumes the culpability and consequences.[21] A "fine lady" in a dream affirms the heroine's sacrifice and promises that "giving up [her] life to save [her father] shall not go unrewarded" (1756: n.p.).

The inclusion/consideration of "female" space is parallel to that of the other tales. In spite of being held captive in opulent surroundings, the heroine is instructed that she rules within this space.[22] Little Mermaid and the nightingale both lack freedom within the emperor's or the prince's jurisdiction and are similarly compensated with materialism. These lavish trappings in fact indicate that they are caged, ensnared, imprisoned, and entombed. Such adjectives perfectly coincide with the climax and denouement of the novel.

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[21] "my father shall not suffer upon my account . . . I will deliver myself up to [the monster's] fury and I am very happy . . . that my death will save my father's life . . as proof of my tender love for him" (1756: n.p.).

[22] A magical book reveals "You are queen and mistress here. /Speak your wishes . . . /Swift obedience [will follow]" (1756: n.p.). Beast (ruler and master) decrees to his captive "you alone are mistress here" (1756: n.p.).

The moral of the tale is that women are to see beyond the "monstrous" traits of their suitors and not seek wealth or status (in spite of the fact that these are the heroine's rewards). Beauty's rationalization of masculine faults prompts her self-sacrifice, resignation, and assumption of guilt.[23] Curiously, the moral is for young girls to choose virtuous husbands, but there is nothing in the tale that reveals Beast to be virtuous. In *El mismo mar*, Julio does not show any virtue. Neither E nor Beauty feels tenderness toward the male figure, yet both will be bound in matrimony to their respective patriarchs.

El mismo mar bares explicit and implicit references to "Beauty and the Beast." While E and Clara are exploring the childhood summer home, as if it were an enchanted castle, Clara queries "¿Cuál de las dos es la Bella? ¿En qué rincón nos espera la Bestia?"[24] (1978: 84). Their (re)discovery of interior areas in the home runs parallel to their getting to know each other emotionally and sexually; the two activities are referred to as an entry into various wells ("pozos") and visits to "un santuario subterráneo"[25] (1978: 84). The fairy tale is further linked to female space ("la casa a la que trajimos muerta ya a mi abuela"[26] [1978: 139]) where Clara and E had played hide-and-seek.

With the overt nods to this tale, Tusquets frankly promises to render a new telling and to live afresh tales that had been based on stagnant archetypes. E narrates,

> "la historia de Clara y la mía, que tal vez no sean tan siquiera una misma historia, sino dos historias absurdas y paralelas . . . un mero pretexto mío para contar y revivir viejas historias . . . desde la mañana en que la introduje por vez primera en el hondo verdor de mi pozo encantado . . . desde el día que buscamos a la Bestia."[27] (1978: 104-105)

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[23] "Is it his fault if he is so ugly, and has so little sense? He is kind and good, and that is sufficient. . . . it is neither wit, nor a fine person, in a husband, that makes a woman happy, but virtue, sweetness of temper, and complaisance . . . . It is true, I do not feel the tenderness of affection for [Beast], but I . . . have the highest gratitude, esteem, and friendship; I will not make him miserable, were I to be so ungrateful I should never forgive myself" (1756: n.p.).

[24] "Which of the two is Beauty? In what corner does Beast await us?"

[25] "a subterranean sanctuary."

[26] "the home where we brought my already dead grandmother"

[27] "Clara's story and mine, which perhaps are not one story, but rather two absurd and parallel stories . . . a mere pretext of mine to tell and relive old stories . . . from the morning I introduced her for the first time into the deep verdure of my enchanted well . . . since the day we looked for Beast."

Hence, we see the possibility of entering the fairy tale text from a new direction and partaking in a transgressive reading. If the moral of "Beauty and the Beast" is to see beyond monstrosity and if this "beastliness" is viewed as forbidden (same-sex) desire, then the tryst promises "virtue" in homoerotic happiness. Yet the gendered context of LePrince's moral insidiously urges young girls not to expect too much from a (heteronormative) husband by deluding themselves that his "monstrosity" masks virtue. The allusion proves ironic, then, for in this instance the search for the Beast is the exploration of a "darker side," the unexpressed desires within the feminine space (the grandmother's seaside home, the tunnels, and the wells, all of which symbolize female anatomy). In this uterine domestic arena, the vaginal sexual space is explored. Ultimately, in spite of the promise of rewriting the script, the conclusion of *El mismo mar* perfectly follows obedient Beauty's "voluntary" decision to accept the patriarch and a life of luxurious captivity.

6. Little Mermaid

Like Beauty, the motherless Little Mermaid is the youngest and most unusual of her sisters. Her love for the prince leads to his safety (from drowning) and ultimately her ruin, whereas in "Beauty and the Beast," the heroine's love for the male beast leads to his redemption and her social well-being. Little Mermaid's self-sacrifice surpasses Beauty's sacrifice to the point of self-destruction and a nullification of self, in the name of love, in order to be with the narcissistic prince. The mermaid's erasure of self becomes evident in her underwater garden, which is but a shrine to the statue of the prince whom she idolizes. Her self-sacrifice has countless dastardly consequences: exile from her home, alienation from her family, lack of expression through the amputation of her tongue, devaluation of her greatest attributes, and inauthenticity through the excruciating bifurcation of her tale in exchange for agonizing legs. Little Mermaid questions what will remain of who she is if she forsakes her voice/tongue in exchange for legs. The Witch responds, "Your lovely form . . . your gliding movements and your eloquent eyes" (1836: 71). The synesthetic expression of eloquent eyes reveals that her expression and communication are futile, because no one, not even the prince, understands her. The term "eloquent," from the Latin lexeme "to speak," proves particularly ironic when juxtaposed with the Sea Witch's removal of the protagonist's tongue (1836: 71). The tail-change operation exacts

excruciating, phallicly inflicted agony.[28] Little Mermaid is rendered powerless, self-less, and speechless and becomes an agonizing, incommunicative, and marginalized individual. She is reduced to eroticized and objectified physicality. Others are insensitive to her pain and she becomes a screen onto which the prince projects his desires.

Myriad references to this tale abound in Tusquets's novel, starting with the prevalence of expressions such as "gruta subacuática" (1978: 64), "pozos de sombra" or "sumergirse en el pozo de sombra" (1978: 50, 52, 54, 78, 79, 80, 82, 83, 145),[29] and countless descriptions of Clara as a mermaid. These include "princesa subacuática" (1978: 67), "tu cola casi piernas"[30] (1978: 67, 68), and several references to her mermaid tail, hair, and scales in the balcony intimacy scene (1978: 135). Bellver notes that Tusquets's characters retreat from the hostility of the phallic world to "places where they feel secure." The enclosed spaces surpass "their metonymic value as backdrops for erotic scenes" in order to symbolize female sexuality. Bellver underscores the direct "correlation between rooms and female genitalia," given the fact that the author describes them with "identical adjectives . . . [such as] 'cerrado', 'pequeño', 'oscuro', 'húmedo'"[31] (1984: 15-16). The seaside home and the homoerotic affair, which allude to Little Mermaid's aquatic world, become a temporary refuge. These feminine "new spaces" provide a safe locus of erotic, literary, and psychic expression (Levine, 1987: 206).[32] As E monologues,

> "Una vagina . . . es también otro pozo ciego, una vagina que a fuerza de ignorada es como si no existiera y que grita tan fuerte desde esta casi no existencia que su aullido angustioso puede desquiciar el universo."[33] (1978: 82)

Tusquets's enclosed watery spaces speak to loci of autonomy and authenticity where there is freedom to express, create, and simply be,

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[28] "as if a two-edge sword struck through her frail body . . . . Every footstep felt as if she were walking on the blades and points of sharp knives" (1836: 72).

[29] "subaquatic grotto"; "wells of shade," "submerging oneself in the dark/shadow well"

[30] "subaquatic princess"; "your tail that is almost a pair of legs"

[31] "closed, small, dark, moist."

[32] Nichols, Bellver and Levine draw upon Pratt's (1981) concept of "new spaces" in the lesbian novel. These are literary, psychic and erotic loci in which the expression of the feminine takes place (Levine, 1987: 206).

[33] "A vagina . . . is also another blind well, a vagina that, upon being ignored, is as if it did not exist and screams so loudly from this almost nonexistence that its anguished howl can set the universe off kilter."