

La llorona, an oral tradition

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The legend of La Llorona Lechner, J. V. (2004). Allyn & Bacon anthology of traditional literature. Boston: Pearson A and B. Lyons, G. (1972). Tales the people tell in Mexico. New York: J. Messner. The legend of La Llorona (The weeping woman) is a well known Hispanic tale in the Southwestern part of the United States, Mexico, Central and South America and also Puerto Rico. Many versions of the story exist allowing them to fit the community where the story is being told. The story is about a beautiful woman named Maria from a town near the present day city of Monterrey, NL.

Mexico. She falls in love with a handsome revolutionary Sergeant that was passing by during the Independence War of Mexico from Spain that occurred in the 1800s. They marry each other and have three children, due to the traveling of the revolution her husband is always absent. One day he comes back with another woman to visit his children and pays no attention to Maria the whole visit. In a hurry of the event she takes her children to a nearby river and drowns them; blaming her children for her husband leaving.

She then comes to realization of the horrible mistake she has done and the water takes her kids out of her hands. She begins to yell " Ay, mis hijos! " meaning " Oh, my children! " and decides to kill herself. It's been told that her grief was so great that it was carried with her after death and since then she has been looking for her children in areas where water is near. It is said that every foggy night around eleven she will wander the area and pick up kids who are walking or outside near water. The legend is used to scare children away from water areas at night and staying out too late.

One of the characteristics that we find in the genre of legends and the story of La Llorona is that they are told and received as truths and are set in a

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historical point of view. Lechner says in her book that people tell legends because they often endure because they convey something important about the community's values, perception of who they are, or concerns for their safety and well-being. It is very clear that safety is a concern when keeping the story alive of La Llorona to the children. I decided to chose The legend of La Llorona after reading the fifth chapter f the book Allyn & Vacon anthology on traditional literature because after finishing the story it reminded me of mychildhoodgrowing up in Mexico. To refresh my memory I also read Tales the people tell in Mexico, called my parents, and called my brother asking for their version of the story. Even though it is a tragic and sad story to be toldI believeis a great story to keep alive telling and retelling not just among my ownculturebut to share it with other people whom may not be familiar with the story.

I think it might even be a great ghost story to be told in the middle of a woods at a bong fire and if a river or creek is nearby you might even get to hear her torturing weeping noise of " Ay mis hijos". I also had a firsthand experience with La Llorona while growing up. In a dark foggy night I decided to follow my older brother Francisco and his friends into a nearby woodlands. I had heard that they had built a secret wooden house and created a swing that was used to jump off into a small river which was themotivationof my secret following. After a couple of minutes of following from the distance I had lost them due to excess fog.

I found myself alone in the middle of the woods when I started to hear some weeping sounds. At first those sounds were unclear and I couldn't distinguish them but as the seconds went by it sounded louder and louder until I clearly

heard " Ay mis hijos! Ay mis hijos! " meaning " Oh, my children! " I then noticed a body of a women wearing a white dress floating on top of the low fog coming in my direction, I could say that is where I developed my talent as a runner because I made it back to my house in a flash. After that I never wondered the woods alone at nights and respected the legend of La Llorona.