

This research paper was written in the Fall of 2016 for my Chicano Literature class, a class co-taught by Dr. José Aranda and Professor Elena Valdez that places an emphasis on the translation of novels that were originally published by the U.S. Spanish-language press into English. Jorge Ainslie's *Los Pochos* (1934), the novel that I analyze in my paper, was translated by Dr. Aranda's translation class in the Spring of 2016. This novel shares the immigration tale of a family who moves from Mexico to the United States during the Mexican Revolution of 1910 in search of a safe environment and financial betterment. *Los Pochos* exemplifies many of the issues people of Mexican descent faced in the immigration process during the early twentieth century such as financial loss, susceptibility to discrimination and exploitation, and the transgenerational loss of the Mexican culture as a result of their presence in a place dominated by Anglo American culture.

Our task for this paper was to identify a character type found in *Los Pochos* and analyze what that type reveals about the novel as a whole. I decided to focus on Abuelita because she is such a unique figure in the text. Not only does she defy gender norms and societal expectations as a figure of financial authority in the community, but she also provides an interesting perspective on immigration, as her personal immigration tale took place in the early 1800's, during the Spanish colonial era in California. Though she does not know how to read or write, she shares her experiential knowledge about life on the California Mission of San Fernando del Rey orally through the folktales she tells. One of her stories is about a woman who mourns for her infant after the infant is gruesomely murdered by a priest as a punishment for the woman's sexual transgressions.

Abuelita uses this tale to educate and discipline children's behavior in the community. Her story piqued my interest, as its style greatly reminded me of the folklore I had heard growing up along the Mexican-Texas border. It reminded me of one legend in particular, La Llorona, the weeping woman. According to the legend, a woman murdered her children after the father of her children left her to marry a woman of higher social status. For her actions, the spurned woman's soul is cursed to mourn the death of her children for eternity. My mother often told this story to scare my siblings and me into staying at home during the night time. She would say, "*Cuidado*, be careful, if you walk around when it's dark, La Llorona might steal you to replace her children!"

I knew that I had to focus on Abuelita's character type for my paper. Abuelita's appearance in the novel is very brief, but the impression she left on me as a reader was long-lasting. I wanted to know more about her immigration tale and her experience living on the Mission of San Fernando del Rey during the early nineteenth century. I wanted to learn more about the woman at the well whose child was murdered at the hands of a priest, a central figure in California's colonial history. Furthermore, I wanted to know why Abuelita would tell such a horrifying story to children and whether the story itself had historical backing. For the first time in my life, I had a self-directed interest to learn more about events that shaped the production of a Mexican American novel. All of these questions prompted me to embark on one of my greatest research journeys within Fondren Library.

I first began my search on Google scholar. Because I am neither a History, English, or Spanish major and have had little experience with terminology in each field, Google scholar enabled me to learn the keywords I needed to perform a successful search on Fondren's OneSearch Catalog. Once I had ideas about the sort of sources I would need to inform my essay, I began my search on Fondren's OneSearch, using the keywords and search phrases I learned during my GoogleScholar search exercises. The types of sources I was looking for ranged in

topic. While my initial interest was to examine the way in which Abuelita's story deviated from a traditional telling of La Llorona, which would require looking for anthologies to get a sense of what a "traditional" telling encompassed, I knew that I also had to find a methodology to facilitate my analysis. It was by the wondrous magic of Fondren's OneSearch that I found Domino Perez's *There was a Woman: La Llorona from Folklore to Popular Culture* (2008), using the keywords "La Llorona" and "revision."

Through the OneSearch Catalog and recommendations made by my professors, I compiled a list of potential sources. Some sources were electronic, but most were in print format. Because I had little experience checking out books across different disciplines for one project, I had to visit the circulation desk multiple times to ask questions about where to find books based on call numbers and how to extend my book reservations (a function on my Fondren User Services account that I ended up utilizing quite often over the course of this research project). I noticed that as I began to focus and refine my search, I was going back to the same areas in the book stacks on the 2nd and 4th floors. Though I did not restrict myself to searching in just these areas, I began to navigate my way through the library comfortably and freely, which, I must say, is a liberating feeling in contrast to the fears I had about getting lost in the library as a freshman. Eventually, when it came time to check out my books (and I had over ten in my arms), I got to experience the accomplished feeling of asking for one of those gray, durable Fondren bags to help me carry them—something that I had never envisioned myself doing at Rice.

When it came time to write my paper, I utilized some of the sources found on the CWOVC website under the resources tab. I reviewed tips on how to construct an effective thesis and how to conduct a "reverse outline" to assess the organization of my paper once it had been completed. I also referred to their Citation, Source Management, and Honor Code webpage to review how to cite sources using the Modern Language Association (MLA) style. Because my papers as a Psychology major often require that I cite using the American Psychological Association (APA) format, it was helpful and refreshing to have a source that provided reliable MLA citation guidelines. Additionally, as a part of the Social Science Gateway program, I attended lectures led by Dr. Elizabeth Vesta and Mr. Joe Goetz that covered every aspect of constructing a literature review, including how to define your genre, identify your purpose, grapple with sources, and manage your citations effectively. In these lectures, I was briefly introduced to Zotero, a citation manager program that seems highly useful when dealing with a large research project. I decided not to use Zotero for my research paper, as the number of citation this project had was quite manageable on a Word document alone, I plan to attend one of the Zotero workshops that Fondren holds in the future, as I feel it would be greatly beneficial to learn how to use it for future reference.

As a senior this year, I have come to really appreciate the resources that Fondren Library provides to the students at Rice. As I would read through my books and type up my essay in the first floor study area, I would look around me at all the books and students studying, and a bittersweet feeling would wash over me. I thought, "How great is it to be at a university with a library that constantly seeks to improve the scholastic experience of its students?" Through the years, I have gone from feeling intimidated by the library, hearing stories about how students would camp under desks during finals and survive off of caffeine and granola bars, to being absolutely in love with and excited by the knowledge and answers that Fondren holds. After writing my paper on *Los Pochos*, I even began another research project for my Human Factors psychology class. When handing out our assignments, my professor said "Be sure to begin this project soon. This will require an extensive review of existing literature, and the amount of

reading you will have to do will be daunting.” With his warning, I did not even flinch. I smiled at the prospect of asking for another gray Fondren bag.