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A redefined feminine from paleolithic to twenty-first century through children's literature & film

Pamela Dee McCombs

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A Redefined Feminine From Paleolithic to Twenty-first Century

Through Children’s Literature & Film

Pamela Dee McCombs

Thesis

Submitted to the Department of English Language and Literature

Eastern Michigan University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Children’s Literature

Thesis Committee

Ian Wojcik-Andrews

Sheila Most

20 October 2007

Ypsilanti, Michigan
Dedication

Dedicated to my wonderful children,

Michael, Michelle & Mathew,

And their families.
Acknowledgements

Many thanks go to my Children’s Literature advisor and professor, Ian Wojcik-Andrews, for his inspirational class discussions, for his constant encouragement and support, and for his organizing the “Oxford and Beyond” study abroad trip. Second, I would like to thank all the professors I have taken classes from in the past three years, Christine Hume, Sheila Most, Annette Wannamaker, Janet Kaufman and Craig Dionne. Third, I would like to thank all my friends and relatives for putting up with my continuous excuses of: “No I have to study,” “No I have to read,” or “No I have to write, write, write.” Last, I would like to thank my dearest little nine pound friend, Tobias Lorenzo, for his interruptions to go for a walk, for his barking insistence to play, and for his always being there with a kiss when I needed it most.

My tenth grade English teacher once told me I was a very creative writer, but I needed to work on the fundamentals. Thank You, Mr. Renfro, for those words of encouragement and advise so many years ago. I’m still working on the fundamentals, which brings me to a very special thanks to Ian, Sheila, and Lisa for all the editing.
Abstract

The intention of my critical discourse is to redefine the knowledge of the feminine that Western tradition, through “master narratives,” silenced, subverted, and deferred. My guidelines were drawn from the deconstruction of philosophical works by Jacques Derrida and redefined the unique circle of “Being and beings” to be not just God and man, but God, Goddess, and Human, the Goddess being the original feminine. I discovered the feminine beginning, through archaeomythologists Gimbutas, Dever, and Davis-Kimball, with the unearthing of female figurines, temple models, and warrior priestesses. I found examples of the feminine survival through the Dark Ages in Lithuanian Dainos and folktales “Queen of the Serpents,” “Ashputtle,” and “The White Cat.” In the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries, the feminine is redefined through female writers like Edgeworth, Potter, and Woolf. I culminate my journey with the patriarchal feminine redefined through the fantasy film animation of Miyazaki and the “stark realism” fantasy of Pullman’s trilogy His Dark Materials, which taught the heroine to tell her “true stories.”
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Introduction and Background

Yearning is the word that best describes a common psychological state shared by many of us, cutting across boundaries of race, class, gender, and sexual practice. Specifically, in relation to the post-modernist deconstruction of “master” narratives, the yearning that wells in the hearts and minds of those whom such narratives have silenced is the longing for critical voice (2011).

bell hooks

The intention of my critical discourse is to redefine the knowledge of the feminine that Western tradition, through “master narratives,” silenced, subverted, and deferred. As bell hooks describes above, “the yearning” has taken me on a journey back in time to discover when the knowledge of the feminine was originally defined. Western tradition would say that the beginning is the Bible’s Garden of Eden when Eve ate the forbidden fruit and caused the fall of man. Scholars tell us the Bible was first written circa 1000 BCE, though scientists tell us there were human beings as long ago as 30,000 BCE My journey begins with the Paleolithic circa 25,000 BCE female figurines to redefine the knowledge of feminine.

The guidelines I will use on this journey to redefine the knowledge of the feminine are the original private feminine through nature and the constructed public feminine through writing, and I determine these through the post-structural philosophical works of Jacques Derrida and his theories as put forth in “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences” and “Differance.” I also use Diana Fuss’ Essentially Speaking and her discussion of essentialist and constructionist forms of thinking.

Using post-structuralism, I show how our knowledge of the feminine is often passive, obedient, subservient, the Other. For this discourse the Being of beings is the Goddess and
beings are human. As Derrida states, “Being speaks through every language, everywhere and always” (Differance 949). I’m redefining the being of the original feminine, the being that exists in differance. I consider the ‘a’ in differance in the same way as the ‘hu’ in human. Western patriarchal traditions “placed on reserve, [. . .] detoured, [. . .] deferred, [. . .]” (Derrida 944) dropped the ‘hu’ in human and made it man, mankind instead of humankind.

My discourse is based in Children’s Literature for purposes of revising the curriculum, the Canon; my goal is to educate, teach, instruct, the redefined knowledge of the feminine. Here, I use Jo Anne Pagano’s article “Critical Education and the Liberal Arts” as my inspiration:

Curriculum revision discussions are over that body of traditional knowledge, known as the Canon, and supporters of the Canon see themselves as holding the line against the depredations against civilization by a band of multiculturalists, feminists, and other troublemakers. (229)

So, the archaeologists, the authors, and tales I have chosen for this critical discourse are outsiders, multi-faceted feminists, and trouble-makers redefining the traditional knowledge of the feminine, from a beginning that starts with the Paleolithic female figurines to the twenty-first century “Yearners” that bell hooks described.

I chose Children’s Literature because it has been treated as “childish” literature and therefore not worthy of recognition. As Beverly Clark so aptly quotes in Kiddie Lit: The Cultural Construction of Children’s Literature in America, even feminist theory has not, as Jane Flax remarks, included “discussion of children as human beings or mothering as a relationship between persons” (8). The “stepping-stone phenomenon that African American” women accuse first- and second-wave feminists of doing is also done to children (10). As
Clark states, Alice Walker “prefers the term womanist to feminist, the former embracing the love of women, sometimes men, and being committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female” (10). Walker also “seeks an egalitarian mode with her daughter: ‘We are together, my child and I. Mother and child, yes, but sisters really, against whatever denies us all that we are’” (11). bell hooks argues that “black women have identified work in the context of family as humanizing labor, work that affirms their identity as women, as human beings showing love and care” (11).

Here I would like to interject Roberta Seelinger Trites’ definition of feminism because I believe it is pertinent and logical:

I define feminism as the premise that all people should be treated equally, regardless of gender, race, class, or religion [or sexual preference. . .] The important thing is that girls—and boys—have choices and that they know they have choices. A major goal of feminism is to support women’s choices, but another that is equally important is to foster societal respect for those choices. And since childhood is the time in our lives when our options seem most unlimited, it is a time when respect for choices about self and about others can have serious import. Because feminism and childhood are both imbued with issues of freedom and choice, they complement each other well. (Trites 2)

Lisa Paul’s statement also is very pertinent about the

[S]ilencing of women and the silencing of children: ‘Children, like women, are lumped together as helpless and dependent; creatures to be kept away from the scene of the action, and who otherwise ought not to be seen or heard. But women make
up more than half of the population of the world—and all of us once were children.’

(Trites 48)

As Philip Pullman stated in his Carnegie Medal acceptance speech, “There are some themes, some subjects, too large for adult fiction; they can only be dealt with adequately in a children’s book” (1). The themes he deals with in *His Dark Materials* are large: the soul and consciousness, truth and lies, good and evil, and organized religion. All of these testaments are evidence to my choice of Children’s Literature because it is considered outside the dominant, patriarchal, traditional canon of literature.

Diana Fuss states that essentialism “is classically defined as a belief in true essence—that which is most irreducible, unchanging, and therefore constitutive of a given person or thing” (2). This “Aristotelian understanding of essence” is the basis for “the history of Western metaphysics,” but in feminist theory “essentialism articulates itself in a variety of ways and […] can be located in appeals to a pure or original femininity, a female essence, outside the boundaries of the social and thereby untainted (though repressed) by patriarchal order” (Fuss 2). I use a private feminine with voice and language beginning in the Paleolithic, through the ubiquitous female figurines that have been unearthed by archaeologists, through the oral folksongs and folktales, through the love of nature to discover the original feminine.

Fuss states that Constructionism “insists that the essence is itself a historical construction” and the constructionist interrogates “the intricate and interlacing processes which work together to produce all seemingly ‘natural’ or ‘given’ objects” (2). The “constructionists are concerned above all with the production and organization of differences and therefore reject the idea that any essential or natural givens precede the processes of
social determination” (3). Therefore, “the essentialist and the constructionist are most polarized around the issue of the relation between the social and the natural” (3).

For the essentialist, the natural provides the raw material and determinative starting point for the practices and laws of the social [. . .] sexual difference (the division into ‘male’ and ‘female’) is taken as prior to social differences which are presumed to be mapped on to, a posteriori, the biological subject. For the constructionist the natural is itself posited as a construction of the social [. . .] sexual difference is discursively produced, elaborated as an effect of the social rather than its tabula rasa, its prior object. (3)

What Fuss is saying is that the essentialists believe that the “natural is repressed by the social” and the constructionists believe that the “natural is produced by the social” (3). She refers to Ernst Jones, who feels “woman is born not made,” and to the anti-essentialist Simone de Beauvior, who feels “woman is made not born” (3). Explaining further Fuss refers to the term “history” and says “a constructionist might insist that we can only speak of histories (just as we can only speak of feminisms or deconstructionisms) the question that remains unanswered is what motivates [. . .] the continued semantic use of the term ‘histories’” (4)? Fuss says “this is just one of many instances” and “[i]n [her] mind it is difficult to see how constructionism can be constructionism without a fundamental dependency upon essentialism” (4).

If constructionism does have a fundamental dependency upon essentialism, then I could say we are both. We are all born and then we are all made by the dominant Western patriarchal tradition. But, as Fuss points out, we have to take into consideration “historical change” as well as the “cultural influences”; in other words, time and place would come into
play (3). Fuss explains it further by turning to Locke’s theory of “real and nominal essence” (4). The “real essences are discovered by close empirical observation” and the “nominal essences are not ‘discovered’ so much as assigned or produced—produced specifically by language” (5). Therefore “a rose by any other name would still be a rose—for an essentialist; for a constructionist, a rose by any other name would not be a rose, it would be something altogether rather different” states Fuss (5).

With this in mind I will use the theory of the constructed “nominal essence” as a public feminine constructed through writing, through the markings on the female figurines, through the female written folktales, through the love of writing. I will use the theory of the “real essence” as an original feminine, a private feminine with voice and language beginning with the discovery of the Paleolithic female figurines, the oral folk songs dainos and the love of nature. So the guidelines are a public feminine through writing and a private feminine through nature to redefine the knowledge of the feminine. How does the feminine come into play with the signs of Western patriarchal tradition?

Jacques Derrida in his article “Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences,” asks when and how does “this notion of structurality of structure, occur?” He says

[I]t would be naïve to refer to an event, a doctrine, or an author [. . . ] Nevertheless if I wished to give some sort of indication by choosing one or two names [. . . ] I would probably cite the Nietzschean critique of metaphysics, the critique of the concepts of being and truth, for which were substituted the concepts of play, interpretation, and sign (sign without truth present); Freudian critique of self-presence, that is, the critique of consciousness, of the subject, of the self-identity and of self-proximity
or self-possession; and more radically the Heideggerean destruction of metaphysics, of onto-theology, of determination of being as presence. But all these destructive discourses and all analogues are trapped in a sort of circle. The circle is unique.

(916-17)

Derrida goes on to say that to erase the difference between the signifier and the signified “consists in putting into question the system in which the preceding reduction functioned: first and foremost, the opposition between the sensible and the intelligible” (917). He says this is a “Paradox […] the metaphysical reduction of the sign needed the opposition it was reducing” (917). What this leads to is that “the sign can be extended to all the concepts and all the sentences of metaphysics, in particular to the discourse on ‘structure.’ But there are many ways of being caught in this circle” (917). Derrida says, “It is these differences which explain the multiplicity of destructive discourses” (917). He ends this article with “we must first try to conceive of the common ground, and the difference of this irreducible difference” (Derrida 926). Is this “irreducible difference” the difference between man and woman, between masculine and feminine? Can Derrida’s discussion help this discourse to discover an original feminine? I believe it can and does when followed step by step.

First to understand “irreducible difference” I use Derrida’s article “Differance.” “Differance is the nonfull, nonsimple ‘origin’; it is the structured and differing origin of differences” (939). Derrida asks, “Is not the whole thought of Nietzsche a critique of philosophy as active indifference to difference, as a system of reduction or adiaphoristic repression?” (943). The adiaphoristic, which pertains to religious or theological indifference (religious indifference repressed), I understand to mean a system repressing or reducing the difference, which for my purposes would be repressing the feminine difference or reducing
the feminine difference to be insignificant and the masculine to be the only significant.

Freudian theory has two different meanings of *differance*, one being that “the concept of trace, of facilitation, of forces of facilitation are inseparable from the concept of difference [. . .] There is no facilitation without difference and no difference without a trace” (Derrida 943). Translated by Allison, Derrida is suggesting that, “Freud’s psychology is also one based on *differance*, in which consciousness is a by-product,” and facilitation, as understood in German and French, is “the opening-up or clearing-out of a pathway” (933). The second one is

[A]ll the differences involved in the production of unconscious traces and in the process of inscription (*Niederschrift*) can also be interpreted as moments of differance, in the sense of ‘placing on reserve.’ [. . .] relate each concept to the other like movements of a detour [. . .] one is only the other deferred, the one differing from the other. The one is the other in differance, the one is the differance from the other.

(944)

Derrida further explains using Emmanuel Levinas, a Lithuanian/French philosopher, whose idea was that “ethics begins when we confront the face of the absolutely Other (*autrui*) and recognize our responsibility to acknowledge it. Religion, in effect, is a metaphorical extension of that Other face, in that God is the Other of all Others” (933). But, for my discourse, for my purposes, Goddess is the Other of all Others.

Second, Derrida uses Saussure’s formula that “language is necessary in order for speech to be intelligible and to produce all of its effects; but the latter is necessary in order for language to be established; historically, the fact of speech always comes first” (939). He then extends this to “the term *differance* [refers to] the movement by which language, or
any code, any system of reference in general, becomes ‘historically’ constituted as fabric of
differences” (Derrida 939). Therefore a feminine is necessary in order for a masculine to be
intelligible and produce all of its effects; but the latter is necessary in order for feminine to be
established; historically “the fact of [masculine] always comes first,” but for my discourse the
feminine comes first in this unique circle. Quoting Emmanuel Levinas, Derrida states

[T]he Other [. . .] And the concept of trace, like that of difference, forms—across
these different traces and through these differences between traces, as understood by
Nietzsche, Freud, and Levinas (these ‘authors’ names’ serve only as indications)— the
network that sums up and permeates our ‘epoch’ as the de-limitation of ontology (of
presence). The ontology of presence is the ontology of beings and beingness. (945)

Third, Derrida explains Being also in Heidegger’s theory that “the point of Being
is to be the Being of beings. The linguistic form of this enigmatic and multivalent genitive
designates a genesis, a provenance of the present from presence” (947). Heidegger believed
that “the essence of presence, and thus the difference between presence and present, is
forgotten” (Derrida 947) and what we have forgotten is the feminine. Derrida explains
Heidegger’s “forgetting of Being is the forgetting of the difference between Being and
beings.” Through a slow progression “the difference between Being and beings, forgotten by
metaphysics, has disappeared without leaving a trace.” [. . .] The trace is not a presence but is
rather the simulacrum of a presence that dislocates, displaces, and refers beyond itself”(947).
For my purpose this “simulacrum of a presence” would be the original feminine.

Derrida continues with Heidegger’s “difference between Being and beings” that
can be “experienced as something forgotten”; for my discourse, the forgotten would be the
original feminine, the “something forgotten only if it is already discovered with the presence
of the present,” the discovery of the ubiquitous female figurines. The original feminine was “thus sealed in a trace that remains preserved in the language which Being appropriates,” and through the figurines that were forgotten, sealed away, “placed on reserve, [. . .] detoured, [. . .] deferred, [. . .]” (Derrida 944) to the storage rooms of many a museum by Western patriarchal tradition. But as Derrida continues Heidegger takes it one step further,

Thus, in order to name what is deployed in Being (das Wesende des Seins), language will have to find a single word, the unique word (ein einziges, das einzige Wort).

There we see how hazardous is every word of thought (every thoughtful word: *denkende Wort*) that addresses itself to Being (das dem Sein zugesprochen). What is hazarded here, however is not something impossible, because Being speaks through every language; everywhere and always. (Derrida 949)

So for my discourse I believe as Derrida states, “Such is the question: the marriage between speech and Being in the unique word, in the finally proper name. Such is the question that enters into the affirmation put into play by differance. The question bears upon each of the words in this sentence: ‘Being speaks through every language; everywhere and always’” (949). For my critical discourse of redefining the feminine I’m redefining the Being as God/Goddess. Goddess/God, the being that exists in differance, is the feminine. Being and beings make up Derrida’s unique circle Goddess/God/beings (917).

I think of the “a” in differance in the same way I think of the “hu” in human. Western patriarchal tradition “placed on reserve, [. . .] detoured, [. . .] deferred, [. . .]” (Derrida 944), and dropped, the “hu” in human so that it became man. As Heidegger stated, “There we see how hazardous is every word of thought that addresses itself to being.” Using *mankind* instead of *humankind* is hazardous because it has eliminated half of the beings, the feminine
Therefore this critical discourse brings back into play the “placed on reserve. [. . .] detoured, [. . .] deferred, [. . .]” half of beings through the redefined knowledge of the feminine (Derrida 944). Western Patriarchal tradition has defined feminine as weak, passive, and insignificant. This discourse is a journey that begins in Chapter 1 by redefining the knowledge of the feminine beginning circa 25,000 BCE, through Gimbutas, Dever, and Davies-Kimball, with the unearthed archaeological female figurines, temple models with Yahweh and the Goddess Asherah, and warrior priestesses who were actually from an egalitarian culture, bringing us up through 500 BCE. I have chosen these three archaeologists precisely because their theories are outside the dominant Western Patriarchal tradition.

In Chapter 2, my journey moves forward to 400 BCE to redefine the knowledge of the feminine through its survival of the Dark Ages of persecution and annihilation by discussing the mythological elements used in the Lithuanian folk songs, dainos, and a Lithuania folktale, “Queen of the Serpents,” through Gimbutas’ introduction in The Green Linden and her last work The Living Goddesses. I give a brief history of the beginning of children’s literature with the advent of Gutenberg’s printing press and the publishing of the literary folk and fairy tales through Jack Zipes’ Fairy Tale as Myth / Myth as Fairy Tale and Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion, comparing mythological elements of a German folktale “Ashputtle” to those present in the Lithuanian folk tale. I continue to follow the mythological elements in a French female folktale “The White Cat,” written by Maria-Catherine D’Aulnoy in 1690, and show how the French female writers created a second type of fairy tale, that Elizabeth Wanning Harries dubbed “complex” in Twice Upon a Time (16). The second type of fairy tale, a framed tale, a tale within a tale, a “complex” tale, is continued with female
writers of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries.

In Chapter 3, my journey brings me forward to the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries to redefine the knowledge of the feminine. I discuss three female writers who wrote essays, novels, and children’s stories, and invented new genres, new fables, and new forms of writing: Maria Edgeworth, Beatrix Potter, and Virginia Woolf. Because of their unique fathers, with beliefs outside the dominant Patriarchal tradition, and their nonconforming lives, these women produced numerous works that are exceptional examples of the feminine knowledge redefined.

In Chapter 4, my journey brings me into the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries with the feminine redefined through children’s fantasy, both film and fiction. The twentieth century is the technological era that brings silent pictures (around 1900), Technicolor movie theaters by 1940, and home entertainment of TVs, VCRs, and DVDs. I give a brief history of children’s film through Wojcik-Andrews’ Children’s Film: History, Ideology, Pedagogy, Theory. Then through Zipes’ Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion I discuss the Disney “commodity spell” and “American civilizing process” using the 1937 Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (203-5). To understand the effect film has on an audience, of both young and old, I discuss Patricia White’s article “Feminism and Film,” which defines the film theories of “spectatorship, scopophilia and suture” (116). I then compare Disney’s Snow White to the animation and manga of Hayao Miyazaki and his storytelling ability through McCarthy’s Hayao Miyazaki: Master of Japanese Animation, Hatfield’s Alternative Comics: An Emerging Literature, and Kroeber’s Make Believe in Film and Fiction: Visual vs. Verbal Storytelling. I culminate my findings with a discussion of the incredible trilogy by Philip Pullman, His Dark Materials, and the significance of his female protagonist, Lyra, and her
partner, Will, giving us a new version of Eve and Adam for the future. My journey concludes with evidence that the knowledge of the feminine has and is being redefined. I discovered the feminine beginning through archaeomythologists’ female figurines, temple models with Asherah and Yahweh, and egalitarian culture of the Amazon women. I found evidence of the original feminine survival through the Dark Ages in the Lithuanian *Dainos* and a folktale, “Queen of the Serpents,” the compact German folktale “Ashputtle” and the French complex fairy tale “The White Cat.” I brought to awareness the feminine redefined through the female writers of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries: Edgeworth, Potter, and Woolf. These women represent both the private feminine through their love of nature and the public feminine through their love of writing; they produced a new genre for education, a new form of animal fables and awareness for conservation of the land, and a new form of writing through a stream of consciousness. I then revealed the feminine redefined through the film animation and manga of Miyazaki with his extraordinary females and egalitarian male partners. Last I discussed Pullman’s incredible trilogy *His Dark Materials*, which Pullman himself initially told his publisher would be “*Paradise Lost* for teenagers in three volumes” (Parsons 126). This trilogy has Lyra as Eve, Will as Adam, and Dr. Mary Malone as the serpent. It does not have a “happy ever after” ending. Will and Lyra have to return to their own worlds, their own Oxford, to build “The Republic Heaven” (Pullman, *Amber* 465).
Chapter 1 – Three Archaeomythologists Redefine The Feminine Beginning

Lithuanian Folk Song
May the earth mother Zemyna hold you in gentle embrace
May the rays of Goddess Saule warm you in winter
May Medeine’s spirit of the forest shade you in summer
May Laima lady of good fortune bring you all you can conceive
(\textit{Signs Out of Time})

My journey begins with the ubiquitous female figurines that have been unearthed by archaeologists from tombs, graves, and burial mounds of the ancients to redefine the “In the beginning” that Western patriarchal monotheistic culture has controlled for three millennia. These figurines include the famous robust Willendorf figure from the Paleolithic 25,000 BCE (Fig. 1); the mammoth ivory figurine from Lespugue, Haute Garonne, France 21,000 BCE (Fig. 2); and the figurines from Catal Huyuk, Anatolia 6000 BCE, which are, the “enthroned Goddess flanked by felines” giving birth (Gimbutas \textit{Language} 107), and the figure unearthed in 2004 (Fig. 3-4) For more examples, see Table 1 at the end of this chapter.
Through the works of archaeologist Marija Gimbutas, biblical archaeologist William Dever, and art historian/archaeologist Jeanine Davis-Kimball, I illustrate how their research and theories have contributed to redefining the feminine beginning, by bringing to light Old-European worshipping of a Goddess or Goddesses; by acknowledging the worshipping of the Goddess Asherah along side Yahweh in Israel; and by a better understanding of the Amazon women who lived in a more egalitarian culture than the Western tradition scholars have acknowledged. These cultures existed prior to and during the writing of the Hebrew bible ca. eighth century BCE (Dever, Did God Have a Wife 69).

Gimbutas

I start with the “complicated, charismatic, controversial” Dr. Marija Gimbutas, who, as Ernestine Elster states, in Archaeology and Women, “set the agenda” by writing about the ubiquitous female figurines and using an interdisciplinary method of research, which included linguistics, comparative mythology, historical sources, folklore, and historical ethnography, along with archaeology (83). This interdisciplinary method Gimbutas would later name archaeomythology (83). During her lifetime Dr. Gimbutas “directed or co-directed five excavations in southeast Europe,” and published “twenty books and hundreds of articles and reviews” (83). She “is recognized as a pioneering researcher of prehistoric southeast Europe,” and even though Gimbutas was Elster’s director of graduate studies, Elster states that they “did not at all always agree” (83).

Born Marija Alseikaite in Vilnius, Lithuania, on January 23, 1921, she was proud of her heritage. Both of her parents were doctors, and her mother and aunt were the first women doctors in Lithuania (Elster 85). Elster states that Marija “loved to dance, ride, ice skate,
swim, bicycle, hike, and was drawn to music,” which explains her passion for the Lithuanian dainos (85). The dainos are Lithuanian folksongs, which Marija heard sung by the women working at her home and on her grandparents’ farms. When her parents separated in 1931, she moved with her mother and brother to Kraunas, and, Marija says, that was when her childhood ended. It was just five years later that her father died; Marija was devastated. She had been so “influenced by her father she chose to study the history of her people” (Elster 86). As Elster states, Marija was fifteen, “speaking Lithuanian, Polish, German and studying Russian,” which would help her to become “an authoritative archaeological voice in later years” (87).

While she was studying at the University of Vilnius in 1940, “she went on an ethnographic field trip to southeastern Lithuania to record the texts of dainos sung by an elderly woman reputed to have some three hundred songs in her repertoire.” These were handed down generation to generation as an oral tradition. They included “mythological images, peasant work, sowing, reaping, and reflections of archaic, patriarchal family life,” which Gimbutas “interpreted as quintessentially Indo-European” (Elster 86). Gimbutas collected more than 5000 dainos, because she said they reflected the “rhythm of the birds, laments, the liturgy of everyday life” (Signs Out of Time). It is these dainos, the folklore, and the folk art that she was so passionate about that gave her the insight into the female figurines and their markings as an archaeologist. This insight would lead to a redefining moment in the knowledge of the feminine beginning.

Living in the midst of “political confusion and terror” at this time (her country was first occupied by Poland 1938-39 and then the Soviet Union in 1940; in 1941 “the German Army forced a Soviet retreat”), Gimbutas continued her education at Vilnius University,
studying “archaeology, ethnography, languages, folklore, mythology, ancient religion, and historical linguistics” (Elster 87). But it is Gimbutas’ interest in the Lithuanian language, Elster states, “as one of the most ancient Indo-European tongues,” that deepened as her studies progressed and was also one of the factors that led to her understanding of the female figurines and markings (87). She was able to make connections that other archaeologists without her background would not see (87). This linguistic background is a distinct factor in redefining the knowledge of the feminine beginning.

Joan Marler states that Gimbutas left Soviet controlled Lithuania in 1943 with her first baby daughter under one arm and her dissertation under the other (3). She earned her Doctor of Philosophy degree in archaeology in 1946 at Tubingen University in Germany. Her extensive background in linguistics, ethnology, and history of religion was quite unusual for an archaeologist (1995 Marler 3). In 1949, Gimbutas, her husband, and two daughters immigrated to the United States. She was offered an unpaid position at Harvard and the use of a small office so she could continue her research. Harvard in 1950 did not allow women in the libraries, and she could not join the faculty club; as Elster states, her position was “exploitative” (90). However, because of her linguistic background and her ability to speak the Slavic languages, she did translations for other professors as well as wrote her first book on the *Prehistory of Eastern Europe*, which was published in 1956. She was never paid any royalties for this publication (*Signs Out of Time*). Gimbutas was “a woman of determination and ambition, a survivor of foreign repressive occupations of her homeland, who crossed Europe during WWII” and who started at the bottom of her field and “slowly climbed up, publication by publication” (Elster 90). Her sheer determination is an important part of the feminine beginning being redefined.
In 1963 Dr. Gimbutas was invited to teach at the University of California, Los Angeles where she blossomed as an academic, writing her second book the same year titled *The Balts*. At UCLA she became chair of European Archaeology and Curator of the Old World Museum, which is now the Fowler Museum. Over the years she received many awards: Outstanding New American in 1960, Humanities Endowment Award in 1967, Los Angeles Woman of the Year Award in 1968, and, in 1993, “an honorary doctorate at Vytautas the Great University in Kaunas, Lithuania,” given by the president of the Republic (1995 Marler 13).

Her first book about the goddess figurines, *The Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe: 7000-3500 BC*, was published in 1974 by the University of California Press and included 252 illustrations and photographs. This work was the beginning of her archaeological and mythological quest to find out what the female figurines were, why there were so many, what the markings were, and whether they were part of a visual language. This same book was re-released by Thames and Hudson Ltd, London, in 1982, with the title *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe: Myth and Cult Images*, which reflects Gimbutas’ evolving understanding of the Neolithic Old European culture.

After Dr. Gimbutas’ focus turned to the Goddess figurines and their markings, archaeological scholars began to criticize her for her interdisciplinary method of study as well as her theories. Ernestine Elster, Director of the Mediterranean Archaeology Lab at University of California, Los Angeles states, “Gimbutas wrote about the figurines when nobody else would, she set the agenda” (Elster *Signs*). In Elster’s interview in *Signs Out of Time* (2003), the documentary about Gimbutas’ life work, she remarks that she didn’t agree with Gimbutas’ method, but “she caused all this scholarship, which she loved” (*Signs*). The
documentary portrays Dr. Gimbutas’ extraordinary love of folk songs, folktales, and folk art of her homeland of Vilnius, Lithuania, and her vast knowledge of languages, mythology, and archaeology.

Gimbutas’ last book, *The Living Goddesses*, “occupied the last two years of her life” and was completed and edited by Miriam Robbins Dexter, published in 1994. Dexter states “It is different from Marija Gimbutas’ other works: it is exceptionally rich in folklore and myth” (xv). This work is a synthesis “of her research on Neolithic Europe [. . .] grounded in her findings at the archaeological sites she excavated” in “Obre in Bosnia, Anza in Macedonia, Sitagroi in northwestern Greece, Achilleion in southern Thessaly (Greece), and Manfredonia in southern Italy” (xv). During these excavations she helped unearth hundreds of figurines, as well as sculptures and pottery that show how the Neolithic (ca. 7000/6000-3000 BCE) people of Old Europe and ancient Anatolia were a peaceful, agrarian, creative, egalitarian, and Goddess-worshiping culture (xv).

Dr. Gimbutas believed that around 4400 BCE, a disruption of some kind caused a migration of a different type of people, people who were patrilineal, seminomadic, horse riding warriors who worshipped a sky God; she said they came from the steppes of Russia and she identifies them as a “Kurgan culture” (*Living Goddesses* xv) (Fig. 5). A Russian word *kurgan* means “a type of burial under an earthen mound” (Elster 92). The Kurgan invaders came into the areas now called “Greece, Italy, Britain, Ireland, Lithuania, Latvia, Russia, Germany, Scandinavia, Anatolia, India, Iran, and Chinese Turkestan” in three different waves (*Living Goddesses* xvi).

The third wave, circa 3000-2800 BCE, finalizes the merging of the Kurgan people with the Old Europeans and forms what scholars call Indo-Europeans. It is the distinct
contrast of the “hierarchal Indo-Europeans” to the “equalitarian Old Europeans,” which
Gimbutas establishes. For the last twenty years of her life she focused on the artifacts of the
Old Europeans that were discovered in burial sites, tombs, and temples and the hundreds of
female figurines, with their numerous markings of chevrons, spirals, and tri-lines, which were

![Figure 5. Kurgan culture, Elster, “Marija Gimbutas: Setting The Agenda” Archaeology and Women Ed. Sue Hamelton, Ruth D. Whitehouse and Kathleen I. Wright (Walnut Creek; Left Coast Press, 2007) 91.](image)

found in large quantities at Catal Huyuk, Thessaly, and Yugoslavia (xvi).

Dr. Gimbutas was one of the first archaeologists to use an interdisciplinary approach
to her research, like Georges Dumezil, whose work was also interdisciplinary. Dumezil, a
French mythologist, used sociology, anthropology, and philology to formulate the theory that there were parallels in the Indo-European religious pantheons and social structures, a “tripartite scheme” of class and function where priests handled the realm of the sacred, warriors the realm of physical force, and farmers the realm of prosperity (Larson 10). Gimbutas states that Dumezil did not include archaeological findings and “dissociated his system of three functions from the preceding matristic system that reflected an entirely different pantheon of goddesses and a different social structure” (Living Goddesses xviii).

It is The Language of the Goddess published in 1989 that specifically deals with all the different types of figurines and their markings. Dr. Gimbutas believed that the markings of triangles, chevrons, tri-lines, zigzags, meanders, spirals, and their varied combinations “must belong to an alphabet of the metaphysical” (1); as in the “examples of figures with markings” and the “spindle whorls with inscriptions” (Living 49; Fig. 6 & 7). The markings illustrated all the aspects of the Goddess, “Giver of life, Wielder of death, and Regeneratrix,” which was for “not only humans but for all life on earth” (xix). She studied these figurines

Figure 6. Example of figures with markings, Vinca culture c. 5000 BCE. Cited in Gimbutas, The Living Goddesses (Berkley: University of California Press) 49.
and markings, cross-referencing folk songs, folklore, and myths in their original language until they lined up, as biographer Joan Marler explains in the documentary *Signs Out of Time*. Gimbutas saw the markings on the figurines as reflecting “the common people’s point of view”; she wrote of a folk religion, not the dogma of scholars, but she did it in a scholarly way (*Signs*). This approach of seeing the markings as representing the “common people” is what I would call private as opposed to the public dogma in redefining the knowledge of the feminine.

Dr. Gimbutas recognized the symbols in the pottery, weavings, and architecture of her surroundings in Lithuania as being similar to the markings on the numerous artifacts of pottery, sculptures, and figurines excavated from the Neolithic burial grounds, tombs and temples, and connected them to the *dainos*, folk tales, and myths. She did not start out searching for Goddess figurines. She just wanted to fully understand their function, because there were thousands of figurines unearthed all over Europe and the Near East. Her astute observations of the similarity of markings on the figurines led to the publication of *The
Language of the Goddess.

In the introduction to this work Joseph Campbell compares Gimbutas to Champollion, who deciphered the Rosetta Stone,

[H]er assemblage, classification, and descriptive interpretation of some two thousand symbolic artifacts from the earliest Neolithic village sites [. . .] has been able to prepare a fundamental glossary of pictorial motifs as keys to the mythology of an otherwise undocumented era [. . .] to establish [. . .] a religion in veneration, both of the universe as the living body of a Goddess-Mother Creator [. . .] a religion [. . .] in contrast to that of Genesis 3:19, where Adam is told by his Father-Creator: ‘In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground [. . .] you are dust, and to dust you shall return.’ In this earlier mythology, the earth out of which all these creatures have been born is not dust but alive, as the Goddess-Creator herself. *(Language xiii)*

Campbell so eloquently lays out the greatest obstacle to Gimbutas’ research and theories, the dominant patriarchal Judaeo-Christian Western tradition, which has been in control of the canon of knowledge for far too long. He ends the introduction with

The message here is of an actual age of harmony and peace in accord with the creative energies of nature which for a spell of some four thousand prehistoric years anteceded the five thousand of what James Joyce has termed the ‘nightmare’ [. . .] from which it is now certainly time for this planet to wake. (xiv)

Joan Marler begins her biography of Gimbutas with a statement about Joseph Campbell. She states, “he profoundly regretted that her research on the Neolithic cultures of Europe was not
available in the 1960s when he was writing *The Masks of Gods*, otherwise he would have ‘revised everything’” (1).

Dr. Gimbutas’ last work, *The Living Goddesses*, has two parts, the first being an updated summary of her earlier works with an emphasis on the Neolithic period. This part includes many illustrations. The second part deals with the goddess culture and how it was reflected in religion and myth of Minoan, Greek, Etruscan, Basque, Celtic, Germanic, and Baltic regions. I will concentrate mainly on the Minoan religion with some references to Greek and Etruscan religions, because Crete and Etruria (modern day Tuscany) are areas that were “left relatively unaffected” by the Indo-European invasions from 4300 to 2900 BCE (131).

Gimbutas explains that “Old European and Anatolian religion and social structure” are very evident in the “art, pottery, architecture, and burial customs” of Minoan culture (131). Her descriptions of the most familiar Minoan goddess “portrayed on seals, rings, frescoes, and sculptures is the young goddess” connected to the Neolithic goddess of regeneration. The young goddess is featured with “regenerative symbols of double axes, butterflies, bucrania and trees (or columns) of life” (142). Dr. Gimbutas used findings from the sites she excavated in Obre, Anza, Sitagroi, Achilleion, and Manfredonia to solidify her theories (*Living Goddesses* xv).

A good example of the goddess of regeneration is the sketch of Crocus Gatherers, a fresco in Xeste 3 temple on the island of Thera, which shows the goddess “seated high on a throne on a tripartite platform, flanked by a griffin and a monkey (Fig. 8). Young girls bring her flowers in baskets” (Gimbutas *Living Goddesses* 142). She is portrayed on many seal stones from Knossos as young and bare-breasted, flanked by griffins or lionesses, or
lions. She is also depicted “holding triple horns above her head” or “holding water birds,” indicating that she is “mistress of nature” (Gimbutas *Living Goddesses* 142).

The common Minoan religious symbols related to the goddess of regeneration are the labyrinth and the double ax. Tablets recovered from the temple complex at Knossos on Crete “refer to a honey offering dedicated to da-pu-ri-to-jo po-ti-ni-ja,” which is Mycenaean Greek (143). The first set of paired letters refers to the classic Greek laburinthos (labyrinth) and the second set refer to potnia, “lady,” or “queen.” The honey is being offered to “Our Lady (or Queen) of the Labyrinth” (143). Her many epithets have been preserved by Greek and Latin authors as Britomartis, “Sweet Virgin or Maid,” also as Aphaia on the island of Aegina and as Diktynna linked to Greek diktyon, “net” (Gimbutas *Living Goddesses* 143). This Goddess of the Minoan religion—young bare-breasted lady or queen, flanked by lions, associated with water and a net—I find the most fascinating. The similarities of the Canaanite Ugarit Goddess Asherah, Ashteroth, Anath, Astarte, depicted bare-breasted, flanked or standing on lions and referred to as ”Lion Lady,” “Lady of the Sea,” and “Queen of Heaven”
to this Minoan goddess are quite striking. Because of these similarities I will discuss later the Goddess Asherah through the biblical archaeologist William Dever.

Dr. Marija Gimbutas’ accomplishments are many, and Dr. Ernestine Elster synthesizes them extremely well:

Marija’s scholarly theorizing focused on the following major themes: archaeology and language, the identification and transformation of culture, and prehistoric religion. In all of these she made significant contributions, . . . her achievement was to set the agenda in each area. The several aspects of her legacy are all interrelated:

(1) the location of the homeland of the PIE-speaking [Proto-Indo-European] Kurgan people and their characterization as patriarchal, pastoral, horse-breeding and war-like; (2) the identification, location and characterization of Old European pantheon of goddesses and gods (which Marija Gimbutas eventually decided was pan-European and extended from the Upper Palaeolithic to the end of the Chalcolithic or Late Neolithic); and (4) the ‘incursions,’ migrations, or movements of the Kurgan people to the west, resulting in the transformation or Indo-Europeanisation of Old Europe,

(99)

With this in mind I believe Dr. Gimbutas was a “founder of discursivity,” as Michel Foucault’s theory shows, because she “made possible not only a certain number of analogies, but also a certain number of differences” (911). Foucault said of Freud and Marx that they produced “the possibilities and the rules for the formation of other texts” (911). Miriam Robbins Dexter said of Gimbutas,

A dynamic scholar, she never shirked from criticism or from taking a chance. She realized the importance of interpreting findings as well as presenting them, affording
us hypotheses to prove or disprove, as well as foundations of facts upon which to build our own theories. She realized that the interpretation and interconnection of data are what lead to understanding. (xix)

Her observations and conclusions gave the second wave feminists new avenues of study and discourse. Her interdisciplinary method of archaeomythology, using the *dainos*, the folklore, and folk art of her beloved Lithuania not only created new possibilities for researchers, but also opened up a natural private connection to the Goddess, and even though the dominant authority criticized her heavily, Gimbutas helped to redefine the knowledge of the feminine beginning in a very public way for future generations.

Her work is referenced in Merlin Stone’s momentous historical investigation, *When God Was A Woman*, published in 1976 at the height of the second wave of the feminist movement. Riane Eisler also references several of Gimbutas’ works in her landmark exploration *The Chalice & The Blade: Our History, Our Future* first published in 1987 and again in 1995. Eisler’s 1989 interview of Gimbutas is featured on the *Signs Out of Time* documentary. Jane Baring and Jules Cashford also reference Gimbutas works in their 1991 *The Myth of The Goddess: Evolution of an Image*. All of these works are examples of Dr. Marija Gimbutas’ discursive influence. The significance of her interdisciplinary method of archaeomythology, her profound insight into the ubiquitous female figurines, and her passion for the *dainos* and folklore of her beloved Lithuania have contributed to redefining the knowledge of the feminine beginning.
The second scholar I categorize as an archaeomythologist is biblical archaeologist William Dever. I have chosen Dever because of his archaeological work of the Hebrew Goddess Asherah and his use of artifacts, biblical text, and history to illustrate his theories. Dever wrote *What Did the Biblical Writers Know & When Did They Know It?: What Archaeology Can Tell Us about the Reality of Ancient Israel*, and *Did God Have a Wife?: Archaeology and Folk Religion in Ancient Israel*, and with these two works challenged the very heart of the Western Patriarchal monotheistic tradition by acknowledging the existence of the Goddess Asherah.

The Goddess Asherah, states Merlin Stone in her renowned *When God Was A Woman* (1976), is the Goddess the biblical writers disguised by using the masculine gender form of her name Ashtoreth in the forty references to her in the Hebrew bible (9). Stone wrote the forward in Raphael Patai’s *The Hebrew Goddess* third enlarged edition published in 1990. Patai tells us Asherah was the “chief goddess of the Canaanite pantheon,” and she is written about in Ugaritic mythology on “numerous tablets” that date from the 14th century BCE. The Goddess Asherah is referred to as “Lady Asherah of the Sea” and her husband was El, her daughter Anath. She was considered the Mother Goddess. Patai also makes the connection that in a Sumarian inscription [. . .] dating from ca. 1750 [BCE . . .] she was called Ashratum (i.e., Asherah), the bride of Anu. [. . .] The Sumerian and Akkadian Anu closely corresponds to the Canaanite El in being the god of heaven, it appears Asherah held the position of the chief or mother goddess for at least three centuries prior to the Ugaritic period. [. . .] In the 14th century Amarna tablets, containing letters written by
Canaanite petty chieftains to their overlords, the king of Egypt, the names of Asherah and Astarte interchange. (37)

This interchange of names or epithets has made it quite confusing. Patai states “the same confusion between Asherah and Astarte is found in the Bible and persisted among scholars down to our days” (37), but on an Egyptian New Kingdom plaque in the Winchester Museum is the Goddess Asherah standing on a lion, and written beside her are three of her epithets, “Qudshu (Asherah); Astarte; and Anat” (Dever, Did God Have a Wife? (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans) 178).

Figure 9. “Qudshu” (Asherah); Anat; Astarte. Cited in Dever, Did God Have a Wife? (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans) 178.

Dever says Patai, “a charming, cultured Old World Jewish intellectual, a polymath who worked in anthropology, sociology, Oriental studies and Judaica” was “30 years ahead of anything else on our subject. […] Patai knew all along about the existence of a ‘Hebrew’ Goddess,” because he had “access to the rich lore of medieval Rabbinical scholars” (Did God 208).

The Neolithic Goddess religion of Old Europe and Anatolia can be traced into the biblical era and beyond. William Dever gives us the archaeological figurines, temple models, and pottery with inscriptions similar to what Gimbutas did with the Neolithic and Bronze Age figurines and markings. The biggest difference is that Dever actually has a language with which to work, although interpretation is still challenged.

William Dever received his Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1966. He is a professor emeritus of Near Eastern Archaeology at University of Arizona, Tucson. As he himself states

I started in a fundamentalist home. I went to a very conservative church school. But I went to a liberal theological school, Harvard. And then I converted to Judaism. I’m not a theist. [. . .] I’m conservative in the proper sense: I want to preserve what we know about the past. But that’s conservative with a lowercase c. (A17)

His background is very different from Gimbutas, but just as Gimbutas did not start out searching for the Goddess, Dever did not start out looking for the lost Hebrew Goddess Asherah; he just wanted to piece together the life of the early Israelites and their religion.

Dever tells us we must study the history along with the mythology and the archaeology to get a complete picture. He says the Israelite monarchy begins with David’s death and continues until the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BCE. Dever says you can mine “Historical Nuggets” from the Deuteronomistic 1st & 2nd Kings in the Hebrew Bible (101). Even though he refers to the Deuteronomist writers as “propagandists,” he says that with the “external data” provided by archaeology as a tool, we can isolate a reliable “historical core” of events. A fairly accurate accounting can be found of the Kings of Israel and Judah in the Hebrew Bible in 1st & 2nd Kings and 1st & 2nd Chronicles. The biblical writers cross-reference each reign with a formula of “King A of Judah began his reign in the ___ year of King B of Israel” (Dever *Biblical* 101, 160). Using these “Historical Nuggets” helps place the archaeological artifacts in a more specific biblical time.

Dever shows this by referencing the archaeological sites with the correlating biblical town. For instance, the biblical town of Tirzah is the archaeological site of Tell el-Far’ah and the biblical town Megiddo is the archaeological site of Tell el-Mutesellim; both are in Israel (Fig. 10). At Tell el-Far’ah or Tirzah there were “numerous 10th to 9th century female
figurines” discovered; Dever refers to these as “Asherah” figurines, the Old Canaanite Mother Goddess (*Biblical* 176). He goes on to state “that archaeologists have recovered . . . 2000 or more” of these “mold-made terra-cotta female figurines,” which are “nude female en

*Figure 10. “Iron Age sites.” Cited in Dever, *What Did The Biblical Writers Know & When Did They Know It?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001) 109.*
"face" with hands to their breasts (Table 1, Item 24; Dever, *Biblical* 193). Some of the earlier examples are “clutching tambourine (or bread-mold) or occasionally an infant to the upper body” and “the later Judean ones prominently emphasizing the breasts” (193). The pillar shape has been interpreted as exemplifying the familiar sacred Tree of Life (193), which Gimbutas identified with the Neolithic Goddess of regeneration (*Living Goddesses* 150). The combination of the Asherah figure and the Tree of Life is unique to the Levant. Also unique are the Asherah poles referred to in the 1st Kings 14:23: “They erected hill-shrines, sacred pillars, and sacred poles, on every hill and under every spreading tree.”

Dever states, “In view of the obvious imagery of these female figurines, it is surprising that so many biblical scholars are reluctant to conclude anything about them” (193). They think of them as merely “toys,” says Dever; “Such reductionist views simply highlight our ignorance (or lack of imagination?)” He calls this the “Barbie doll syndrome” (192-93). Just as Gimbutas was the first archaeologist to write about the female figurines of Old Europe when nobody else would, Dever is one of the first biblical archaeologists to write about the many Asherah figurines and her inclusion in temple models and inscriptions.

North of Tirzah at Megiddo, found on the Iron Age sites map (Fig. 10), “a household shrine of the 10th century” was uncovered, states Dever (*Biblical* 176). The shrine consisted of several cult vessels and “small four horned limestone altars of the type” found at many Israel archaeological sites (176). The priests of the “Official Religion” supposedly prohibited these shrines. Dever describes a 10th-century four-tier terra-cotta offering stand or temple model, found in Ta’anach, a few miles east of Megiddo (Fig. 11). “The top row shows a quadruped carrying a winged sun-disk on its back”; the second row down seems to depict two goats on either side of a tree of life flanked by lions, which would represent the Goddess,
but Dever does not mention this. The third row down has the doorway of the “temple” empty, flanked by a pair of sphinxes, or winged lions, one on each side, “perhaps to signify that the male deity presupposed here in the door of his ‘house’ (in Hebrew bet [house] means ‘temple’ when used of a deity) is invisible,” but it is “the bottom row” which, Dever states, “is startling, for it has two similar flanking lions with a smiling nude female figure standing between them, holding them by their ears” (Biblical 178). Dever suggests that the female figure in the bottom row is the Canaanite Asherah, the Goddess known throughout the Levant as “The Lion Lady,” often depicted nude riding on the back of a lion (178).

Figure 11. Temple model found in Ta’anach. Cited in Dever, Did God Have a Wife? (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans) 16.

It is fascinating and intriguing that both the God Yahweh and the Goddess Asherah are depicted in the same offering stand or temple model. Dever calls this “a remarkable piece of Israelite iconography” (178). Here we have evidence of the Goddess Asherah equally represented with Yahweh in Israel in the biblical period (178). Dever calls this a folk or
family religion that was practiced in a “shrine” or “local holy place” by “a nuclear family, or at most a small group of related families” (*Biblical* 111). The people continued practicing their folk religion, or what I call a private religion, in spite of the priests, who represented the official religion or what I call the public religion, determination to destroy the goddess religion.

Dever tells us that the symbols representing the goddess were used as motifs in the nearly thirty examples of the Solomonic Temples throughout Syria and Palestine. The Standard “long room” temple plan was a Levantine Style of the Iron Age (*Biblical* 145). One of the motifs used in the Solomonic Temple was the Palm Tree. It was used as the capitals for the columns. Again the “Tree of Life” symbol, which is a Goddess symbol, is used in the Solomonic Temple as stated in 1st Kings 6:29

*Figure 12. Kuntillet, Ajrud and Layout of Fort. Cited in Dever, *Did God Have a Wife?* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2005) 161.*
Round all the walls of the house he carved figures of cherubim, palm-trees, and open flowers, both in the inner chamber and in the outer.

Dever’s latest work, *Did God Have A Wife?*, describes the most widely discussed and controversial finding in the history of Israelite archaeology, the Kuntillet Ajrud inscriptions. Kuntillet Ajrud, a fort in the remote Sinai desert, was discovered in 1878 by British explorer Edward Palmer and excavated in 1978 by Ze’ev Meshel (Fig. 12; 160). Dever describes the structure as an 8th century BCE fort with double walls, towers at the corners, and an open courtyard in the center, a “typical Iron Age Judean desert fort” (160). The unique entrance is through a “white plaster esplanade that leads into a passageway flanked by two plastered side rooms with low benches, behind which are cupboard-like chambers” (*Biblical* 184). The latter was used for storage of discarded votives and cult offerings, such as are known at many Bronze-Iron Age sanctuaries. Dever explains that this is a “gate shrine” and “anyone coming or going must pass through the sacred area” (*Did God 160*). This placed the “gate shrine,” which all have to pass through, in the biblical beginning, acknowledging a folk or private religion in a very public way.

The items found were “several inscriptions painted in the plaster walls; two large
storage jars with painted scenes and inscriptions; and quantities of pottery” (*Did God* 162). Also found was a “heavy stone bowl inscribed around the rim ‘(Belonging) to Obadaiah, Son of Adnah; blessed be he by Yahweh,’ no doubt a votive,” states Dever (Fig. 13; 162). Comparing these markings to Gimbutas markings on Figures 6 and 7, I can see similarities; maybe some day we will be able to decipher them as well. The inscriptions on the walls are what has caused so much controversy because “they contain clear references to at least four deities: Yahweh, El, Ba’al, and Asherah” (162). Dever states, “Where the names of these well-known deities are *paired*, their occurrence is even more significant” (162). An inscription on a wall “in one of the bench rooms of the shrine reads: To [Y]ahweh (of) Teiman (Yemen) and to his Asherah[h]” (162).

On one of the storejars “is a long inscription that ends ‘I [b]lessed you by (or’to’) Yahweh of Samaria and by his Asherah’” (*Did God* 162). The other storejar also has an inscription that reads “Yahweh of Teiman and his Asherah” (163). The “exotic painted scenes” are especially interesting; the “scene showing two standing male (?) figures with arms linked, and off to the right a seated female figure” (163) is unique, and as Dever states, “The three figures [are] so rare in Hebrew art that these are almost the only intact examples that we have” (Fig. 14; 163). He explains that he saw these.

*Figure 14.* - “Three figures so rare in Hebrew art”, Kuntillet ‘Ajrud. Cited in Dever, *Did God Have a Wife?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans) 165.
storejars twenty-five years ago and was stunned, and he wrote two articles explaining that

[T]he two figures to the left represented the Egyptian dwarf-god Bes, who is often portrayed bow-legged, with leonine head and a crown, wearing spotted leopard skin. The left-hand figure is apparently male [. . .] The right-hand figure, however, seems to be female, since it has breasts. Odd as that may appear, it does not pose a problem, since Bes is an androgynous deity [. . .] an apotropaic deity, one who ‘turns away’ bad luck, associated with music, dancing, and celebrations. (164)

The half-nude female figure playing a lyre seated on a primitive lion-throne is the Goddess Asherah (Fig. 14; Dever, *Did God Have a Wife?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans) 165). Dever says this is not speculative because she is already “named in the inscription above” and an epithet of Asherah is the “Lion Lady” (166). The “stylized palm tree” (Fig. 15) Dever remarks, is “looking rather phallic” (166). I disagree with this description it is typical of the Tree of Life symbol that he also ignored in the offering stand (Fig. 11), which was also flanked by two goats just as this image is, as well as the lion right below, both Goddess symbols representing Asherah. We have here further evidence that the two religions, whether “Folk” or “Official,” did exist simultaneously. The
Goddess Asherah, Lady of the Sea, Great Mother Goddess, or Lion Lady, however she was referred to, was definitely a deity equal to Yahweh, a Goddess worshipped not only in private but in public as well.

Dever states, “There is no point today in either attacking the Hebrew Bible or trying to ‘save’ it: it is what it is, [ . . . ] But what the archaeological rediscovery of the long-lost Goddess can do is to give back to the women of ancient Israel their distinctive long-lost voice” (306). With this statement Dever has helped to redefine the knowledge of the feminine beginning by acknowledging that it was lost, “placed on reserve, [ . . . ] detoured, [ . . . ] deferred [ . . . ]” (Derrida 944), but his patriarchal monotheistic upbringing stops him from going any further. He wants to give voice to the ancient women, which is more then most male biblical scholars do, but what about the women of today? He goes on to state, “I do not want to revive the Goddess as a living deity, whom we should venerate, only to listen through her to women’s voices in the past” (307). I’m curious how we can listen to ancient women’s voices through the Goddess Asherah without reviving her; this seems a contradiction, which makes me believe his underlying interest is to keep the status quo.

Dever refers to “the highly respected archaeologists (avowed feminist) Ruth Tringham and Margaret Conkey” who, he says, “repudiate Gimbutas and the ‘Goddess movement,’” and he also refers to a collection of essays edited by Karen King as “useful, sensible” (Did 308). He says “the best” is by Judith Ochshorn, author of The Female Experience and the Nature of the Divine, in which she

[P]oints out that patriarchal religion is hardly to be blamed exclusively on the ancient Israelite men who wrote the Bible [ . . . ] She believes that Judaism’s and Christianity’s vision of God can be expanded considerably and reformed to embrace women’s
experiences. That includes the belief in monotheism in particular, which must be broadened. (308)

Dever states, “While radical in some senses, most feminists do not necessarily seek to dethrone the male deity, only dismantle patriarchal religion” (309). And he calls the “radical secular feminists [. . .] ‘Neopagans’ or ‘Wiccans’ (witches)[. . .] inspired by Gimbutas early works celebrating a supposedly universal Earth Mother whom traditional and official religions have sought to suppress” (310). He calls Merlin Stone’s *When God Was a Women*, Mary Daly’s *Beyond God the Father*, and Starhawk’s *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess* “occult works, which romanticize ‘primitive women’s religion’” (310). His very carefully chosen words—“useful, sensible, supposedly”—lead me to believe that he does not want the patriarchal monotheistic tradition to change.

That is the intention of my critical discourse in redefining the knowledge of the feminine beginning. I’m aiming for the Western Patriarchal tradition to change, to evolve by giving voice to the ancient Goddesses including the Goddess Asherah, and incorporating her into egalitarian humankind. To get there we must be open to archaeomythology, which is giving us more and more knowledge of an ancient feminine equal to the ancient masculine in both public and private ways.
My third archaeomythologist, Dr. Jeannine Davis-Kimball, the author of *Warrior Women: An Archaeologist’s Search for History’s Hidden Heroines*, traveled a unique road to archaeology. In the preface of her book she tells us she was “born in Idaho in 1929” married three times, has six children, and “a varied resume that included stints as a nurse in Idaho, an administrator in a convalescent hospital in southern California, an English-language teacher in Bolivia and Spain, and a failed cattle rancher in South America” (xii). She did all of this before getting her “bachelor’s degree in art history from California State University at Northridge at the age of forty-nine” (xiii).

Unlike Gimbutas, who decided at the age of fifteen “to study the history of her people,” Davis-Kimball, an art historian, states that while “working on [her] master’s and cataloging Near Eastern art for the Los Angeles County Museum” she discovered that her “passion was ancient civilizations” and became “very curious about the collection’s two hundred bronze plaques and animal statuettes from Eurasia, a legacy of the steppe nomads” (xiii). She states she “puzzled over the meaning of the ubiquitous recurring coils and scrolls that marked the hip and shoulder joints of these beasts” and even “more curious about the free-roaming lifestyle of [. . .] the Eurasian nomads who had created those enigmatic plaques and statuettes” (xiii). With her “master’s degree in hand,” she began her Ph.D. in Near Eastern studies at the University of California Berkeley, which, as she says, “brought [her] career ambitions into focus” (xiv).

Her curiosity led Davis-Kimball down the road to the Iron Age (1200-300 BCE) Kurgan people of the Russian steppes, which are:
Immense grasslands [that] sweep from the forested eastern slopes of Hungary to the lush fields of Manchuria, reaching into the southern fringes of Siberia and down through the high Tibetan plateau. Sliced into two distinct portions by the Altai Mountains, the steppes stretch for roughly six thousand miles, spanning nearly a third of the world’s land mass. The Volga, Don, Dniester, and Dnieper rivers snake through these rolling pasturelands [. . .] with temperatures that ricochet from 130 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer to 30 below in the winter. (xiv)

This vast area is where Gimbutas theorized the Kurgan culture Proto-Indo-Europeans migrated from, in three waves beginning in 4400 BCE, invading Old Europe over a span of roughly 1600 years (*Living Goddesses* xvi). And with Davis-Kimball’s research of the three nomadic tribes of the Russian steppes (Fig. 16), we have formed a unique circle in the redefining of the knowledge of the feminine beginning. During her quest to learn more about the Eurasian nomads, Davis-Kimball is drawn to the Amazons, the women of the Greek
myths; she discovers that these Iron Age nomads were of European descent and realizes from observations that some of these tribes were more egalitarian in structure than patriarchal.

Dr. Davis-Kimball visited Russia several times, in 1985, 1989, and 1990, before being invited by Leonid Yablonsky to excavate with him in 1991 (9). The three tribes that she was interested in were first, “the Saka, who occupied the eastern steppes and the Tien Shan and Altai mountains from the eighth thru third centuries BCE”; second, “the Sauromatians, who lived in Russia’s southern Urals and along the Volga and the Don rivers in the sixth and fifth centuries BCE”; and third, “the Sarmatians, another nomadic confederation of mysterious origins who began displacing the Sauromatians around the fourth century BCE” (9). Some articles written by Russian archaeologists stated that “there were female warriors and priestesses in these societies” and a couple of the articles define “the Sauromatians as a ‘female dominated’ tribe” (12). But the Soviet archaeologists preferred “to concentrate on the more spectacular burial mounds of male chieftains,” and the consequence is that “even in archaeological circles, the prevailing Western concept of ancient steppe nomads was that they were a pack of merciless warlords [ . . . ] who marauded on tiny ponies throughout Europe, the Middle East, and eastern Asia” killing, pillaging, and “carrying off the women for breeding stock” (13).

In her quest “hunting for clues about these lost women” she “realized that the steppe maidens and matrons who fought on horseback or made prognostications with the aid of bronze mirrors [ . . . ]” forced her to “look deeper and further to ferret out other hidden women of history,” but as she states “it all started in the plains of Kazakstan, at the sacred mounds where Iron Age nomads once came to bury their dead,” which she and Yablonsky excavated for four summers (13).
The archaeological dig at “Pokrovka on the southern edge of Siberia” was a three-day drive south of Moscow (Fig. 16), and Yablonsky and Davis-Kimball worked on this site four summers in a row, but it was the summer of 1994 that proved to be the most exciting (19). On a very hot day they uncovered the skeletal remains of a young female warrior who had lived around 300 BCE (56). They were sure she was a warrior because of the artifacts she was buried with: “an exceptionally large collection of bronze arrowheads—forty in all,” an “iron dagger,” and a “six-inch-long boar’s tusk,” which Davis-Kimball states “certainly indicated her prowess as a warrior” (58). But further analysis would prove that this young female was also a priestess, because of “two types of artifacts most consistently placed with priestesses,” that of a “bronze mirror and fossilized shells” (Davis-Kimball 59).

The young female warrior was “probably between thirteen and fourteen,” and also had “a pair of oyster shells that had already fossilized when buried, and a pink, translucent stone with a similar shape,” which led Davis-Kimball to deduce that she was also a priestess (58). The “other warrior women” that they “discovered at Pokrovka” had similar artifacts but not “the clutch of seashells” (60). Other artifacts buried with this young warrior priestess, which help to mark her “high status” in the tribe, were “many valuable glass and stone beads” and “a fragment of bronze mirror” (60). Priestess candidates were “chosen for their intuitive powers or family history of spirituality,” and their training would have begun in childhood. This is “still the criteria for steppe religious leaders today,” states Davis-Kimball (72).

It appeared that the priestesses, unlike the warriors, continued their duties after having children, because “many of the priestesses exhumed at Pokrovka and other sites were middle-aged or older when they died,” (Davis-Kimball 72). Davis-Kimball tells us the priestess
duties would have been “the healing arts,” an oracle “channeling the voices” of the many deities, stoking “the sacred fires of the hearth,” and interpreting “divine will using sheep shoulder blades and anklebones” to determine “when to wage war, strike trade agreements, or change pastures” (72). Could this warrior priestess be one of those fierce Amazons of the Greek myths?

As an art historian, Davis-Kimball, drawn first to the “bronze plaques” that she helped catalogue at the Los Angeles County Museum, tells of an interesting “piece of Attic Black Figure pottery” housed at the “Louvre’s enviable collection of Greek antiquities,” which is an epinetron, “an elongated bell with one side cut away” used by Athenian women for carding wool (Fig. 17; 112). The “seated woman would settle the hollowed-out section over her lower thigh and rub the wool over the scales incised on the upper surface to separate the fibers before placing them on a distaff” (112). But it is the two scenes portrayed on this epinetron that she found quite interesting: on one side was the scene of “willowy, upper-class Greek ladies contentedly working wool and chatting” and on the other side is “a trio of grim-face and muscular female warriors preparing for battle” (Davis-Kimball 112).
The sharp contrast of the two scenes “is even more remarkable given the status of women in Classical Greece” (500 to 323 BCE) and “represented nothing less than the Athenian feminine ideal and its antithesis, a cautionary tale of the horrors that would be unleashed if the natural and proper social order were disturbed,” states Davis-Kimball (113). The scene of the warrior women is, of course, the Amazons, who started appearing on Greek pottery during the Classical age and “became so popular, it was given its own name—amazonomachy—and could be found on architectural friezes, jewelry, and ceramics” of all kinds (113). This epinetron is an example of how patriarchal Greek culture suppressed the feminine, “placed on reserve, [...] detoured, [...] deferred [...]” (Derrida 944); just as the biblical writers did by using the masculine spelling of the Goddess Asherah’s name (Stone 9), so the Greeks used the horrific tales of the Amazons. I can’t help thinking, as Davis-Kimball does, that for some Athenian women the tales of the Amazons would have been very tempting instead of subversive.

But for Davis-Kimball these scenes “hold a special allure,” a special significance, because “Herodotus identified the Amazons, along with the Scythians, as the progenitors of the Sauromatians” (114). Herodotus, the “man often credited as the Father of History,” was born in “Caria, a Greek colony in Anatolia,” circa 484 BCE. His work, a nine-volume set known as the Histories, tells the story of the Greco-Persian wars 499 through 479 BCE (Davis-Kimball 52).

Herodotus often strayed from military subject matters, touching upon everything from the growth of the Achaemenid Persian Empire to the Amazons and women warriors, to the bizarre burial practices of the Scythians. [...] For many centuries, the Histories was considered more myth than historical fact, and only in recent times
have archaeologists’ findings begun to corroborate many of his seemingly outlandish contentsions—including those regarding women warriors and horrific nomadic burial rites. (Davis-Kimball 52)

Homer writes of the Amazons as “the equal of men” in the Iliad; Plato wrote that they were praiseworthy “for their readiness to fight in defense of their nation,” and Athenian author and orator from the fifth-century-BCE, Lysias, wrote:

‘[T]he daughters of Ares’ were the first in their region to be ‘armed with iron, and they were the first of all to mount horses, with which, owing to the inexperience of their foes, they surprised them and either caught those who fled or outstripped those who pursued. They are accounted as men for their high courage, rather than as women for their sex; so much more did they seem to excel men in their spirit.’

(Davis-Kimball 117)

Even though this quote gives credit to the women warriors, it does so only because they act like men. Lysias cannot give them credit as women because women are considered weak and passive, a patriarchal point of view.

Further myths about the Amazons were that they “cut off the right breast of their female children so they could better shoot a bow,” and Herodotus wrote that the word Amazon “stemmed from two Greek works meaning ‘without a breast’ (a= without; mazos=breast),” but as Davis-Kimball states, “modern linguists seem to agree that the word Amazon actually comes from a Proto-Indo-European term meaning “no-husband one” (118). She tells about observing “today’s full-busted Mongol women archers taking fine aim and marking the bull’s-eye” (118).
Dr. Davis-Kimball went on not only archaeological digs in the Russian Steppes, but also “ethnographic expeditions” such as a six-week trip in 1996 to observe a “Kazak aul (village or yurt) at their jailou or summer pasture,” which was located in western Mongolia. The Kazak nomads, she states, “are a mixture of the many groups who lived in these lands throughout the millennia, including a variety of Caucasoid, Turkic, and Mongol tribes,” and she says that observing “contemporary steppe cultures is integral to unlocking the mysteries of the Sauro-Sarmatians, the Scythians, and the Saka” (31). Because all that these confederacies left for archaeologist to study were “the houses of the dead” and the artifacts buried with them, so “ethnography is a critical weapon,” and Davis-Kimball states that “the strong oral tradition of the steppe nomads has preserved many highlights of their history” (33). She witnessed this tradition while living with the Kazaks.

Just as Gimbutas identified the Neolithic Old European culture as being egalitarian it is even more important to realize that the Iron Age nomads may have also been more egalitarian, than history leads us to believe. Davis-Kimball’s observations of the Kazak aul show how “husband, wife and children” work together to “make the wool felt that is used for clothing, rugs, blankets and the exterior walls of the yurts”; and both girls and boys are trained to herd the “horses, sheep, goats, yaks and other animals”; as well as being cross trained, the “young boys help their mothers prepare food, carry water from the stream or lake, milk the livestock and perform other domestic duties, while girls learn how to ride and round up the herds” (36-37). Davis-Kimball states,

Some ethnographers seize on the nomadic Kazak inheritance laws as proof this is a male-dominated society, but even that apparently inequitable situation requires a further look. It’s true the youngest son inherits the father’s estate upon his death, but
the daughters—and other sons—each receive a fair portion of the family’s assets when they marry. (37)

The women’s “saulke, the tall, pointed hat festooned with precious-metal and jeweled plaques” can be “so lavishly adorned with silver and gold ornaments [. . .] to be worth forty thousand horses—a valuable commodity indeed in nomadic currency” (38).

Davis-Kimball also tells us that “egalitarianism is also reflected in the many festivals and celebrations that bring the auls together,” because both male and female participate in the different competitions (39). The “boys and girls ages six to nine compete as equals in the grueling horse races, [. . .] riding their sturdy ponies up to thirty-five kilometers (about twenty-two miles) (39). She observed a “singing contest known as the aites” at this event, in which both men and women compete. The “contestant sings out questions” and the “challenger unhesitatingly must warble back the answer” (40).

As an example, Davis-Kimball tells of a celebration of “western Mongolia Kazaks commemorating Kurumbai Batir, an eighteenth-century hero (batir means ‘hero’) who had saved his Kazak tribe from the Djungars, a fierce Mongol tribe who had coerced their way west” (Davis-Kimball 40). This aites was being sung by a “fifty-year-old man” who “sat cross-legged on a brightly colored felt rug, protected from the soft [. . .] rain by his heavy black coat and hat.” He started the event “throwing down the musical gauntlet by crooning something like ‘What did Kurumbai Batir do on the fifth of July in 1760?’” and the responding challenger, “a woman a few years his junior, replied in her strong, vibrato-laden soprano, ‘He vanquished the forces of the Djungars near the Ili River’” (40). As Davis-Kimball tells it “the answer[s] were fired back immediately [. . .] These two were a good match, well versed in Kazak history and skilled at adding the theatrical flourishes and
flashing eye contact that help determine the winner” (40). This contest went on for “three
days” being “suspended in the afternoon and resumed the next morning.” In this way their
oral tradition keeps history alive (Davis-Kimball 41). Unfortunately she never found out who
won, because her young Kazak interpreter was not interested in the aites, typical of most
young people.

Women also have “a voice in the running auls,” which “operate mostly by consensus”
and is a “nomads’ method,” giving all the adults “some say as to the manner in which they
are governed” (Davis-Kimball 41). Women can also be given extra voice if they are called
“an ana (mother of the tribe), hewana (which roughly translates as Mother Eve), or kelen
(one who comes from outside)” (Davis-Kimball 41). Davis-Kimball’s guide told her of “a
middle-aged woman [who] was chieftain of a six-yurt Kazak aul near the Chinese border”
and when Davis-Kimball asked why Aisha was running things, she got “a disdainful look”
and a quick response “Because she’s the most adept” (42). As Davis-Kimball explains,
“His matter-of-fact tone underscored the fact that roles and status are dictated mostly by
pragmatism, not sexual politics” (42). But, when children are involved, she states,

Each Kazak child must commit ten or more generations of the family tree to memory,
and the ancestry is traced through the father’s line, not the mother’s. When a woman
gives birth, she does so on the male side of the yurt, symbolizing that the children
belong to the aul (the father’s side of the family). Divorce is a bit of a mixed bag: In
auls that adhere to Muslin religious law, only men can initiate it [. . .] In contrast, auls
that observe traditional tribal law might feature a kind of no-fault, quickie divorce if
both parties agree: The bride and groom simply say ‘Talakh’ ([. . .] means ‘divorce’)three times very loudly [. . .] If only the woman is seeking divorce, [. . .] she must
forfeit her dowry, abandon her children to her ex-husband’s family, and petition her parents to take her back. (43)

Davis-Kimball states this last is rare and would apply to such “cases of spousal abuse” (43). Also in the above quote you see religion can play a big part in the laws of the auls, and where some may be Muslin, others may be “a polytheistic brew” (68).

The deities that the Saka and Sauro-Sarmatians worshipped would have been “similar to those of the better-documented Scythians” per “Herodotus [. . . who] linked them to their Greek counterparts.” For example, the Scythian Goddess Tabiti would equal the Greek Hestia “Goddess of hearth and family,” Api would equal Gaia, the Greek Earth Goddess, and Papaios would equal “Zeus the Sky god” (Davis-Kimball 69). Davis-Kimball says that because of the “Black Storms” that can happen anytime of year, “but in the summer the only warning you’ll have that one is looming is a period of intense heat before the sky darkens and the wind sweeps in with its load of punishing sand,” it is understandable “why primitive peoples would have seen the storms of the steppes as the acts of vengeful gods” (68). She goes on to say that these nomads’ “system of religious belief” was quite complex because their “free-ranging ways brought them into contact with a number of theologies” like “the Greeks, Romans, Persians, Indians, Thracians from the Balkan Peninsula, and others” (68). This resulted in “a polytheistic brew of ancestor worship and animism, perhaps with a little Zoroastrianism thrown in for good measure.” This “polytheistic brew” was presided over by the priestesses, such as were unearthed at Pokrovka (68).

Davis-Kimball tells of her studies of the archaeologist Sergei Rudenko who excavated “five large kurgans in the Altai Mountains of southern Siberia” in the 1940s and 50s. The contents were preserved by permafrost so that “a middle-aged woman was buried in a
caftan lined in squirrel skin and decorated with a flourish of brightly colored felt appliqués in floral designs.”

Also buried with her were “a clutch of cowry shells [. . .] an elaborate headdress made from black colt’s fur, amulets [. . . and an] assortment of mirrors,” which, for Davis-Kimball, indicated her priestess status (74). The headdress is a unique item for identifying priestesses; Davis-Kimball says it has through “historical documents from the Achaemenid Empire [. . .] identified one group of nomads as the ‘Saka with pointed hats,’” but adds that, the “concept of a large headdress as a status” symbol “originated centuries earlier [. . .] in Anatolia, priestesses—goddesses depicted in religious reliefs and stele—wore a brimless high square headdress called a polos,” most likely “assimilated by the Scythians as depicted on their gold plaques” (77).

The headdress has not been found just in burial mounds but also in carvings such as the large carved stone “overlooking a vast lake in western Mongolia” that is called “The Lady of the lake.” She “wears a veiled pointed headdress and large beads, and holds a ritual cup,” circa 1000 BCE (Fig. 18; Davis-Kimball 73). There was also a wealthy priestess found at the Khokhlatch kurgan in the Don River region with a “gold crown studded with amethysts, garnets, turquoise, and coral.” As Davis-Kimball states, “The size and shape of the attachments could have been dictated by the wearer’s cultic beliefs, but more likely it revealed her tribal status” (77). This leads us to the conical headdress, found with the
“famous Gold Man” of the “fifth-century-B.C.[E.] Saka kurgans,” which are “near the village of Issyk in southern Kazakstan” (Fig. 16; 104). Excavated in 1969 by the “renowned Kemal Akishev,” who worked with the Kazak Institute, the body was identified to be that of a man. Davis-Kimball believes this was actually a woman warrior priestess (100). Found with the body were “four thousand small gold plaques and ornaments in near-mint condition” (100) but the “most striking” was “the corpse’s conical headdress (Fig. 19), which had stood about twenty-five inches tall [. . .] constructed of wool felt stretched over a wooden frame. A small gold ram had been affixed to its tip. [. . .] On the neck flap and back of the headdress, fantastical winged and twisted snow leopards” (103). Above the snow leopards were “birds perched in series of stylized, symmetrical Trees of Life sprouting from mountain symbols,” and on the front of the headdress was what Davis-Kimball says were “cattails (local to the region), a floral motif, or another stylization of a Tree of Life—all fertility symbols—not weapons” (105). She also states the “Gold Man” had “three gold and turquoise earrings and a set of carnelian and white beads, items never before found in an early nomadic male’s burial, and the signet ring on the right hand bore an unusual design, the profile of a person wearing a feathered headdress suggestive of the images of shamans” (105). But, she says, “the telling artifacts” were the “gilded bronze mirror, a silver spoon with bird’s-head handle,
and a koumiss beater—all of which have cultic significance” (105). Davis-Kimball published her theories “in the September/October 1997 issue of *Archaeology*” and was rewarded with support from Beken Nurapiesov, who told her

[T]hat members of the original excavation crew had remarked on the similarity of the Gold Man’s headdress to the traditional hats worn by Kazak brides, and a French archaeologist confided he had heard rumors at the Kazak Institute that the archaeologists had thought it was a female in the burial[. . .] . Orazak Ismagulov, the physical anthropologist who had examined the skeleton [. . .] admitted that he never examined them *in situ* and hadn’t been able to make a positive sexual identification. ‘The bones were very small and could have belonged to a female’ he said during a phone conversation. ‘It was probably the prestigious artifacts, particularly the sword and dagger, that made Akishev think the skeleton had been a male chieftain.’ (106)

Davis-Kimball states that she tried to obtain some bone samples to be tested by “Israeli scientists who perfected a method for determining sex from ancient DNA,” but, because “the Gold Man’s [. . .] skull was crushed [. . .] it’s likely that no one bothered to gather up the pieces to be repaired in the laboratory” which meant that “the Issyk figure’s sexual identity will remain one of the mysteries of the steppes” (107). For my discourse it is just another incident where patriarchal tradition suppressed the feminine beginning.

Another account of information suppressed has to do with the “Chinese Mummies” that Davis-Kimball researched for a *Nova* special made with Howard Reid, an English documentary filmmaker in 1996 (133). She tells of the first time she visited the Urumqi historical museum, which had “small cast-bronze animal scenes, many identical to the Saka artifacts displayed in the Kazakstan museums” (134). Urumqi is the capital of Xinjiang and
a “sparsely populated region in northwestern China” surrounded by the Altai, Pamirs, and the Tien Shan mountains. “A fifth of Xinjiang is consumed by Asia’s most arid desert, the Taklamakan” (Davis-Kimball 134). When Davis-Kimball observed that the circa 2000 BCE “mummies recovered from graveyards in the Taklamakan” where “daytime temperatures [. . .] often top 130 degrees Fahrenheit” were preserved because of the “extreme dry heat of the desert,” she began to solidify her theories of warrior priestesses (136).

One especially interesting female mummy was “roughly 2,500 years old, she was clad in still-vivid rust-colored dress, felt stockings, and pale deerskin boots. [. . .] Spirals had been painted or tattooed on her face” (Davis 137). Davis-Kimball says these were “the designs used by the ancient nomads to embellish animal plaques” and “seen so often on the steppe art, probably indicated her status as a priestess [. . .] Her hair was reddish brown shot through with gray, and she had stood more than six feet tall” (137). While observing this mummy, she realized that she had Caucasoid features, because her “face was long, the bridge of her nose was high, and the well-defined sockets suggested her eyes had been large and round” (137).

The fact that these mummies were Caucasians was a surprise,

I later discovered that a handful of Western explorers had [. . .] published in scholarly journals starting in the late 1800s, but nothing appeared in the popular American press until April 1994, when Discover magazine ran an article titled ‘The Mummies of Xinjiang.’ (137)

There was another instance similar to patriarchal suppression, but this time it was national identity in question. She states, “The Beijing government hasn’t exactly welcomed” the discovery of “several hundred” Caucasoid mummies, which are just another inconvenience because they “didn’t fit into the established mode of thinking” (138).
On Davis-Kimball’s *Nova* visit to Urumqi she was introduced to the Chinese archaeologist responsible for recovering many of these mummies in 1978, Wang Bing-Hua. Some of these mummies were either “reburied or dispatched to obscure regional museums such as the museum in Hami, an ancient Silk Road city about 376 miles southeast of Urumqi” (140). The Chinese government set up an archaeological dig for the *Nova* crew to film. Observing this dig along with Davis-Kimball and director Howard Reid were “Victor Mair, professor of Chinese studies at the University of Pennsylvania and Charlotte Roberts, a biological anthropologist from Bradford University” (140). The dig was a charade; the head of the corpse was missing, the burial pit was empty instead of being filled with dirt that filters down over the ages, and there was “fungus growth on the body” (141). Davis-Kimball deduced that their “hosts had borrowed a mummy from the Hami museum’s storage and reburied it in the cemetery. [. . .] They had removed the head so there’d be no chance of filming any of those Caucasoid features” (141). She comments that later she realized the charade was most likely for financial gain of the Chinese government, because there were several other production companies “lining up to film mummies” (141).

The *Nova* crew did finally get to film mummies in the Korla museum through contact with the director, a Chinese archaeologist, He Dexiu (142). Davis-Kimball states the most exciting was a 2,500-year-old woman of about 40 years old, who had “reddish brown hair [. . .] bound in neat braids [. . .] No wrinkles marred the smooth surface of her face, and thick black lashes rimmed her eyes. She was five feet nine inches tall, slender and shapely” (144). She had a long flat face with a narrow nose, which “didn’t fit the Mongol mold. Tattooed or painted designs of spirals [. . .] covered parts of her hands and face, [. . .] she had been a priestess” (144). This fact was further proven with “her burial artifacts, which included an
altar, cultic spoons, and white wool squares painted with repeating red scroll design” (144-5). The documentary titled Mysterious Mummies of China was the result of filming done in the Xinjiang, but as Davis-Kimball states, the film “provides an all-too-brief glimpse of a petroglyphs site that sheds some light on some of the mummy people’s origin” 153).

Figure 20. Kangjiashimenzi petroglyph schematic. Cited in Davis-Kimball, Warrior Women (New York: Warner Books) 156.

The Kangjiashimenzi petroglyph (Fig. 20) was first shown to Davis-Kimball by Wang Bing-Hua in 1991; it unfortunately is in an “area completely closed to foreigners because of its proximity to military outposts and political prisons,” so Wang Bing-Hua had pulled quite a few strings to take Davis-Kimball to this site. It is “located sixty miles southwest of Urumqi” in the “intermountain valley of the Tien Shan” (lower right Fig. 16; 154). The petroglyph is at the base of a “massive dark-red sandstone rock, which Davis-Kimball calls a “Gothic cathedral.” The “bas-relief carvings [. . .] ran from under the sloping grotto roof on the back wall to a point graduating in size toward the ground” (155). She was “amazed at the scale and sophistication of the tableau,” which consisted of:
More than sixty figures arrayed along the walls, ranging from larger-than-life-size to rows of diminutive people with their arms linked around each other’s shoulders as if they were a chorus line [. . .] Most of the figures are dancing, knees bent, fingers splayed, their upper arms extending straight in line with their shoulders, the right arm bent up and the left turned down [. . .] As the tableau progresses to the right, not all the humans are fully drawn, [. . .] curiously, many disembodied heads float through the mix. [. . .] A specific canon of art certainly dictated the style in which male and female were portrayed, and nearly all appear to be naked, a condition emphasized by the enormous erect phalluses displayed on the men. The women whose images (contrary to average human size) are much larger than the men’s, are indicated by flattened conical-shaped headdresses embellished with tiny antennae projecting upward and outward. The women’s bodies are also uniquely portrayed: They have large inverted-triangle torsos, while prominent hips and thighs form a second, smaller triangle. The men’s heads contrast with women’s as they are oval (apparently hatless), and their torsos are trapezoid, with sticklike legs. (Davis-Kimball 157)

Davis-Kimball, an art historian, comments that “no other art came to mind—these carvings are truly unique,” and there were only a few animals scattered through the scene, “half dozen or so dogs meandering [. . .] two sets of heraldic animals that I took to be goats, and two large, striped felines, probably tigers” so “this could not be mistaken for an Animal Style scene” (157). The huge “29.5-foot-high and 45.93-foot-long” scene at its lowest to the ground was carved about ten feet above the ground, so the artists must have used scaffolding to create this carving (159).

Davis-Kimball states that “petroglyphs are notoriously tricky to date—carbon
14 dating requires organic material and none is available on stone, and studying micromorphological changes in rocks is still a fledgling technique” so she says “archaeologists usually depend on stylistic, ethnographic, or historical comparisons made with other reliably dated artifacts” (158). She states that “when Bronze Age or Iron Age people did render a human form, it was in the stick-figure style, representing anthropomorphized sun gods, a few paper-doll dancers, or the occasional shaman-like image found at Tamgaly—light-years away from these expressive and well-realized characters” of the Kangjiashimenzi petroglyphs (159). After comparing “style, iconography, and cultural affinities” she theorized that these petroglyphs were made by the Cucuteni-Tripolye culture that existed in Romania, Moldova, and the western Ukraine in 4000 to 3000 BCE and migrated east to the northern Caucasus and the Don and the Volga river regions around the close of the second millennium and continued on through northern Afghanistan (or Bactria, as it was know in ancient world) where the orgiastic element must have seeped into their rituals (rites associated with the Goddess Cybele), according to the findings of Russian archaeologist Yuri Rassamakin (163-64). She sees a similar rendition of women accompanied by dogs and the elliptical cowrie shell on a Cucuteni-Tripolye pottery vessel at the archaeological museum in Kishinev, Moldova. The “Eastern European woman was the stylistic twin to the graceful dancers” in the Kangjiashimenzi petroglyph and “must be associated with fertility” because of the “elliptical cowrie, a sea shell that symbolizes female reproductive system” (163). Davis-Kimball concluded that “From style to semantics, the Kangjiashimenzi tableau yielded many secrets about the ancients’ dependence on fertility rites” and “allowed [her] to piece together the Tripolye populations’ cross-continental journey from Eastern Europe to Afghanistan to the oases around the Taklamakan desert” (165).
Davis-Kimball makes one last link to the feminine beginning, and that is the fertility-related feline symbol that Gimbutas related to the Minoan goddess of regeneration (Table 1, Item 5) and that Dever associated with the Goddess Asherah (Fig. 9). Davis-Kimball makes the lion connection to the warrior priestess through an ivory *akinakes* (sword shield) she observed in the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg. The ivory nomadic sword sheath (Fig. 21) “excavated from the Takht-I Sangin, a cultic site on the Oxus River (now Amu Darya) in northern Afghanistan” has an upright lion holding a spotted deer, which some scholars have interpreted “as the domination of the Achaeminid kings over the nomadic people,” but Davis-Kimball states, “Perhaps it had once been a prized possession of a warrior priestess or priest” (170). She states this may sound like a “far-fetched link to what is often credited as the world’s oldest religion, the worship of the Great Mother Goddess, which took many strange turns as it wound its way through a series of widespread cultures” (171). It is not only the lion on this sword sheath but also the goat head with horns at the bottom that I find as an equally important clue to theorizing that this could have belonged to a priestess.

Through her art history studies of the Near Eastern cultures, she says “one immediately finds from the very beginning the strong presence of the Mother Goddess” and “any study of ancient religions” starts with the “earliest known archaeological evidence of
human spiritual beliefs” at the “thirty-two-acre mound known as Catal Huyuk” in southern Turkey discovered by James Mellaart in the 1960s (171). But controversy follows the Goddess no matter how ancient. Davis-Kimball recounts the remarks made by the current British archaeologist who resumed Mellaart’s work nearly thirty years after the Turkish government put an end to the older explorer’s work:

Hodder maintained that because almost all the female figurines are tiny, they do not necessarily denote the existence of a Mother Goddess culture, […] Mellaart rebuffed that contention testily referring to the birthing female between two snarling felines:

‘It’s obviously a goddess—no human being sits on two leopards!’ (172; Table 1, Item 5)

Figure 22. Female seated on or riding lions, tigers, or snow leopards. Cited in Davis-Kimball, Warrior Women (New York: Warner Books, 2002) 174.
The Mother Goddess culture that Mellaart refers to is the same Old European culture that Gimbutas studied and wrote about most of her life. This culture, religion, cult, belief—whatever you want to call it—was obviously assimilated after the migrations west of the Neolithic Age Kurgans and back again with the migrations east of the Iron Age Nomads, making a full circle with the symbols of the Tree of Life flanked by goats and females seated on or riding lions, tigers, or snow leopards (Fig. 22). Davis-Kimball’s quest to identify the origin of the warrior priestess unearthed at Pokrovka and other sites led her through many years and many expeditions, and I have only touched on a few, but as she states, “We’ve only just begun to understand warrior women” (240). But through the study of archaeomythology, the knowledge of the feminine beginning will be redefined as well as understood.

As Elster stated, Gimbutas “set the agenda,” and Dever and Davis-Kimball carried on her work even though in different ways. They are redefining the knowledge of the feminine beginning through archaeomythology. All three came from very different backgrounds but use archaeological artifacts, historical references, ethnology, linguistics, and mythology to develop their theories. The mythological elements of the goddesses I will discuss in Chapter 2, through folksongs, folk tales, and fairy tales that redefined the feminine survival through the Dark Ages and became the literary tales that are the base of children’s literature.
Table 1  
Chronology and Bibliography of a Sampling of Figurines

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<th>Location</th>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>140</td>
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<td>Great Goddess of Hamangia found with Sorrowful God/Thinker cemetery, Romania</td>
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<td>232</td>
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<td>Enthroned Goddess, Tisza culture, Szentes, Southeast Hungary</td>
<td>5000 BCE</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>Goddess figurine wearing mask, Kosovska Mitrovica, Vinca culture</td>
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<td>47</td>
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<td>Neolithic</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Lady of Pazardzik</td>
<td>central Bulgaria</td>
<td>4500 BCE</td>
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<td>b) Alabaster figurine</td>
<td>5000 to 5500 BCE</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>c) Marble figurine, Sardinia</td>
<td>5500 BCE</td>
<td>Gimbutas, Marija</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>d) Found in girls tomb</td>
<td>e) Marble figurine</td>
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<td>Late Cucuteni figurine</td>
<td>Western Ukraine</td>
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<td>Shrine model with Goddess with hands on pregnant belly</td>
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**BRONZE AGE**

3000 to 1100 BCE
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<td>24</td>
<td>Goddess Asherah</td>
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<td>Scham, Sandra. “The Lost Goddess of Israel” <em>Archaeology.</em> March/April, 2005. page 38</td>
</tr>
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Chapter 2

Lithuanian Dainos and Three Folk Tales Redefine the Feminine Survival

Through the Dark Ages

On Mother’s grave
Grass did not grow,
Grass did not grow.
No grass.
Only a green linden
Has grown
With nine branches
With a radiant top
(Gimbutas Green Linden 23).

My journey to redefine the knowledge of the feminine began 25,000 BCE through the archaeomythology of Gimbutas, Dever, and Davis-Kimball and brought me to 500 BCE. I continue my journey with the discovery of the feminine survival from 400 BCE to 1700 CE—a time that encompasses the Dark Ages and the Christian persecution of Pagan belief—through the mythological elements found in the folk songs, folk tales, and literary fairy tales, passed down from generation to generation, sung while reaping; celebrating or mourning; told around campfires, hearth fires, or sacred fires; written, rewritten, and revised, to form the foundation of Children’s Literature.

Beginning with a discussion of the Lithuanian folk songs, dainos, some of the oldest Lithuanian folk literature (example above), I use the folktale “Queen of the Serpents,” which reflects some of the Baltic pantheon of gods and goddesses and mythological elements that Gimbutas discusses in the introduction to The Green Linden and in her last book, The Living Goddesses. I follow the same mythological elements in a German folktale, “Ashputtle,”
discussing Jack Zipes’ *Fairy Tale As Myth / Myth As Fairy Tale* and *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*. I end this chapter with a discussion of a “complex” fairy, Madame D’Aulnoy’s “The White Cat.” D’Aulnoy is one of the French female authors who helped to create a second type of literary fairy tale as discussed by Elizabeth Wanning Harries in *Twice Upon A Time: Women Writers and the History of the Fairy Tale*.

The Lithuanian folk songs or *dainos* that Gimbutas collected in her youth, and discussed in *The Living Goddesses*, explain the mythology of the Balts, a geographic group made up of people from Lithuania, Latvia, Finland, and Estonia (197). Lithuanians were surrounded by “Baltic-speaking tribes,” and for “millennia the ancestors of the Lithuanians were shielded from strong outside influences,” states Gimbutas in *The Green Linden* (15). Christianity did not come to Lithuania until 1387 and did not take hold for several centuries after that (Gimbutas 198). The ancient elements in the “Lithuanian language, mythology, and *daina,*” are also due to its geographic location: surrounded by the thick forests of northeastern Europe on three sides and the Baltic Sea on the fourth (15). As Bishop Merkelis Giedraitis wrote in 1587 “[. . . ] you would not find a [hu]man who has any understanding of the secrets of our [Christian] creed. They make sacrifices to Perkunas, they worship serpents, and hold oak-trees sacred” (Gimbutas *Living* 198). Gimbutas states “Lithuanians are Indo-Europeans” and “they speak one of the most archaic living Indo-European tongues, one closely related to the *satem* groups, even the Sanskrit of the Vedic hymns” (*Green* 14).

In Marija Gimbutas’ introduction to *The Green Linden* (1964), she explains that the Lithuanian folksong, the *daina*, in 1940, was still being sung by women and that it reflected the ancient beliefs. One woman in Dzukija had a “repertory of more than 300 songs” and she
states, “They were the last bards of Lithuania, the chief transmitters of its heritage [. . .] the last vestiges of an era which is fast disintegrating today” (11).

The woman, reaping oats with a sickle, sang in full voice. This was ‘a sacrifice to the gods’ in the best meaning of the phrase—a personal, and collectively sanctioned, need. Even by the best singers in the world, the daina cannot be preformed on a stage with equal feeling and power, because it cannot be separated from its environment. As the woman sang, the earth seemed to move and breathe hope, together with the daina’s three-tone melody and simple rhythm. (Gimbutas 11)

As Gimbutas tells us, the “words were created at the same moment, as a song . . . the words were adjusted to the melody, to special rhythms: to reaping, to plucking, to swinging, to weaving, to the flight of a bird, to a wedding dance, to a game,” which helps us to understand the “repetition of phrases, the abundant use of refrains and little words that appear in songs, such as lylia, lylia; lingo rito ta ta to.” Little words such as these have “no separate meaning, suggest the rhythms and sound of work” (Gimbutas 12). This description of a Lithuanian woman at work in the fields gives us a vivid picture of the feminine survival through oneness of nature, woman, and work—a feminine essence that is both real and nominal, not “placed on reserve, [. . .] detoured, [. . .] deferred” (Derrida 944).

This essence can also be found in the mythological elements “reconstructed from folklore and medieval historical sources, in Indo-European par excellence,” states Gimbutas (17). These elements are found in the pantheon of deities that “reflect the old Indo-European social structure with its three basic classes: the ruling, the warrior, and the agricultural” (Gimbutas 17). The sky god “Dievas (pronounced ‘de-e-vas’) was the god of the shining sky; like the Vedic Devas, he was a superior god on whose account the sun and moon and the day
are bright” (Gimbutas 17). Gimbutas points out, “the word ‘God’ used in translation should not be confused with the Christian God” (17). Gimbutas later amends this with,

Lithuanian and Latvian written and oral sources do not separate pre-Christian deities into two groups like the Vanir and Aesir in Scandinavia. Rather the Old European matristic and the Indo-European patristic deities existed side-by-side for millennia with little intermingling. (Living 199)

The Baltic Indo-European Dievas, “god of the shining sky; Perkunas, the thunder god; and Velinas or Vels, god of death and the underworld,” were not able to “transform the Old European goddesses into lovers, wives, and daughters” as did many other pantheons such as the Akkadian and Cannanite pantheons (Gimbutas Living 199).

A second god that appears in the dainos is a “warrior-god . . . one of the liveliest in Baltic folklore, Perkunas, god of thunder and lightening, rain-shedder and overseer of right and order” (Gimbutas, Green 19). Like Zeus, he brings the first spring thunder and rain and makes Mother Earth, Zemyna, moist. “He bedews the earth and makes it moist. Dew is the divine seed” and is represented in the dainos as “golden or silver: Droplets of dew shine like silver buds” (19). The sacred oak tree is Perkunas (19). These gods are also similar to the Germanic Norse gods of the Vanir with the life-giving Goddess Freyja and sea God Njord representing “the indigenous Old Europeans,” and the Aesir with the warrior Gods Thor and Odin representing “the Indo-European” (Gimbutas, Living 191).

The many Goddesses of the Baltic pantheon are “Laima, the goddess of fate, who also decreed the ‘sun’s day’ and foretold the happiness and unhappiness in human lives” (Gimbutas, Green 17); Zemyna, Mother Earth, “the goddess of plant and human fertility”; and Saule, the Sun goddess,” who “was a separate divinity analogous to the Greek Helios
and the Indic Savits. ‘O little Sun, God’s daughter’” (Gimbutas18). Gimbutas states that as an epithet this is “not an expression of an emotional attitude toward the sun, but derives from the ancient hierarchy of the pantheon,” and “the moon, likewise, was subsidiary . [. . .]A ‘prince’ rather than a ruler, he was called Dievaits (diminutive of Dievas) (Green 18). But, she states, “the goddesses take their creative energy from water, the earth, the moon, stones, and plants. [. . .]They maintain their dual and triple natures, as in Neolithic” (Living 199). The triple nature of the goddess is that of maiden, mother, and crone, (“young and old, as a mother and daughter, or as two sisters,”) and as life, death, and regeneration, sometimes as “three fates or three white ladies” (199). The number three is one of the oldest mythological elements because of its relationship to the aspects of the Goddess, and it is used in folk and fairy tales and will be discussed throughout this chapter.

The sun is feminine in Baltic mythology, which is contrary to “almost all other mythologies,” states Gimbutas— prayers to Saule should be said with a bare head. She is esteemed “at summer solstice, on the morning of June 24 and again at the winter solstice “holding silken whips as she comes over high hills and low valleys on iron wheels, or appears as a nine horned stage, [. . .] and the smiths hammering and forging a golden cup.” The sun is “seen as a fluid substance, bringing blessings to plant life and beauty to maidens” (Gimbutas, Green 18-19). The Baltic Goddesses were venerated in Lithuania up to “the mid-twentieth century,” but “with the infiltration of technology and political upheavals” she has been diminished, states Gimbutas (Living 213).

Other mythological elements used in the dainos as well as in folk tales are “a symbolic life-tree” as Gimbutas phrases it. This Tree of Life has “glittering cones or buds,” and “In every branchlet a golden bud, on the toplet the cuckoo leans” (Green 20). The same
symbol, a tree of life with a bird in the top, I discussed in Chapter 1, as shown in Dever’s offering stand (Fig. 11) and inscriptions (Fig. 15); and in Davis-Kimball’s Kazak headdresses (Fig. 19), Gimbutas states, “These birds perch at the top of a nine-branch spruce or linden, [. . .] as in the symbolic portrayals by Mycenaean Greeks and Cretans of almost 3000 years ago” (20). The dainos also use the mystical numbers three and nine, “three leaves and nine branches [. . .] and the sacred part of the tree is the top” (22). This Mother Goddess Tree of Life and bird symbol are represented in the dainos:

A shoot of linden sprouted
Straight in the plain’s green middle.
A little oriole came flying.
Beautifully she sang (Green 22).

This daina is similar to the example at the beginning of this chapter, with the Tree of Life the number nine and a special top. Several types of Birds are referred to in the Dainos: “the cuckoo (the prophet of human life)” and “the dove, and the woodpecker,” which “belong to the divine sphere of Perkunas” (Gimbutas 20-21). We will also see the cuckoo in the fairy tales. Just as the Goddess Laima weaves and spins the life of humans, the cuckoo also “spins, weaves, or sews with golden or silken thread perched on a golden throne” usually high at the top of a tree.

Sing, O cuckoo,
Tell me, cuckoo,
Perching on a green spruce,
Sitting on a golden throne,
Herding the horses of the brothers,
Weaving a silken scarf,
Sewing with golden threads,
Counting my years,
How long shall I live? (Gimbutas, Living 201)
This *daina* shows that cuckoo sings about the future just as the Goddess *Laima* weaves the future; they both foretell what is to be.

Another aspect of *Laima* is that of the “hearth-fire deity” *Gabija*, which derives from the Lithuanian “verb *gaubit*, to cover or to protect” and “each day the hearth-fire deity was fed” (203). Gimbutas states “as late as the first decade of the twentieth century in Lithuania, the mother of the family, while baking bread, first prepared a little loaf for Gabija, marking it with a fingerprint” (203). This is similar to the Asherah bread molds that Dever spoke about, another aspect that helps to redefine how the feminine survived the Dark Ages.

There is one more “mythological figure who brings fertility, happiness and prosperity,” states Gimbutas, and that is “the harmless green snake, called *zaltys*. It is a blessing to have a *zaltys* in one’s home” (21). This little green snake “is the messenger of the gods” and is described in a *daina*:

O you *zaltys*, little *zaltys*,  
You, the gods’ little messenger . . .(21).

Like the Greek Hermes messenger to the Gods, *zaltys* “was also the god of ghosts and underworld, the conductor of the souls of the dead to Hades” and has an underworld palace (21). This little green snake “was loved by the sun,” and “to kill one was a crime” (Gimbutas 21). As Gimbutas states, “This oneness of human and plant life stems from the belief that the life force or soul, is the same in [hu]man, plant, animal, and bird” and at death the soul “goes into a tree—that for a woman, to a linden or spruce; that of a man, to an oak, maple or birch [. . .]” and “the souls of ancestors live in the trees or grass of cemeteries” (23).

The Russian poet Balmont said the “Lithuanian poetry was a ‘forest fairy,’” and Gimbutas says that the phrases, “golden apples, pearl leaves, silver streams—seems to draw us into fairy worlds [. . .] they lead into the early mythological image—the concept that there
is divinity where Earth and Heaven meet” and this motif, “however modified and freely applied, is usually of intense beauty” (20). This folk poetry finds its way into the folktales or fairy tales that I discuss later. Maria Warner states:

The word ‘fairy’ in the Romance languages indicates a meaning of the wonder or fairy tale, for it goes back to a Latin feminine word, *fata*, a rare variant of *fatum* (fate) which refers to a goddess of destiny. The fairies resemble goddesses of this kind, for they too know the course of fate [. . .] fairies share with Sibyls knowledge of the future and the past, and in the stories, which feature them, both types of figure foretell events to come, and give warnings. (Tatar 309)

As we shall see in the Lithuanian tale and the German tale, foretelling, or warning are integral parts of the tales and, for my discourse, link the ancient Goddess or Goddesses to the tales and help the knowledge of the feminine survive the Dark Ages.

“Queen of the Serpents”

We shall now float down the Nemunas to the shores of the Baltic where a bronze stature stands in Palanga honoring “Egle, The Queen of Serpents,” one of Lithuania’s favorite folk tales. The tale of Egle (AG-lay) begins:

In another time, long ago lived an old man and his wife. Both of them had twelve sons and three daughters. The youngest being named Egle. On a warm summer evening all three girls decided to go swimming. After splashing about with each other and bathing they climbed onto the riverbank to dress and groom their hair. But the youngest, Egle, only stared for a serpent had slithered into the sleeve of her blouse. What was she to do? The eldest girl grabbed Egle’s blouse. She threw the blouse down and jumped on it, anything to get rid of the serpent. But the serpent turned to
the youngest, Egle, and spoke to her in a man’s voice: ‘Egle, promise to become my bride and I will gladly come out.’ (Kuncaitis 1)

This is the beginning of a classic beauty and beast tale or, as the Aarne and Thompson index states, tale types “AT 425A The Monster (Animal) as Bridegroom” and “AT 425C Beauty and the Beast” with a “Tabu: overstaying at home” (Tatar 376). Egle reluctantly promises to be the serpent’s bride and hurries home to tell her father. The next day all the serpents in the land descend upon the father’s land. The father does not want to give up his beautiful daughter to the serpent so he goes to the wise woman and she tells him “it is easy to trick a serpent, instead of your daughter give him a goose,” so the father dresses a goose in Egle’s clothes and off they go in a carriage to meet the serpent. But on the way the cuckoo bird in the birch sings truth:

Coo-coo, coo-coo, you have been tricked.
Instead of a bride, he has given you a white goose.
Coo-coo, coo-coo (Kuncaitis 4).

Here is the mythical bird giving warning. The father tries to trick the serpent three times; each time he goes to the wise woman for help, but to no avail. Egle has to marry the serpent. We also have transformation similar to Beauty and Beast tales because when Egle and the serpent meet on the beach, he is a handsome young man. They live happily underground for nine years and have three sons and a daughter; and when the eldest son asks where his mother’s parents live, Egle becomes homesick for her family. Egle has three tasks to complete before the serpent husband will let her go spend nine days with her family. Unfortunately, the daughter is frightened into telling Egle’s brothers the secret words they must say to return. The brothers speak the words and kill the serpent when he appears. Egle is so angered by her daughter’s betrayal that she delivers her fate, saying:
May you turn into a willow,
May you shiver day and night,
May the rain cleanse your mouth,
May the wind comb your hair!

To her sons:
Stand, my sons, strong as trees,
I, your mother, will remain a fir (Kuncaitis 4).

She turns her daughter into a weeping willow, her sons into the oak, ash, and birch, the strongest trees, and herself an evergreen fir.

This tale mixes mythological elements of both the Old Europeans and the Indo-Europeans and gives the reader a feeling of both belief structures. Elements such as a hierarchal serpent world; the youngest daughter, Egle, leaving home to marry the serpent King (beast); and Egle’s daughter betrayal telling the secret words are all Indo-European, Christian, patriarchal elements. The wise woman, the three tricks and three tasks, the cuckoo bird delivering the warning, the secret words or code, and the power Egle has transforming herself and her children into trees are Old European, Pagan, egalitarian elements. The use of the numbers three and nine found in myths as well as in the fairy tales represents aspects of the goddess such as birth, death, and regeneration. The number nine, or three to third power, represents all aspects of the Goddess: life, death, regeneration; maiden, mother, crone; past, present and future (Warner 309). In this Lithuanian folk tale we are given an amalgamation of hierarchal and egalitarian beliefs with the serpent kings command to marry Egle and the power Egle wields in the end of the tale with transformation.

These two beliefs can also be found in Norse mythology with similar elements: the nine worlds of Yggdrasill, that is a giant ash tree, with three roots, which suffers and “cares for all living creatures and is in turn sustained by the three female Norns, Urd (Fate), Skuld
(Being) and Verdandi (Necessity)” (Crossley-Holland xxiv-xxv). The three Norns represent the nine aspects of the Goddess; Fate would be past, present, and future; Being would be maiden, mother, and crone; and Necessity would be life, death, and regeneration. In the Egle folk tale her father tries to trick the serpent three times, she has to perform three tasks, she is happy for nine years, and she must return in nine days; three and nine perpetuate the aspects of the goddess and give us a coded tale for the survival of the knowledge of the feminine. But we have to remember that Lithuania was unique in that it was isolated from the Christianizing that the rest of Europe endured.

Christianity totally assimilates the Old European mythological and Pagan elements that get incorporated into the legends and folktales during the period 400 to 1700 CE. The word *pagan* comes from the oldest classical Latin word *paganus* meaning “of the country, rustic” per the Oxford English Dictionary. The common Latin meaning is “civilian, non-militant,” because the Christians called themselves *milites*, “enrolled soldiers” of Christ, per the Oxford English Dictionary. *Pagan* came to mean non-Christian and was viewed as evil. So the evolution of the literary fairy tales reflects the Christian Western tradition and forms the foundation of children’s literature. For my discourse, redefining the knowledge of the feminine survival through the Dark Ages, I use non-traditional tales, that were “placed on reserve, [. . .] detoured, . . . deferred [. . .]” (Derrida 944)

The history of children’s literature begins shortly after the invention of the moveable-type printing press by Johannes Gutenberg in the 1450s, when books began to be mass-produced. William Claxton established England’s “first printing press in 1476” and published *Book of Curtesye*, which “contained direction for drawing the reader away from vice and turning toward virtue,” a Christianizing device (Norton 44). These verses were on personal
cleanliness, polite social interaction, reverence in church, and correct table manners; they told
the reader in the fifteenth century to do such things as comb their hair, clean their ears, look
people straight in the eye when speaking, and never quarrel with dogs (44). This little book
is now considered one of the classics in children’s literature, along with *The Fables of Aesop*
and *Le Morte d’Arthur*, even though they were not originally written specifically for children
(Norton 45).

The first books used to teach reading and numbers were hornbooks made up of
“printed sheets of text, mounted on wood, and covered with translucent animal horn.”
These were popular up to the 1700s (Norton 45). It is the publication of the “crudely printed
chapbooks,” sold for pennies, which brings ballads and oral folk tales into print for the
majority of people (45). Ballads such as “Jack the Giant Killer” and “Two Children in the
Woods” were popular Chapbooks, but religious instruction, romantic legends, and historical
narratives were also printed (45). The first book actually written for children, *The Pilgrim’s
Progress* by John Bunyan, was not printed until 1678. This book is a Christian allegory about
a character named Christian who tells of his adventures and experiences on his journeys
searching for salvation. The book not only had a moral Christian improvement theme but also
used “bold action” that attracted the young readers (46).

In 1693, with the publication of John Locke’s very influential *Thoughts Concerning
Education*, the concept of the child begins. Locke stressed “healthy physical development
and healthy mental development,” and he “advocated milder ways of teaching” (Norton 47).
He “believed that children who could read should be provided with easy, pleasant books
suited to their capacity” (47). He “envisioned the child’s mind at birth as a *tabula rasa*, a
blank page on which ideas were to be imprinted” (47). It is this belief that makes the child a
unique individual with a need of literature specifically for them that would mold or, as Locke said, “imprint” the child’s mind with the dominant thinking of the time, what Zipes calls the “modern Western civilizing process” (Fairy Tale as Myth 34).

In discovering the redefined knowledge of the feminine survival through the Dark Ages, we must understand the civilizing process used in the literary fairy tale. As Jack Zipes tells us in Fairy Tale as Myth, Myth as Fairy Tale, “What belonged to archaic societies, what belonged to [P]agan tribes and communities was passed down by word of mouth as a good only to be hardened into script, Christian and patriarchal” (7). The purpose of both Perrault and the female writers was to civilize, to socialize, to inhibit their readers, “to give a moral purpose to influence the behavior of adults and children in a tasteful way” (Zipes 32). Zipes quotes Perrault: “They [people of good taste] have noticed that these trifles [the tales] were not mere trifles, that they contained a useful moral, and that the playful narrative surrounding them had been chosen only to allow the stories to penetrate the mind more pleasantly and in such manner to instruct and amuse at the same time” (Art of Subversion 32). Perrault continues: “Virtue is rewarded everywhere, and vice is always punished [. . .] It is incredible how avariciously innocent souls whose natural rectitude has not yet been corrupted receive these hidden instructions” (33).

So the mythological elements of the Goddess found in the Lithuanian dainos and present in the Egle folktale were Christianized and made patriarchal through a civilizing process that was part of both Perrault’s French tales and the Grimm’s German fairy tales. The classic Western tradition fairy tale evolves out of oral tradition, out of the tradition of bards and minstrels who were storytellers, who sang or told tales using “rapid plot development and easily identifiable characters” (Norton 45). The beginning of children’s literature is also
at the beginning of this evolution of the fairy tale, from the ballad and folksongs such as the
Dainos to the literary fairy tales we know today.

“Ashputtle”

An example of this evolution is the German fairy tale, “Ashputtle” or “Aschenputtle,”
that appeared in Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm’s first edition of Nursery and Household Tales in
1812 (Zipes, Complete 715). Ashputtle is the classic Cinderella tale that the “Aarne-Thomson
index of tales identifies” as type “AT 510A” with a plot “driven by the anxious jealousy”
of the stepmother and stepsisters (Tatar 102). Ashputtle’s mother dies and several months
later her father marries a woman with two daughters. The stepmother and stepsisters are
mean-hearted and cruel. They jeer at Ashputtle, call her names, and make her wait on them
hand and foot. She has to do all the cooking, and sleeps in the kitchen next to the hearth in
the ashes (Hallett 45). Why would a father allow such treatment of his daughter? I believe
the tale reflects Christianity converging with Pagan beliefs of the Old European culture.
Remember, this is in the first edition of the Grimm’s tales.

The tale continues, the father has to go to town, and he asks all the girls what they
want him to bring them back. The stepdaughters ask for beautiful dresses, diamonds, and
pearls. Ashputtle asks him to “break off the branch that brushes against your hat on your
way home and bring it to me” (Hallett, 46). This nature-based request is not at all a strange
one from a girl who has probably been raised by a mother of Pagan beliefs. When the father
brings back the hazel branch as requested, Ashputtle plants it “over her mother’s grave and
cries so hard that her tears fell on the sprig and watered it” (Hallett, 46). This is very similar
to the dainos at the beginning of this chapter. A beautiful hazel tree grows overnight. This
reflects intertwined beliefs connected with nature and mythological element of the Tree of Life, a Goddess symbol still prominent, but the tree is now a hazel tree reflecting the assimilation of the Christian influence, a subversive meant to have a negative affect on the Pagan beliefs. Was this little branch meant to refer to witch hazel? The witch, wych, wyche, or wich is applied generally or vaguely to various trees having pliant branches such as the mountain ash, witch alder, or witch hazel tree per the Oxford English Dictionary (OED).

Witch Hazel [. . .] It has been said, that it is possessed of the power of attracting gold or silver, and that the twigs of it are made use of to discover where the veins of these metals lie hid (OED).

This type of tree also connects the tale to a “fairy world” of “intense beauty” (Gimbutas 24). The Goddess Tree of Life symbol has now become a magical symbol connected to the fairy world of silver and gold. Ashputtle is also assisted by nature, through the doves and turtledoves, along with the hazel tree when she has to perform her three tasks in order to be allowed to go to the ball and to have something to wear to the ball (Hallett 45-52).

The bird is changed to a dove in the “Ashputtle” tale. The dove is a Christian symbol used in the story of Noah Genesis 8:8-12 where the dove is sent out three times by Noah to see if it is safe to leave the ark, predicting the future. The cuckoo, the Goddess or Pagan symbol of wisdom and foretelling the future, is now the Christian symbol. But it is the number three that occurs in myth, daina, legends, folktales, and the literary fairy tales. Ashputtle has three tasks to perform and three balls to attend, and she tells the birds to assist her in the sorting of the lentils the stepmother has thrown in the ashes:

the good ones in the pot
the bad ones in your crop
This little rhyme is similar to the Lithuanian dainos that Gimbutas wrote about “words were created at the same moment, as a song” (12) and they help Ashputtle with her task. Once the tasks are accomplished she goes to her mother’s grave and asks the hazel tree for a dress with another little rhyme. She does this for all three balls.

“Shake you branches, little tree,
Throw gold and silver down on me.”

Whereupon the bird tossed down a gold and silver dress[. . .]” (Hallett 48). The dresses of gold, silver or stars are another Aarne-Thompson tale type, “AT 510B The Dress of Gold, Silver[. . .],” found in fairy tales such as Cinderella and Cap o’Rushes (Tatar 376). Nature also intervenes when both the stepsisters try to make the shoe fit by cutting off a toe or a “chunk of her heel” (Hallet 50). The doves tell the king’s men:

“Roocoo, roocoo,
There’s blood in the shoe.
The foot’s too long, the foot’s too wide,
That’s not the proper bride” (Hallet 50).

The trickster element in the Egle tale is also present in Ashputtle, but it isn’t the father this time that the birds reveal; it is the stepsisters. According to Hallet and Karasek, the Grimm’s tale “Ashputtle” has nature playing “a more significant role . . . than in those of Perrault” or other versions of Cinderella (38). The mythological elements present in the Lithuanian dainos and the folk tale Egle have been transformed to the Christian and patriarchal through the civilizing process of the time. An important fact to consider is that:

“[B]y the time Perrault [and the French female writers] began writing [their] fairy tales the major crisis of the Reformation period that had been manifested drastically in the massive witch hunts between 1450 and 1650 had been temporarily resolved,
and they resulted in greater rationalization and regulation of social and spiritual life.”

(Zipes 37)

This rationalizing coincided with an increase in socioeconomic power by the bourgeoisie, especially in France and England, and produced a blending of the aristocratic-bourgeois, socially, religiously, and politically (Zipes 37). The European witch-hunts actually lasted another hundred years, and both women and men of the Pagan religion were hunted down and killed. In 1484 Pope Innocent VIII implemented a papal bull against witchcraft called the *Summis Desiderantes*, and he appointed regional inquisitors (Phillips, 358). In 1485 the Catholic inquisition authorities published the *Malleus maleficarum*, (The Hammer of Witches). Over a period of about three hundred years it has been estimated that 100,000 trials and between 50,000 and 60,000 executions took place, at least 80% percent being women, per Jenny Gibbons and Robin Briggs (9, 13). It is no wonder the Old European mythological elements are changed, assimilated, or disappear all together.

The writers of fairy tales were “creating a literature where before there had been myth and folklore” states Zipes (17). Many literary historians credit the literary fairy tale for children to Charles Perrault’s *Contes du temps passé* (1697) (Zipes 17). But there were French female writers, “tale-tellers,” or “conteuses,” states Elizabeth Wanning Harries in *Twice Upon a Time*, which were actually creating a second type of fairy tale at the same time. Perrault and Grimm’s type of tale she identifies as “compact” and the French female writer’s tale type she identifies as “complex” (16). The “compact” tales of Perrault and Grimm’s Harries illustrates with a cartoon by Roz Chast that has only four frames. The first frame depicts a woman, a man, and a little girl with the words “Once upon a time”; the second frame has “Suddenly” with a ferocious dragon underneath; the third has a superman figure with
“Luckily” above him; and the last frame has “Happily ever after” (9). This gives a very succinct image of the “compact” fairy tale.

“The White Cat”

My journey to redefine the knowledge of the feminine through the survival of the Dark Ages brings me to a discussion of the “complex” female tale “The White Cat” or “La Chatte Blanche” by Madame la Comtesse d’Aulnoy. Harries says the complex tales were “carefully framed, usually within a telling dialogue as contrasting novella” and that the French “conteuses” wrote from “their own position as knowing, educated, worldly-wise female subjects with a wry and sometimes sardonic view of the narrative” (16). Unlike Perrault and the Grimms, the female writers “evolve the voices they heard every day, in palaces, in the salons,” and the tales they wrote were

“[B]ased primarily on written models—Straparola, Basile, medieval romances, accounts of Greek mythology, probably chapbooks that circulated in all levels of society during the seventeenth century.” (Harries 71)

And of these French female writers of fairy tales—some of which were Mademoiselle La Force, Les Contes des Contes 1697, Mademoiselle L’Hériter Oeuvres meslées 1696, and Madame de Murat, Contes de Féés 1698—Harries calls Madame Marie-Madeleine d’Aulnoy “the most prolific and the most gifted” (39). D’Aulnoy’s first tale “L’île de la félicité” was written in 1690 seven years before Perrault’s. She used “folkloric motifs [. . .] figures from Greek mythology [. . . and] repeatedly and imaginatively deals with metamorphosis, transforming her characters into plants or animals, and sometimes leaving them in that state” (Harries 39). D’Aulnoy frequently has “heroines who dress as men to travel in safety”; this device, Harries states, “questions seventeenth-century assumptions about invariable gender
characteristics” (39). Two hundred years later this device is seen also with nineteenth century female writers such as Virginia Woolf in Orlando, which I discuss in Chapter 3.

The tale of “The White Cat” was published in her Contes nouveaux ou Les fées à la mode in 1698 and begins like Perrault’s “Puss in Boots” story. D’Aulnoy’s hero is “the youngest of three princes” whose father sends them on three quests to win his kingdom after he dies. The first quest is “to find the most beautiful dog”; the second quest is “to find a long and beautiful piece of cloth that will pass through the eye of a needle;” and the third quest is “to find the most beautiful bride” (Harries 40). But, as Harries states, this “competition among brothers becomes submerged in the central story about the White Cat, a beautiful and mysterious anthropomorphic being who lives in a beautiful and mysterious castle” (40). This hero quest tale quickly becomes

[T]he story of the highly educated and intelligent female cat. The delights of her castle and of her conversation, [. . .] it is always the cat herself who reminds him that [. . .] the year is coming to a close and supplies him with the things his father has requested. (Harries 40)

Within the tale of the prince and his father’s request in fact is the story of the White Cat, who is a woman writer under a spell. The cat’s story is like Rapunzel “promised to the fairies by her pregnant mother in exchange for some enticing fruit, she is hidden away in a tower by the fairies/witches but falls in love with a passing cavalier” (Harries 41).

The tale within a tale within a tale is further reflected with the items the prince takes back to his father. The first is the tiny dog within an acorn and the second, the finest piece of cloth inside a millet seed, which was in a grain of wheat, which was in a cherry-stone, which was in a hazel nut, which was in the walnut the White Cat had given the prince. As Harries
quotes Lewis Seifert, ‘‘La Chante blanche’ is first and foremost about the power of female storytelling” (40). I also believe it tells how the Old European Pagan beliefs had to be hidden away disguised.

The framed-tale of “The White Cat” is also embedded within a narrative, “Le gentilhomme bourgeois” whose central character “one can hardly call him a hero—begins life as the son of a draper on the rue St. Denis but decides to pass himself off in Normandy as the noblemen M. de La Dandinardiere.” This story is a mixture of Moliere’s “Georges Dandin” and of “Don Quixote,” states Harries (66). In most anthologies we do not get the whole narrative, because publishers chose not to print the framed-tale, only the tale within, says Harries (69). The Hallet and Karasek Folk & Fairy Tales third edition only has the tale of “The White Cat,” not “Le gentilhomme bourgeois”; even The Fairy Tales of Madame D’Aulnoy, printed in 1895 and reproduced in 2003, has only “The White Cat” tale. Harries states, “The practice of printing them [fairy tales] as isolated text” comes partly from the French female writers’ usual framing of the tales “in typical fairy-tale style, beginning with ‘Once upon a time’ and ending with a marriage,” but the female writers did not intend for the tales to be read out of context (Harries 69).

As Harries states, the framed-tale “Le gentilhomme bourgeois” has a “romance drama of an unrecognized princess” in The White Cat “juxtaposed with the comic class drama of the merchant’s son trying to rise in a sharply stratified world” (68). The character Dandinardiere “is completely unable to recognize a fiction when he sees it”; he believes the story of The White Cat when told to him by the Prior, and he says “all this happened long ago, and would still happen now except that it’s no longer fashionable” (Harries 68), D’Aulnoy, states Harries, “mocks his ridiculous belief that he actually could be present at the
marvelous events the tales depend on” (68). D’Aulnoy’s shallow male character is intrigued more by The White Cat’s jewels rather than by “her political wisdom and power as ruler of her realm and as writer” (Harries 68).

Like the other French female writers, D’Aulnoy does not “attempt to re-create a mythical or ur-storytelling situation”; she attempts to “resist or undo the cultural notions that were coming into being” (Harries 70). She and the other female writers write “simulations of oral conversations,” simulations of “interwoven voices, in elaborate conversational frames” (71). D’Aulnoy, states Harries, “gives us many different voices,” but “the voice she never mimics, however, is the voice of the old peasant woman telling her tales” (71). The French female writers “were interested in the art of conversation and of dialogue between gentlefolk, where the art of narrating plays such a great role” (71).

As Harries states:

> By framing their tales with traces of salon conversation, they represent their tales as part of an aristocratic oral culture. By writing their tales down, they contest the notion that women can only tell the tales that men transcribe and transmit in print. By explicitly setting their work within the traditions of fairy-tale writing, they establish themselves as not only literate but learned. And, in a final paradox, by including traces of the oral culture of the salons, they create a new world of femininity. (72)

These female writers are responsible for the survival of the knowledge of the feminine. The mythological Goddess symbols may have been assimilated by the Christian and patriarchal civilizing process, but this group of French female writers, D’Aulnoy one of their best, created not only a second type of fairy tale, a “complex” tale that had layers of tales, but gave
future female writers of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth century a writing heritage to emulate.

Similar to the father in “Beauty and The Beast,” in the tale of “The White Cat” the prince arrives at a mysterious castle bewildered, cold, wet, and in need of shelter. The prince is greeted at the door by “a dozen hands in the air, each holding a torch” and is fearful and hesitates but feels “other hands pushing him from behind somewhat violently” so he continues and is pleasantly surprised by the hands “beautiful, white, small, plump and well-proportioned” as they gently undress him, dress him in “others much richer” and brought him a chair before the fire to warm himself (D’Aulnoy 349). D’Aulnoy’s imaginative creation of the floating “clearly feminine” hands even though “playing women’s traditional domestic role, [. . .] reflect the cat’s ability to create a mysterious order in the domain she controls,” states Harries (43).

When the prince is shown to his room, he passes through the hall with “a picture gallery of scenes representing ‘the history of all the fairies, from the creation of the world to the present,’ including several of D’Aulnoy’s own tales and Perrault’s ‘Peau d’ane’ and ‘Belle au bois dormant,’” and the “salon is decorated with portraits of famous literary cats,” which indicates that the mysterious cat and the prince share “a literary heritage as well as a royal one” (Harries 41). D’Aulnoy gives the story another layer with the White Cat’s own elaborate tale of being given to the fairies and hidden in a tower similar to Rapunzel, but she refuses to marry the dwarf the fairies expect her to marry. The White Cat “turns out to have a will of her own” not only refusing to marry whom the fairies have chosen but refusing “to do the spinning the fairies expect, [. . . bringing] about her first metamorphosis; her second depends on the prince: only he can release her from her feline form by cutting off her head and tail.”
(Harries 42). The prince has to follow the cat’s order “to dismember her at her command” in order for the transformation to happen, and as Harris states, “D’Aulnoy seems to be saying, [transformation] does not come without risk and even violence” (42). In other words, states Harries, “D’Aulnoy has transformed a tale about a wandering prince into a tale about a powerful princess, whose storytelling, both written and oral, is part of her power” (43).

D’Aulnoy ends the tale focusing totally on the princess with, “The beautiful White Cat was immortalized as much for her goodness and generosity as by her rare merit and beauty” (d’Aulnoy 376). But in the Hallett and Karasek version, they chose to eliminate this line completely, taking away the feminine power the French female writers were demanding in the seventeenth century, which is the reason for my discourse of redefining the knowledge of the feminine through the survival of the Dark Ages that seem to still be at work today. The patriarchal Western tradition still has the feminine “placed on reserve, [. . .] detoured, [. . .] deferred [. . .]” (Derrida 944). These French female writers influenced all three of the female writers I discuss in Chapter 3: Maria Edgeworth, Beatrix Potter, and Virginia Woolf.
Chapter 3
Eighteenth, Nineteenth, and Early Twentieth Century Female Authors Redefine the Feminine

My journey started with redefining the knowledge of the feminine beginning through archaeomythologists Gimbutas, Dever, and Davies-Kimball with the unearthing of archaeological female figurines, temple models, and warrior priestesses in Chapter 1. In Chapter 2 I redefined the knowledge of the feminine through the survival of the Dark Ages with the Lithuania dainos and folktale “Queen of the Serpents,” the non-traditional Grimms’ “Ashputtle,” and the “complex” French female D’Aulnoy’s “The White Cat.”

I continue to redefine the knowledge of the feminine through three female writers who wrote children’s stories in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries; Maria Edgeworth, Beatrix Potter, and Virginia Woolf. The unique lives and numerous works of these women produced exceptional examples of the feminine knowledge redefined. They were female writers who discovered a private feminine through a love and respect of nature and produced a public feminine through their love of writing; they were also outstanding human beings, not the “placed on reserve, [. . .]detoured, [. . .] deferred [. . .]” feminine of the Western patriarchal tradition (Derrida 944).

I start with Marilyn Butler’s Maria Edgeworth: A Literary Biography, which gives a complete picture of Maria Edgeworth (1768-1849), an icon in education and a contemporary of Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797). Edgeworth created the first female heroine in children’s literature with her autobiographical character, Rosamond, and was the “first English classic writer for children,” states Butler (160). Edgeworth together with her father, Butler continues, created “a distinct genre of lessons for teaching not only behavior, but facts about chemistry,
physics, mechanics and other sciences” (168). Maria Edgeworth lived outside of the dominant Christian culture of her time, because of her father’s beliefs as a teacher-nurturer and his association with the Lunar group and Dissenters, such as Joseph Priestly.

Using Linda Lear’s *Beatrix Potter: A Life in Nature*, I explore the life and works of Beatrix Potter (1866-1943), who was the beloved illustrator, author, naturalist, conservationist, scientist, and the creator of the famous Peter Rabbit, Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle, and many other characters for children. Potter also created a “new form of animal fable [. . .] in which anthropomorphized animals behave as real animals with true animal instincts and are accurately drawn,” states Lear (153). Potter also lived outside the dominant Christian culture, because her father and grandmother were Unitarians and Dissenters.

Last, I look at Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), whom some call the Mother of Feminist criticism, and whose children’s stories *Nurse Lugton’s Golden Thimble* and *The Parrot and the Widow*, written for her niece and nephews, were not published until after her death. Considered one of her best works, *To the Lighthouse* paints a picture of childhood “not only from [her] own memory, but from a cultural context,” states Dusinberre (4). Her mock biography, *Orlando*, paints a story of coming-of-age and identity. Woolf also lived outside the dominant Christian culture because both of her parents were agnostics, and she was one of the founding members of the Bloomsbury Group. Additionally, Woolf’s father was also a teacher-nurturer to his “ragamice” (Gillespie 19).

Thanks to these women, who pick up the “metaphorical penis” (Gilbert 3) and write numerous essays, novels, and children’s stories, earn their living and a place in history; they are prime examples of the redefined knowledge of the feminine. Gilbert and Gubar would say that before these women writers could “journey through the looking glass toward literary
autonomy, [they] must come to terms with the images on the surface of the glass” (17), images constructed by Western patriarchal tradition.

*Edgeworth*

Maria Edgeworth, like many fairy tale heroines, lost her mother at the young age of five. She did not know her father that well at the time, because he had been away a lot. Marilyn Butler’s biography states that Maria remembered “being led to the bed for a last kiss”; kissing the dead was a common custom of the period. This early loss could be the explanation for the many incidents involving Maria that were called “naughtiness” (Butler 45). Maria’s father married Honora Sneyd only four months later, which surely confused her even more with all the strange people around (Butler 45). One of the incidents was her “throwing tea in someone’s face,” and another was on the journey to the family estate in Ireland, Edgeworthtown, when she climbed out on the ledge of a window and scared a poor maid, who told her she could have fallen to her death. Butler states that Maria told the maid “I wish I had—I’m very unhappy,” such a heartbreaking thought for “so little a child being so very wretched” (47).

Both Maria and her older brother, Richard, subjected to the strictness Honora brought to the Edgeworth household during the years 1773 to 1775, ended up being sent away to school—Richard to Charterhouse and Maria to Mrs. Latuffiere’s school at Derby, England (Butler 51). Maria’s father had five children by his first wife: Richard, born 1764; Lovell, born and died 1766; Maria, born 1768; Emmeline, born 1770; and Anna Maria, born 1773, ten days before her mother’s death. The two younger girls responded to the new strictness,
and Maria’s father comments in a manuscript in 1778 “that children from the age of three should be made to dress themselves and make their beds,” a most uncommon practice for “this period of servants and elaborate clothes,” states Butler (50). We must also note that her father is to marry twice more and have eighteen more children during the period of 1774 to 1812: two with Honora Sneyd; nine with his third wife, Elizabeth Sneyd; and six with his fourth wife, Frances Anne Beaufort. A portrait of the Edgeworth family in 1787 was the frontispiece in Butler’s biography (Fig. 23). Maria is seated at the left in a hat.

At Mrs. Latuffiere’s Maria learns “French, Italian, dancing, embroidery, and handwriting,” and it is the handwriting which she picks up quite easily. Her first letter is composed in March 1776:

Dear Mamma, It is with the greatest pleasure I write to you, as I flatter myself it will make you happy to hear from me. I hope you & my Dear Papa are well: school now

Figure 23. Edgeworth family in 1787, Butler, Maria Edgeworth (Oxford: Clarendon Press) i.
seems agreeable to me: I have begun French and Dancing: I intend to make great
improvement in everything I learn: as I know it will give you great
satisfaction to hear that I am a good Girl: my cousin Clay sends her Love to you;
mine to my Brothers and Sisters, who I hope are well: Pray give my Duty to Papa,
and accept the same from Dear Mamma

Your dutiful Daughter

Maria Edgeworth. (Butler 52)

From this letter we can see that Maria strives to succeed, hoping this will win the love
of her stepmother and her father, but this drive for perfection did not win her friends. Telling
stories, she “discovered that she could command one device which gave her some sort of
standing at both the schools she went to.” Butler states (54):

Maria was remembered by her companions both at Mrs. Latuffiere’s and Mrs. Davies’
for her entertaining stories, and she learned with all the tact of an improvisatrice to
know which tale was most successful by the unmistakable evidence of her auditors’
wakefulness, when she narrated at night for the amusement of those who were in the
bedroom with her. (Butler 55)

It is her correspondence with home that sustains Maria through the years at school,
particularly when her father starts sending her writing assignments. The first of these, “in
1779, was a well known Arabian fable, which he began and asked her to finish,” and the
second, “set in the following spring, was to be an original composition, a fable of her own on
the subject of Generosity” (Butler 57).

From these first assignments given her by her father, Butler states, Maria “retained
two useful impressions [. . .] One was that the contents did not match the title—and ‘Where’s
the generosity?’ became a common phrase used in family criticism.” The second was that the style of the piece “fell below eighteenth-century standards of exactness: there was, Maria remembered ‘a sentence of inextricable confusion between a man, a saddle, and a horse’” (146). Her father also made a big impression on Maria during one of his initial visits to school; Butler tells us she commented later:

I had not for some years the happiness to be at home with him. [. . .] But even during the years that I was absent from him his influence was the predominating power in my early education. It is now above forty years ago, but I have a fresh and delightful recollection of his first coming to see me at school on his arrival from Ireland. I recollect the moment when [. . .] he stopped and said with a look & voice of affection which went to my heart, [. . .] my dear little daughter if there is anything you wish for or want—and remember what I now say—You will always through life find your father your best and most indulgent friend. (Butler 57)

It is important at this point to give some background of Maria’s father, Richard Lovell Edgeworth (1744-1817), and his second wife, Honora. He noted later that they “had been too exclusively interested in one another” during the first years of their marriage. They were intellectually well matched “for they read voraciously and made considerable progress in their joint pursuits—pursuits which were also to bring incalculable benefits, especially to Maria, in time to come” (Butler 58). The return to England in 1777 gave them opportunity to socialize and formulate their theories in education founded during the years of 1777-80 (Butler 58).

The formulation of theories came from Richard’s failed “dabbling with the ideas of Rousseau” with his first son, his lifetime friendship with Thomas Day, and his “growing
preference for Lunar practicality,” states Butler (59). Even though Day “remained an ardent disciple of the imaginative, theoretical Rousseauistic tradition,” Richard and Honora were drawn to “Joseph Priestly [who] had come within the Lunar orbit” (Butler 60). Priestley’s “emphasis on reasoning capacity in preference to parroted learning, [. . .] which the English [. . .] inherited from Locke” were explained in his 1768 *Essay on a Course of Liberal Education*, based on the courses he taught at Warrington.

Warrington was one of the two best “Dissenting academies” of the time and was where, as a master, Priestley “taught language, oratory, criticism, and the history, law, and constitution of England.” Warrington also had an “unusually up-to-date syllabus [which] included literature, German, and natural history [. . .] a branch, at least, of science” (Butler 60). Butler explains that Richard “agreed with Priestly about the case for modernizing the syllabus” (61), a case that Jo Anne Pagano also calls for at the end of the twentieth century.

But it is Richard’s search for a means to teach his two youngest daughters, Anna and Honora, to read that leads him to studying “upwards of forty books, written for children, [. . .] Aesop’s and other fables, collections of ‘beauties’ from famous authors, Newbury’s recent pioneering publications, [. . .] perhaps vulgar chap-books,” and finally Anna Laetitia Barbauld’s *Lessons for Children from Two to Three Years Old* “in which the vocabulary was simple, the backgrounds homely, and the lessons kept short” (Butler 61). Butler tells us that after the “girls learned to read in six weeks” Richard wrote a “seventy-page [. . .] essay” to Mrs. Barbauld where he explained, “his observations and the moral he drew from them” (61).

Richard brought together the teaching of children to read and the new science of psychology through Priestley’s abridgement of Hartley’s *Observation on Man*, which brings to light the “importance of Hartley’s doctrine of the association of ideas [. . .] the mind’s
reception and ordering of external impressions” (Butler 61) This becomes, for Maria’s father, the bases of his two principles: that books for children should be pleasing and that “the writer for children must try to make an absolutely clear mental impression,” bringing together psychology and education.

[Richard] Edgeworth had already praised Mrs. Barbauld’s simple language and familiar setting, but Priestley and Hartley supplied the reason why her clarity helped the child to learn. . . . Edgeworth’s informed conviction that children’s literature must be based on a knowledge of children was to be crucial in his daughter’s [Maria’s] career as a writer for this special audience. (Butler 62)

In 1779 Richard and Honora wrote a story “about two children called Harry and Lucy, who get up in the morning, make their beds, and eat their breakfast,” asking many questions and having their parents answer in “well-judged phrases calculated to make brick-making, or many another process, intelligible to the very young” (Butler 63). This simple “purely educational” plot structure becomes the pilot for Maria’s becoming “the first English classic writer for children” and a redefining moment for the knowledge of the feminine, because even though outside the dominant culture, Maria became an influential author of books for children.

One of her first stories written for The Parent’s Assistant 1796 is “The Purple Jar.” It has “the impetuous, fallible Rosamond, based by family tradition on Maria herself [. . . who is] the first real heroine in children’s literature,” says Butler (160). It also has the character of the mother, I believe as a trickster, a device used by female writers says Audrey Bilger, to interject humor and force the protagonist to reason (104). I think Maria does this in her children’s stories.
In “The Purple Jar,” seven-year-old Rosamond (8) and her mother are out shopping, and each shop they pass has some bauble that Rosamond thinks her mother should buy. In the window of a chemist shop Rosamond sees a beautiful purple jar that she tells her mother could be used as a flowerpot. Rosamond’s mother gives her the choice of buying either new shoes or the purple jar, but she will not buy both, and she will not be able to buy new shoes for a whole month. (11). Rosamond picks the purple jar and her mother has it delivered. When the purple jar finally arrives, Rosamond discovers that there is black liquid inside and dumps it out only to discover the jar is not purple after all. She is greatly disappointed, but her mother says, “But didn’t I tell you that you had not examined it, and that perhaps you would be disappointed” (12). The story continues with Rosamond even more disappointed when she cannot go on a walk with her Papa, because of the hole in her shoe. She says to her mother, “O mamma, how I wish that I had chosen the shoes—they would have been of so much more use to me than the jar: however, I am sure—no, not quite sure—but I hope I shall be wiser another time” (13).

The phrasings of suggestions, by the mother, to Rosamond encourage her to think for herself, to make her own choices, and to live with the consequences. The mother does serve as a trickster, but in a parental way that teaches a valuable lesson. It is this interplay of adult suggestions and child responses I find quite wonderful and humorous in these children’s stories. They follow the two principles her father believed a writer for children’s stories should have: be pleasing and make a clear mental impression. Her stories also follow the basic fairy tale form of tragedy/problem, journey/discussion, and resolution/lesson.

Butler states that Maria and her father created “a distinct genre of lessons for teaching not only behavior, but facts about chemistry, physics, mechanics and other sciences” (168).
These lesson stories fall into the first of two groups. The second group, *Early Lessons*, were written for parents to be used as a program. The *Rosamond* stories fall into both groups. The characters, such as *Frank*, initially for four- to six-year-olds, and *Harry & Lucy*, for six- to ten-year-olds, as well as Lazy Lawrence and Simple Susan, all grow up over the years, as did Maria’s siblings, for whom they were all originally written (Butler 174).

The *Rosamond* story “The Memory Bracelet,” written in 1821, is for ten- to thirteen-year-olds and illustrates the discourse between brother and sister and a traveling merchant who has a box of very unusual items, one of which is a memory bracelet. In this story, it is the father who asks Rosamond to choose between the unique bracelet and a horse of her own; she does pick the horse but not before there is much discussion. This was written during the period after she finished her father’s memoirs, contrary to some of her biographers who said she didn’t write anything. She also wrote *Harry and Lucy Concluded* in 1825, four volumes of what Butler calls Maria’s “most impressive and interesting” books for children (434).

For Gilbert and Gubar, Maria Edgeworth’s mirror image always had her father over her right shoulder until he died in 1817 and she finished his memoirs in 1820 (147). But Butler tells us “Maria herself wanted to have established what indeed seems to be the sober truth, that she owed her literary importance to the training and attitudes she received from her father” (304). I believe Gilbert and Gubar go too far in portraying Edgeworth’s father as just an overbearing, egotistical personality (147). He was also a teacher-nurturer, not a quality that would have been acknowledged by Western patriarchal culture.

Their 1798 family collaboration, *Practical Education*, was published as co-authored with her father Richard Lovell Edgeworth, though it was actually written by Maria (Manly
It receives “hostile critical attention” states Susan Manly (59); because it is a secular pedagogical discourse that stated at the beginning:

[W]e have no peculiar system to support, and, consequently, we have no temptation to attack the theories of others; and we have chosen the title of Practical Education, to point out that we rely entirely upon practice and experience. (v)

This statement is “indicative of the Edgeworth’s pedagogical convictions” that came from “observations, experimental process and methods derived from experience and praxis,” states Narain (57). Maria Edgeworth was thirty years old when *Practical Education* was published; the book had taken five years to write with the help of two stepmothers—Honora Sneyd, who died in 1780 at twenty-nine, and her sister Elizabeth Sneyd—and the observations of fourteen siblings.

Maria had been educated in Derby, England, and London from age seven until the age of 15 when she came home to Edgeworthstown, County Longford, Ireland. Edgeworth wrote her first book, *Letters for Literary Ladies*, what Susan Manly calls “an epistolary novel,” in 1795 (58), a year before *The Parent’s Assistant*. Audrey Bilger tells us that Edgeworth was “the family comic, […] the only one who could make her serious cousin Letty laugh,” but she was “painfully shy around strangers” (66). Because of the “eighteenth century sentimental family” which, historian Lawrence Stone says, flourished from 1670 to 1790, the “new middle-class family type” that existed was less patriarchal and “offered women membership in a group in which they might exchange ideas—and share jokes—with others” (Bilger 56). This is confirmed in Maria’s last novel, *Helen*, written in 1834, which explores “women’s friendships” and is considered her best adult novel (Manly 61).
Bilger states that feminine humor starts first with Mary Astell, with her 1696 *Serious Proposal to the Ladies*, which advocated women not to enter into marriage but “to retire from the world” and live in an “alternative community such as a “Protestant convent in which women would be free to pursue learning without fear of male derision” and just “sidestep confrontation and avoid being ‘the subject of their Discourse’” (37). A hundred years later, Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) puts forth a feminism, which engages laughter. “She parodies the most extreme prejudices against women and encourages her readers to laugh at the folly of such irrational views,” states Bilger (42). The male sneer used by satirists to mock women because of their flaws and lack of education is what angers Wollstonecraft, but it is “the women who go along with the system —the smile of complacency,” says Bilger, that really angers her (43). Women are not only ridiculed for their lack of education but “for their attention to appearance,” and Wollstonecraft “refuses to be duped by the system and laughs to steal power away from the oppressors” (43).

Wollstonecraft defies the system that keeps women in a perpetual state of childhood and the men who then make fun of women’s enforced childishness. She turns the laugh against the tyrants and encourages ‘high treason’ by setting an example with her own revolutionary text. (49)

This revolutionary text opened the door for future women writers to become public examples of how one redefines the knowledge of the feminine. Public is what Maria Edgeworth did not believe. Her revolution was private and domestic, filled with laughter of family when ever possible. Her knowledge of the domestic feminine was acquired through the everyday life process of action and self-learning (Narain 57).
Edgeworth collected “amusing anecdotes (from newspapers and hearsay)” to be used in her stories, essays, and letters (Bilger 66). Her children’s book *Rosamond: with other tales*, one of which is “The Day of Misfortunes,” uses situational humor. It starts out with Rosamond not wanting to get out of bed when her sister does. Rosamond stays in bed up to the last minute, which throws her whole day into one misfortune after another. Edgeworth was not a descriptive writer, but she manages to give the impression of being “placed within” a home or landscape, with “unselfconscious” descriptions of movements, conveying the everyday events and objects with clarity (Butler 163). It is easy to relate to such a day by both adults and children. It is a timeless story.

Maria Edgeworth’s creation of a new genre of lessons for teaching behavior and facts is an exceptional example of the feminine redefined. She was a private domestic person, who never had children of her own, but had nineteen younger brothers and sisters and three stepmothers that formed her immediate family. Her close relationships with her family are apparent in her last novel, *Helen*, which is about the relationships of women. Maria enlisted the editing skills of her younger sisters, Harriet and Fanny, as well as other family members, in the editing and revising, a process that she used her whole writing career. But I believe it is also the special relationship she had with her father and his Lunar friends that gave her the practical qualities she skillfully conveys in her writing.
Beatrix Potter’s birth on 28 July, 1866, “was announced in The Times with customary formality,” states Linda Lear in Beatrix Potter: A Life in Nature, and continues by dismissing the myth that there were iron bars on 2 Bolton Gardens’ third floor nursery dormer windows (25). Beatrix was the only daughter of Helen and Rupert Potter, and she occupied the third floor nursery, schoolroom, art studio, botanical laboratory, and museum to numerous pets, both alive and dead, until she was forty-seven. Her brother, Bertram, arrived when she was almost six and joined her in this very protected life (Lear 25).

Their holidays were spent either at “Camfield Place, her Potter grandparents’ home” or at Dalguise, the family “holiday house in Perthshire, Scotland” (Lear 25). Beatrix’s first sketchbook, “inscribed Dalguise 1875” has numerous sketches of caterpillars in watercolor with their physical descriptions and her observations of their habits (31). Both her father and mother kept their own sketchbooks. Grandmother Leech had a set of Edgeworth’s Tales at Gorse Hall; Beatrix’s favorite character was Simple Susan.

Unlike Edgeworth’s early troubled years, Beatrix early years were normal, for a solitary, upper class little girl, and filled with her favorite memories of holidays at Dalguise, states Lear (25). Holidays were spent accompanying her father on his photographic outings, which gave her the opportunity to become a “proficient photographer” herself, photographing what she wanted to draw later (36). These outings, observing nature and learning photography with her father, give the impression that he was also a teacher-nurturer, similar to Maria’s father.

Beatrix wrote that she was “descended from generations of Lancashire yeomen and weavers; obstinate, hard headed, matter of fact folk . . .As far back as I can go, they were
Puritans, Nonjurors, Nonconformists, Dissenters” (Lear 9). Beatrix’s “inner self-reliance, distinctly pragmatic approach to life” and tendency towards rebelliousness was honestly acquired from a Dissenting tradition and Unitarianism (41). She wrote in her journal after her eighteenth birthday, “All outward forms of religion are almost useless and are the cause of endless strife. What do Creeds matter, what possible difference does it make to anyone today [. . .]” (41). This attitude towards religion definitely sets Beatrix outside the dominant culture, and for my discourse represents a redefining moment of the knowledge of the feminine because she is an expressing her own beliefs.

Beatrix in 1929 wrote to an American friend “Thank goodness, my education was neglected. I was never sent to school . . .it would have rubbed off some of the originality” (Lear 42). Governesses, of course, educated her. The first was Nurse Mackenzie, who contributed to her love of “rhythm, cadence, wordplay, humour, dialect and dialogue: all nourishment for her imagination” (35), until the age of six when Miss ‘Florrie’ Hammond began her formal education. She stayed until Beatrix was almost seventeen and her brother went off to school, in 1883 (42). Beatrix had learned the basics: “reading, writing, arithmetic, Latin and later French. Her last teacher was Miss Annie Carter, who taught her German (43).

One of the most fascinating facts about Beatrix, Lear says, is that she kept journals written in code starting at “about the age of fourteen” and continued until 1897 when she was thirty-one (49). Potter describes the code as “a kind of cipher shorthand” that she used to write, “long winded descriptions, hymns and records of conversations” (49). Lear states that the journal was an “important laboratory for her irrepressible creativity” (50). The journals gave her a place to “sharpen her eye, improve her story-telling, and even experiment with various forms and styles” (50). In her journals she imitated “writers she admired like Edward
Lear, Lewis Carroll, Jane Austen, and Fanny Burney” (50), all of whom wrote for either children or women. These coded journals made sure no one, especially her mother, could read her “intimate, confessional and rebellious” comments (50).

A sharp contrast of adolescent years to Edgeworth, who starts to write compositions for her father at age fourteen away at school, Potter writes in secret code in her journals so her mother cannot read them. Potter paints and illustrates her “menagerie of pet animals, which were her surrogates for human friends” (Lear 43), while Edgeworth writes stories for her many siblings. I see Edgeworth representing the private in her domestic surroundings, and ironically I see Potter representing the constructed public through her isolation on the third floor where she paints and draws nature.

Beatrix’s father took her with him on several occasions to visit Sir John Millais at his studio. She wrote in her diary in 1896 after hearing of his death, “He gave me the kindest encouragement with my drawing [. . . he said] plenty of people can draw [. . . but] you and my son John have observation” (Lear 45). Her father had at some point acquired three colored drawings by the children’s illustrator Randolph Caldecott. Beatrix loved copying them, and, as Lear states, she “unconsciously absorbed his light-toned palette, economy of line and use of white space” (47).

During the period from 1882 to 1885 Beatrix did not write in her journal; she was ill most of this time with a “systemic infection” that caused “headaches, fever, colds, sleeplessness and neuralgia,” zapping her energy and contributing to her lethargy (Lear 66). For her nineteenth birthday she was given a rather large party, which marked the end of her formal education and the departure of her governess Miss Carter. Beatrix wrote in her journal
Whatever moral good and general knowledge I may have got from it, I have retained no literal rules [. . .] I have liked my last governess best on the whole – Miss Carter had her faults, and was one of the youngest people I have ever seen, but she was good-tempered and intelligent. (Lear 67)

The year of 1886 was a long one for Beatrix, because she was again sick most of the time, suffering from acute fatigue and low-grade fever that was most likely rheumatic fever (Lear 70). While she was “convalescing, she took pleasure in drawing her schoolroom pets” (71). Some of these were a pair of long-eared bats, a ground beetle, and a hairy jumping spider; to draw the details she used her brother’s old microscope (71). As Lear states, “Her observations of animals coincided with similar qualities in people she knew” (71). She had painted a weasel while at Camfield with a “sinuous body under a glossy, thick coat” and she had observed of her Aunt Harriet, “She is more like a weasel than ever, and her tongue—it exceeds all description” (71).

One of her schoolroom pets was a woodmouse; she was called Xarifa, the dormouse that she loved to draw. Beatrix wrote, “Poor little thing, I thought at one time she would last as long as myself . . . I think she was in many respects the sweetest little animal I ever knew” (Lear 72). Another of her pets, “Benjamin Bouncer, our tame Jack Hare,” she wrote, became her model for six designs for cards that she made at the suggestion of her Uncle Harry Roscoe. Beatrix sent samples to five publishers and was promptly rejected, but when her brother hand-delivered them to Hildesheimer & Faulkner, a response was received the next day with a check for six pounds and a request to the “gentlemen artist” for more sketches (73). This was an affirmation of the dominant patriarchal culture, the image on the glass she was to confront.
Beatrix’s favorite governess, Annie Carter, married Edwin Moore the year after leaving the Potters, and Annie’s first son, Noel Moore, was born Christmas Eve 1887. At five years old, Noel received the now famous picture letter with the story of Peter Rabbit to cheer him up because he was sick. His brother and sisters also received many picture letters after the first one in 1893 (Linder 7). Beatrix visited the Moore children frequently, sometimes bringing her pet white mice in their cage.

In January of 1900 when on a visit, Lear states that, “Annie Moore suggested that some of her picture letters would be most suitable for a book” (142). Beatrix borrowed the children’s letters to copy and determine which one would work for a book. “The original letter was too short for a proper book, so she added some text, and some new black and white illustrations.” As Lear points out, these changes “slowed the narrative down, added intrigue, and gave a greater sense of the passage of time” (142).

Beatrix sent “The Tale of Peter Rabbit and Mr. McGregor’s Garden” to six publishers including Frederick Warne & Company, but all rejected the little book (Lear 143). In September 1901 she withdrew money from her savings and ordered two hundred fifty copies, with black and white illustrations, of The Tale of Peter Rabbit from Strangeway & Sons, and five hundred copies of the “engraved colored frontispiece from Hentschel of Fleet Street” (Lear 145). By mid-December her little book was ready to distribute to family and friends.

Canon Rawnsley from the Lake District, where the Potter’s had been spending their summer holidays, “offered to make one final effort on” Beatrix behalf, tempted, says Lear, “perhaps by her report that one publisher had wanted poetry” (145). Rawnsley, a journalist and writer of sonnets, had published Moral Rhymes for the Young in 1897, so he put her text to verse and submitted it with the illustrations to Frederick Warne & Co. (145). At the time
several other publishers had popular children’s books, one of which was *The Story of Little Black Sambo*, and so Warne was looking for a book to compete in the market. The biggest drawback for Warne was that the “bunny book” had too many illustrations and they were all black and white, but they really liked the size and the format (146).

Beatrix had wanted to keep the price of the book down so that children could afford to buy it. But, states Lear, when Potter considered the possibility of a private and trade publication, commercial success was a likelihood, so Potter sent a letter agreeing to the changes, along with several colored illustrations and a copy of her privately printed edition. The phenomenon of Peter Rabbit was born (147). In the contract negotiations, her biggest concern was with the “issue of reprint rights and what her rights were should they choose not to reprint” (Lear 148). Potter comments that “I have not spoken to Mr. Potter, but I think Sir, it would be well to explain the agreement clearly, because he is a little formal having been a barrister” (148). Even though Beatrix was thirty-five, she was “unmarried and could not enter a legal or financial agreement without her father’s consent” (148). This patriarchal “image on the glass” Beatrix handled quite efficiently to her advantage.

During these negotiations and subsequent discussions of *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* (1902) and the five other titles they would publish by 1905, Beatrix “almost always dealt with Norman Warne” (Lear 148). Their business relationship turned into a friendship that led to a proposal of marriage in a letter from Norman on July 27, 1905. Tragically, he died a month later, on August 25, “of lymphatic leukemia [. . .] His decline had been extraordinarily rapid,” states Lear (202). At this time Beatrix had five titles in print: *The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin* and *The Tailor of Gloucester* (1903) were the second and third; *The Tale of Benjamin Bunny* (1904), the fourth; and *The Tale of Two Bad Mice* (1905), the fifth.
She was working on two other titles during the summer of 1905, *The Tale of Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle* and *The Pie and The Patty-Pan*, and wrote to Norman:

I wish another book could be planned out before summer, if we are going on with them, I always feel very much lost when the are finished [. . .] I do so hate finishing books, I would like to go on with them for years. (Lear 195)

Her life was so controlled by her mother’s schedule and the complete disapproval of her relationship with a “publisher” that she had a hard time arranging her visits to Warne that summer (Lear 195-96).

The story of *The Tale of Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle* was originally written in 1901 during the summer holidays at Lingholm, as Linder states,

In a small exercise book found at Hill Top, believed to be the earliest manuscript [. . .] Potter had written on the title page, ‘Made at Lingholm, Sept. 01 told to cousin Stephanie at Medford, Nov. 01—written down Nov. 02. There are no pictures, it is a good one to tell.’ (155)

The Vicar of Newlands and his wife were friends of the Potters’, and during these holidays their daughter Lucie spent time with Beatrix and played with the pet hedgehog, Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle (Linder 155). Beatrix had sent Lucie “a copy of her privately printed *Peter Rabbit*,” inscribed “For Lucie with love from H.B.P., Christmas 1901—I should like to put Lucie into a little book” (155).

The story from the 1902 manuscript of *The Tale of Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle* is “about a little girl called Lucie,” who loses her “hand-ker-sniffs and a pinafore, and goes searching for them (Linder, *Writings* 159). On this search she meets many animals and asks if they have seen her “hand-ker-sniffs,” but they all say no (160). When she comes to “a little well with a
stone trough,” she sees someone in the distance and follows until she comes to a “little door in the side of a hill.” Lucie can hear someone singing, so she knocks and is invited into the side of the hill, where Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle introduces her and continues ironing (161). Lucie has tea, watches as all different articles of clothing are ironed, and then helps deliver the little bundles of clothes to all the animals she had spoken to earlier (163). The last bundle is her hand-ker-sniffs and pinafore, “but Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle had not waited either for thanks, or for the washing bill!” (164).

The description of Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle (Fig. 24) is a mixture of old Kitty MacDonald and Potter’s own little pet hedgehog. Katie MacDonald was the washerwoman at Dalguise, Scotland. In a journal entry she tells of a visit in 1892:

Went out with the pony [. . .]to see Kitty MacDonald, our old washerwoman [. . .]

Kitty is eighty-three but waken, . . .comical, round little old woman, as brown as a berry and wears a multitude of petticoats and a white mutch. (Linder 155)

In another journal entry many years after the publication of Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle, reminiscing about some items in her china cabinet she writes:

—a little mug shaped pot with lid and handle—Seventy eighty years ago it belonged to another old woman, old Katie MacDonald, the Highland washerwoman. She was a tiny body, brown as a berry, beady black eyes and much wrinkled, against an incongruously white frilled mutch. (Linder 159)
This old Scottish woman left a lasting impression on Beatrix and not only inspired her to write a story but was very possibly an inspiration for her becoming a countrywoman herself.

The joy of converse with old Katie was to draw her out to talk of the days when she was a wee bit lassie—herding the kine. The days when ‘Boney’ was a terror . . . the old woman wouldn’t dwell upon hard weather and storms; she spoke of the sunshine and clouds, and shadows, the heather bells, . . . the sun and wind on the hills where she played, and knitted, and herded cattle and sheep. A bonny life it was, but it can never come back (Linder 159)

The story of the little washerwoman hedgehog is what I would call a combination of private and public posited in nature. Potter with her precise illustrations and whimsical songs of the little washerwoman hedgehog at work are reminiscent of the Lithuanian folk songs that I discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. This oral tradition accompanied a woman in her daily work, a tradition that was passed down in Scotland as well, and Beatrix Potter memorializes in her tale.

With her sixth book, *The Tale of Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle*, in print and her recovery from the sadness of Norman’s death came her liberation at the age of thirty-nine. This liberation came on a crisp November morning in 1905 when Beatrix Potter bought Hill Top farm in Near Sawrey (Lear 207-08). Hill Top was a working farm, says Lear, that had “a late-seventeenth-century farmhouse, outbuildings, orchard” and 34 acres of land—“a purchase Norman must surely have known about and approved; a dream they shared” (206-07). The sudden death of Norman “made her more determined than ever to control at least this aspect of her life and to make a success at farming—even if it had to be from a distance” (207).
“The necessity of overcoming her grief and getting on with her life,” says Lear, “inspired a remarkable outburst of creativity. She produced thirteen stories over the next eight years” and was herself “transformed into a countrywoman” (207). Beatrix had created a [N]ew form of animal fable: one in which anthropomorphized animals behave always as real animals with true animal instincts and are accurately drawn by a scientific illustrator. (Lear 153)

This is another redefining moment in the knowledge of the feminine, which links the private feminine nature and the public feminine writing to a very special human being.

Beatrix’s “first venture in local preservation” was the “old Ees bridge, a local landmark at the bottom of Graythwaite Lane” (Lear 214). She hired and insured a “good quarry man” and ordered the stone “from her own quarry to rebuild the old bridge,” states Lear (214). The renovations of Hill Top were also done with preservation in mind. She studied the neighboring buildings and drew her designs accordingly. Lear says that the “sketches show how closely she had observed Lake District architecture and how sensitively she altered her old structure” (210). The new wing was for the Canon family and she would live in the old farmhouse, the new wing was completed in 1906 with a finish “of grey pebbledash to unify the new with the old” (210).

When Beatrix had bought Hill Top, states Lear, “her father’s firm of barristers in London had acted as her agents,” but she later found out that they had done a poor job, so in 1908 when “she sought advise,” to purchase Castle Cottage, she went to “W. H. Heelis & Son, a well-regarded local firm” (227). She not only got another farm that sits opposite of Hill Top, but she also met her future husband. Beatrix purchased Castle Cottage on May 12, 1909, with William Heelis as her solicitor, and four years later, on October 15, 1913,
they were married. Two events mark the total transition of Beatrix to a countrywoman. On their wedding day “the newly-weds were to collect a new white bull when they arrived at the railroad station at Windermere” and “Beatrix went up and down the Kendall road offering pieces of wedding cake to her village neighbors, a traditional gesture,” says Lear, “that would have been in keeping with her desire to be part of the community” (261-2).

When Helen Beatrix Potter Heelis died on December 22, 1943, her properties were put in trust for the Lake District. It was announced February 1944, states Lear, that the National Trust was given:

‘Greatest Ever Lakeland Gift’ [. . .] over 4,300 acres, sixty individual properties, [. . .] fifteen farms, scores of cottages, several houses and more than 500 acres of woods [. . .] The properties were scattered into all the Lake counties, Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire. (444)

Typical of the businesswoman Beatrix came to be, she also left five thousand pounds “to be put in trust for improving these properties and adding to them” (Lear 444). Her ashes are scattered at Hill Top, but the exact spot was never revealed. One of her last poems written, found at Castle Cottage after her death, says

I will go back to the hills again
That are sisters to the sea,
The bare hills, the brown hills
That stand eternally,
And their strength shall be my strength
And their joy my joy shall be.

There are no hills like the Wasdale hills
When spring comes up the dale,
Nor any woods like the larch woods,
Where the primroses blow pale,
And the shadows flicker quiet-wise
On the stark ridge of Black Sail.

I will go back to the hills again
When the day’s work is done,
And set my hands against the rocks
Warm with an April sun,
And see the night creep down the fells
And the stars climb one by one (Linder xxvi).

The little animal fable books and conservation work in the Lake District of Beatrix Potter truly redefined the knowledge of the feminine, struggling from her very public third floor prison at Bolton Gardens to her private Hill Top commune with nature. Neither Edgeworth nor Potter had any children of their own—Edgeworth never married and Potter was not married until age forty-seven—yet they can be described in terms of domestic, nature, and nurturers—Edgeworth, through her large immediate family and close relationship with her sisters and stepmothers; and Potter, through her numerous pets and the realistic domestic tales of the animals. Both of these women were constructed through their love of writing.

Woolf

Though Virginia Woolf has been called both “a radical writer of genius” and “a narrowly focused snob” (Hussey xvii), still she is considered by some the Mother of feminist criticism. Her works, such as *A Room of One’s Own*, have without a doubt redefined the knowledge of the feminine. Virginia Woolf was born in London in 1882, thirty-three years after the death of Maria Edgeworth and fourteen years before Beatrix Potter published her little book. Similar to Edgeworth’s father, who believed in educating his daughters, Virginia’s
father, Leslie Stephen (1832-1904), recognized her keen intellect and gave her full access to his vast library, encouraging her to read what she liked (xi). Her mother, Julia Jackson Duckworth (1846-1895), died when Virginia was just thirteen. In *Moments of Being*, Virginia writes, “And there is my last sight of her; she lay dying; I came to kiss her and as I crept out of the room she said ‘Hold yourself straight, my little goat’” (84). Julia was a true Victorian lady who believed “to serve was the fulfillment of women’s highest nature” (xi). It was Julia who believed that women should not be educated outside the home (xi).

Analogous to Edgeworth and Potter, Virginia’s parents were Agnostics, which put her outside the dominant Christian culture. “Leslie Stephen published an essay called ‘An Agnostic’s Apology’ in 1876, then used the same title for a book (1893)” (Gillespie 197). Julia also wrote an essay “Agnosticism and Women,” in response to Bertha Lathbury’s article in *Nineteenth Century*, but it was never published. As Diane Gillespie states, “Although she must have felt personally attacked by this article and forced to define her own motives, the tone of her rebuttal is thoughtful and objective” (199).

Julia Stephen wrote many essays and children’s stories that were never published until they were “discovered by Martine Stemerick in 1979” while still “in the possession of Quentin Bell” (Gillespie xiii). These unpublished works are now in Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections, Holland Library, Washington State University, Pullman, Washington (Gillespie xiii). When Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* were published, Julia was in her twenties. Her stories show the influence of these books. Gillespie and Steel state, besides the “parallels of English culture, there are deadpan humor, the regard for ‘propriety,’ and the strong sense of class, its obligations and weaknesses,” but it is in her story “Emlycaunt” that we see the strongest resemblance (29).
On his birthday Aunt Joan takes Tommy to the bazaar to pick out his gift. He picks “a black and white spotted rocking horse. He had often seen it and had longed to have it for his very own” (Gillespie 69). He gets to ride it while his aunt goes to look at something else and when he gets on the horse it takes him out of the bazaar and to a strange place called Emlycaunt. Gillespie and Steele state, of all Julia’s stories this is the only one “where a lapse of clock-time is not accounted for” (30). While Tommy is on the horse he has several adventures, as if he has fallen down a rabbit hole (30). Julia probably told “Emlycaunt” to her children. Lesley also “read novels and history to his ‘ragamice’ and drew amusing animals in the margins, fronts and backs of books” to entertain them (19). Julia had planned to publish her stories with Lesley’s drawings (Fig. 25), but that never happened (xiv).

Virginia’s stepsister, Stella Duckworth, took on the responsibilities of the household after their mother’s death until she married in 1897, but only three months later Stella died (Hussey x). Virginia started writing in a diary at this time and wrote “the first really lived year of my life” (x). She kept a diary for the next twelve years, recording everything she read and her observations of people and places, including her siblings and home at 22 Hyde Park Gate (x). After her father died in 1904, she moved to 46 Gordon Square in Bloomsbury with her older sister, painter Vanessa Bell, and her brothers, Thoby and Adrian.

Their home became the center for the influential Bloomsbury Group. The original group, states Anthony Curtis in *Virginia Woolf: Bloomsbury & Beyond*, invited to the

Figure 25. Lesley’s drawings, Gillespie and Steele, *Julia Duckworth Stephens* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press) 124.
“Thursday evening At Homes,” consisted of “Clive Bell, Lytton Strachey, Saxon Sidney-Turner, Walter Lamb, and Leonard Woolf among others,” all Cambridge friends of Thoby (53). Woolf, Strachey, and Sydney-Turner had been elected to the Apostles Society, an intellectually elite Cambridge group that practiced a kind of conversation that discussed “everything under the sun, with emphasis on ethics, sexuality and art” (63). Later Duncan Grant, Roger Fry, E. M. Forster, and Desmond MacCarthy joined the group.

Virginia “was shy initially” but after reading G. E. Moore’s *Principia Ethica* (1903), she told Vanessa, “I finished Moore last night [. . .]I am not so dumb foundered as I was; but the more I understand, the more I admire” (Curtis 65). According to Curtis, Moore’s book became the Bible of Bloomsbury,

The argument, one that Moore continually revised, is too complex for a brief summary, but a salient point is Moore’s destruction of what he called the ‘naturalistic fallacy’ of goodness, goodness thought of as an attribute of something other than itself: a good meal, a good book, a good man, and so on. Moore came to the conclusion that good was indefinable but that certain activities were in themselves good, notably, ‘the pleasures of human intercourse and the enjoyment of beautiful objects.’ (65)

For Virginia this “contact with the brethren” was a “confirmation of her belief that Reality consisted in the exercise of the intellect in the pursuit of the truth and that the rest of life was merely Phenomenal” (Curtis 65). This conviction took the place of a religion and “was further strengthened when she married an Apostle in Leonard Woolf” (Curtis 65).

She wrote to Janet Case in June 1912, “I want to tell you I’m going to marry Leonard Woolf—he is a penniless Jew. He was a friend of Thoby’s,—and I’m so happy[. . .]” (Curtis
81). Leonard and Virginia were married on August 10th and moved to Clifford’s Inn, London (Hussey xxv). The next year Virginia finished the manuscript for The Voyage Out, but the horrible headaches she suffered throughout her life sent her to a nursing home for a “rest cure” (xiii). However, that September “she took an overdose of a sleeping drug” and in early 1915 had a “severe breakdown” and was ill for most of the year, “in which her first novel was published” (xiii).

In 1917 Leonard and Virginia established the Hogarth Press in their home in Richmond. Virginia wrote Vanessa:

Our press arrived on Tuesday. We unpacked it with enormous excitement, finally with Nelly’s [their cook’s] help, carried it into the drawing room [. . .]One has great blocks of type, which have to be divided into their separate letters, and fonts, and then put into the right partitions. The work of ages, especially when you mix the h’s with the ns, as I did yesterday. (Curtis 99)

Their first printing job was Leonard’s “Three Jews” and Virginia’s “The Mark on the Wall” and was published as Two Stories with woodcuts by Dora Carrington (Hussey xiv). Hogarth Press became the publisher for all the “young radical writers” such as Katherine Mansfield, T. S. Eliot, Gertrude Stein, and the English translations of Sigmund Freud. In May 1919 Hogarth Press published Eliot’s Poems, Murry’s critical essay, and Virginia’s Kew Gardens. Harold Child, the assistant for editor Bruce Richmond, reviewed Virginia’s little ten-page book in The Times Literary Supplement. Child, says Curtis, “[by] emphasizing the remarkable visual effects of light and shade, he took the line that what mattered was not the content but the form; [. . .] ‘the colour, the rhythm, the atmosphere,’ the ‘observation’” (115). This review “identified Virginia as a writer at the forefront of the modern movement.
in English literature; it also established the Hogarth Press as a publisher of original work” (Curtis 115). With this affirmation of Kew Gardens for its form, Virginia was on her way to helping redefine the knowledge of the feminine.

“She had given one great snore,” is the first line of Virginia’s children’s story not published until after her death, published first as Nurse Lugton’s Golden Thimble (1966) by Hogarth Press and illustrated by Duncan Grant, and again as Nurse Lugton’s Curtain (1982), published by Gulliver Books and illustrated by Julie Vivas. The story was found in the manuscript of Mrs. Dalloway written in 1924 for her niece, Ann Stephen, when visiting her aunt (Woolf 4). The Hogarth edition starts with the line above, but the Gulliver edition starts “Nurse Lugton was asleep,” which, for me, ruins the rhythm, the atmosphere, and the observation of the line “She had given one great snore,” a true Woolfian line.

Another children’s story, The Widow and the Parrot, illustrated by her grandnephew Julian Bell, was published sixty years after its writing in 1922. As Quentin Bell explains, Virginia was asked by her nephews to write a story for the family newsletter they printed, a family newsletter Woolf herself had started. They were hoping for “something as riotous as their Aunt herself. She fooled them by writing a tongue-in-check Victorian tale containing a moral: be kind to animals” (Bell front flap). This moral was one of two used by her mother in her unpublished children’s stories; the other was “fostering home relationships” (Gillespie 30). The story is about a lame elderly widow who inherits from her brother a ramshackle old cottage and a noisy gray parrot named James. When she journeys to collect the inheritance, the cottage burns down. But, as luck would have it, during the night James shows her where the sterling is hidden under the brick floor. She returns home with James and lives a comfortable life, and when she dies of old age James immediately dies. The story is a little
eerie to read because Woolf used her own home town of Rodmell; refers to both Asheham House and Monks House, where she lived; and mentions a Mr. Leonard Woolf and the river Ouse. It may on the surface appear to be a story with a moral—be kind to animals—but it also appears to foreshadow Woolf’s death consciously or unconsciously.

Considered by most her best novel, *To The Lighthouse* (1927) paints a picture of childhood drawn from her consciousness “not only from [her] own memory but from a cultural context which placed the child at the center of many different forms of awareness,” states Dusinberre in *Alice to the Lighthouse: Children’s Books and Radical Experiments in Art* (4). Arnold Bennett, one of Virginia’s antagonists, stated in his review,

> I have heard a great deal about the wonders of Mrs. Woolf’s style. She sometimes discovers a truly brilliant simile. She often chooses her adjectives and adverbs with beautiful felicity. But there is more style than this. The form of her sentences is rather tryingly monotonous, and the distance between her nominatives and her verbs is steadily increasing. Still, *To the Lighthouse* has stuff in it strong enough to withstand quite a lot of adverse criticism. (Curtis 156)

Sandwiched between *To the Lighthouse* and *A Room of One’s Own*, (1929) is *Orlando: A Biography* (1928), a book that, to me, is about coming of age and finding one’s identity, as seen from both a private feminine, love-of-nature point of view and a public feminine, love-of-writing point of view, but to most it is a book about Woolf’s relationship with Vita Sackville-West. As Curtis states, the novel “worked for those who possessed the key to it and equally well for those who took it at face value as pure fantasy” (162). The character, Orlando, starts out as a young boy of “not yet seventeen—and that the sixteenth century had still some years of its course to run [. . .]” (16) and so he was an aristocrat of
the Elizabethan age. The very first line of the book brings in the issue of gender. “He—for there could be no doubt of his sex, though the fashion of the time did something to disguise it [. . .]” (13). Woolf opens her novel with two significant words, *sex* and *disguise*. I would articulate that *sex* is the private aspect and *disguise* the public aspect, and Woolf uses these words throughout the book to help illustrate a three hundred year history of the feminine coming of age and finding identity.

For example, after Orlando has been given “the jeweled order of the Garter” by the Queen who loved him and made him “the son of her old age,” Woolf tells us that “he [Orlando] began going frequently to Wapping Old Stairs and such places at night; wrapped in a gray cloak to hide the star at his neck and the garter at his knee” (29). This is a typical disguise used by many so as not to be recognized, to hide one’s identity. Later in the book when Orlando has been a woman for a length of time, she again “puts on a black velvet suit richly trimmed with Venetian lace” and, Woolf writes, “she took a turn or two before the mirror to make sure that her petticoats had not lost her the freedom of her legs, and then let herself secretly out of doors” (215). This disguise is used to get out of the suffocating restrictions imposed on women. These moments could be seen as humorous or satirical, but I see them representing a freedom from the laws of society, a freedom from the constructed.

Through these scenes of disguise, Woolf gives the reader a weaving of the natural and the constructed, the body covered with the fashion of the day. Diana Fuss explains that

For the essentialist, the natural provides the raw material and determinative starting point for the practices and laws of the social. . . .sexual difference (the division into ‘male’ and ‘female’) is taken as prior to social differences which are presumed to be mapped on to, *a posteriori*, the biological subject. For the constructionist the natural
is itself posited as a construction of the social . . . sexual difference is discursively produced, elaborated as an effect of the social rather than its *tabula rasa*, its prior object. (3)

What Fuss is saying is that the essentialist believes that the “natural is *repressed* by the social and the constructionist believes that the “natural is *produced* by the social” (3). She refers to Ernst Jones, who feels “woman is born not made,” and to the anti-essentialist Simone de Beauvoir, who feels “woman is made not born” (3). Fuss than goes on to say, “It is difficult to see how constructionism can be constructionism without a fundamental dependency upon essentialism” (4).

As I explained in the introduction using Locke’s theory of real and nominal essence, I use the constructed “nominal essence” as a public feminine constructed through writing; through the markings on the female figurines; through the female written folktales; through the love of *writing*. I use the theory of the “real essence” as an original feminine, a private feminine with voice and language beginning with the discovery of the Paleolithic female figurines, the oral folk songs *dainos* and the love of *nature*. So my guidelines are a public feminine through writing and a private feminine through nature to redefine the knowledge of the feminine.

Using these guidelines we can understand the two aspects of Woolf’s *Orlando* that relate to the natural and constructed subject: Orlando’s love of writing and his love of nature. Woolf weaves these aspects of Orlando into the beginning of the first chapter.

[He] sat down at the table, and, with the half-conscious air of one doing what he does every day of his life at this hour, took out a writing book labeled ‘Ethelbert: A
Tragedy in Five Acts,’ and dipped an old stained goose quill in the ink. Soon he had covered ten pages and more with poetry. (16)

Then he leaves the house without anyone seeing him.

Orlando naturally loved solitary places, vast views, and to feel himself for ever and ever and ever alone. So after a long silence, “I am alone,” he breathed. [. . .] He had walked very quickly uphill through ferns and hawthorn bushes, startling deer and wild birds, to a place crowned by a single oak tree. (18)

After enjoying the view he flings himself down on the ground under the oak tree where “to feel the earth’s spine beneath him; for such he took the hard root of the oak to be; or, for image followed image, it was the back of a great horse [. . .] or the deck of a tumbling ship” (19). I believe that Woolf brings the reader back to nature and Orlando’s writing over and over again, to help us stay grounded to these two aspects throughout the book while she weaves them together to give us her subject’s identity. Woolf redefines the knowledge of the feminine through her subject Orlando, who at the beginning is a young man and at the end is a woman.

“Foucault’s poststructuralist definition of ‘a subject’ [i]s ‘not the speaking consciousness, not the author of the formulations, but a position that may be filled in certain conditions by various individuals’” (32) Fuss states, “Which subject-positions one is likely to read from is less a matter of ‘choice’ than ‘assignation’” (34). Fuss lists four benefits to “such a theory of reading based on the shifting grounds of subjectivity” as

First, the notion of subject-positions reintroduces the author into literary criticism without reactivating the intentional fallacy; the author’s interpretation of his or her own text is a legitimate recognized position among a set of possible positions
a subject might occupy in relation to the text produced. Second, because subject-
positions are multiple, shifting, and changeable, readers can occupy several ‘I-slots’
at the same time. [. . .] Third, there is no ‘natural’ way to read a text: ways of reading
are historically specific and culturally variable, and reading positions are always
constructed, assigned, or mapped. Fourth, basing a theory of reading on subjectivity
undermines any notion of ‘essential reader.’” (35)

Fuss states, “All of these points suggest that if we read from multiple subject-positions, the
very act of reading becomes a force for dislocating our belief in stable subjects and essential
meanings” (35).

Foucault asks us, “What difference does it make who is speaking?” in his essay
“What Is an Author?” (912). He takes us through discussions of author-function, listing four
of the most obvious. First is that “the author-function linked to juridical and institutional
systems” and this pertains to copyright laws. The second is that “it does not affect all
discourses in the same way at all times and in all types of civilizations,” so place and time
affect the author-function. The third is that “it is not defined by spontaneous attribution of
a discourse to its producer, but rather by a series of specific and complex operations,” this
I would say is scientific method. The fourth is that “it does not refer purely and simply to a
real individual, since it can give rise simultaneously to several selves, to several subjects—
positions that can be occupied by different classes of individuals” (910).

Woolf’s author-function in Orlando actually falls under both the second and the
fourth. The place and time are constantly shifting as the narrative progresses. Woolf gives us
a character who not only transforms from man to woman but also endures several centuries
of cultural change. Orlando’s identity is partly shaped by disillusionment of both sexes, first
by a young female Muscovite, Sasha, when she leaves him waiting in the rain on the night they are suppose to run away together, and second, several years later, by a poet, one Nick Greene, who writes a “spirited satire” about Orlando, titled “A visit to a Nobleman in the country” (Woolf 95). Woolf uses these two events to convey the negative, mean-spirited side of each gender. Orlando is so deeply wounded that he states, “I have done with men” and purchases a pair of elkhounds. He also burns “fifty-seven poetical works, only retaining ‘The Oak Tree,’ which was his boyish dream and very short” (96). But, when the Archduchess Harriet pursues him, he cannot deal with another human relationship so he requests an ambassadorship to Constantinople and leaves the country.

There Orlando, at the age of thirty, is transformed into a woman. Woolf uses the natural idea that “the body occupies a pure, pre-social, pre-discursive space” (Fuss 5) and sets it on its ear with Orlando’s transformation. She then proceeds to use the constructed, where “the body is never simply there, rather it is composed of a network of effects continually subject to sociopolitical determination” (Fuss 5). These two ideas are woven throughout the book. For instance, Woolf writes:

The change of sex, though it altered their future, did nothing whatever to alter their identity. Their faces remained, as their portraits prove, practically the same. His memory—but in future we must, for convention’s sake, say ‘her’ for ‘his,’ and ‘she’ for ‘he’—her memory then, went back through all the events of her past life without encountering any obstacles. [. . .] The change seemed to have been accomplished painlessly and completely and in such a way that Orlando herself showed no surprise at it. Many people, taking this into account, and holding that such a change of sex is against nature, have been at great pains to prove (1) that Orlando had always been a
woman, (2) that Orlando is at this moment a man. Let biologists and psychologists
determine. It is enough for us to state the simple fact; Orlando was a man till the age
of thirty; when he became a woman and has remained so ever since. (138-39)

The idea of Woolf writing this in 1928 is really quite incredible. As Curtis states, “In
terms of theme Orlando was a work in advance of its time: in terms of style it belongs to the
cult of Beauty, to the aesthetic movement [. . .]” (163). Arnold Bennett wrote “You cannot
keep your end up at a London dinner-party in these weeks unless you have read Mrs. Woolf’s
Orlando” (163). That was the “opening sentence” to his review, enough to send everyone out
to get a copy; it didn’t matter that the rest was “distinctly negative” (Curtis 163). Discussion
is what Orlando initiates, which I believe would work quite well with adolescents, making
them aware of the natural or private and the constructed or public, and how these can shift
and change with time.

It is right after the transformation that Orlando realizes there is a war going on. The
Turks rose against the Sultan, Woolf’s narrator tells us (140). Orlando washes and dresses
herself in the “Turkish coats and trousers, which can be worn indifferently by either sex,”
(140). Undaunted by her new position, she calmly looks through the papers and puts the
poetry ones in her shirt, calls her “Seleuchi hound, which had never left her side in all these
days,” for she had been in a trance for seven days (140); and

[She] then stuck a pair of pistols in her belt; finally wound about her person several
strings of emeralds and pearls [. . .] This done she leant out the window, gave one
low whistle, and descended the shattered and bloodstained staircase [. . .] There, in
the shadow of a giant fig tree waited an old Gipsy on a donkey. He led another by
the bridle. Orlando swung her leg over it; and thus, attended by a lean dog, riding a
donkey, in company of a gipsy, the Ambassador of Great Britain at the Court of the Sultan left Constantinople. (140)

While Orlando was in a trance the narrator tells us the maid found a “deed of marriage, drawn up, signed, and witnessed” between Orlando and a gipsy named Rosina Pepita. It is while staying with the gypsies that they become suspicious “that she had other beliefs than their own [. . .] that she had fallen into the clutches of the vilest and cruelest among all the Gods, which is Nature” (143). Through Woolf’s narrator we are told “The English disease, a love of Nature, was inborn in her, and here where Nature was so much larger and more powerful than in England, she fell into its hands [. . .]” (143). Orlando realizes how much she loves and misses the grassy green lawns, so she tells the gypsies she is leaving the next day for England (143).

Woolf’s distinct style of the stream of consciousness writing comes through the voice of the unknown narrator and guides the reader over a span of three hundred years. Woolf wrote Orlando as a mock biography, which balances the tension of fact and fiction, says Karen Westman in her article, “The First Orlando: The Laugh of the Comic Spirit in Virginia Woolf’s ‘Friendship Gallery.’”

When faced with the ‘truth’ of Orlando’s change from man to woman, Orlando’s biographer is caught between ‘spar[ing] the reader what is to come’ and adhering to ‘Truth, Candor, and Honesty, the austere gods who keep watch and ward by the inkpot of the biographer’ ([Woolf Orlando] 134). Woolf’s satire on the hypocrisy of such claims to ‘Truth, Candor, and Honesty’ soon becomes clear in the masque the biographer describes, a spectacle that in turn foreshadows the Victorian interval of Miss La Trobe’s play in Between the Acts (1941). As ‘our Lady of Purity,’ ‘our
Lady of Chastity,’ and ‘our Lady of Modesty’ all dance attendance on the scene of Orlando’s transformation, they try to ‘cover Orlando with their drapes’ and ‘to cast their veils over the mouths of the trumpets’; ‘Truth,’ however, ‘blare[s] out’ and thrust their offices from the room’ (136) (46)

I found the quote above most interesting because it refers to the form of writing Woolf choose to use to describe Orlando’s transformation, and the reference to the play in her last novel. The use of the words truth, candor, and honesty juxtaposed against purity, chastity, and modesty, are reflections of her weaving of the private feminine and public constructed feminine ideas respectively. These words are also signifiers for women in Woolf’s cultural time.

Once Orlando is a woman, Woolf is able to give an almost historical account of the subjugation of women through the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. Orlando experiences this realization of subjugation when he is not a man anymore and, as a woman, has to follow the rules of society. There are several passages where this occurs; the first is on the ship sailing back to England.

It is a strange fact, but a true one that up to this moment she had scarcely given her sex a thought. Perhaps the Turkish trousers, which she had hitherto worn, had done something to distract her thoughts; and the gipsy women, except in one or two important particulars, differ very little from the gipsy men. At any rate, it was not until she felt the coil of skirts about her legs and the Captain offered, with the greatest politeness, to have an awning spread for her on deck that she realized, with a start the penalties and the privileges of her position. (153)
This is Orlando’s first reference to difference, and she goes on for several pages thinking of the pros and cons of being a woman.

These skirts are plaguey things to have about one’s heels. Yet the stuff (flowered paduasoy) is the loveliest in the world. [. . .] Could I, however, leap overboard and swim in clothes like these? No! Therefore, I should have to trust to the protection of a blue-jacket. Do I object to that? Now do I? she wondered, encountering the first knot in the smooth skein of her argument. (155)

Woolf continues Orlando’s discussion on differences in the scene where a sailor almost falls from a mast because he gets a glimpse of her ankles. Orlando says, “‘What fools they make of us—what fools we are!’ And here it would seem from some ambiguity in her terms that she was censuring both sexes equally, as if she belonged to neither” (158). Woolf brings the natural or private into play with the constructed or public; she confronts difference and chooses ambiguity. This is where I feel an adolescent would benefit from discussing this book, because they could relate to the interplay of natural/private with constructed/public.

This interplay or weaving of private and public is also illustrated through the disguise scene after Orlando has returned to England. Orlando has dressed as a man and secretly leaves her house and goes to Leicester Square where she meets a lady of the evening, Nell, who takes Orlando to her room. There, as Nell is readying herself for what she thinks is an evening with a man,

The deception roused her [Orlando’s] scorn; the truth roused her pity. [. . .]When all was ready, out she [Nell] came, prepared—but here Orlando could stand it no longer. In the strangest torment of anger, merriment, and pity she flung off all disguise and
admitted herself a woman. [. . .] Whereupon, drawing up the fire and stirring a bowl of Punch, she told Orlando the whole story of her life. (217-18)

Woolf has brilliantly brought together the natural/private and the constructed/public and revealed the biggest patriarchal fallacy, “that women are incapable of any feeling of affection for their own sex and hold each other in the greatest aversion,” what can we suppose that women do when they seek out each other’s society?” (220). The narrator tells us that Orlando “found it convenient at this time to change frequently from one set of clothes to another” (220).

Woolf’s constructed/public feminine comes through the discussions of Orlando’s writing and especially when she discusses her poem about nature, about an oak tree.

Then Orlando felt in the bosom of her shirt as if for some locket or relic of lost affection, and drew out no such thing, but a roll of paper, sea-stained, blood-stained, travel-stained—the manuscript of her poem, ‘The Oak Tree.’ (236)

The significance of this poem is an expression of identity covering almost three hundred years. Orlando reads what she wrote as a young boy and decides that “through all these changes she had remained, she reflected, fundamentally the same” (237). Woolf has tied the natural/private and constructed/public together with the poem. But when she is faced with the nineteenth century’s emphasis on marriage, there is a totally different reaction. This next passage I found extremely funny and playful.

“What a world we live in! What a world to be sure.” Its complexities amazed her. It now seemed to her that the whole world was ringed with gold. She went in to dinner. Wedding rings abounded. She went to church. Wedding rings were everywhere. She drove out. Gold, or pinchbeck, thin, thick, plain, smooth, they glowed dully on
every hand. Rings filled the jewellers’ shops, not the flashing pastes and diamonds of Orlando’s recollection, but plain simple bands without a stone in them. […] Orlando could only suppose that some new discovery had been made about the race; they were somehow stuck together, couple after couple, but who had made it, and when, she could not guess. It did not seem to be Nature. (242)

Woolf writes of her own era through her character, Orlando, that this new revelation is the hardest to understand, it takes her and breaks her just as it did Woolf in real life.

Orlando had inclined herself naturally to the Elizabethan spirit, to the Restoration spirit, to the spirit of the eighteenth century, and had in consequence scarcely been aware of the change from one age to the other. But the spirit of the nineteenth was antipathetic to her in the extreme, and thus it took her and broke her, and she was aware of her defeat at its hands as she had never been before. (244)

But just when she is at her lowest, Woolf’s natural, her private love of nature comes forth.

Some wild notion she had of following the birds to the rim of the world and flinging herself on the spongy turf and there drinking forgetfulness, while the rooks’ hoarse laughter wounded over her. She quickened her pace; she ran; she tripped; the tough heather roots flung her to the ground. Her ankle was broken. She could not rise. But there she lay content. The scent of the bog myrtle and the meadowsweet was in her nostrils. The rooks’ hoarse laughter was in her ears. ‘I have found my mate,’ she murmured. ‘It is the moor. I am nature’s bride,’ she whispered. (248)

Shortly after this passage, her future husband, Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine, Esquire, a sea captain who sails the Horn, rescues her. Woolf gives Orlando a husband of convenience
for he is rarely around even into the twentieth century. The last passage of the book has Orlando standing at the Oak tree greeting Shel, who has come home.

‘It is the goose!’ Orlando cried. ‘The wild goose. [. . .]’ And the twelfth stroke of midnight sounded; the twelfth stroke of midnight, Thursday, the eleventh of October, Nineteen Hundred and Twenty-eight. (329)

Woolf was ahead of her time with this mock biography and its wonderfully poetic sentences that arouse all the senses. In this work Woolf not only redefined the feminine but she redefined a form of writing for the twentieth century. Through her narrator’s constant stream of consciousness we are given a weaving of nature and writing, of the natural/private and the constructed/public. For Woolf, her writing was both private and public just as Edgeworth’s and Potter’s, but where Edgeworth and Potter were able to come to terms with the images on the surface of the glass, in the end Woolf was not. She drowned herself in the river Ouse in 1941. It makes one wonder if the struggle for equality and identity was more than her brilliance could take. I strongly believe that Virginia Woolf is one of the authors Foucault named “founders of discursivity, who are unique in that they are not just the authors of their own works. They have produced something else: the possibilities and the rules for the formation of other texts” (911).

All three of the women, I discovered, were taught and nurtured by their fathers, fathers outside the dominant Christian patriarchal tradition. All three—Edgeworth through her distinct genre of lessons for teaching behavior and facts, and her devotion to her family; Potter for her new form of animal fable accurately drawn by scientific illustrator and her pioneering conservation work in and around her beloved Hill Top farm; and Woolf for her written visual effects of “the color, the rhythm, the atmosphere, the observation” (Curtis 115)
that flowed out of that “metaphorical penis” to create a new form of writing and generate decades of discourse (Gilbert 3)—contributed to redefining the knowledge of the feminine. They produced much for women and men of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries to emulate. Millions have not only read their stories, but have also watched film adaptations—film, the technological wonder of the twentieth century, that I discuss in Chapter 4.
Chapter 4

The Feminine Redefined Through Children’s Fantasy both Film & Fiction in the Twentieth and Early Twenty-First Centuries

I discovered the feminine beginning through archaeomythologists Gimbutas, Dever, and Davies-Kimball, with the unearthing of archaeoological female figurines, temple models, and warrior priestesses in Chapter 1. I found examples of the feminine survival through the Darks Ages in the Lithuanian dainos and folktale “Queen of the Serpents,” the traditional “compact” fairy tale, Grimms’ “Ashputtle,” and the “complex” French female fairy tale d’Aulnoy’s “The White Cat” in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3 the feminine was redefined through three female writers: Maria Edgeworth, for her a creation of a distinct genre of lessons for teaching behavior and facts; Beatrix Potter, for her new form of animal fable accurately drawn by a scientific illustrator and her pioneering conservation work at Hill Top farm; and Virginia Woolf, for her written “visual effects of light,” color, rhythm, atmosphere, and observation (Curtis 115) to create a new form of writing, a “stream of consciousness” that generates decades of discourse.

In Chapter 4, I put forth the feminine redefined through children’s fantasy, both film and fiction, of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The twentieth century is the technological era that begins with silent pictures around 1900; sound is added in 1927, and by 1940 Technicolor movie theaters are the entertainment of the era (Wojcik-Andrews 53, 78). In 1950 the microchip is invented by Jack Kirby and Robert Noyce—“the integrated circuit stands historically as one of the most important innovations of [hu]mankind”—and, by the end of the century, the PC (personal computer) and High Tech are commonplace (Bellis 7). We communicate via Internet and cellular phones; and we are entertained in the comfort
of our home by TV (television), VCR (video compact recorder), or DVD (digital video disc), and technological advances continue at lightning speed. Throughout my journey of research and writing, I have studied VCRs and DVDs of Gimbutas, *Signs Out of Time*; Jeanine Davis-Kimble, *Warrior Women*; Beatrix Potter, *Miss Potter*; Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* and *Orlando*; and many animated films by Disney and Miyazaki, as well as read many, many books and I have had the library at my fingertips to answer any question that came into my mind.

Now I discuss the feminine redefined through children’s fantasy--both film and fiction--of Miyazaki and Pullman. I begin first with a brief history of children’s film through Wojcik-Andrews’ *Children’s Film: History, Ideology, Pedagogy, Theory*, a history that must include the animated films of Walt Disney. The brief film history is followed by a short discussion of film theories of “spectatorship,” “scopophilia,” and “suture,” using White’s article “Feminism and Film.” I then compare Disney’s *Snow White* to the animation and manga of Hayao Miyazaki and his storytelling ability using McCarthy’s *Hayao Miyazaki: Master of Japanese Animation*, Hatfield’s *Alternative Comics: An Emerging Literature*, and Kroeber’s *Make Believe in Film and Fiction: Visual vs. Verbal Storytelling*. I culminate findings with a discussion of the incredible trilogy by Philip Pullman, *His Dark Materials*, and the significance of his female protagonist, Lyra, and her partner, Will, giving us a new version of Eve and Adam.

*Film History and Disney*

The Silent Era of moving pictures begins with the classic literary fairy tale
being assimilated by the animator. The history of children’s moving pictures starts in France around 1899 with the first adaptation of a fairy tale by George Méliès, *Cinderella* (*Cendrillon*), which he called “feeries or trick films” (Wojcik-Andrews 55). Méliès also adapts “Bluebeard,” “Red Riding Hood” and others, and is “known for his ironic approach” and “extraordinary illusions that emanated from common everyday situations” (Zipes 196). Méliès is responsible for “a new way of making moving pictures” through his “illustrated . . . order of the scenes” to “form a coherent, logical, and progressive continuity. [. . .] Scenes could now be staged and selected” giving “the movie maker [. . .] control [of] both the material and its arrangement” (Jacobs 13). But it is Walt Disney who takes the fairy tale, animates it to suit his own beliefs and creative abilities, and turns it into a huge commodity.

To redefine the Western patriarchal feminine, we must first have a clear picture of what it had become. Walt Disney begins creating animation during the early era of film with the 1922-23 animated adaptations of fairy tales in Kansas City, with Ub Iwerks, what they called Laugh-O-Grams (Zipes 196). Such fairy tales as *Little Red Riding Hood, Puss in Boots, Jack and the Beanstalk, Goldie Locks and the Three Bears,* and *Cinderella* were “short films” that were “experimental [. . .] open-ended and inventive,” employing “original use of animation art and technique” (Zipes 197). These first experiments, says Zipes, “tended to be partial to the underdogs” and “had heroes who often resembled Disney or Disney’s aspirations” (197).

The purpose of the early-animated films was to make audiences awestruck and to celebrate the magical talents of the animator. [. . .] The animators sought to impress audiences with their abilities to use pictures in such a way that they would forget the earlier fairy tales and remember the images. (Zipes 197)
As Zipes tells us, “most important were the gags, [. . .] technical inventions [. . .] improving movement of the characters [. . .] devising ludicrous and preposterous scenes for the sake of spectacle” (197).

The “commodity spell” is cast with the 1937 Disney version of *Snow White*, states Zipes. *Snow White* was produced by the Disney studio and “its numerous departments, such as animation, layout, sound, music, storytelling” that were also subdivided so that certain animators were responsible for certain characters, such as Snow White, the prince, the dwarfs, or the wicked queen (Zipes 203). This Disney Technicolor production was created with the newest cameras, special focusing devices and the newest sound and music equipment so that the “synchronization with the characters on the screen” would be improved (203).

The Grimms’ fairy tale is changed to reflect Disney’s beliefs in seven ways, states Zipes; four of them are significant for this discussion (203). The first change is that Disney has the prince begin the film singing a “song of love and devotion” on his white horse, thereby framing the tale beginning to end with the male character; the Grimms’ version begins with a queen looking out a window at the snow, pricking her finger and wishing for a daughter “white as snow, red as blood and black as the wood of the embroidery frame” (Cole 53). The second change Disney makes is changing the dwarfs into “hardworking and rich miners” and giving them all a “name—Doc, Sleepy, Bashful, Happy, Sneezy, Grumpy, and Dopey.” The dwarfs represent the American male worker: they help to defeat evil, as well as provide comic relief; they become the stars of the film, and they share in the title *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (Zipes 204). In the Grimms’ version, the dwarfs do not have names; they are secondary characters in the tale, and they do not kill the wicked queen. The
third change Disney makes is that the wicked Queen tries to kill Snow White only once, and the wicked Queen is crushed by a huge boulder the dwarfs roll down the hill. In the Grimms’ version the wicked Queen tries to kill Snow White three times, first with the tight laces, second with the poisoned comb, and third with the poisoned apple (Cole 57-59). The last line of the tale explains how the wicked queen was forced to put on “red-hot iron shoes, in which she had to dance until she fell down dead” (Cole 61). The fourth change Disney makes is to have Snow White brought back to life by the prince’s kiss. In the Grimms’ version the glass coffin is jostled, and the “bit of poisoned apple flew out of her throat” (Cole 60). Disney, by changing the tale, “went much further than the Grimms in reinforcing the nineteenth-century patriarchal notions” that a woman’s place was in the home (Zipes 204). Disney reflects the Anglo-American male myth of Horatio Alger “about perseverance, hard work, dedication, loyalty, and justice—key features of Protestant ethics, which forms the basis of the so-called American civilizing process,” states Zipes (205). This American civilizing process was in keeping with the Western tradition of the female as weak, passive, and subservient.

Disney’s Snow White follows “the classic sexist narrative about the framing of women’s lives through a male discourse,” (Zipes’ summation in Gilbert and Gubar’s The Mad Woman in the Attic), and “it also pits women against women in competition for male approval (the mirror) of their beauty, which is short lived” (Zipes 204). I would also add from Gilbert and Gubar that Disney’s version of Snow White has become even more of an “it, a possession, Snow White has become an idealized image [...] and as such she has definitively proven herself to be patriarchy’s ideal woman” (Gilbert 41). Even though Snow White is white, she still represents the woman who “keeps the house clean” (Zipes 205). This subversive element of being a servant, of being a possession, of being an object leads me into
my next discussion of reflection theory, spectatorship, and women in films, which can also be applied to children’s films.

In her article “Feminism and Film,” Patricia White refers to the studies done by Molly Haskell and Marjorie Rosen in the field of “reflection theory” on women and film. They believe “film ‘reflects’ social reality, that depictions of women in film mirror how society treats women, that these depictions are distortions of how women ‘really are’ and what they ‘really want’” (White 116). If we think in terms of Disney’s *Snow White*, which was released in 1937, getting married, having children and “keep[ing] the house clean” were women’s only options (Zipes 205). Haskell’s narrative arc of film history shows the silent era as “reverence” and “Hollywood in the 60’s and 70’s ‘rape’” and puts the high point of the arc in the 40’s when film depicted “strong, independent heroines,” with such stars “as Katherine Hepburn and Rosalind Russell” (116). These films counter the Disney films promoting patriarchal traditions.

White states that Claire Johnston’s article “Women’s Cinema as Counter Cinema” (1973) explains “film must be seen as a language and woman as a sign—not simply a transparent rendering of the real” (116). This, states White, “combines Roland Barthes’s concept of myth as the rendering natural of ideology with auteur theory to decode the function of women in Hollywood films” by such directors as “Howard Hawks, John Ford, Ida Lupino and Dorothy Arzner” (116). Arzner’s comment on working as a director is both sad and powerful. “When I went to work in a studio, I took my pride and made a nice little ball of it and threw it right out the window” (Geller 1). She was responsible for one of the largest bodies of work by a woman director within a studio system (1). She had a talent for launching the careers of young actresses, including Katherine Hepburn in *Christopher Strong*
(1933), Rosalind Russell in *Craig's Wife* (1936), and Lucille Ball in *Dance, Girl, Dance* (1940; 5). Contrasting with Arzner’s work, which seemed to be redefining the knowledge of the feminine, there was Disney creating a patriarchal commercial dynasty.

White then presents Laura Mulvey’s “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” which recommends a political use of psychoanalysis. Mulvey states that the institution of cinema is characterized by a sexual imbalance of power (117). She uses Freud’s description of scopophilia, “pleasure in looking,” and states that “cinema displays unconscious mechanisms in which the image of woman functions as signifier of sexual differences.” In other words, “woman as image/man as bearer of the look. The mechanisms are built into the structure of the gaze and the narrative through the manipulation of time and space by point of view, framing, editing and other codes” (117). This is very evident in Disney’s *Snow White* when the prince gazes upon her, but he doesn’t just gaze: he kisses her back to life.

Mulvey’s “male spectator is doubly supported by these mechanisms of visual gratification as the gaze is relayed from male surrogate within the diegesis to the male spectator in the audience.” The woman is defined as “spectacle” or, as Mulvey calls it, “to-be-looked-at-ness.” Pleasure in looking has been split between active male/passive female, giving us a sexual imbalance (Hill 117). This sexual imbalance can be seen also in the Shirley Temple films of the same era as Disney’s *Snow White*. The curly-headed little girl with the ultra short dresses danced on planes, tables, and down steps, always with men. Temple referred to herself as being “a tiny commodity” (Wojcik-Andrews 73); I would add a tiny sexual commodity.

Even though the Disney films are now viewed as promoting a patriarchal tradition, the Disney films of the late 1930s and 1940s, “critic John Taylor note[s . . .] were at the
forefront of escapist cinema in the dark days of 1942-3” (Wojcik-Andrews 78). Wojcik-Andrews states, “[F]antasy films function merely as escapist entertainment […] this rings true if we consider only the famous movies the Disney Corporation produced at this time […]: *Fantasia* and *Pinocchio* in 1940 and *Bambi* in 1942,” which were definitely escapes from the stark, horrific images of “Pearl Harbor, Bataan, Hirochima, Nagasaki” (79). This escape into a fantasy world through movies became even more popular by the end of the twentieth-century and the beginning of the twenty-first century as Karl Kroeber states “contemporary culture is a visual culture” (69).

Throughout this period, many fantasy series were written and adapted to film. C. S. Lewis wrote the *Narnia* series in the 1950s; an adaptation of *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* was released in 2006. J. R. R. Tolkien wrote the *Lord of the Rings* series from 1937 to 1949; the first book, *The Hobbit*, was animated by Warner Studios in 1978, followed by adaptations of *The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001), *The Two Towers* (2002), and *The King Returns* (2003). George Lucas wrote and directed *Star Wars*, released in 1977, and *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) and *The Return of the Jedi* (1983). Twenty years after the original, a prequel trilogy was released: *The Phantom Menace* (1997), *Attack of the Clones* (2002), and *Revenge of the Sith* (2005). Then J. K. Rowling wrote the phenomenal *Harry Potter* seven-book series from 1997 to 2007, five of which have been adapted to film. All of these fantasy series are extremely popular with children and adults; we definitely are a “visual culture” (Kroeber 69). But all of these fantasy series have a male lead character, which is why I will not be using any of them for my discourse.

In his *Make Believe in Film and Fiction: Visual vs. Verbal Storytelling*, Kroeber calls this film fantasy upsurge “hyper-visuality” (69). He gives an example from teaching
children’s literature to undergraduates: “[A]ll the classics that I read as a child […] my current students may or may not have read but have all seen in movie or animated versions. For them to read Hans Christian Andersen’s “Little Mermaid” after having seen Disney’s “Little Mermaid,” […] is a startling different experience. […] This phenomenon ramified, to the nadir where a National Merit Scholarship student can believe that *Winnie the Pooh* and *Wind in the Willows* were invented by Disney” (69).

Kroeber explains this “phenomenon” further with the “antithetical responses” of the novel reader and the movie spectator, who “each respond from an isolated situation” (73).

In a movie theater, carefully structured organization of displays of technologically generated images *impose* themselves on the audience’s perceptual systems, making imaginative responses secondary. Exactly the opposite process is fundamental to novel reading. The words, whether read by the eye from the printed page or heard from someone reading, instantaneously evoke private fantasizing. (Kroeber 73)

He uses J. R. R. Tolkien’s observation that, when a storyteller asks his audience to imagine “*bread or wine or stone or tree,*” the words “appeal to the whole of these images’ as the visual representation cannot” (73). The filmed or animated image will be a particular type of bread, wine, stone, or tree. However “a writer’s language enters directly into a reader’s mind where it evokes what [Kroeber] calls associative imagining, […] the imagined ‘whole’ of the thing is *not predetermined for the reader:* the bread, wine, stone, or tree the writer imagines will *not* be exactly the bread, wine, stone or tree that each individual reader imagines” (74). Therefore, film has a greater responsibility to make the image a little more ambiguous, giving the audience a chance to let their own imagination, their own “private fantasizing,” respond (73).
It is this ambiguity and space that Hayao Miyazaki’s films give the audience, which I believe to be important for redefining the patriarchal feminine. Miyazaki’s Academy Award-winning *Spirited Away* (2001) and his most recent film *Howl’s Moving Castle* (2004) are “fairy-tale films” that “question the degeneration of [Disney’s] utopia,” states Zipes, and are films in which “one senses a liberation of the imagination that counters social reality” (211).

In an interview by Tom Mes in Paris 2001, Miyazaki states:

I believe that fantasy in the meaning of imagination is very important. We shouldn’t stick too close to everyday reality but give room to the reality of the heart, of the mind and of the imagination. Those things can help us in life. But we have to be cautious in using this word fantasy. In Japan, the word *fantasy* these days is applied to everything from TV shows to video games, like virtual reality. But virtual reality is a denial of reality. We need to be open to the powers of the imagination, which brings something useful to reality. Virtual reality can imprison people. It’s a dilemma I struggle with in my work, that balance between imaginary worlds and virtual worlds.

(Mes 4)

Miyazaki understands the importance of the spectator being able to connect to his/her own imagination, and his films do leave room for that “private fantasizing” to happen, unlike the Disney fast-paced spectacles.

To understand Miyazaki, I give some background using Helen McCarthy’s *Hayao Miyazaki: Master of Japanese Animation*. His father was a director of the family firm, Miyazaki Airplane, which made parts for Zero fighters during the war (26). As a child, Miyazaki loved to draw planes, tanks, and battleships but had a hard time with people. Like
most kids in Japan after the war, he loved comics and wanted to be an artist (27).

Miyazaki, born in 1941, was only three years old when the family was evacuated from the outskirts of Tokyo to a safer area. After the war, his family moved back, and he went to an “American-influenced elementary school” (26). Miyazaki’s mother “played a huge part in forming her son’s view of the world.” She suffered from spinal tuberculosis and was bedridden from 1947 to 1955, but, despite her long illness, she lived to be seventy-one years old (27).

Miyazaki’s work was not only influenced by the comic or manga artists of the time, such as Osamu Tezuka. Regarding his viewing of Taiji Yabushita’s *Legend of the White Serpent*, Miyazaki wrote that, in 1958, his last year of high school,

I have to make an embarrassing confession. I fell in love with the heroine of a cartoon movie. My soul was moved [. . .] but the meeting with *Legend of the White Serpent* left a strong impression on my immature self. (McCarthy 29)

This impression is evident in all his female characters, as I discuss shortly. While at the Gakushuin University, Miyazaki became a member of the children’s literature research society. This society read children’s books and comics, which included many “British authors, like Rosemary Sutcliff, Philippa Pearce and Eleanor Farjeon and Europeans such as Antoine de Saint-Exupery” (McCarthy 30). These authors used fantasy and legends in different ways, which helped to form Miyazaki’s views of storytelling, character, and plot development (McCarthy 30).

Hayao Miyazaki’s directorial debut is *Castle of Cagliostro*, released December 15, 1979, based on the manga by writer and artist Monkey Punch. Monkey Punch’s character, Lupin III, is based in part on the French novelist Maurice LeBlanc’s *Arsene Lupin,*
Gentleman-Thief. Miyazaki’s film “is a romantic action-adventure tale that combines an appreciation of slapstick comedy with a sophisticated sense of characterization and pace” (McCarthy 50). She goes on to state “Many of the themes he would develop in his later movies are sketched out in this light-hearted caper set in European never-never land of ancient castles and modern intrigues” (50).

In 1983, Miyazaki’s mother died just before work begins on the film of *Nausicaa of the Valley of The Wind*. When released in 1984, it was considered one of the most influential anime of its time. This film and the manga series of the same name are a tribute to the pictocentric Japanese culture, a culture of the visual, which is exemplified in its use of characters and ideograms (Napier 7). *Nausicaa*, states Miyazaki, is fashioned after the Phaecian princess, Nausicaa, in The Odyssey, translated by Bernard Evslin, and the Japanese heroine, “the princess who loved insects.” He says that “Nausicaa and the Japanese princess, unconsciously became one in his mind” (Miyazaki, Nausicaa Vol. 1 135). This manga series took until March of 1994 to complete and is an epic environmental tale told in seven volumes. Miyazaki’s Nausicaa is a young girl with a mysterious ability to communicate with animals of all kinds. She journeys into the “Sea of Corruption, an enormous toxic forest” and learns its secret, which can save her people (Miyazaki Vol. 6 back cover). These graphic novels are an expression of the ecological and political consciousness of the seventies, and Nausicaa as the heroine, redefines the feminine. They were translated to English in 1995, and are still very popular and influential today (McCarthy 41).

Miyazaki and Isao Takahata, under the supervision of Toshi Suzuki (former editor of Animage), opened Studio Ghibli “(Ghibli—pronounced *ji-bu-ri*—is a word for a hot strong Saharan wind and [. . .] the name of Miyzaki’s favorite Italian fighter plane)” in 1985.

Considered the master and grandfather of Japanese anime, Miyazaki has a unique style of working; he does not work with a script. He is both director and animator and develops the story as he does the storyboards (Mes 2). He creates a manga or comic, using the storyboards to structure the narrative. Miyazaki does this to “ensure his vision [is] put across purely and clearly to audiences” (McCarthy 42). This follows what Charles Hatfield says in *Alternative Comics: An Emerging Literature*, “[C]omic [manga] art is a form of writing” (Hatfield 32).

Hatfield profoundly agrees with many critics who are reacting “against the comparison of comics to cinema,” and he states that “[C]omics [. . .] are not mere visual displays that encourage inert spectatorship but rather texts that require a reader’s active engagement and collaboration in making meaning” (33). Miyazaki treats his anime as if it were manga (comics), creating moments of tension, with slow pacing and natural sound, giving the audience, like the reader of a novel, a chance for “active engagement” with what they are seeing and hearing. This is why his stories have such a powerful emotional effect and deep meaning. This follows “Scott McCloud’s insistence that the reader is always the author’s active ‘accomplice’ in constructing the meaning of a comics text” (Hatfield 33).

We get this “active accomplice” in *Spirited Away*. Miyazaki created the female character after meeting the ten-year-old daughter of a friend. In an interview in Paris in 2001, Miyazaki stated,
What made me decide to make this film was the realization that there are no films made for that age group of ten-year-old girls. It was through observing the daughter of a friend that I realized there were no films out there for her, no films that directly spoke to her. Certainly, girls like her see films that contain characters their age, but they can’t identify with them, because they are imaginary characters that don’t resemble them at all. (Mes 2)

As Tom Mes states in his 2001 review of Spirited Away, Chihiro is a sullen, “jaded child” in the opening scene who changes “by using her own abilities for kindness, endurance, devotion and honesty” (2). She overcomes the obstacles and challenges on her journey, including remembering her own name, which Yubaba has stolen, something, Mes states, which “constitutes nothing less than an Orwellian method to rob people’s identities and force them into submission” (2). Unlike Snow White who saves herself by cleaning the dwarfs’ house for them, Chihiro overcomes her fear and gets Yubaba to release the spell put on her parents. In this character, Chihiro, Miyazaki has created for all young girls a redefined feminine that has self-power and learns that she does not have to be weak, passive, or subservient. Even her male partner in the movie, Haku, is under Yubaba’s spell, and he cannot remember his name. He is a dragon at night and a boy who works for Yubaba during the day. He instructs Chihiro how to ask for a job, which Yubaba cannot refuse because of a spell. Chihiro, in turn, helps Haku remember his name, which breaks the spell. Miyazaki portrays Chihiro and Haku as equals through their quest for retaining and learning who they are—equality is a basic human need—which helps redefine the knowledge of the patriarchal feminine.

Napier states in Anime: From Akira to Princess Mononoke, “Miyazaki’s female characters are indeed ‘real’ and richly believable within the confines of the narrative” (126).
She continues that, “in these alternate realities created by Miyazaki, these girls can and do exist, inspiring many viewers to identify with them as role models if not as surrogate identities” (Napier 126). This relates to the “psychoanalytic interpretations of identity as ‘suture.’” It is that moment that the viewer says, “Yes, that’s me” (Hill 168). Miyazaki gives us a story where the characters are looking for their identity, while giving the audience characters they can identify with.

As in most fairy tales, the females are on their own or orphaned, but Miyazaki takes it to an egalitarian level with the male protagonist as friend, helper, protector, and equal partner. In *Laputa Castle in the Sky*, Sheeta teams up with Pazu. In *Princess Mononoke*, Mononoke/San is befriended by Ashitaka. And in *Spirited Away*, Chihira/Sen is helped by Haku. In Miyazaki’s adaptation of Diana Wynn Jones’ *Howl’s Moving Castle*, released in 2004, the Wicked Witch of the Waste at the beginning of the film transforms the lead character, a young girl, into an old lady. Sophie helps the wizard Howl and the fire demon Calcifer through a series of adventures to undo the spell they are under. Miyazaki has made “a ninety-year-old granny the centerpiece of the tale, even if she does have the heart of an 18 year-old. [. . .] This tension between internal disposition and external appearance [. . .] turns out to be a crucial aspect of the plot,” says Jasper Sharp in his 2004 review of the film (9). There is a private internal Sophie—young, shy, innocent—and a public external Sophie—old, wise, experienced—that propels her through the adventures.

Even though Miyazaki has taken Jones’ book and expanded it into an anti-war adventure—with all the tanks, flying machines, and battle cruisers similar to *Laputa Castle in the Sky* and *Porco Rosso*—both Sophie and the wizard Howl exhibit traits of Miyazaki’s creativeness. Wizard Howl seems to be a coward who’s summoned by the King to aid in
the war along with all the other witches and wizards; instead, he sends Sophie to meet
with Madame Suliman, the King’s witch. But Howl hates the war and makes a comment,
when one of the war ships is flying over, that it really doesn’t matter who they are, they are
carrying bombs, so he disables the bombs with his magic ability. Here Miyazaki gives the
impression that no one really knows what started the war. Wizard Howl’s transformation into
a dark feathery creature gives us a glimpse of his internal self, contrary to the public external
handsome young wizard.

The scene leading up to Sophie meeting Madame Suliman is one of my favorites.
The Witch of the Waste has also been summoned, and Sophie meets her on the stairs to the
entrance of the castle. They bicker back and forth about undoing the spell the Witch of the
Waste put on Sophie, and, as they ascend the stairs, the Witch of the Waste begins to lose her
looks, shrinking, wrinkles appearing, fat rolls around her neck appearing. Sophie then has to
pick up the dog that has been following her. So we have these two old women huffing and
puffing up the stairs, bickering, arguing about undoing the spell and “why can’t you undo it”
and so forth. Eventually Sophie brings the deflated witch of the Waste and the dog to live in
Howl’s castle. Typical of Miyazaki, some of the evil characters will not be all evil, as some of
the good will not be all good. It is this ambiguity that is so appealing—it blurs the sharp lines
not only between good and evil, but also male and female, not distinguishing which is better,
smarter, or worthier—and redefines the patriarchal feminine in the twenty-first century.

This film has more of a happy ending than most of Miyazaki’s films, which usually
have an ambiguous ending, but he does make a statement about war. When Madame Suliman
realizes that the spell over Howl and Calcifer is broken, she comments that “It is time to
put an end to this idiotic war.” Miyazaki has given Jones’ book an anti-war theme and made
Sophie another strong independent character for young girls to emulate, even though she is an old woman through most of the film, in this animated world of make believe.

“Make believe is always a story,” says Kroeber, and “the essential form of both verbal and visual make believe is a verbal account [. . .] because our language has not yet absorbed the concept of purely visual narrative” (45). Kroeber paraphrases Martha Nussbaum: “Story has been important in every known culture because it is the primary mode of enabling people to imagine together productively” (47). Kroeber states that “children’s make believe is private” but “adult make believe on the contrary, produces a coherent system, a dynamic structure accessible to any imaginative adult” (48). Adults’ “stories possess a formal order of thought, feeling, and judgment that offers means for organizing one’s powers of consciousness” (48). The adult make believe enhances “our self-consciousness, especially if the make believe arouses powerful emotions,” and “adult make believe is infinitely more durable than children’s make believe, which is ephemeral” (48). I would think that some of the natural private imaginings of a child could become adult make believe in the form of a verbal or visual story, which, written down and adapted, could thereby be made public in the form of a novel or a movie.
Pullman

Philip Pullman is a storyteller of make believe, and his trilogy, His Dark Materials, meets Western traditional knowledge of the feminine head-on with the “metaphorical rebirth of Eve” through his protagonist Lyra, redefining the patriarchal feminine for the future. The trilogy starts with The Golden Compass (The Northern Lights UK 1995), introducing the reader to the protagonist, Lyra, and her alethiometer; next is The Subtle Knife (1997), which introduces Will, the second protagonist who is the “bearer of the knife” (SK 159); and last is The Amber Spyglass (2000), a spyglass invented “by the nun-turned-physicist,” Mary Malone (Squires 9). Scheduled for release December 2007 is the film adaptation of The Golden Compass.

In Pullman’s brief autobiography, which appears on his web site titled, “I have a feeling this all belongs to me,” he tells us that his grandfather told stories. “He took the simplest little event and made a story out of it” (4). Pullman recalls that when he was telling his students the myth of Prince Hector in the Iliad, he always thought of one of his grandfather’s stories. After the death of his father in the 1950s, his mother remarried, and the family moved to Australia. Pullman was nine years old, and it is there, he tells us, he discovered storytelling for himself. There was no TV in Australia, so they listened to the radio programs like “Clancy of the Outback,” “Dick Barton,” and of course “The Adventures of Superman.” His stepfather brought home one day a “Superman comic, it changed my life” Pullman writes (7). Being a reader of books, he had never read a comic book until this time, and he says, “I devoured it and demanded more. [. . .] I adored Superman, Superboy [. . .] but most of all I adored Batman. These poorly printed stories on their yellowing newsprint intoxicated me, enthralled me, made me dizzy with passion” (8). Pullman states that it wasn’t
that he wanted to be Superman or Batman: he wanted to “write about him” (8).

He says that, when he began telling his brother stories before they fell asleep at night, “I remember vividly the sense of diving into the dark as I began the story, with no idea at all what was going to happen or whether the story would ‘come out,’ [...] make sense or come to a neat end” (Pullman 8). After the family moved back to England when he was fifteen, he “discovered art”: first, the visual art of paintings and sculpture through a book he got for Christmas, *A History of Art*, which “became more precious to me than any Bible,” and second, the poetry of the “metaphysical poets” Milton and Wordsworth his English teacher had him read. Pullman describes this experience as a “physical thrill . . . my skin bristles; my hair stirs; my heart beats faster. I feel my body moving to the rhythm” of the poems (10).

I began to play with them, like a little child. [...] I had no patience with free verse: I wanted the most ornate and complex verse forms, the most demanding rhyme schemes. I wrote sonnets and rondeaus and villanelles; I wrote heroic couplets and blank verse and ballads and sestinas. I learned enormous amounts of poetry by heart; I developed a great respect for craftsmanship. (10)

He does not call himself a poet but a writer of verse; “the writing of verse in strict form is the best possible training for writing good prose. [...] Writing in verse teaches you to recognize rhythms and cadences, which are just as important in prose, but much harder to get right” (Pullman 10).

Pullman’s first book was for adults. This was *Galatea* published in 1978, a book that “isn’t really fantasy or science fiction” and “certainly isn’t realistic,” he says. “[N]obody else was sure about it either. [...] I’m still proud of it” (14). The next book was *The Ruby in the Smoke* (1985). The heroine, Sally Lockhart, is “a girl of sixteen or so, in terrible trouble,”
states Pullman (15). The idea came from two Victorian postcards that sat on his desk for several years that were “photographs illustrating a sentimental poem called ‘Daddy,’ showing a little girl sitting on the lap of a man dressed as a workman.” The mother had died and “in the second picture you can see the Mummy looking down from Heaven” (Pullman 15).

Pullman says he writes “to find out more about the picture.” He never makes a plan because that “kills the story stone dead” (15). He just writes his usual “three pages a day”— which, by the way, he has done since he finished college—knowing that some will be “thrown away or abandoned” because, as he says, “I won’t know what shape the story should take till I’ve finished it” (15). Pullman’s creative process is similar to Miyazaki’s: both are storytellers, the one in verbal art and the other in visual art, but neither makes a plan. Another similarity is that Pullman, like Miyazaki, admits to falling in love with a character. Pullman states one of his favorite books was Paul Berna’s *A Hundred Million Francs* and “on page 34 [. . .] I fell in love with the girl in the drawing” (About 3).

In the last book of Pullman’s trilogy, *The Amber Spyglass*, Lyra and Will are in the world of the dead, and all “the numberless millions of ghosts” (AS 288) listen to her as she tells stories about her and Roger and “the Oxford townies and the clayburners” (AS 281). Lyra teaches the dead to be storytellers, to tell their true stories to the harpies, and then they can leave the world of the dead and become “part of everything alive” (AS 286). Telling true stories is the overriding theme of *His Dark Materials*, the lesson Lyra has to learn:

When Lyra spoke to you outside the wall, you flew at her. Why did you do that?

Lies! the harpies all cried. Lies and fantasies!

Yet when she spoke just now, you all listened, every one of you and you kept silent and still. Again, why was that?
Because it was true, said No-Name. Because she spoke the truth. Because it was nourishing. Because it was feeding us. (AS 284)

Truth nourishes, but Lyra, a feisty, inquisitive, little “half-wild cat” (GC/NL 33) likes to break all the rules the Master and scholars lay out for her. That truth nourishes is something Lyra has to learn for herself. Her ability to spin-a-yarn, to tell-a-tale, to lie whenever she needs to get out of a tight spot is what propels the trilogy.

Pullman illustrates her daring character in the first scene of *The Golden Compass*. Lyra is left by her uncle, Lord Asriel, in the care of the Master and the scholars of Jordan College in Oxford. They teach her in an offhand way and she is allowed to explore the roof spires and the underground crypts. This setting for Pullman is very familiar since he went to college there and he has lived there almost the entire time since. As in a fairy tale, she has been told her parents are dead and that Lord Asriel is her uncle. It is her fearless curiosity that takes her into the forbidden “Retiring Room,” which is next to the dining hall. Her daemon Pantalaimon, who is a moth at the moment, gives her the high sign that it is all clear to enter (Pullman GC/NL 4).

She had lived most of her life in the College, but had never seen the Retiring Room before: only scholars and their guests were allowed here, and never females. Even the maidservants didn’t clean in here. That was the Butler’s job alone. (GC/NL 4)

Pullman makes the reader aware of the significance of Lyra’s rule-breaking curiosity by revealing the fact that females are never allowed in this room, but Lyra sneaks in anyway. She not only sneaks into this forbidden room, but from her precarious hiding place behind a chair in the center of the room, she also sees what no one is supposed to see: the Master “poured a thin stream of white powder into the decanter” of her uncle’s favorite wine. Lord
Asriel is the special visitor that is expected to arrive soon. Her daemon, Pantalaimon, thinks they should not get involved, but Lyra says they “have no choice” (GC/NL 8).

Master storyteller Pullman has created a scene of intrigue, betrayal, and possible peril in the first few pages of the trilogy. When Lord Asriel arrives, only the Butler is in the room, and he is sent out to fetch some crates of “specimens and a projector.” When the Butler had come in earlier, Lyra had “darted to the oak wardrobe, and hid inside” (GC/NL 6, 10). While watching her uncle pour a glass of the wine, she can’t help herself; when he goes to drink it, she softly says “No,” and he hears her. He is upset with her, but he enlists her to watch the Master for him, and from her hiding place she watches not only the Master, but also her uncle’s slides of the Aurora, Stanislaus Grumman’s skull, and Dust (GC/NL 12-15).

Pullman skillfully introduces all the major themes of the *Golden Compass* in the first two chapters. The reader not only learns about Lyra, her daemon Pantalaimon, her uncle Lord Asriel, but also about Dust, the Northern Lights, and a mysterious city in the sky; Stanislaus Grumman’s skull, the oblation board, the Consistorial Court of Discipline, the Papacy replaced by the Magisterium; and the Master and the Librarian who discuss the alethiometer and that Lyra “will be the betrayer” (GC/NL 29). We have the real and the fantastic all woven together into a story with a curious, bodacious, fearless little girl as the heroine.

As Pullman states in an interview with Wendy Parsons and Catriona Nicholson in 1999, the creation of the daemon is one of his best ideas because it relates directly to “the theme of the books, namely the change from innocence to experience” (128). The children’s daemon changes at will, “but then when they, as it were, Fall, they become mature and settle down in one fixed form. [. . .] The difference between adulthood and childhood [is] signified by their daemon” (Parsons 128). Lyra explains daemons to Will in the beginning of *The
*Subtle Knife* while they are eating an omelette he has just cooked for them and she sees Will glance with “wide wary eyes”

You have got a daemon, she said decisively. Inside You.

Me and Pantalaimon. Us. But you, your daemon en’t *separate* from you. It’s you. A part of you. You’re part of each other. En’t there anyone in your world like us? Are they all like you, with their daemons all hidden away? (SK 22)

The daemon for the humans in Lyra’s world is their “constant companion” and most often of the opposite sex, and they have the ability to change into any animal form until the human reaches adolescence (Squires 24). At that time, the daemon will “settle” into a set form, as the seaman tells Lyra: “That’s a part of growing up. [. . .] Knowing what kind of person you are,” and he describes himself through his seagull daemon Belisaria. “She’s a seagull, and that means I’m a kind of seagull too. I’m not grand and splendid nor beautiful, but I’m a tough old thing and I can survive anywhere; [. . .] that’s worth knowing” (GC/NL 147).

Pullman explains that the daemons “symbolize the difference between [. . .] the infinite potentiality and mutability of childhood and the fixed nature of adulthood” (Squires 27). Maria Warner’s description of Pullman’s daemons, in the epilogue of *Fantastic Metamorphoses, Other Worlds: Ways of Telling the Self*, is “the relation between metamorphosis as truth-telling about people, through [. . .] a personal daemon accompanying every character, a kind of external soul” (205-12). As Pullman states in his Carnegie Medal acceptance speech, “There are some themes, some subjects, too large for adult fiction; they can only be dealt with adequately in a children’s book” (1). The subject of one’s soul, one’s consciousness, is a large subject and gives children’s literature huge credibility.

Halfway through *The Golden Compass* the reader learns that Lyra “has a great
destiny that can only be fulfilled elsewhere—not in this world, but far beyond. Without this child, we shall all die” (GC/NL 154), Dr. Lanselius tells Farder Coram about the prophecy. This prophecy is how Pullman makes Lyra the new Eve in his writing of “Paradise Lost for teenagers” (Parsons 126). He states “Eve must fall. Lyra must be tempted. [. . .] But this time Satan is understood to be good rather than evil” (Parsons 119). Lyra, the new Eve, represents a strong equal partner to Will, the new Adam, and thereby redefines the patriarchal feminine.

To verify that this young girl is the girl of the prophecy, Dr. Lanselius, the consul for the witches, asks Lyra to pick the “little branch of pine” from a wall of forty or more that the witch Serafina Pekkala has used to fly. After she picks the correct one using her alethiometer, Dr. Lanselius breaks off a little twig from the branch and gives it to Lyra. He needs the rest so he can contact Serafina. He tells Lyra “[T]his will be enough. Look after it.’ [. . .] And she tucked it into her purse beside the alethiometer” (GC/NL 155). The “little branch of pine” is reminiscent of the mythological Tree of Life Goddess symbol that I have discussed throughout most of this discourse. This symbol, which was assimilated into the Christian “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (Genesis 2:9) by the biblical writers about three thousand years ago, is at the very center of the fall of Adam and Eve. Here Pullman brings into his trilogy a “little branch of pine,” the cloud-pine the witches use to fly (GC/NL 155).

The little twig of pine goes next to Lyra’s alethiometer, the device Pullman has created for Lyra that tells her the truth. The Master of Jordan College gives the alethiometer to her on the morning she goes to live with Mrs. Coulter. He tells Lyra “to keep it private. It would be better that Mrs. Coulter didn’t know about it. . . . It tells you the truth. As for how to read it, you’ll have to learn by yourself” (GC/NL 65). It looked like a pocket watch or a very ornate gold compass.
[F]or there were hands pointing to places around the dial, but instead of the hours or the points of the compass there were several little pictures, each of them painted with extraordinary precision. [. . .] There was an anchor, an hourglass surmounted by a skull, a chameleon, a bull, a beehive. [. . .] Thirty-six altogether [. . .] There were three little knurled winding wheels and each of them turned one of the three shorter hands. [. . .] The fourth hand was longer and more slender; [. . .] it swung where it wanted to, like a compass needle.” (GC/NL 70)

Lyra teaches herself how to read it after she runs away from Mrs. Coulter and is rescued by the gyptians. Farder Coram explains to Lyra how to use it and read the many-layered symbols. He tells her that “by pointing to three symbols you can ask any question you can imagine, because you’ve got so many levels of each one,” then the longer “needle swings round and points to more symbols that give you the answer” (GC/NL 112).

While with the gyptians, Lyra also learns from John Faa, king of the gyptians, that Lord Asriel and Mrs. Coulter are her father and mother. He tells her the “true story. I know it’s true, because a gyptian woman told me, and they all tell the truth to John Faa and Farder Coram. So this is the truth about yourself, Lyra” (GC/NL 108). After a time he tells her that the “Master of Jordan and the other scholars, they loved you like their own child. They’d do anything to keep you safe”; and because her parents were both strong and ambitious, the Master of Jordan was in the middle trying to just protect her (GC/NL 113). The alethiometer becomes Lyra’s personal “weapon in the battle of His Dark Material,” giving her the ability to know what is true and foretell the future, much like an oracle. She becomes “able to communicate with a consciousness that people of her own world name ‘Dust’” (Squires 31).

In  The Subtle Knife, the reader is introduced to Will Parry, along with two cats. One
is his own cat, Moxie, who saves him from the man searching his house.

But neither of them saw the cat. As the man had reached the top step, Moxie had come silently out of the bedroom, [. . .] but the cat was in the way, and as the man tried to move back, he tripped over her. With a sharp gasp he fell backwards down the stairs and crashed his head brutally against the hall table. (SK 6)

Pullman begins his second book in the trilogy with the same storyteller intensity of mysterious intrigue, but it is Will’s cat, Moxie, who is responsible for his escape from the men that keep bothering him and his mother, looking for something. Will believes it is the “battered green leather writing case” that holds his mother’s letters from his dad, John Parry, who disappeared when Will was very young (SK 4).

A second cat is the one Will watches later that night after taking his mother to stay with Mrs. Cooper. It was near a “traffic circle” where there are “two lines of hornbeam trees,” and Will watches this cat “behave curiously,” patting the air and leaping backward near “an empty patch of grass between the hornbeam trees and the bushes of a garden hedge. [. . .] The cat stepped forward—and vanished” (SK 13).

It looked as if someone had cut a patch out of the air about two yards from the edge of the road, a patch roughly square in shape and less than a yard across. . . . But Will knew without the slightest doubt that that patch of grass on the other side was in a different world. (SK 13)

The cat leads Will into a seaside town with a row of palm trees instead of hornbeam trees, a mysterious cat similar to d’Aulnoy’s White Cat and her mysterious castle that helps the prince. The cat disappears in the mysterious world of Cittagazze, where Will and Lyra meet, but shows up again later to help.
Lyra and Pantalaimon, at the end of *The Golden Compass*, “walked into the sky” after having a discussion about Dust (GC/NL 351),

And the Oblation Board and the Church and Bolvanger and Mrs. Coulter and all, they want to destroy it too, don’t they? Yeah [. . .] Or stop it affecting people [. . .] Why? Because if *they* all think Dust is bad, it must be good. [. . .] If Dust were a *good* thing . . . If it were to be sought and welcomed and cherished, [. . .] We could look for it too, Pan! (GC/NL 349-50)

So, Will Parry and Lyra Silvertongue find each other in Cittagazze—she to find Dust and he to find his father. In this other world they teach each other. Will teaches Lyra about the everyday needs of cooking and cleaning up after herself, and that sometimes you need to remain inconspicuous as he has done in his world to protect his mother. And Lyra helps teach Will how to master the knife when Giacomo Paradisi is instructing him how to close a window after opening it with the subtle knife. During the fight, Will’s two little fingers on his left hand get sliced off with the knife, and he is finding it difficult to concentrate.

Well, you’re trying to do two things with your mind, both at once. You’re trying to ignore the pain *and* close that window. I remember when I was reading the alethiometer once when I was frightened. [. . .] Just sort of relax your mind and say yes, it does hurt, I know. Don’t try and shut it out (SK 164).

In Cittagazze Lyra and Will learn to work together. I agree with Squires that Lyra has to “unlearn some of her independence” (Squires 31), but I do not believe it is a subservient role that she takes on; I believe it is her learning about things in a different world and learning to be truthful to Will. Pullman comments on Lyra’s situation
Actually, of course, they’re equal. She’s realizing that. […] There was always going to be this form to the book. The first one starts with the word *Lyra*, the second one starts with the word *Will*, and in the third book they’re of equal importance […] They share] a different relationship. […] Eve is the equal of Adam and shares in whatever it is that happens. (Parsons 127)

In book two, Pullman is propelling all the forces around Will and Lyra—Mrs. Coulter, the Oblation Board, the Magisterium, and the Specters; Lord Asriel, Lee Scoresby, Dr. Grumman, Mary Malone, Serafina Pekkala and the Witches—all the forces of evil and good toward the final battle, the final events in book three. For this discourse I concentrate on the elements that help to redefine the patriarchal feminine, the mythical and fairy tale elements that Pullman uses in the trilogy. Serafina Pekkala and her clan of witches, and the shaman, Dr. Stanislaus Grumman, share a quality of respect for nature along with their special abilities to fly on a branch of cloud-pine, heal with herbs, summon a great storm, or be summoned by a tiny flower. Pullman’s make believe weaves the nature-based Pagan religion into the trilogy as part of his challenge to Christianity and Western patriarchal knowledge of the feminine.

The little twig of cloud-pine that Lyra put in her purse connects her to Serafina Pekkala, the queen of her clan. Lyra asks three times how the witches knew to come save her and Will from the angry children in Cittagazze. “Serafina Pekkala! How did you find us? Thank you, thank you! They was going to kill us!” Lyra shouts as the witch flies above them (SK 206). Will and Lyra cannot see the hundreds of Specters that have surrounded the temple they sought refuge in, but the witches can. Serafina gives Lyra and Will directions to a cave in the woods where they will meet them safely. Lyra tells Will, “It’ll be all right now
Serafina Pekkala’s here! [. . .] She came just at the right time, didn’t she? Just like before, at Bolvangar . . .” (SK 208). When they finally get to the cave, the witches are cooking an ointment made of herbs and preparing a spell to hopefully heal Will’s hand. Lyra asks again how they came to help them, and Serafina Pekkala explains “that the witches had agreed that since they came into this world to find Lyra and be her guardians, they’d help Lyra do what she now knew her task to be: namely, to guide Will to his father” (SK 229).

Pullman does not have Serafina Pekkala tell Lyra how she knew, but he does have her ask three times, that mythical number. Then later, when Hester reminds Lee Scoresby of the little red flower that the witch had given him to summon her, the reader knows that it is the flower, the little twig of pine, even though the summons is too late to save him (SK 268). Serafina arrives after Lee has died. But the events that led Lee Scoresby and Dr. Grumman to that end are important. Scoresby agrees to fly Grumman into this other world to find the “bearer of the knife,” as long as Grumman swears Lyra will be under the knife’s protection. Scoresby thinks of Lyra like the daughter he never had. As the balloon flies over Cittagazze, Dr. Grumman explains about the vampire-like Specters, who Scoresby thinks are like “those devils at Bolvangar” (SK 248).

On the contrary. Both the Oblation Board and the Specters of Indifference are bewitched by this truth about human beings: that innocence is different from experience. The Oblation Board fears and hates Dust, and the Specters feast on it, but it’s Dust both of them are obsessed by (SK 248).

But four Imperial zeppelins sight Scoresby’s balloon, and they have to fly into the hills to try to escape them. The shaman Grumman summons a great storm and crashes three of the zeppelins, but the fourth continues to pursue them. After landing the balloon in the trees,
Scoresby holds off the soldiers, killing most of them, to allow Grumman to get away to find the bearer of the knife. Pullman’s twist in the plot of *The Subtle Knife* is that the shaman Dr. Stanislaus Grumman, alias John Parry, is Will’s father, and on a mountain in this strange world they find each other. In the dark they struggle until Will is weakened and the shaman reaches for Will’s hand and gently feels the stumps where his fingers used to be and says “You’ve got the knife.’ . . .’You’re the knife bearer” (SK 281).

Grumman puts some bloodmoss ointment on Will’s wound and tells him to listen and not interrupt.

There is a war coming, boy. The greatest war there ever was. Something like it happened before, and this time the right side must win. We’ve had nothing but lies and propaganda and cruelty and deceit for all the thousands of years of human history.

It’s time we started again, but properly this time. . . (SN 282).

Grumman explains to Will that “those old philosophers [. . .] invented a device that could split open the very smallest particle of matter and they used it to steal candy. [. . .] They’d made the one weapon in all the universes that could defeat the tyrant. The Authority. God” (SK 283). But Will didn’t want the knife, doesn’t want the knife. Grumman continues that its “[t]oo late. You haven’t any choice: you’re the bearer” (SK 283). The shaman, Grumman/John Parry explains to Will the reason he has to choose a side:

Every little increase in human freedom has been fought over ferociously between those who want us to know more and be wiser and stronger, and those who want us to obey and be humble and submit. (SK 283)

Grumman breaks his promise to Scoresby and tells Will he must go to Lord Asriel, and then he lights his little lantern, and, as they look at each other, recognition dawns, but at that
moment a scorned witch shoots an arrow into Grumman’s heart and he is dead (SK 284).

At the same time that Pullman has Will find his father, Mrs. Coulter snatches Lyra. Mrs. Coulter had caught the witch Lena Feldt spying, and commands her Specters to seize the witch’s daemon, a snow bunting. The torture is too much for the witch, and she tells where Lyra and Will are, how many witches are guarding them, and that the prophesy names Lyra as “Eve! Mother of All! Eve, again! Mother Eve!” (SK 278). When Will comes down from the mountaintop, he finds that the witches have been killed by Specters and “Lyra was gone, Lyra was captured, Lyra was lost” (SK 288). Will notices her “little canvas rucksack” was left behind and the alethiometer was still in it. Then two angels, sent by Lord Asriel to follow the shaman, appear and tell Will he must do as the shaman told him but Will “looked from them to Lyra’s rucksack and back again, and he didn’t hear a word they said” (288). Pullman leads the reader to believe at the end of The Subtle Knife that Will is going to find Lyra.

In the third book, The Amber Spyglass, Dr. Mary Malone follows the instructions that were given to her through the “cave” computer from the “shadow particles” that she is to leave her world and (SK 221)

find the girl and the boy. Waste no more time. You must play the serpent. [...] You will be protected. The Specters will not touch you [...] Destroy the equipment. Do it now and go at once. (SK 221)

So she did as instructed by the “shadow particles” or Dust, as Lyra told her. Dr. Malone leaves her world and goes into the world of Cittagazze (SK 221). After spending time with a kind old couple, she ventures on and consults the I Ching, the “Chinese method of divination, [...] her grandfather had given her, and she had used a lot as a schoolgirl” (AS
This method of “counting, dividing and counting and setting aside” of “the little yarrow stalks” came back to her quickly; the message she gets is to “go upward,” and the last part is “Keeping still is the mountain; it is a by path; it means little stones, doors, and openings” (AS 72). At the top on a path of little stones, she enters the world of the Mulefa.

Pullman’s creation of the wheeled Mulefa is quite an ingenious way for Dr. Malone to spend her time while waiting for Will and Lyra to show up. She studies them, learns their language and way of life, just as an anthropologist would do. Pullman’s wheeled creatures evolve because of their relationship with the seedpod trees and the oil that comes from the pods, which are used as a wheel. At the end of *Amber Spyglass*, when Lyra and Will have made an opening for the dead to leave the underworld, it is into the world of the Mulefa that they depart. Mary is shown the opening by the anxious Mulefa, and she sees the “procession of ghosts” as:

> They took a few steps in the world of grass and air and silver light, and looked around, their faces transformed with joy—Mary had never seen such joy—and held out their arms as if they were embracing the whole universe; and then, as if they were made of mist or smoke, they simply drifted away, becoming part of the earth and the dew and the night breeze.” (AS 386)

As Mary watched the procession, an “old woman—beckoned, . . . Then she spoke . . . . Tell them stories. They need the truth. You must tell them true stories [. . .]” (AS 386).

Through the supplication of the ghost woman, Pullman has Mary tell Lyra and Will her true stories. She starts when Lyra comes to visit her laboratory and asks about Dust. Mary tells them she created a program so she could talk to the shadow particles through her computer.
I did as you told me. [. . .] I made a program. [. . .] They said they were angels, [. . .]

I used to be a nun, you see. I thought physics could be done to the glory of God, till I
saw there wasn’t a God at all. (AS 393)

Then Lyra asks when she stopped being a nun, and Mary says, “I remember it exactly” (AS
393. She tells them she was at a conference in Lisbon, and, the night after she presented her
paper, she went out to dinner with her colleagues and began talking to the Italian man across
from her.

He wasn’t a ladies man or a charmer. [. . .] But he was nice and clever and funny and
it was the easiest thing in the world to sit there in the lantern light under the lemon
tree with the scent of the flowers [. . .] (AS 395).

Mary uses the metaphor of “going to China” for falling in love and she told Will and Lyra
she believed it was something that would not happen to her. But at that dinner under the
lemon trees

someone passed me a bit of some sweet stuff and I suddenly realized I had been to
China. [. . .] I had forgotten it. It was the taste of the sweet stuff that brought it back—
I think it was marzipan. Sweet Almond paste” (AS 395).

Mary told of her first experience of love, when she was a young girl at a party and a boy
asked her to dance and they started talking. “And you know what it is when you like
someone, you know it at once” (AS 396). When the birthday cake was served, the boy “took
a bit of marzipan and he just gently put it in my mouth,” and that was when she fell in love
the first time. These memories came back to her that night under the lemon trees, and she
asked herself “am I really going to spend the rest of my life without ever feeling that again?
[. . .] And the answer came back—no” (AS 397). Mary comes to the realization when “I had
the marzipan in my mouth, before I even swallowed it. A taste—a memory—a landslide . . .” (AS 397). That night she took off the crucifix and “threw it in the sea. That was it. All over. Gone.” (AS 397), she told them. That was when she quit being a nun. Lyra and Will both have questions for her, and she answers them all as honestly as she could.

These wonderful innocent stories that Pullman creates for Mary to tell of her experiences allow Lyra to realize she knows exactly what Mary “meant and half an hour earlier she would have had no idea at all” (AS 386). The next day Lyra and Will go looking for their daemons, and, when they stop to have some lunch, “Lyra took one of those little red fruits. With a fast beating heart, she turned to him and said, ‘Will . . .’ And she lifted the fruit gently to his mouth” (AS 416). They declare their love for each other with a passionate kiss and then, walking hand in hand, return to Mary’s house. Mary and Atal watch them walking back and realize the Dust has stopped flowing away: “[I]t was falling like snowflakes” (AS 421). Lyra and Will are passing from innocence to consciousness and “conscious beings make Dust—They renew it all the time, by thinking and feeling and reflecting, by gaining wisdom and passing it on,” the female angel Xaphania tells them the next day when they are reunited with their daemons (AS 441).

All of Pullman’s female characters in His Dark Materials trilogy have redefined the knowledge of the patriarchal feminine. Even the wicked Mrs. Coulter in the end makes the ultimate sacrifice for her daughter when she “leapt with all her heart, to hurl herself against the angel and her daemon and her dying lover, and seize those beating wings, and bear them all down together into the abyss” (AS 365). The liar, the lying went down into the abyss as well; truth has won. And at the end of the trilogy, when Lyra is back at Jordan College having dinner with the Master and Dame Hannah, Lyra asks them to promise her one thing.
You have to promise to believe me, Lyra said seriously. I know I haven’t always
told the truth, and I could only *survive* in some places by telling lies and making up
stories. So I know that’s what I’ve been like, [...] but my true story’s too important
for me to tell if you’re only going to believe half of it. So I promise to tell the truth, if
you promise to believe it. (AS 459)

Tell them true stories so they can navigate the passage from childhood to adulthood, from
innocence to experience with real honesty, is the overall theme of Pullman’s trilogy. For my
discourse to discover a redefined knowledge of the feminine that is not “placed on reserve,
[...] deferred, [...] detoured [...]” (Derrida 944) by the dominant Christian Patriarchal
tradition, Pullman has given us a new Eve, equal in all aspects to Adam. Both Lyra and Will
return to their own worlds to “be all those difficult things like cheerful and kind and curious
and patient. [...] and build The Republic of Heaven” (AS 464).

Through the fantasy for children, we are given a redefinition of the knowledge of the
feminine in both fiction, such as Pullman’s and film animation such as Miyazaki’s. There
are other examples, but I believe these are the strongest. It is, however, interesting to note
that Miyazaki’s storytelling style has influenced John Lasseter, the creative genius behind
Pixar studio’s huge success with hits such as *Toy Story*, 1995; *Finding Nemo*, 2001; and
*The Incredibles*, 2004. In May of 2006 Disney purchased Pixar, but Pixar is now wholly
responsible for “the creative direction of Disney,” and John Lasseter heads the department
(Schlender 140). One of the noticeable changes is in the middle of the latest film *Cars*,
released in June of 2006, in which the lead characters—Lightning McQueen, an egotistical
fast-paced race car, and Sally, a lawyer Porsche, turned motel owner in an off-the-beaten path
town of Radiator Springs—take a drive through the mountains (Rose E2). The whole mood
of the film slows down and actually gives the audience time for “active engagement” with what is happening (Hatfield 33). These two characters also have more egalitarian aspects, and the film does not end with the typical “happily ever after.” It ends with possibilities, just as Pullman’s trilogy ends with possibilities. We are heading in the direction of redefining the knowledge of the feminine much needed in children’s fantasy fiction and animation.
Conclusion

My discursive journey began with ubiquitous female figurines that were created some 27,000 years ago by human beings who were peaceful, agrarian, creative, egalitarian, and Goddess-worshiping (Gimbutas Living xv). I discovered there was a feminine prior to the Western patriarchal tradition as described in the Bible. I consider this knowledge of an earlier feminine to be part of our ancient history that should be taught at all levels. I began this discourse with a quote from bell hooks that “describes a common psychological state” as “yearning” for a voice to speak for those who have been silenced by “master narratives” (hooks 2011). In the introduction, I deconstructed two philosophical works by Jacques Derrida and redefined the unique circle of “Being and beings” to be not just God and man, but God, Goddess, and Human. The Goddess is the original feminine, the third part of the unique circle that Western patriarchal tradition “placed on reserve, […] detoured, […] deferred […]” (Derrida 944).

In Chapter 1 I put forth the interpretations of archaeomythologists Gimbutas, Dever, and Davis-Kimball on the ubiquitous female figurines, temple models with Asherah and Yahweh, and egalitarian culture of the Amazon women, giving evidence of an ancient feminine heritage not taught by Western patriarchal tradition. The second chapter provided evidence of the original feminine surviving through the Dark Ages in the Lithuanian Dainos and a folktale “Queen of the Serpents,” in the compact German folktale “Ashputtle,” and in the second type of fairy tale, the complex French female tale, “The White Cat.” In the third chapter I brought to awareness the private and public feminine redefined through three female writers of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries: Edgeworth, Potter, and Woolf. These women represent both the private feminine through their love of nature and
the public feminine through their love of writing and produced a new genre for education, a new form of animal fables, an awareness for conservation of the land, and a new form of writing through a stream of consciousness.

In the fourth chapter, I explained how the feminine was further subverted throughout the twentieth century by the animation of Disney, through what Zipes called the “American civilizing process,” using *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (205). Then I revealed the feminine redefined through the Japanese film animation and manga of Miyazaki with his extraordinary females and egalitarian male partners in such films as *Spirited Away* and *Howl’s Moving Castle*. Because of the friendship and admiration for Miyazaki’s storytelling ability, John Lasseter, Disney’s new head of animation, makes the latest Disney film, *Cars*, a more egalitarian, slower-paced, thought-provoking experience. The audience actually has time in the middle of the film for what Kroeber calls “private fantasizing,” and what Hatfield calls “active engagement” (73; 33). This is a significant change and hopefully will continue in future Disney animation films.

It is through the extraordinary storytelling abilities of Pullman and his female protagonist Lyra, “Eve, again” (SK 278), that his incredible trilogy *His Dark Materials* truly redefines the Western patriarchal feminine. Pullman initially described this book he wanted to write to his publisher as “*Paradise Lost* for teenagers in three volumes” (Parsons 126). This trilogy is about teenagers coming of age, but it is also much more than that. Pullman has taken some of the toughest themes—the soul and consciousness, religious authority, good and evil—and woven them into a temptation story with a “nun-turned-scientist,” Dr. Mary Malone, as the serpent temper who must “tell them true stories” (Squires 9). But, as Pullman states, “[t]his time Satan is understood to be good rather than evil,” and Lyra, or Eve, “must
be tempted” (Parsons 119).

*His Dark Materials* reverses the biblical story and does not have a “happily ever after” ending, as do the classic literary fairy tales. Will and Lyra, though very much in love, have to return to their own worlds, their own Oxford—after releasing the dead from the underworld to become part of all living things—and build “The Republic of Heaven” (AS 465). Pullman has Lyra explain to Pantalaimon what it will take: “We have to be all those difficult things like cheerful and kind and curious and patient, and we’ve got to study and think and work hard, all of us, in all our different worlds” (AS 464). Pullman, through his female character, is telling the reader what needs to be done to create a “Republic of Heaven” here on earth (AS 465). Even though most classify this trilogy as a fantasy, Pullman has emphatically called it “stark realism.” He explains it this way:

The story I was trying to write was about real people, not beings that don’t exist like elves or hobbits. Lyra and Will and the other characters are meant to be human beings like us, and the story is about a universal human experience, namely growing up. The ‘fantasy’ parts of the story were there as a picture of aspects of human nature, not as something alien and strange. (About 3)

The “universal human experience,” growing up, coming of age, passage from adolescence to adult, that special time of learning brings me back to Pagano’s call for a change in the curriculum—in the canon. I suggest that the canon include Pullman’s trilogy; Miyazaki’s animation and manga; women authors such as Edgeworth, Potter, and Woolf; the French female writers of complex fairy tales like D’Aulnoy; and topics such as archaeomythology. Pagano calls for the “need to revise our education myths of culture and intellectual liberty and try to tell the truth” (237), so that children of the future have a more
complete view of our human heritage. Just as Pullman’s trilogy has Lyra learn to tell her “true stories,” Pagano’s recommendation is also truth, “the truth of connection that nourishes and is nourished by our differences. [. . .] Only Outsiders tell the truth” (237).

My discursive journey was made complete this past summer with my final class in Oxford. I was fortunate to explore the many places Pullman refers to when writing of Lyra’s and Will’s Oxford. When he talks about the rooftops of the many colleges, I now have these images.

*Figure 26. Merton College, photo by P. D. McCombs, July 2007.*

*Figure 27. New College Lane, photo by P. D. McCombs, July 2007*
I was privileged to tour Potter’s beloved Hill Top Farm in the Lake District, where the meandering moss-covered stone gray walls give a distinctive appearance to the landscape.

![Meandering moss-covered stone gray walls](image1.jpg)

*Figure 28. Meandering moss-covered stone gray walls, photo by P. D. McCombs, July 2007.*

The highlight, for me though, was a visit to Stonehenge, which gave me a better understanding of the Neolithic people who created this monument. It took approximately

![Monolithic Stonehenge](image2.jpg)

*Figure 29. Monolithic Stonehenge, photo by P. D. McCombs, July 2007.*
eight hundred years to construct, a testament to an astonishing connection to nature (Weyth 18). Over the years there have been many theories as to why this was constructed, but the most logical is Dr. Terence Meaden’s. He states in *Stonehenge: The Secret Of The Solstice* that “the solution to Stonehenge has been found”: it represents “the peace-loving, benevolent Goddess—Herself an everlasting image of harmony and love” (157). During the summer solstice, a reenactment of the “Cosmic Marriage” (Meaden 155) between the Sky God and the Earth Goddess takes place there (Weyth 23-4).

Stonehenge is a *monument* from the ancient past that represents the original private feminine through an incredible love of nature, and the constructed public feminine through a creative love of writing with image. Stonehenge is a monolithic image that redefines the knowledge of the feminine.
Works Cited


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*Secrets of the Dead: Amazon Warrior Women*. Dir. Carsten Oblaender and Jens


Abbreviations:

*The Golden Compass (The Northern Lights)* (GC/NL)

*The Subtle Knife* (SK)

*The Amber Spyglass* (AS)