

Yash Rakesh Gupta

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Paranormal Patriarchy and Vengeful Women: Tracing Misogyny in the Cultural Constructions of
Vindictive Spirits

Passed down from *familia* to *familia*, clad in white, with long hair, haunting the life giving waters, similar to where she drowned her children, *La Llorona*, or the Wailing Women, is one of the primary female archetypes of the Latin iconographic pantheon (Simerka 49). With her roots in pre-Columbian religion, *La Llorona* has been central to myth-making for centuries. But figures of vengeful women serve more than just to scare. Wee (151), in her commentary upon the monstrous feminine in media notes that horror as a subversive genre reflects the deepest fears, or as Clyde Kuckhohn terms it, the ‘type anxieties¹’ of a society (71). Horror has the ability to project, through a distorted *différance*², what a society represses (87). Specifically, urban/myths constructed around female spirits reflect, I argue, the deep ingrained fear of female sexuality. Horror is central to this, for regardless whether one evaluates it

In terms of universal fears or historically determined cultural anxieties, issues of gender remain central to the genre. For gender, as recent theory has argued, is, like horror itself, both universal and historical, biological and cultural (Grant in Morales 8).

However, fear is double sided. What one can learn from myth-ritualists and psychoanalytic studies, is that the mythical mind germinates tales in order to control fear, to direct it, and thus, to enact social charters over behaviours lest the tabooed fear be broken

¹ Kluckhohn describes the type anxiety as the overbearing collective anxiety that a society shares, and that finds a vent through patterns for coping created by rituals.

² Grossberg defines *différance*, as an identity created through negation. So identity B, here the living identity, is the negation/opposite, of the mythical identity of *La Llorona*.

(Segura 2013; Segal 1980; Harwood; 1976; Freud 1913; Kluckhohn 1952; Cooke 1927; Ross 2000). Simerka in her analysis of the Wailing Mother in the 21st century, notes that myths are integral to the evaluation of societal ideologies, and it is within myths that a collectivity transmits its systems of belief (49). It is on this foundation that this paper aims to evaluate the patterns of patriarchy in the myths of vengeful women. I argue that myths that fall under the genre of horror act as pedagogical tools in inculcating a patriarchal femininity, with the role of the mother acting as the focal point in this analysis. Adopting a Frazerian rationalist approach, the paper shall focus upon the figure of *La Llorona*, to be supplemented by figures from other pantheons to exemplify the point. However, following in Wendy Doniger's argument, the aim is to not establish different cultural expressions on the same stage, for each is defined by their own histories, experiences, and anxieties (534). Rather the trial is to highlight the pattern in which different cultures approach the same question of female regulation. King, perhaps building upon Jung, in his psychoanalytic evaluation of the monstrous female archetype in movie media, notes that the ease with which such ideas are transmitted, and find a resonance within different cultures, may itself denote that the human mind is "pre-adapted to receive certain messages" (King 35). It is within this relevance that some aspects of comparative mythology can be uncovered. Tomio-Armorer argues similarly, stating that, "The central themes of the legend (of *La Llorona*) are so universal that it remains largely relevant today and can easily be transplanted into contemporary media and different cultures" (Tomio-Armorer 61). To reiterate, the answers might not be similar, nor the application; however, what the paper purports is that behind mythological constructions, lies the pale shadow of heteropatriarchal normativity, which this analysis aims to explore.

The aim is thus to explore the monstrous mother, channeled through the figure of *La Llorona*. The term monstrous becomes essential here, for primary analysis of the figure can be

plotted in the seven theses/characteristics of a monster developed by Cohen³. To provide structure to what follows, the characteristics shall be applied to the themes to create a multilayered analysis. For ease of approach, certain theses have been merged, to create a more coherent section.

The Monster as a Cultural Practice Witnessed in Evidence

Myths arise for Tylor, as an intellectual end, as a means for justifying the world (174). King, quoting Kearney states that the creation of myth and narratives is inherent in human nature (5). Thus, creation of narratives becomes a cultural practice for much like science, they establish the ideological basis of a society. The mark of causality upon myths gives them a motive or value that is shared by human actions. Myths are adaptive in so far as they provide a lens into the social norms of the society that remain alterable by the very same process of cultural practice. Thus, the monster of *La Llorona* becomes a cultural practice, for as a figure that has existed centuries, she has both influenced and has been influenced by the society she took roots in (King 9). However, before we proceed any further, it is important to lay out the varied re-telling of the myth, to contextualize the figure.

Being pre-columbine, and subject to colonial erasure, it is difficult to trace stability in *La Llorona's* tale (Kearney 199). Each region, not only within Latin America, but also in spaces with Latinx diaspora, has its own version of the myth. However, these are to be viewed not as contesting accounts, but as Levi-Strauss (*Structural Study of Myth*, 435) suggests, as variation of the same corpus, where the different versions create one myth. Indeed, this also foregrounds our prior statement, where the *La Llorona* myth as an “endlessly changing legend, modified by

³ The seven theses are thus: (1) the monster partakes in a cultural practice; (2) the monster can only be witnessed through an evidence; (3) the monster manifests a paradox; (4) the monster becomes a societal scapegoat; (5) the monster acts as a social regulator against taboo; (6) the monster must be both attractive and ugly; and (7) a monster must challenge the society (Cohen).

storytellers to address themes central to their own psycho-social development and lifestyles” (Jones in Simerka 50). The contradictions arise, for myths manifest the most perplexing symbols, reflecting several hidden and personal meanings to the interpreter.

Simerka (49) and Morales (2) recounts the prototypical legend of the weeping women. *Llorona*, is characterised as a mother figure, sometimes of indigenous origins, and of lower socio-economic background. Defined as the wife/lover of an aristocratic/European/conquistador lover, she kills her children by drowning them in water, as a response to her lover’s betrayal. Her action is spurred when her lover decides to return to his country, along with their children. In rage or in over-expression of motherhood, she drowns her children to spare them from second-class treatment as indigenous broods in a foreign white country. As a punishment for her sin, and in following a Christian model of repentance, she is condemned for eternity to walk the earth, forever wailing and searching for her children.

Tomio-Armorer (55) provides a detailed, historical account of the same. In her telling, *Llorona* is Spanish, brought to present day Latin America by her father. Orphaned young, she leads a virtuous and hardworking life. As she matures, she falls for the rich Marquis of Monte-Carlo Don Nuno, bearing three of his children. They lead a short-lived luxurious life, until the Marquis is attracted by a younger bride of his own class, consequently abandoning *Llorona*. To save her children from being labelled as ‘bastards’, and leading a compromised life, she murders them with their father’s knife. Realising her crime, she stumbles into the street, wailing for her children. Her wails get immortalised, as she is cursed to haunt the streets of Mexico, searching for her lost children. Characteristically, she is known to prey upon and drown either men deceiving their wives, men indulging in addictions, children who stray too far, and other deviant behaviours; exacting her vengeance at night. Kearney adds to the same, that *La*

Llorona is represented as both a monster and a temptress, seducing men to their mortality (199)⁴. As a figure, *La Llorona* shares similarities with several South-East Asian spirits, such *Phi Tai Thang Klom* (Thailand), a spirit of a pregnant woman who commits suicide after her lover betrays her; *Krasue* (Laos and Cambodi), a beautiful and nocturnal female spirit that is present in the form of a floating head, with dangling innards; *Dambir Ow* (New Guinea), a female spirit that died in labour, and hunts men; and *Wewe Gombel* (Indonesia), a didactic spirit that kidnaps children who indulge in undesirable behaviour (Nathan, Kelkar &, Xiaogana 60-64).

As a female iconographic figure, she is usually grouped with figures such as *La Malinche*⁵ and *Virgen de Guadulape*⁶. Consequently, she has often been conflated with *La Malinche*, with her wailing for her lost children, allegorizing the destruction of the aztec empire (Tomio-Armorer 54). The trinity of the figures form an important group, influencing and binding female expression into three categories (to be covered later).

The ‘evidence’ that Cohen discerns in his analysis can be linked to not only to *La Llorona*’s victims (who if survive, themselves turn into the transmitters of her tale), but also to the imagery she is deeply linked with. The themes of sin, water and air emerge prominently. While the first two themes are apparent in the retellings, the latter requires further explanation. The notion of *Aire* in in Spanish-American belief system refers to the etiological conception of disease. The Ixtepejian model (form Ixtepec, Southern Mexico) of *Aire*, defines the environment as inherently threatening, for the air is manifested with vengeful spirits. In certain versions of the myth *La Llorona* either equated with or is given *aire*-like characteristics (Kearny 199-200).

⁴This version of the myth also proves beneficial for our analysis, as it throws open the opportunity for euhemeristic interpretations, basing our claims in real life actions. Thus, if the analysis on the figure can be historicised, it allows us to make a more concrete claim on the nature of patriarchal reproduction of power (Cooke 396-397).

⁵ A female figure who played a decisive role during the spanish conquest of the aztec empire, serving as an interpreter and guide for the spaniards, especially Hernán Cortés. Thus, she has transformed into a scorned figured responsible for the ‘rape’ of the Aztec empire.

⁶ A catholic title for Virgin Mary, with specific iconography for the figure.

Thus, she is either defined as a floating spirit, or being punished for “her evil deeds, God does not receive such people, he leaves them in the free air” (Kearney 200)⁷. The notion however, is not isolated as air and invisibility are recurring patterns in myths around the world. For Instance, from Eastern Europe is another group of invisible spirits that leech energy from the living (Kearney 203).

As cultural practices, monsters constantly evolve leaving evidence in the minds of its creators. The fascination with the morbid in the form of *La Llorona* can be found in attributed to, as Tylor (305) suggests, to the mythic obsession with illness, and the macabre. Morbid myths become suitable expressions (and thus also a social document) of that which is abhorred, specifically since the framework in which the taboo is consigned is itself tabooed. Frances Harwood, builds this further, suggesting that that the mould of the monster serves, through its exaggerated beauty or grotesqueness, a mnemonic function. It is this, coupled with the shuddering fear that vengeful spirits instill, that makes them a vehicle for social pedagogy (794). *La Llorona* as a spirit occurs in a large pantheon of vengeful figures that exist throughout the world. Thus, in Japan we see a large group of vindictive women exemplified in *Kabuki* theatre. Similarly *Chudail*⁸ from India, *Chao Pu Xi* from China, the Green lady from western Europe, occur as socially revengeful characters (Nathan Kelkar & Xiaogang 58; Wee 152).

The Ugly Mother, and the Beautiful Temptress- the Paradoxical Status of La Llorona

⁷ The detailed connection to Air becomes even clearer once when considering Muller’s argument on the same. In *Philosophy of Mythology*, Muller, building upon his observational nature of myth-making suggests, that the remarked difference between the dead and the living, was reduced to breath, for the escaping of the breath was equated to the escaping of the soul. Similarly in situating the invisibility of disease causing spirits, a plausible explanation could be chalked to the same invisibility of air. The breath, Muller suggests was as immaterial and invisible as the soul, and thus its negation from life resulted in death. The same breath was then assimilated into the *Aire*, which could have been assumed to be where the vengeful spirits/ the invisible, untraceable and spontaneous harm resided (59).

⁸ With the *chudail* it also important to note, that she described as a female that dies during pregnancy, childbirth, or menstruation, further reifying the connection between biological function of the body, to the sociological assumptions about it (Nathan Kelkar & Xiaogang 58)

Cohen's theses on the paradoxical nature of an ugly yet beautiful monster, finds a parallel in Levi Strauss' binary structuralism. As a character that is both murderous and maternal, *La Llorona* acts as the resolution of the binary oppositions, a theme to be further explored in this section (*Myth and Meaning*, 8). Primarily, we can turn to Paz, who in *Labyrinth of Solitude* traces the creation of the Mexican female identity to the three mythical mothers mentioned earlier- *La Llorona*, *La Malinche*, and *Virgen de Guadalupe* (Morales 2). The creation of ideals of women, remain independent of their control, and yet the feminine is relegated to *La Chingada*⁹, or to the position of the receiver in sexual intercourse. To engage with one of the three, is to commit violence on the other. A strict binary is established where the masculine is the active and aggressive ideal; with the feminine, who is always *La Chingada*, is the passive and inert aspect. Thus, the creation of identity is reduced to sexual control. Carbonell (55) comments upon the over-sexualisation of the tabooed *La Malinche*, who inherited the term *La Chingada* for her sexual treatment by the Spanish, allegorizing her political openness to the 'rape' of the Aztec civilisation, which fell as a result of her willing voice and guidance to the Spanish. Morales (2) referring to Paz's work, expounds how in some variations of the *La Llorona* myth, she is united with *La Malinche*, who after her betrayal by Hernan Cortez, drowns her children. Thus, both the figures are locked in the frame of *Chingadas*, creating one end of the binary, which is opposed by *Virgen de Guadalupe*. The binary creates an emphasized veneration of the *Virgen*, maintaining a strict "Whore-Virgin" (Carbonell 56) dichotomy. Thus, even before the identity is created in practice, the pedagogical dichotomy perpetrated by myths solidifies women's position in a binary, creating assumptions and control over sexuality, laying emphasis on virginity, as the desirable divine trait.

⁹ The bitch or the f*cked according to Morales' translation.

The *Put*a (whore)-virgin/beautiful-ugly dichotomy is manifested in real life gendered experience of the myth. Taking an anthropological and ethnographic approach, Tomio-Armorer observes a marked difference in which binary genders approach *La Llorona* (57). Since, primary transmission is subject to orality, the way a myth is interpreted depends on the gendered space in which it is conveyed. Thus, Male perception of *La Llorona* is majorly negative, defined as an evil phenomena particularly since she failed her maternal role. Tomio-Armorer also notes, the central issue of this paper, that is the pedagogical function of the vengeful spirit; whereby, according to her interviews, belief persisted that a failure to fulfill normative roles resulted in a fate similar to the wailing women (57). Key in this regulation is her punishment- to roam the streets at night, serves as the antithesis of sexual control that creates temporal restriction on female bodies. Moreover, *La Llorona* comes to identify with Cohen's paradox of beauty and ugliness, once her charm as a temptress is established. However, while her visuality is emphasized, she is deemed ugly for practicing her sexuality. The same can be viewed in different pantheons as well. For example, the image of *Medusa* (whose image is also refracted through the binary of virginity and sexuality/rape) has become a mnemonic for the image of monstrosity. However, under analysis, the tale of Medusa, turns into an image of authoritarian repression of female sexuality. Either as consensual or non-consensual (as in Ovid's version of the myth), Medusa's engagement with sexuality, especially after adopting revered virginity under Athena's cult, is met with punishment. The punishment emphasizes her beauty, transforming into a hideous monster. While not a spirit, Medusa's drive towards vengeance is brought to an end by Persues. Similar theme is also witnessed in the tale of Arachne, who is transformed into a spider for skillfully protesting against the authority. *La Llorona*, Thus, comes to manifest the archetype of dangerous, but beautiful seductress, or as King (23) defines it, that of the castratrix (the

sexually awakened spirit that enacts revenge for being wronged). *Nü gui*, a Chinese spirit, is similar to *La Llorona* in this pattern. Also with long hair and white/red robes, *Nü gui* is the ghost of a woman who commits suicide after being assaulted/raped. She returns in red (colour of revenge in Chinese symbology), to exact revenge upon those who wrong her. In some versions, the spirit also takes the form of a beautiful woman, seducing men and absorbing their yang/energy (Nathan, Kelkar, & Xiaogang 60).

Female perception flips masculine commentary, in that female accounts place sympathetic focus upon *La Llorona's* abandonment. According to their interpretation, the spirit's hunting of male prey (who are characterised through engagement with deviant behaviour) is justified, for they have similarly failed their duties as husbands and fathers, and therefore deserve punishment; thereby subverting the discourse on gendered duties. Furthermore, in certain accounts, while not warranted, *La Llorona's* filicide is considered appropriate, for it deprived the lover his main source of his pride, that is, his children (Tomio-Armorer 58-59). A similar justified tale also exists in Japan in *Tokaido Yotsuya Kaidan* (Yotsuya's ghost story). The tale retells the murder of Oiwa, by the hands of her husband, Iemon. Oiwa then returns as a vengeful spirit, driving Iemon to kill his kin, including his new wife. Her spirit is satiated only once her former husband is killed. *Bancho Sarayashiki* or *the tale of Okiku* follows a similar pattern, where Tessen Aoyama kills his maid Okiku, disposing off her body in a well. Okiku returns as a ghost driving Aoyama mad. All these tales however, rest upon the Confucius idea of morality, where the ghost's murder of their oppressors is justified in the context of their own murder. Similar to *La Llorona*, then, we observe a pattern of deaths caused by violence caused by the normative male protector, where female action is always a retaliation of the male counterpart (Wee 153). The two tales mentioned all under the umbrella of *Onryo*, or the majorly female

group of spirits that return from the dead due to some wrong done to them. Within this group is also the more contemporary *Kuchisake-onna*, or the spirit of a wife whose face was disfigured by her husband. Her modern version haunts locations, wearing a mask. Those who run into her are similarly disfigured through a scissor, creating a smile that stretches from ear to ear. However, it is also important to note that there occurs marked social differences between the two cultural constructions of spirits. For instance, Japanese vindication is marked by *bakeru* or change, where justified murder occurs as a transformation from a subservient adolescent girl, to a vindictive spirit, which is quelled after exacting revenge upon the oppressor in question (Wee 154).

When abstracted, the mythical pedagogy parallels the notions of *Machismo* and *Marianismo*. While both depend upon normative notions of duty, *Machismo* comes to define male virility, and power over the feminine, and *Marianismo* peddles passivity. The former arises as the *différance* of the latter. Going back to myths, we find the roots of *Marianismo* in the Virgin Mary/ *Virgen de Guadalupe*, who symbolises a pious, caring and silent female. Thus, women who maintain their ‘purity’/virginity before marriage manifest the holy mother; while those who fail to do so are slotted in the *puta* paradigm (Tomio-Armorer 58). Thus, *La Llorona* comes to reflect the paradox of experience. A similar pattern can also be viewed in the Japanese dichotomy of the *Musume* and *Shojo*. The former, *Musume* describes a passive, virtuous and subservient female; while the latter, *Shojo*, are socially unanchored, irresponsible, and over-indulgent (Wee 156). While the components that create both the paradigms are drastically different, the creation of a binary, is indicative of influence nevertheless.

Another venue to identify paradox within the character of the wailing women is through psychoanalytic interpretation. Primarily, she comes to manifest the Great Mother archetype in its entirety. The archetype can be divided into benevolence and malevolence, where *La Llorona*

comes to identify with both (Lawson 112-113). As a malevolent mother, she murders not only her offspring, but hunts for others as a means of exacting revenge. As a benevolent mother, her actions can be viewed as a highly displaced and neurotic portrayal of motherly protection against possible infamy (Aiken 22-23). Furthermore, her eternal wailing can be an expression of the same maternal ambivalence. Furthermore, this reading also suggests that her killing might be a trial at being reunited with her own blood; thus the mythical waters associated with *La Llorona* become a symbol both of birth, and of death.

Freud's theory of psychosexual development gives us more ground to theorise. An overt study of the myth relays the motif of motherly betrayal, however, under a psychoanalytic lens, the same turns into the symbol of weaning, or in Freudian terms, the first betrayal. In this sense, the myths become a mode of staging the triadic relationship between Oedipus, Laus, and Jocasta, paralleled by the absent father, the observer of the myth/son, and the great mother in the form of *La Llorona*. As representation of world order, the myth conflates with life suggesting that the adult observer might still be at the mercy of the malevolent mother, as he was when he was younger. The psychoanalytic interpretation of this paradox may lie, in a Straussian resolution, of the myths as a symbol of maternal ambivalence. Here ambivalence comes to manifest two meanings. The first is social, reflecting the maternal ambivalence faced by women towards their offsprings. In her analysis of patriarchal undertones of motherhood, O'Reilly suggests that childbearing is essentialised, naturalised and idealised, creating a singular mould of experiencing and projecting maternal emotions. However, she argues that motherhood is a complex experience defined by both love and loathing. By demonising ambivalence (through myth), thus, society assumes motherhood as a necessary part of a female's life, and that any repulsion/action against the same results in a bad mother like *La Llorona* or a *Puta* (O'Reilly

65-70). In other words, one can view *La Llorona* as an exemplification of maternal ambivalence. The second manner in which ambivalence is depicted, is psychoanalytic. Drawing from the first explanation, here ambivalence turns unconscious, where one can harbour feelings of appreciation and hostility towards the subject of desire/love (40-44). Freud's application of the subject to death is of specific utility to the analysis. In the words of Hogan, "sexual behavior and its ultimate purpose, children, are quite clearly the antithesis of death. If one is to examine death, then one must examine sex" (Hogan in Morales 3). Within the myth of *La Llorona* both are linked to the essentially maternal body, where the body is able to create life, but monstrous sexuality has the ability to destroy male life. Thus, such an interpretation reveals, that by casting *La Llorona* in a specifically sexual role as the murderous temptress, the myths relays the potential danger female sexuality can cause to masculinity. Nathan, Kelkar & Xiagang, also hint at similar sexual undertones in the role of the destroyer and the protector. In their observation of Isan, in north-eastern Thailand, they highlight how wooden penises are utilised to protect against the necessarily female spirits (66).

The Scapegoat which Restricts the Breaking of Boundaries

The social functions of a myth has been highlighted by several scholars such as Durkhiem, Radcliffe-Brown, Douglas, Malinowski, and Levi-Strauss (Segal 177). Thus, it is no surprise that the tale of *La Llorona* is deeply entangled with social charters. However, the social function can be bifurcated into two- disciplinary, and regulatory. While the former refers to the overt act of setting boundaries through fear, the latter refers to the covert function of a myth in providing legitimacy to certain institutions (Harwood 784). Overtly, *La Llorona* serves a powerful didactic function. Handed down from family to family, the myth has been utilised to inculcate disciplined behaviour in children, cautioning them against wandering too far from

home, and against the lure of strangers. With religious and social undertones, the tale emphasises the safety of home, and the dangers of ill-behaviour (Tomio-Armorer 57).

The convert function lies in regulation of bodies. Myths are important here, for “far from being a kind of cultural froth (myths) may actually represent an important phase in the systematics of the knowledge” (Biesele in King 6-7). For the same, we can revert to the virgin-whore dichotomy, applying it to the control of female sexuality at emergence, or adolescence. The image of *Virgen de Guadalupe* becomes essential at this stage, for puberty marks the uneasy cusp of sexual development. *La Llorona*, as a mother figure, thus becomes instructional, allowing for reverse identification if one fails to fulfill norms. However, the tale also works parallelly to warn males against lustful actions, lest they be punished by a figure. The emphasis on this stage can also be gauged from the anxieties portrayed by the young girl themselves, as the monster archetypes. As a nearly sexual being, the theme emerges in the form of G!kno//’amdima in Kalahari Bushman lore, and in the image of !Xo, //ana in West African Kweneng tradition pantheons (King 19). The tales mentioned above follow a path of punishment, much like *La Llorona* for the crime of male abandonment, thereby acting as cautionary tales against the acts of rape or assault. Thus, the female is casted as the “castratrix” (23) in the tale of G!kno//’amdima, where her assaulters are symbolically castrated by her energy, or in the Mbuti myth concerning the castration of a sexually forceful Chimpanzee, by a tortoise. The position of tale in this paradigm relays that female sexuality is sacred/dangerous, thus tabooed, and thus also a subject to control. Perez, defines this succinctly, when he suggests that the castratrix myths, “teaches boys to see women as temptresses, embodiments of a malevolent sexuality that could cause them to lose their souls and control of their bodies” (Perez in Morales 2).

As discussed earlier, the control also translates into essentialised motherhood. Regardless of the variation, *La Llorona* expounds upon the eternal consequences of failing the normative expectations of a wife, a lover, and a mother, defined through the church (through the Virgin Mary) and the society. The creation of the dichotomy between *Good* and *Bad* mother, creates unconscious guilt, prescribing passivity. This is furthered by *La Llorona's* punishment, which independent of the Christian model of redemption is cursed to wail for eternity. Similar arcs of protection and punishment also occur for Grendel's mother in *Beowulf*, and Clytemnestra in Aeschylus's *Orestia*. Modern examples include Mrs. Vorhees from *Friday the Thirteenth*, Kayako in *Ju-on*, and others. Regardless of their individual complexities and differences, the narrative revolves around a mother and her offspring. Yet, in relegating them to displaced protection, the norm still prescribes the nurturing, pious, and suffering image of the female.

Here a tangent might be in order to explore the contradiction in *La Llorona's* revenge. Kearney identifies the spirits's motives in *Muina*, a form of internalised anger, that leads spirits to turn to malevolency. Freud, in *Totem and Taboo*, hints at the same. He suggests that in the mythical mind, death is the greatest tragedy always chased through unnatural means (which proves true for most vengeful spirits), and therefore, the dead remain dissatisfied with their fate (37). This results in a vindictive spirit channeling *Muina*. For the Ixtepeji individuals interviewed by Kearny, *Muina* occurs as a response to being wronged in life, and as a motive for revenge against that which hurt the spirit (204). Through this lens *La Llorona* can be seen as the first in the chain of being wronged through the loss of her husband and children, and therefore, she “wishes to injure and deprive others who are more fortunate” (Kearney 202). Yet, *La Llorona's* victims remain men, over women, of whom she, as mother, should be envious of. The answer of this partially lies in *imitative or sympathetic magic*, as defined by Frazer in *The Golden Bough*

(9). The notion of *sympathy* resides on Manhardt's law of similarity, where like is supposed to influence like, much like in *voodoo*, where a doll may stand in for a victim (Ackerman 120). Thus, *La Llorona's Munia* generalises all men in the image of her lover. Yet, a deeper social motivation that could also be discerned. *La Llorona's* primary victims are not just men, but *Parranderos*, or men who cheat their wives/ engage in undesirable behaviour. While preying upon husbands might be a way of harming their wives, yet, as a social figure, *La Llorona's* actions can be situated in a moral paradigm, if one considers her prey as deviant men, overstepping the boundaries of normative male duties (Kearny 206). She thereby betrays feminist undertones, protecting families, specially wives from drunk and aggressive *Machos*.

Monster as a Challenge to Society

Sonja Ross in her analysis of hunting and agricultural societies in North America posits that myths act as social documents preserving change in traditions/behavioural patterns (432). This can be taken further, suggesting that the active and gradual transformation of myths are reflective of negotiation with ideologies. Thus, Bej argues that “the reversal of an accepted image, often with humor or irony. This strategy of filling traditional imagery with new meanings is more complex than rejection, for for such strategies both critique and derive power from the image reversed or repositioned” (Bej in Simerka 48). Thus, Morales' mother's version of the *La Llorona* myths is reflective of late 20th century immigrant anxieties. She recounts the tale handed down to her- *La Llorona* was a beautiful woman of poor socio-economic background, who resided near the US-Mexico border. One day, as she walked through the market, her gaze fell upon an American man, with whom she fell in love with. The man reciprocated the sentiment, and soon she was pregnant with their child. Hearing of the pregnancy, *La Llorona's* family disowned her, and within the next year, the American man abandoned her.;ater, left with

no resources, and scorned by her family, she tried fording a river to reach her lover. In her trial, she accidentally drowned her child. Later, she died of grief, transforming into the wailing women (Morales 1-2). This version, as a reflection of the 20th-21st century type-anxiety that defined US-Mexico relations. It challenges the American treatment of Latinx immigrants, thereby modelling the myth to suit novel needs.

Recently, a wave of Chicana writers have started engaging with the three mothers, casting them into the mould of a hero in their literary works. For them *La Llorona* is the wronged mother who wails against the injustices meted out to her. For example, in Helena Maria Viramontes' *The Cariboo Cafe*, *La Llorona* battles against poverty, immigration, and a military dictatorship. In this reinscription, the Chicana mother is not wronged by a lover, but by the governments. Set in a historical context, the short story refers to the dictatorial authority created by the Mexican government and the American military. She loses her children to this government, which abducts them, creating a maternal rift (Carbonell 54). On the other hand Sandra Cisneros' *Woman Hollering Creek* engages with the themes of domestic battery and normative female dependence upon men. *La Llorona* in this scheme is betrayed by her husband who lives beyond the border. She becomes a victim to not only to male aggression, but also to the American dream (Carbonell 58). In both the versions, the woman, at first cannot comprehend their predicament; however, by the end of the stories, both transform into *Gritonas* or women that holler at their persecutors. Both the variations challenge much more than the patriarchy that *La Llorona* is rooted in; with them challenging the US foreign policy, and its dictatorial regimen against Latin American spaces and its people (Carbonell 59).

In these tales the image of *La Llorona* develops as a figure of both loss and wanting, as she searches for her lost kin. Thus, while in real life, women are rendered passive under male

oppression, in folklore and myth, they retaliate by enacting the same ideology and standards upon men (Kearny 203). Similar can also be noticed in Russel's analysis of witches in Europe, where the figure of the witch was a means of contesting the patriarchal authorities; specifically since the authority was, much like in *Vergin de Guadalupe's* case, Christian in nature (Nathan, Kelkar, & Xiaogang 59). Carbonell suggests that by shifting the focus from the female, to the male component in myths, the writers place the figure in a social context that justifies *La Llorona's* action (56). Furthermore, by emphasizing the concepts of class and race, for which the wailing woman is abandoned, the conscious recreations shed light upon the colonial undertones that the myth always possessed. The creation of an alternative Chicana subjectivity through myth, "address(es) themes central to their own psycho-social development and lifestyles" (Jones in Simerka 50). Thus, it is no surprise that the contemporary sightings of *La Llorona* have shifted from creeks and lakes, to dim streets and dumpsters, the modern equivalent of isolated ruin, and manifestation of danger (of theft, robbery, and others). Furthermore, dim alleys, what Walvern calls the 'least civilized' section of urban landscape, associated with the practice of disposing/abandoning unwanted infants in dumpsters (Simerka 50).

Conclusion

Malinowski, in his analysis of mythical function, concluded that there exists an intimate link between social institutions and myths. For him myths legitimised and sanctioned the practice of certain behaviours (Harwood 784). Rogus, in her critical commentary upon the 2001 *Nguyen vs. INS* case suggests that the sociological notion of motherhood has the potential to harm female identifying individuals, by not only consigning them to stereotyped moulds, but also by justifying the denial of reproductive rights (803). Whence a biological mother is assumed to be a sociological mother, she is bound up by the image of the ideal mother, who is often, if not only,

rich, white, nurturing, and dependent on male kin (of which *La Llorona* is none). This system, designed majorly by men, influences women to internalise failure if they do not parallel the norm. Any sign of ambivalence is enough to deem a mother, a monster (Rogus 818).

The reason why the archetype of a caregiving mother seems instinctual, is because the ideal is naturalised through a complex system, of which myth is a part. The assumption is a self-fulfilling prophecy, for the biological and sociological motherhood exists in a cycle of influence, where biological mothers are expected to be sociologically ideal mothers; and the fulfillment of the ideal further reifies a faux connection to biology. An assumption of motherhood influences several sectors of society including economy, law, opportunity, and access. Nathan, Kelkar & Xiaogang, highlight the same, tracing the images of the *Chudail* (India), *Chao Pu xi* (China), and *Dai* (Sino-Thai), as patriarchal tags, that were demonised to enact an economic and social change against the female system of knowledge and power (59). It is for this reason that a feminist reading of vengeful female spirits is essential. By placing the notion of vengeance into a justified response, the behaviour of the spirit is no longer outrageous, but rather a phenomenon that highlights patriarchal injustices. Segura suggests that it is through the transformation of representation, that the larger system can be altered, for the abstract of patriarchy resides majorly in the form of figures (11). Through this as covered earlier, if a vengeful female archetype was created to demonise certain actions, then the engagement with those actions can be reclaimed by transforming *La Llorona* into *La Gritona*. Within Vindication lies kernels of oppression, a complicated mass of wail and mourns; to decentralise patriarchy, then is to dive deep in the unheard screams, and to retrieve a voice.

Annotated bibliography

Ackerman, Robert. "Frazer on Myth and Ritual." *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 36, no. 1, 1975, p. 115., doi:10.2307/2709014.

This article by R. Ackerman traces the development of Myth-ritualist themes in works of James George Frazer. Utilising letter correspondence as a base, Ackerman develops and points out three different variations in the Scottish Anthropologist's conceptualisation of myths. The paper also delves into approaches to mythology that were contemporary to Frazer (such as Muller), along with listing his major theoretical inspirations such as Smith and Manhardt. Through this he sketches Frazer's constantly changing notions in relation to myths and rituals. Ackerman's contextual analysis is particularly essential in discerning Frazer's methodology, and theoretical underpinnings, providing a conceptual framework for comparative study of myths.

Aiken, Jane H. "Motherhood as Misogyny ." *Women & Law*, 2020, pp. 19–37.

In this paper, Jane H. Aiken, a professor of law at Wake Forest Law School, adopts an anthropological approach to motherhood, analysing the notion of essential motherhood and the several forms it adopts. Using case studies as evidence, the author expounds upon the following themes: (1) Motherhood as Sacrifice (2) Mothers Who Kill Their Children (3) Mothers of

Murdered Children (4) Mothers Who Kill to Protect Their Children, and (5) Maternal Sacrifice in the Face of Incarceration. Throughout the categories, the author focuses upon how the maternal figure is deemed centre to any form of blame/harm to children vis-vis the paternal figure, if present. In an analysis of vindictive mothers, the second and the fourth categories are of particular utility, since they exemplify the Great Mother Archetype and its binary expression in relation to filicide.

Carbonell, Ana Maria. "From Llorona to Gritona: Coatlicue in Feminist Tales by Viramontes and

Cisneros." *Melus*, vol. 24, no. 2, 1999, p. 53., doi:10.2307/467699.

The article by Carbonell, fulfills two objects. In the primary section, the author traces the prototypic nature of the *La Llorona* myth in brief, listing down social, historical, and cultural context, along with her normative appearance. The second section, which proves of high importance, analyses the modern feminsit reinscription of the Myth, majorly in the short stories *The Cariboo Cafe* by Helena Maria Viromontes, and *Woman Hollering Creek* by *Sandra Cisneros*. Adopting a contextual analysis the article adopts a feminist comparative contextual analysis, evaluating the source myth, with the reimagnations on historical, and symbolic basis.

Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome. "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)." *Monster Theory*, 1996, pp. 3–25.,

doi:10.5749/j.cttsq4d.4.

In this work Cohen proposes a new model for understanding culture through the monsters it generates. In doing so, the author adopts an approach that omits historical specificity and locality of knowledge. Specifically with regards to the former, Cohen argues that history is one of the

texts in a set, and thereby is not an authority on the meaning of a certain phenomenon. Within the article he proposes seven characteristics of a monster that are of extreme significance when approaching the subject. These seven theses are: 1) the monster partakes in a cultural practice; (2) the monster can only be witnessed through an evidence; (3) the monster manifests a paradox; (4) the monster becomes a societal scapegoat; (5) the monster acts as a social regulator against taboo; (6) the monster must be both attractive and ugly; and (7) a monster must challenge the society

Cooke, John Daniel. "Euhemerism: A Mediaeval Interpretation of Classical Paganism."

Speculum, vol. 2, no. 4, 1927, pp. 396–410., doi:10.2307/2847516.

This article is a historiographical account of the development of Euhemerism as an interpretative approach to myths. The paper traces the origin back to the greek philosophers, and to the theory's namesake, Euhemros. The theory purports that different figures from mythology can be traced back to living human beings that were falsely deified as a function of memory, respect and their distortion. The approach, being grounded in reality, gives us a venue to evaluate the actions in a myth as gestures grounded in human history. The paper's utility lies in proposing a theory that allows us to apply mythical actions from the realms of cognition, to physicality, in treating the myths as an evidence of physical human activity, and not an intellectual off-shoot.

Doniger, Wendy. "Myths and Methods in the Dark." *The Journal of Religion*, vol. 76, no. 4,

1996, pp. 531–547., doi:10.1086/489852.

Wendy Doniger's approach in this article is a reconciliation between modern structuralist quest for universal patterns behind myths and postmodern anxieties about difference and uniqueness.

Inherently feminist, the article also adopts a historiographical approach to idiom, “in the dark all cats are gray”, tracing it back to sexualising contexts. The author melds the two approaches in her work. The paper is of essence, specifically for any approach towards comparative mythology, for it deconstructs the conflation of cultures, providing us an opportunity of engaging with comparative evaluation more consciously.

Frazer, James George. *The Golden Bough: a Study in Comparative Religion*. MacMillan, 1894.

The Golden Bough is a work of comparative mythology and religion that adopts several pantheons/mythical bodies in its analysis. In the book, Frazer proposes several different concepts, including the development of religious thought into science, agricultural rituals, the dying king, the man-god, human sacrifices, imitative/sympathetic magic, and others. His central argument situates early religions as fertility cults, that were centered around the appointment and death of a divine king. The text also stands as an example for comparative myth approach, along with allowing us several theorisations, as mentioned above, that can be applied to the study of mythical figures.

Freud, Sigmund. *Totem and Taboo*. Hogarth Press, 1958.

This book applies Freudian psychoanalysis to the fields anthropology, mythology and the study of religion. A collection of four essays that were inspired by Jung and Wundt, the work applies Freud’s analysis of neurotic patients to primitive mythology, claiming unconscious causes to mythological outputs. This includes the notions of incest dread, taboo, omnipotence of thought, ambivalence towards different entities, and totemism as a mode of maintaining the taboo. Freud’s analysis of ambivalence and spirits is of great utilisation, especially in tandem with the theories of Levi-Strauss and Cohen, in providing a motive and nature to vindictive spirits.

Grossberg, Lawrence. "Chapter 6: Identity and Cultural Studies: Is That All There Is?" *Questions of Cultural Identity*, edited by Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay, SAGE Publishing, 1994, pp. 87-107, SAGE knowledge. sk.sagepub.com/books/questions-of-cultural-identity/n6.xml.

The chapter is a commentary on modern fiction with cultural studies upon the issues of identity. As a means of further complicating the same Grossberg introduces notions such as *Differance*, fragmentation, diaspora creation and others. However, his main aim is to shift the focus from individual construction of identity to, the group construction of the same. He suggests that collective identities can be created by solidarity that originates from being in the same spatial context. Key within the paper's analysis is the notion of *Differance* that suggests identity in a binary are negations of each other. A similar understanding can be applied to vindictive spirits, where it, and a desirable ideal is a negation of each other.

Harwood, Frances. "Myth, Memory, and the Oral Tradition: Cicero in the Trobriands." *American Anthropologist*, vol. 78, no. 4, 1976, pp. 783–796., doi:10.1525/aa.1976.78.4.02a00040.

Building upon Malinowski, Harwood argues that spatial mnemonic is an important aspect to the myths of non-literate society. The author also suggests that space has four functions, (1) a mnemonic for remembering a body of myths (2) as a marker dividing the corpus into cognitive units and (3) as a means of creating internal fail-safes against changes in the corpus. Harwood also argues that myths play a didactic purpose that is furthered by its mnemonic function to shock through extremities. The Paper is useful, for it not only provides novel theorisation, but also succinctly condenses Malinowski's theory, for those adopting his concepts.

Kearney, Michael. "La Llorona as a Social Symbol." *Western Folklore*, vol. 28, no. 3, 1969, p.

199., doi:10.2307/1499265.

Kearny's exploratory study on the figure of *La Llorona* is based on fieldwork carried out in Oaxaca, Mexico. The study sets out the basic characteristics of the wailing woman in the Ixtepejian version of the myth. Besides a brief introduction to her tale, the analysis also delves into the theme of *Aire*, Deception, sociological influence, and *Muina*. The paper also establishes a cyclical model of understanding *La Llorona's* victimhood. The paper is of essence as it establishes the typical characteristics of the vindictive spirit, that are essential to any analysis of the figure, along with clearing her inspiration, local variation, motives, and her context in the Mexican society.

King, Robert. "A Regiment of Monstrous Women: Female Horror Archetypes and Life History

Theory." *Evolutionary Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 9, no. 3, 2015, pp. 170–185., doi:10.1037/ebs0000037.

King, in this article, adopts a psychological approach to analyse the pantheon of female characters in horror movies. The approach also depends upon *Life* theory, to bring out notions of mate selection, cervical and evolutionary purposes of storytelling. Through this he concludes several recurring archetypes in horror movies : (1) Scary Young Girl (2) Sexual Predators (Predatory, dangerous, man-eaters; Predatory, dangerous, woman-eaters; Castratrixes) (3) Mothers (Possessed mothers; Vengeful mothers) (4) Menopausal females (Post-menopausal Machiavelian manipulators) (5) Others (Victim; the Final girl). The analysis serves as an extension to Jungian archetypes, aiding in providing more nuanced understanding of it to an analysis, when compared to the more generalised label of the 'Great Mother.'

Kluckhohn, Clyde. "Myths and Rituals: A General Theory." *Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 35, no. 1, 1942, pp. 45–79., doi:10.1017/s0017816000005150.

Though primarily a review of Myth-ritualist theory, this article applies psychoanalytic theory to the notions forwarded by anthropologists such as Smith, Frazer, Lang, and others. Focusing upon the pan-human symbolism adopted by the theorists, the author suggests that the function of rituals rests in the alleviation of 'type-anxieties'. Furthermore, opposing the myth-ritualists in a sense, he suggests that the primacy between myth or ritual rests solely upon the culture they belong to. The paper is in line with arguments forwarded by Malinowski, Freud and Jung, in providing a purpose to myth/ritual, which proves necessary in a consideration where horror is deemed as a reflection of societal fears/anxiety.

Lang, Andrew. *Myth, Ritual and Religion*. Longmans, 1901.

Myth, Ritual and Religion is a landmark work in the study of myths. Breaking away from prior approaches, the work adopts a scientific-historical approach to myths with the aim of tracing a state of mind wherein myths were rational. Thus, he enacts a bifurcation between religion and myths. The work begins with establishing the status of the savage mind, along with a theory on evolution, and diffusion. The key concepts of the work include animism, totemism, sorcery and magic, spiritualism, curiosity, and credulity of the savage mind.

Lawson, Tom. *Carl Jung: Darwin of the Mind*. Karnac Books, 2008.

Lawson's book is a review and explanation of Carl Jung's theory, focusing upon the symbols and images that can be traced in human myths, dreams and rituals. Influenced by eastern mysticism, Jung provided a theory of how the human psyche develops, and survives in an evolutionary

context. Key in this work is Lawson's explanation of Archetypes as the instinctual images behind all human expression. Primacy among this, for this paper, was given to the Great Mother archetype, which is an ambivalent concept described through its malevolent and benevolent parts.

Levi-Strauss, Claude. "The Structural Study of Myth." *The Journal of American Folklore*, vol.

68, no. 270, 1955, p. 428., doi:10.2307/536768.

One of the most influential texts in the structuralist study of myth, the article delves into Levi-Strauss' methodology of binary structuralism. Levi-Strauss argues that all versions of myths are valid parts of the same myth. He treats myth as language, dividing into two, similar to *Langue* (akin to structure or grammar) and *Parole* (the practice of speech). In his study he suggests that all myths can be reduced to binary oppositions that can be expressed through tables (his studies apply this to the myth of Oedipus) . Through this, he suggests, the true meaning of myths can be gauged.

Lévi-Strauss Claude. *Myth and Meaning*. Routledge, 2016.

Levi-Strauss' *Myth and Meaning* exacts an amalgamation between the study of myth and science. He contends that human thinking occurs in binaries and their resolution, that can be observed in myths. Through his analysis, he aims to universal patterns of human myths, and the nature of 'primitive thinking.' within the work he also tries developing a functional link between myths, history and music. The work is of extreme importance as it allows for exploring the resolatory nature of the binary complexity within mythical figures, such as *La Llorona's* conflicting murder of her children.

Morales, Orquidea. "Chicana Feminism and Horror: Fear La Llorona." *Utah Foreign Language Review* [Online], 18 (2010): Web. 28 Dec. 2020.
<https://epubs.utah.edu/index.php/uflr/article/view/856>.

Focusing upon the figure of *La Llorona* in popular media, this article analyzes *The Wailer 2*, a contemporary portrayal of the mythical figure. Critical in nature, the paper argues that stereotypical depictions of *La Llorona* undermines the reinscription and re-theorising of the figure by modern Chicana writers. The work is of essence, for it not only provides a several versions of the *La Llorona* myth, but also provides commentary upon the pedagogic role of movie adaptations, and the feminist interpretations of the tale.

Müller, Max. "On The Philosophy Of Mythology." *Chips from a German Workshop*, Longmans, Green, and Co, 1880, pp. 46–83.

In *Chips From a German Workshop*, the orientalist, and one of the most influential names in the study of Indian religion, Max Muller provides, especially in the second chapter, an etymological study of the origin of myths. He traces the mythopoeic language to curiosity, suggesting that 'myth was an inevitable disease of language.' he suggests that language has an influence on imagination, that can be gauged from studying the roots of words in myths, that act as allegories of visual reality. The etymological nature of his work is extremely important, for it allows us to deconstruct notions such as *Aire*, and in understanding why such notions are characteristic to certain figures.

Nathan, Dev, et al. "Women as Witches and Keepers of Demons: Cross-Cultural Analysis of

Struggles to Change Gender Relations.” *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 33, no. 44, 1998, pp. 58–69.

The article examines figures such as *Chao Pu xi*, *Chudail*, *Dai*, and others, making them integral to the change in gender relations, and patriarchy. The authors argue that the labels were utilised as a means of establishing male domination over female systems of knowledge. The paper also suggests that myths have economic, social and political roles. However, the paper is of essence, as it also provides a compendium of vindictive female ghosts sharing similar characteristics, that can be employed in any study of tangential topics.

O'Reilly, Andrea. “We Need to Talk about Patriarchal Motherhood.” *Journal of the Motherhood Initiative*, vol. 7, ser. 1, 2016, pp. 64–81. *I*.

This article applies a feminist analysis to the portrayal of motherhood in the novel, *We Need to Talk About Kevin*. The author argues that patriarchy essentialises, naturalises and idealises motherhood, creating binaries of good and bad mother, and stifling maternal subjectivities. The paper explores how the novel depicts maternal ambivalence, and how the same is treated in societal context. She argues that the notion of the good mother impedes and even harms women, who are directed to stock their emotions into a certain mould. The failure to fulfill the same creates internalised shame, creating a repressive model of motherhood.

Rogus, Caroline. “Conflating Women's Biological and Sociological Roles: The Ideal of Motherhood, Equal Protection, and the Implications of the Ngyuen V. INS Opinion.” *Journal of Constitutional Law*, vol. 5, no. 4, 2003, pp. 803–830.

The paper is a feminist legal commentary on the Ngyuen V. INS Opinion of 2001, which traced the national belongingness of a child on the basis of the mother's citizenship over the father's. The article deems assumed maternal characteristics as oppressive to women. Rogus also brings forth a complex argument about the nature of sociological and biological motherhood, and how law has the power to influence the view, by naturalising ideal motherhood. Such a view also ousts out the father, not only reducing their responsibility and accountability, but also their opportunity to act affectionately towards their children. The paper is essential in its articulation between social and biological notions, and how certain characteristics are naturalised in belief systems.

Ross, Sonja. "Mythology as an Indicator of Cultural Change. Hunting and Agriculture as

Reflected in North American Traditions." *Anthropos*, vol. 95, no. 2, 2000, pp. 433–443.

In this paper, Ross argues that myths can be viewed as a reflection of social change. She suggests that myths act as social documents preserving beliefs in value systems in temporal contexts, and any alteration in them can be viewed as a change in the material world upon which the myths rest. Applying the same on agricultural and hunting societies of North America, the article supports that any change in society is refracted ideologically. The last theorisation proves to be of relevance, especially in gauging how femininst alterations of a myth such as *La Llorona's*, is reflective of larger changes in female empowerment and ideology.

Segal, Robert A. "The Myth-Ritualist Theory of Religion." *Journal for the Scientific Study of*

Religion, vol. 19, no. 2, 1980, p. 173., doi:10.2307/1386251.

The paper is a historiography of the development of myth-ritualist theory on various fronts. The paper does not only include theorists deemed as myth-ritualists, it sheds light on functions of different rites in relation to belief, that aids in subverting the idea of perceived superiority of either myth or ritual. As a compendium of different theorists and their analysis, this article is of great essence in gaining a bird's eye view of myth-ritualism through different venues.

Segura, Sofia Nogués. "Myths and the Perception of Gender in Culture and Society."

Unpublished Manuscript, May 2013, pp. 1–20.

The article aims to link the notions of gender and myths, and how one influences the other. The paper is divided into two sections. The first deals with the contextualising and defining of myths as social practices and charters. The second section, which is of more utility to the analysis, contends with the connection between gendered notions of male and female, and how they are regulated by myths. The paper uses several theories to create a holistic understanding of the topic.

Simerka, Barbara. "Women Hollering: Contemporary Chicana Reinscriptions of La Llorona

Mythography." *Confluencia*, vol. 16, no. 1, 2000, pp. 49–58.

Simerka's article focuses upon the function of myth as a social charter, and as a reflection of one's psycho-social status. In the primary section, the paper traces the roots of the *La Llorona* myth, and its different gendered perceptions, along with the figure's connection to *La Malinche* and *Virgen de Guadalupe*. The paper analyzes contemporary retellings such as Rudolfo Anaya's *The Legend of La Llorona*, placing it in historical and social context. The paper develops a

feminist readings of the same, commenting upon how figures such as the wailing women influence and create gender norms.

Tomio-Armorer, Alexia. "The Legend of La Llorona: Historical, Cultural, and Feminist

Significance." *Footnotes*, vol. 20, June 2020, pp. 53–65.,
journal.lib.uoguelph.ca/index.php/footnotes/article/view/5938.

The paper is a general exploration of the figure of *La Llorona* from multiple perspectives. The paper establishes the historical variations in her image, along with her importance in the creation of gendered (regulation) and cultural identification in Mexico. This is furthered by a focus upon a feminist interpretation of the same as both an oppressed female character, as well as an empowered maternal figure wailing against injustices. The paper is highly valuable in the current analysis, that aims to establish a result on a similar trajectory.

Tylor, Edward Burnett. *Primitive Culture*. Harper, 1958.

An intellectualist piece of work, *Primitive culture*, suggests that myths are a product of 'savage' intellectualisation of the world. Myths are created as humans philosophise and give meaning to the world. The work aims at tracing the development of the human mind from 'savage' to civilised, arguing that each stage is closely connected to the development of the belief system. Key in his argument is the notion of *animism* or the process of assigning all objects a soul. Also important is his establishment of connections between morbidity and myths, that is central to the paper's analysis

Wee, Valerie. "Patriarchy and the Horror of the Monstrous Feminine." *Feminist Media Studies*,

vol. 11, no. 2, 2011, pp. 151–165., doi:10.1080/14680777.2010.521624.

The article focuses upon the gender representation in the Japanese movie *Ringu*, and its American adaptation *The Ring*. The paper brings out the manner in which patriarchy plays out in the two movies depending upon the cultural backgrounds and belief systems. The essence of the paper lies in contextual analysis (including traditional inspirations for the movies), of vindictive spirits with the feminine.