

Great Characters' Childhood as Beacon: Contents and Values in Children's Books as Cultural References

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Within this presentation, we will talk about two subjects:

- Material **culture**
- Inter**cultural** education
- The word **CULTURE** is the common element, which is also the subject of this ISCHE Conference where we will find:

Heroes and schools

Heroes and ideology

Heroes and **textbooks** (two sessions)

Heroes and symbols



Finding in this presentation are part of a larger project aiming to analyze the **Reading Books** for Children in Spain during **Franco's** dictatorship

Two periods

- 1939-1955
- 1955-1975

Social and religious values

Ages 9-12

We are presenting the hypothesis and the first finding rather than the conclusion



Intercultural education

- A progressive approach
 - to transform education
 - to respond to discriminatory policies and practices in education,

It is, by definition, contrary to the concept of education in the *nacional-catolicismo* (1940s to 1960s in Spain), where the main educational goal was to underline the **superiority** of everything “Spanish”



Spanish people, Spanish food, Spanish language and Spanish religion, of course!

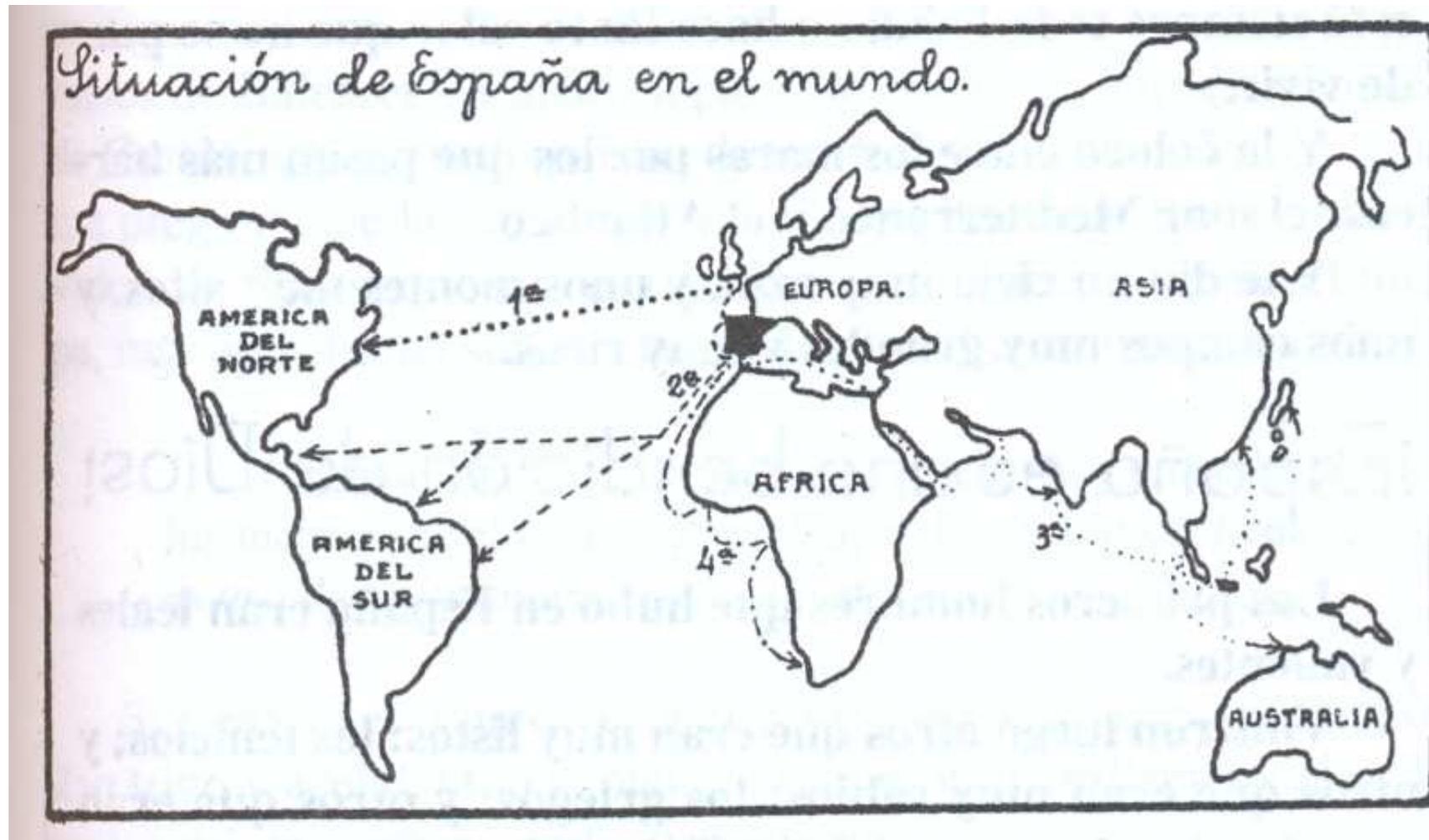
Everything "Spanish" was idealized and regarded as superior

- This monocultural perspective was taught both **directly** -by conveying it to the children and making them repeat and assume- or **indirectly**

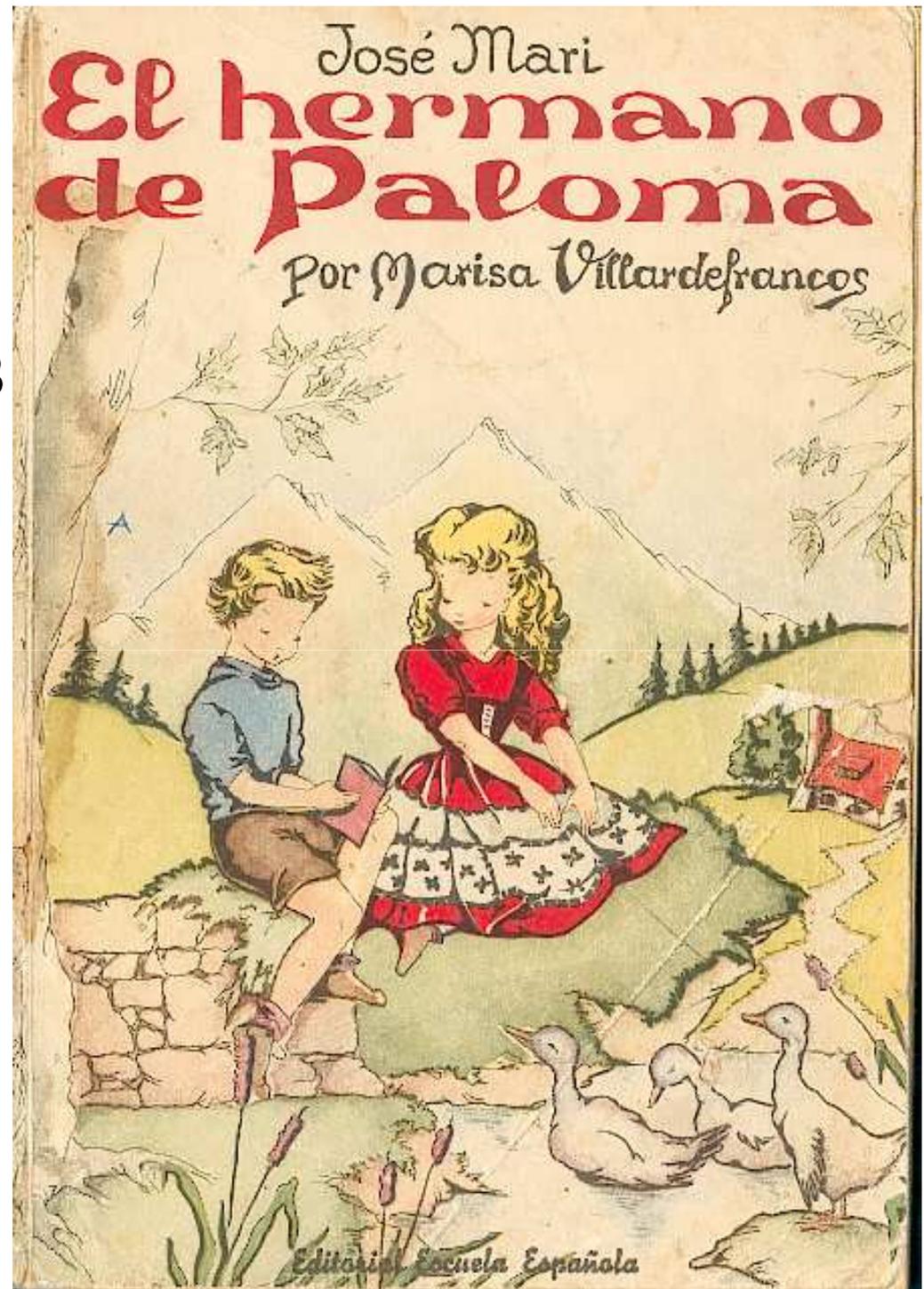


‘Spain was situated by the Divine Providence in the middle of the World’.

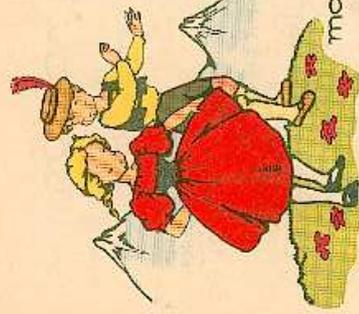
Menéndez-Reigada, *Catecismo Patriótico Español*. Salamanca, FIDE, 1939, p.5



El hermano de Paloma, 1963
[*Paloma's brother*]



se llaman
alemanes
Los niños
de Suiza
se llaman
suizos.



Los niños
de Bélgica
se llama
man belgas.



Los niños de Grecia se llama
man griegos.

Los niños de
Holanda
se llaman
holandeses.

Los niños
de Sue-

cia se llaman suecos.
Los niños de Noruega
se llaman noruegos.

Los niños de Portugal
se llaman portugueses.

Los niños de Rusia
se llama
man rusos.



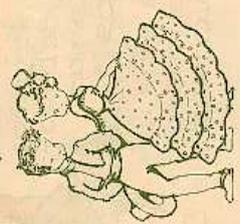
Los niños
de Polonia
se llaman
polacos.

Todas esas y
algunas más son:
naciones de Europa.

Pero la más bonita de
todas.
La más hermosa...
La más buena...
La mejor es:

¡España!

Estoy muy contento de haber nacido español.



- Ser español -

- Si - les dice la maestra:
- Vosotros aunque sois pequeños
debeis de saber que ser español
es una cosa

muy grande
y para que España este orgullosa
de vosotros, debeis ser:

**estudiasos
sinceros
valientes
cristianos...**

- Antonio J. Onieva (**1937**). *Escudo imperial: Libro escolar de lectura*. Burgos, Hijos de Santiago Rodríguez, p. 4.



- “To be Spaniards and Catholic is today one of the few elevated thing on earth, if not the first”

- Marisa Villardefrancos (**1963**). *José Mari. El hermano de Paloma*. Madrid, escuela española, p. 17



- Although you are small, you must know that to be Spanish is a very big thing, very big ... and that you must be hardworking, sincere, brave and Christian so Spain could be proud of you.

Indirectly

- This perspective is more complex
- Often implies the negation of the multicultural fact
- From this perspective, the cultural differences were hidden and blurred; they were not allowed to be seen.

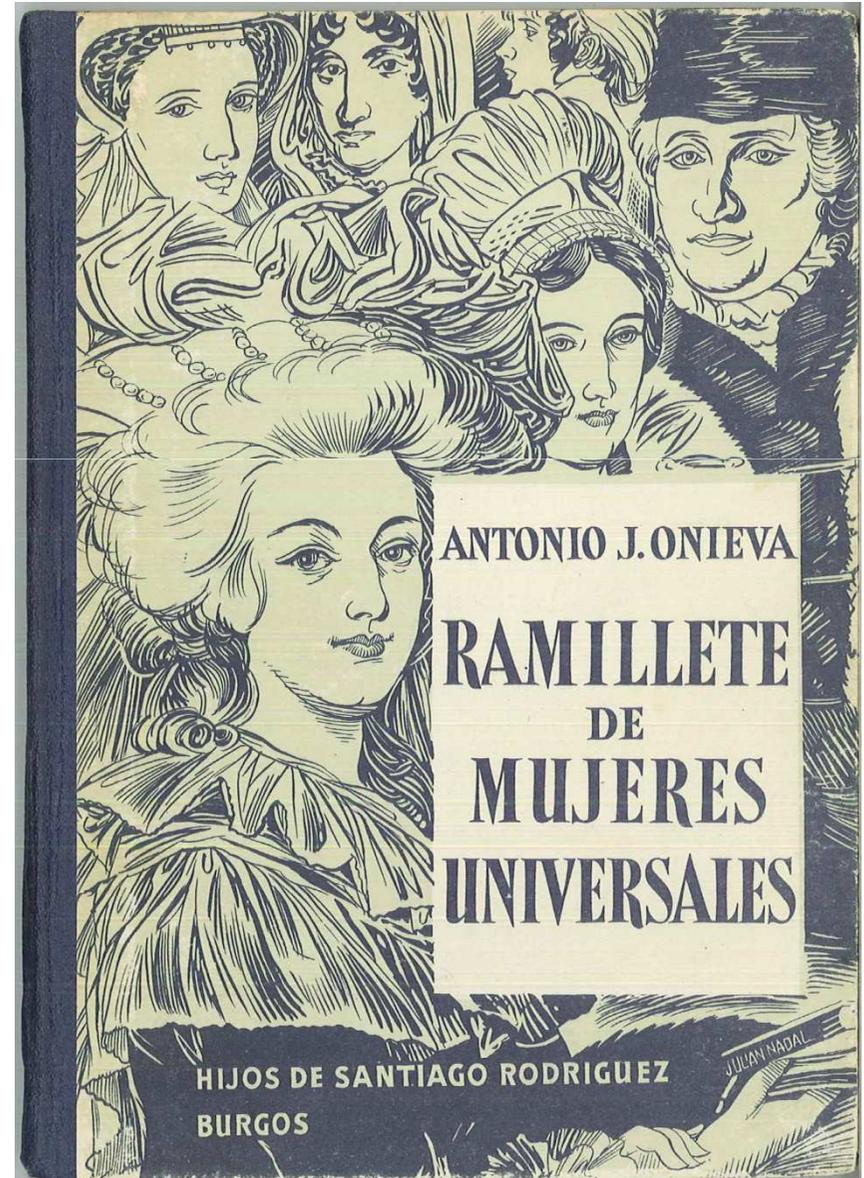
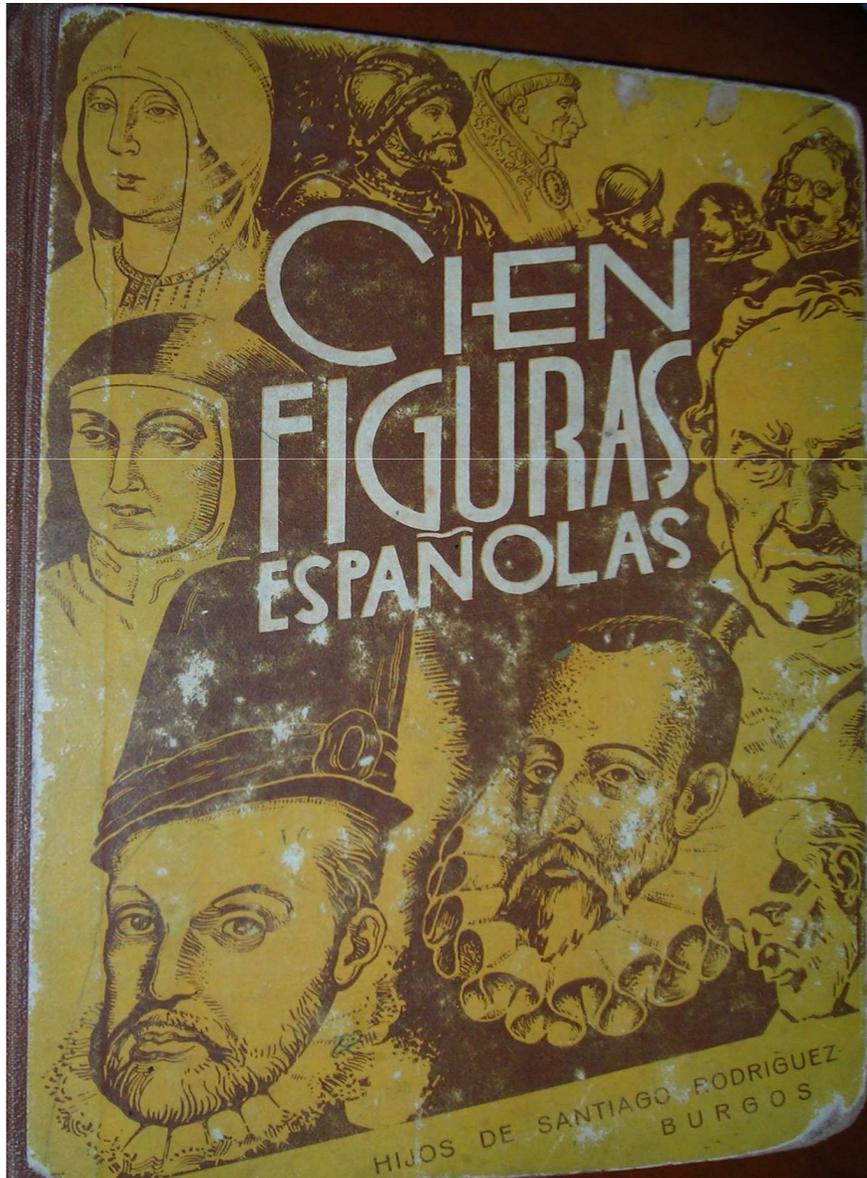
- **Biographies written for kids seemed to make the life of even the most dull person exciting .** Yet biographies are the favorite genre of many lifetime readers.
- **Biographies can and should provide a way to personalize history, to discover the motivation behind some interesting people and perhaps awaken a new interest or passion.**



- The **biography** genre is often considered a **sub-genre of Historical** textbooks.
- Thus, there are two different biographical children's books:
 - To be read at school
 - To be read at home

Biographies. School textbooks, 1939-1964

Different series and editions



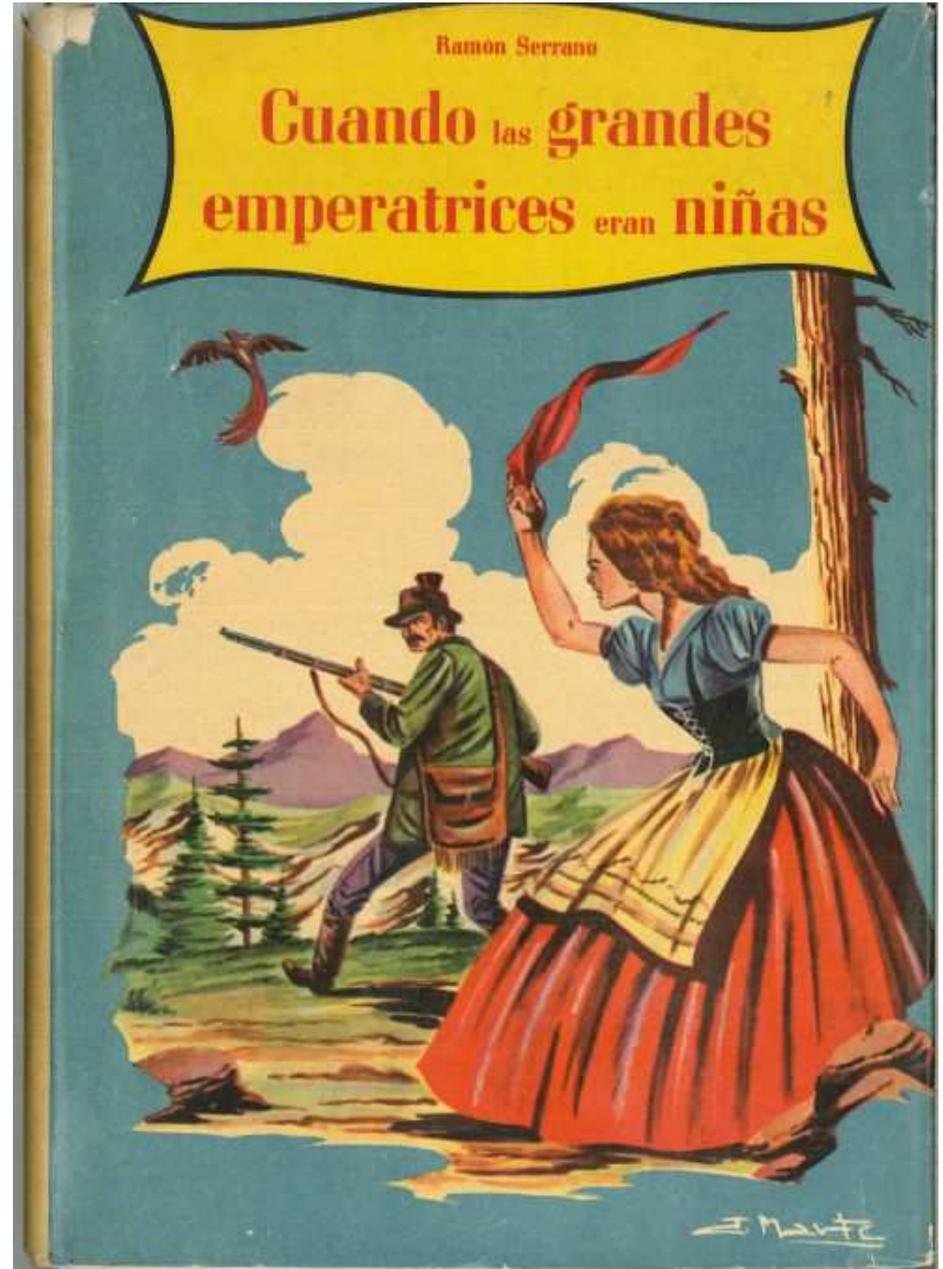
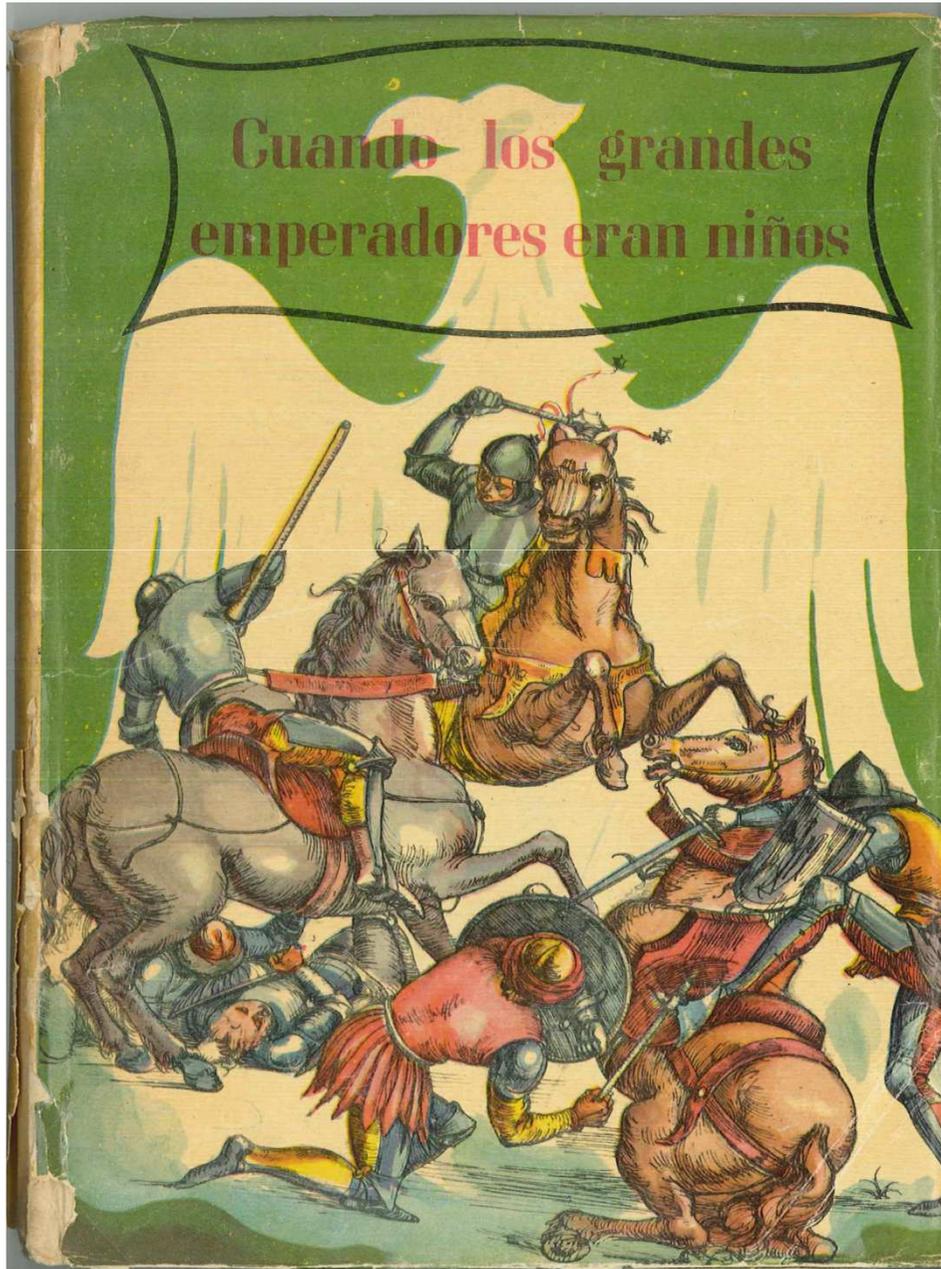
We are studying a **Collection of Children's books** to be read at home

- *Cuando los grandes santos, reyes, reinas, hombres, mujeres...eran niños (**When the great saints, kings, queens, men, women... were children**).*
- Published by Editorial Cervantes, Barcelona
- C. 1955-1965
- Boys and girls, Aged 9-12

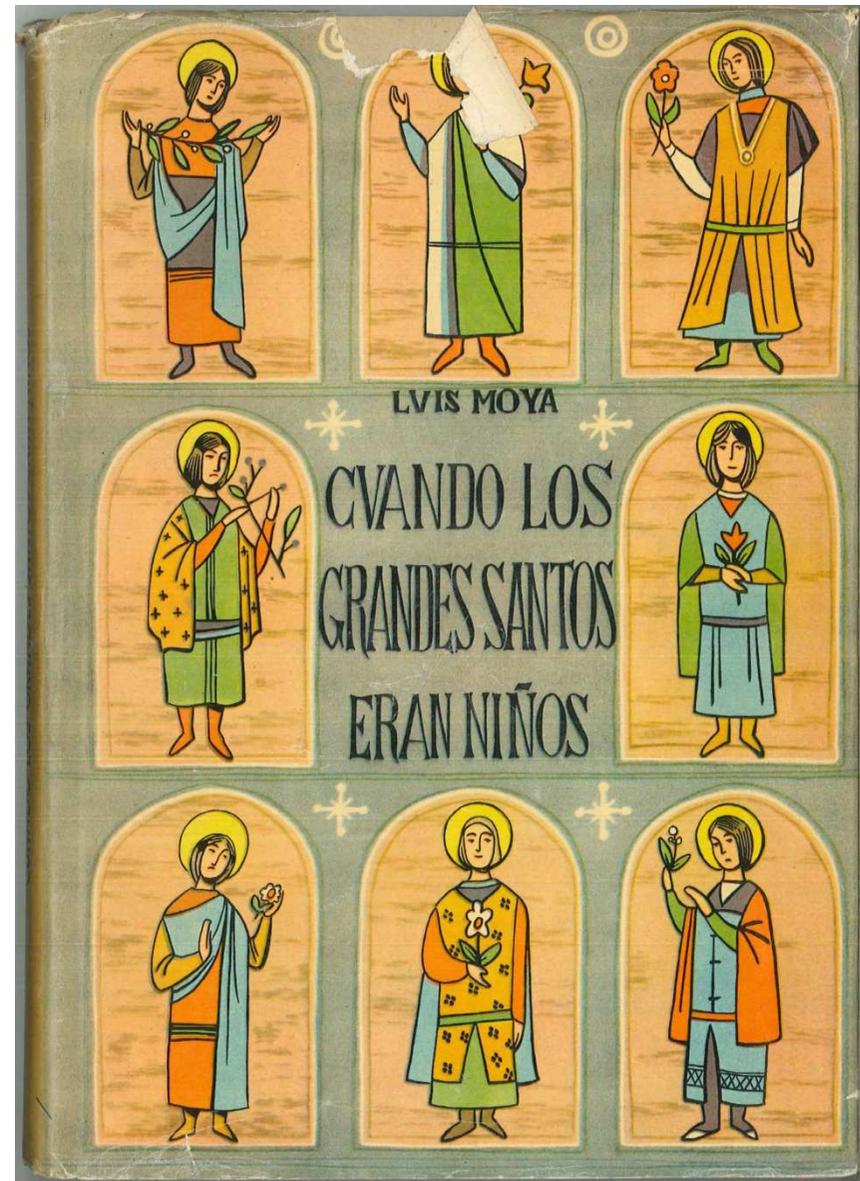
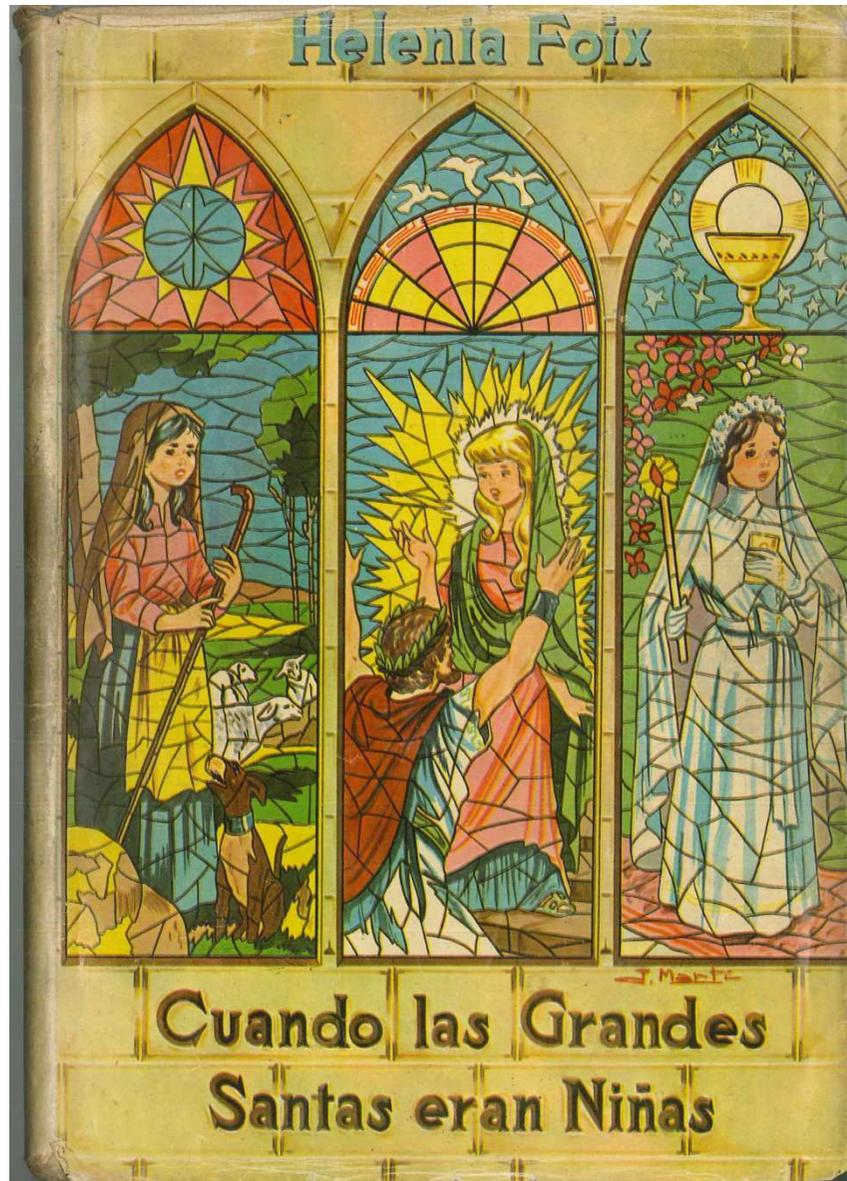


Boys	Girls
Men (Hombres)	Women (Mujeres)
Kings (Reyes)	Queens (Reinas)
Heroes (Héroes)	Heroines (Heroínas)
Male Saints (Santos)	Female Saints (Santas)
Emperors (Emperadores)	Empresses (Emperatrices)
Male Artists (Artistas)	Female Artist (Artistas niñas)
Princes (Príncipes)	Princesses (Princesas)
Conquerors (Conquistadores)	
Popes (Papas)	
Wise Men (Sabios)	
Explorers (Exploradores)	
Doctors (Médicos)	
Physicists (Físicos)	
Inventors (Inventores)	
Benefactors (Bienhechores)	
	Wives (Esposas)
	Female Teachers (Maestras)

When the Great Emperors/Empresses Were Children



When the Great **Saints Women/Men** Were Children



24 Volumes

Each one 120-130 pages in length

9 for girls

15 for boys

- Each one included one eight to ten characters that were used to describe childhood.
- This kind of books is **the perfect frame** to present **different cultures** over time and in different spaces. For example, the volume about the *Great female teachers*, that you are going to see, goes from Catherina of Alexandria to Gabriela Mistral, from Egypt to Chile and from the year 287 to 1957.
- Some of the titles were edited several times from 1953 to 1966





Three relevant pedagogues

Two Nobel Prizes of Literature

	<i>Pág.</i>
<i>A manera de prólogo</i>	5
Santa Catalina de Alejandría	9
Beatriz Galindo «La Latina»	23
Madame de Campan	37
Madame Pape-Carantier	57
Concepción Arenal	73
Selma Lagerlof	85
María Montessori	101
Gabriela Mistral	113

Catherine of Alexandria (ca. 287-ca. 305)



SANTA CATALINA DE ALEJANDRÍA

- **“Catalina es de noble o ilustre familia”**
- **“Catalina hubiera sido la misma aunque hubiese nacido en la cabaña de unos pastores”**
- Catalina **“puede tener los mejores maestros, puede recibir las últimas enseñanzas”**
- **Hogar rico en cuanto a su hacienda es” rico también cultural y moralmente”** p. 12
- Estudia materias **“que parecen más indicadas para muchachos, y sobre todo para muchachos mayores”** p. 14
- **“No sólo hay que limitarse a enseñar retórica y filosofía y letras sagradas y profanas. Es preciso también enseñar algo mucho más importante, algo fundamental, sobre todo en esos tiempos en que el Cristianismo no ha ganado aún la batalla definitiva. En la escuela de Catalina de Alejandría todas las disciplinas están bajo el signo de la Cruz. Todo lo mueve el amor a Cristo”. Catalina “no ha formado tan sólo inteligencias; ha formado también una legión de almas critianas”** p. 17
- Muere martirizada a los 17 años.
- Catherine belongs to a noble and distinguished family
- She would have still been the same person had she been born in a hut of shepherds .
- Catherine “can have the best teachers and access to the latest knowledge”
- Her home is wealthy and both culturally and morally rich.
- She studies subjects “which appear to be more suited to boys, especially older boys
- In her school, all disciplines are under the sign of the Cross. The love of Christ moves everything. She "has not only formed intelligences but also a legion of Christian souls”.
- She died a martyr

Beatriz Galindo (1465-1534)



Madame de Campan (1752-1822)



Beatriz Galindo: She was born in a noble family with scarce incomes. Despite this, the children received a noble education to keep that social appearance, p. 26

- Father: Beatriz should enter a convent as soon as she is old enough to do so.
- Mother: We do not know if she has vocation.
- Father: Well you have to prepare her for it. Beatriz is not the oldest. And she is not pretty and she is not likely to marry as Magdalena. The convent is the best place to stay for a girl without dowry. P. 27
- She began to study Latin because it would help her to understand the prayers. She also studied the complete classic culture.
- What had started as a simple study of the Latin to getting on in the convent, has become the own studies of a humanist.
- The Queen wanted to be her student. She became the Queen's teacher.
- **-Beatriz debería entrar en un convento en cuanto tenga edad para ello – dice una noche su padre.**
- **-No sabemos si tiene vocación- objeta la madre razonablemente.**
- **-Pues hay que prepararla para que la tenga- insiste el padre. No es la mayor. Y no es bonita ni tiene posibilidades de casarse como Magdalena. Para una muchacha soltera y sin fortuna el mejor refugio es el claustro. P. 27**
- Beatriz sabe que sería feliz en la universidad. Es obediente, sumisa, calla,
- **Comienza a estudiar latín porque le ayudará a comprender los rezos y sigue con toda la cultura clásica.**
- **HUMANISM: “Lo que había comenzado como simples estudios de la lengua latina para desenvolverse en el convento, se ha transformado (...) en los estudios propios de un humanista. Y ante este caso asombroso, (...) sus padres no han querido refrenar ese impulso” p. 33.**
- **“Beatriz cumple los dieciocho. (...) Todos aseguran que es la mujer más inteligente de Salamanca. (...) Ya empieza la gente a llamarla “la Latina”. (...) La reina quiere ser su alumna. (...) Beatriz entra por la puerta grande en el gran edificio de la enseñanza”. P. 36**

Madame Pape-Carpentier (1815-1878)

MADAME PAPE-CARPANTIER

vueltas a la cuestión. Las circunstancias mandan y María Ofinda se pone a trabajar en el taller...

La mañana del día en que empieza es de prueba para su madre. Pero la muchacha se muestra completamente tranquila; no se siente ni asustada ni humillada. La cosa le parece... natural. ¿Acaso no ha visto a su madre trabajando siempre, de la mañana a la noche? Pues ¿qué tiene de particular que ahora ella haga lo mismo? No comprende la congoja de su madre. Se levanta más temprano que de costumbre, arregla sus cosas y se encamina, sola, a donde le han indicado que vaya.

Contenta y con naturalidad, como hará siempre las cosas en su vida, la muchachita de once años recién cumplidos se dirige a su trabajo. Va a «aprender y a ganar unos francos», como dicen las amigas de su madre...

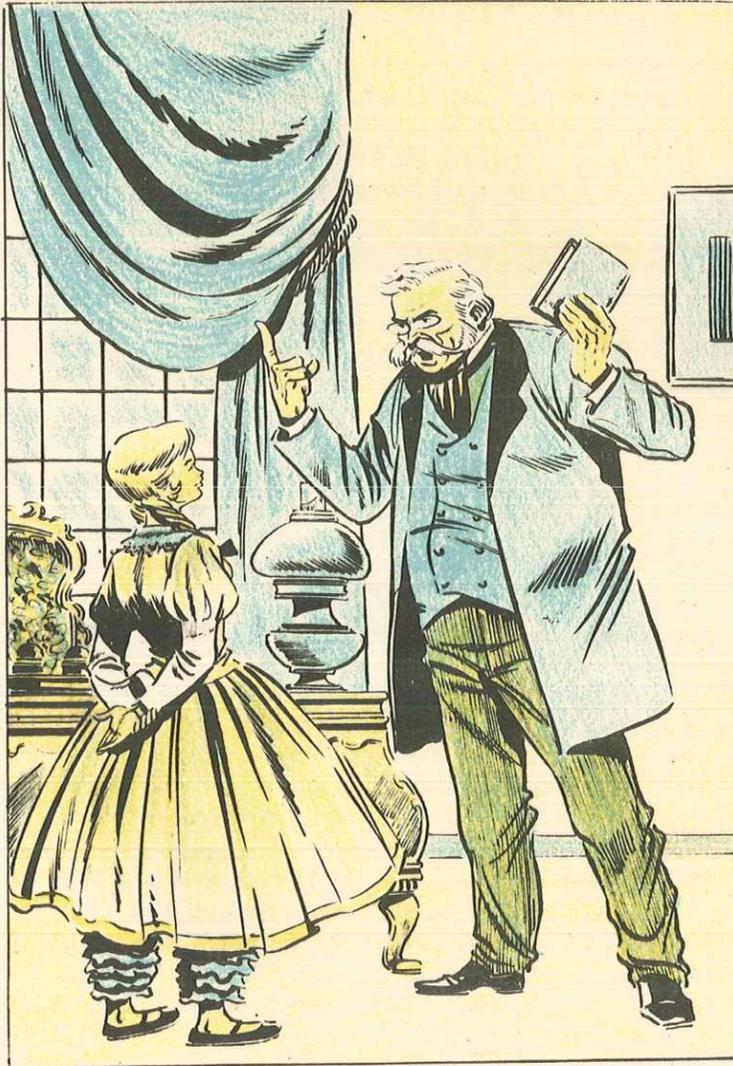
Y ganar unos francos es lo más importante en esas circunstancias, pues le permiten seguir estudiando sin ser una carga para la economía familiar. Ahora estudia por las noches, cuando regresa de su trabajo. Y recibe las lecciones cuando bienamente pueden dárseles sus desinteresados maestros. Evidentemente se ha producido un ligero desequilibrio en su educación, pero su inteligencia y su gran capacidad para acomodarse a todo, a las circunstancias más ingratas y a las situaciones más incómodas, le permiten salvar airoso ese escollo. Su curiosidad intelectual es la misma de siempre.

Una noche sorprende gratamente a su madre. Regresa de su clase de inglés, poco antes de cenar como de costumbre, y después de dejar su paficón y su capucha en una percha del minúsculo recibidor, busca algo afanosamente en su bolsa de terciopelo. Es un papel. Un papel doblado en cuatro dobleces que tiende a su madre.



MADAME PAPE-CARPANTIER

Concepción Arenal (1820-1893) Selma Lagerlöf (1858-1940)



CONCEPCIÓN ARENAL



SELMA LAGERLOF

Gabriela Mistral (1889-1957)

GABRIELA MISTRAL

—¿Lucila? Pues... — su madre titubea.

—¿Dónde va a estar? — interviene la abuela —. En la huerta, con sus flores y con sus pájaros.

Petronila también sabía que Lucila estaba en la huerta o quizá en el valle, ensimismada en la muda contemplación de la Naturaleza. Pero no quiere confesarlo porque en el fondo no le gusta que su hija se aficione tanto y tanto a esa soledad que la tiene como fascinada, a esa vida demasiado sencilla y primitiva en la que adivina algo de místico y de salvaje. Doña Petronila quisiera que su hija no se hundiera tanto en sí misma, que fuera más a menudo con otras niñas de su edad, que jugara con ellas, que encontrara placer y distracción en su compañía. Pero Lucila es un poco huraña, rehuye siempre que puede a sus compañeras. Prefiere el rumor del torrente, el susurro de las hojas, la charla encantada de los pájaros... Ella asegura que habla con ellos; que los entiende y que ellos la entienden a ella. La abuela, al oírla, sonrío complacida: tal como había pronosticado, se ve un poco a sí misma en esa nieta soñadora y un tanto fantástica. Pero su madre mueve la cabeza con gesto de benevolente desaprobación. «¿Qué dirá la gente?», se pregunta la buena señora.

A veces sus amigas van a buscarla. Sus voces cantarinas suenan en el umbroso zaguán.

—¿Está Lucila?

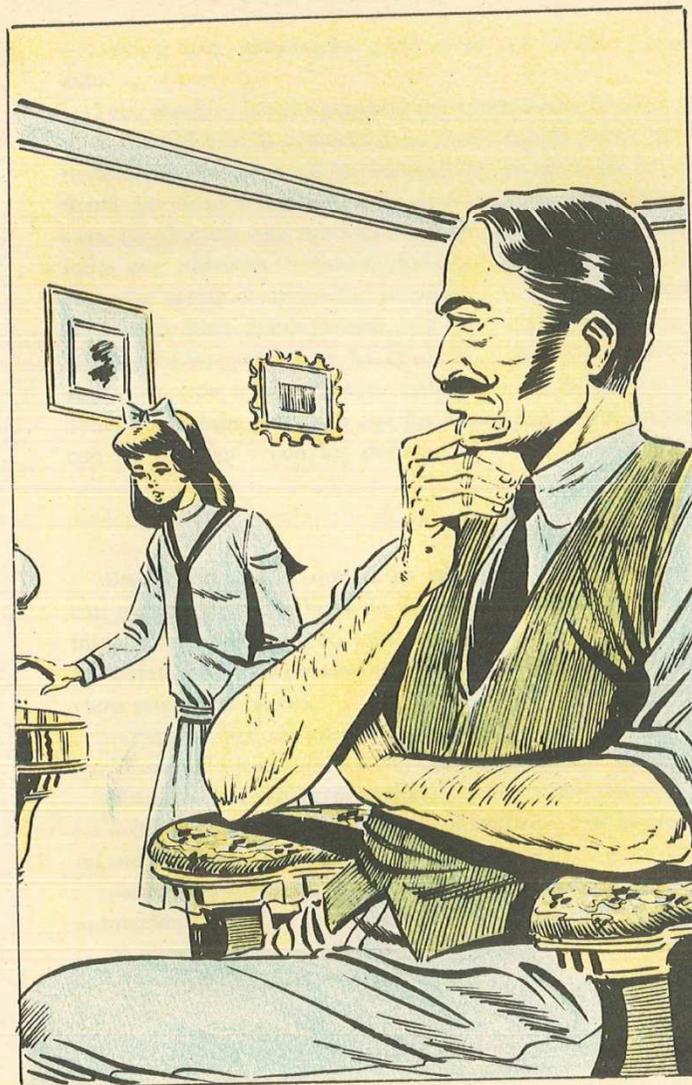
—Hoy es el santo de mi hermana mayor y queremos que venga a casa a merendar — es una de las hijas del alcalde de Vicuña quien formula la invitación.

Doña Petronila, que nunca miente, ha de decir esta vez.

—Lucila está fuera — dice con embarazo.

Sus amigas se van un tanto contrariadas.

—Pues yo la he visto este mediodía en el Puente Viejo



Main hypothesis:

- cultural differences over time and the different spaces are blurred
- all the characters are described and explained from the same perspective without taking into account the obvious cultural differences.
- As each title was **targeted to either boys or girls, we also study the different values** transmitted to the different genders.
- **these issues can be seen as signs of the prevailing culture in Spain in those years**



- Since one of the sub-themes of this conference deals with the use of myths and stories about people conveying a message about what is valued in each culture, some titles of this collection have been analyzed from this perspective.
- Do they show different cultures? NO
- How are **these cultures** explained? They were not explained.
- Which values are **promoted**?



Values 1960s

- The former **values have been softened**, above all those concerning nationalism and patriotism.
- The vision was more neutral, **the burden of patriotism had been reduced. The political indoctrination is clearly lower.**
- Broadly speaking, the references to God and the catholic religion are kept in mind .
- The acceptation and resignation to God's plans (death, illness, misery and poverty) or to parents decisions is the goal: The models are always children obedient to the decisions of their parents or God
- The ideas about **moral and good behavior** are characteristics of **girl's books**. The code of conduct is always clear, but it is underlined in the girl's books.

- To attend **school**, education, to study, **learning**... all is portrayed as something **important**, decisive, a long process that requires **time and effort**.
- Personality, **will**, **intelligence**, the body: All has to be educated though **discipline**, **effort** and **sacrifice**.
- **Teachers** are often presented as people with outstanding qualities. They must be obeyed and loved as if they were our parents or friends.
- We must admit that that perspective is distinctly faded when talking about contemporary women
- In addition, girls must be strong, lively, reliable, cheerful, well-behaved, pure, loving, tender, and so on.

- It must be said that some of those values were not exclusif to our country.
- For instance, values related to boys, girls and the role of women:

Kinder, Küche, Kirche
Children, Kitchen, Church
Niños, Cocina, Iglesia

- Racism, segregation and male chauvinism were still strongly settled in the world.
- But in some places, both women and men were already trying to change that status quo.
- In Spain we had to wait...



- Reading books include some contents of primary school, specially Geography and History, but also religion, moral or politics. But these books could not be used to learn neither Geography or History.
- The **contents** of those books **changed over the years**.
- Nevertheless, most of the books os biographies published just after the civil war, in the 1940s, are still in use and are often reprinted even in the 1960s. Reading books published in the 1940s and 1960s coexisted.



There are differences among the different titles and authors of this collection, but in general...

- The language has been simplified.
- The covers are more attractive.
- **The *Cuestionarios* published in 1953 and 1965 gave the primary teachers general directions on how as well as what to teach.**
- **Instead of indoctrinating the child in his duties to God and patria, education was now to prepare him to understand and function within the physical and social environment in which he would live and work. *Cuestionarios Nacionales para la Enseñanza Primaria*, 1953, p. 10.**
- While grudgingly admitting the value of individualized instruction and a freer classroom environment, they warned it was also important **“to develop in the child the idea of duty, obedience, docility and renunciation”** *Historia de la Pedagogía*, 1965, 2:267.



- Even today, biographies are written for children in all languages. There are biographies of poets, writers, scientists, musicians, painters, Statesmen, Nobel Prizes.....
- When biographies focus in the childhood of the person, identification with the character is easier.
- **In this case, they focus in the values** behind each character, but the **context**, both spatial and temporal, is **blurred**  **Children could learn values, moral or behavior rules, but they could not learn either History or Geography.**

By doing it, the historical learning would be almost impossible and irrelevant.



**THANK YOU
VERY MUCH
FOR YOUR ATTENTION**



ISCHE 2015 in Turkey