

Candidate A evidence

How do the authors explore the themes of frustration, repression and despair through their female protagonists in Esquivel's 'Como Agua Para Chocolate' and Lorca's 'Yerma'?

'Yerma' by Federico García Lorca and 'Como Agua Para Chocolate' by Laura Esquivel possess many common features. Both texts deal extensively with the themes of repression, disappointment and hopelessness, especially in the context of their female protagonists.

'Yerma' is a play set in rural Spain (probably in the early 20th century, although this is not stated) which centres on a peasant woman of the same name who is unable to have children. Although short, the text deals with such major themes as womanhood, nature, despair and death. As the years pass, Yerma's obsession with pregnancy and childbirth overtakes her until, at the close of the play, she murders her husband, Juan, in a desperate act of self-hatred and defeat.

'Como Agua Para Chocolate' is a melodramatic novel (*folletín*) set on a remote Mexican ranch during that country's revolution in the early decades of the last century. The text is divided into months and each chapter begins with a recipe. It focuses on Josefita (*Tita*) de la Garza, the youngest daughter of the family who-by tradition-must devote her life to her mother's care, denied the chance to marry the love of her life, Pedro. This work explores themes as varied as tradition, the rôle of women, food, hatred and love.

Both Yerma and Tita struggle with social and societal pressure: to conform, to bow to tradition, to live up to what is expected of a woman. For Tita, this takes the form of the tradition which binds her to her mother and which forces her to deny her love for Pedro. In Yerma's case, though, the source of this overwhelming pressure is primarily herself, although the dominating attitude of her husband, Juan, as well as the judgement of the villagers, could not be said to help.

Central to Yerma's insecurity about her childlessness is her concept of womanhood: what it is to be female and what is to be expected of her. To Juan, she says:

Yerma: *Ojalá fuera yo una mujer.*

It is to be stressed that Yerma, and Yerma alone, considers herself to be less than a true woman. Thus we can say that the fundamental conflicts in this play are character

versus self and, to a lesser extent, character versus environment. As long as she remains barren, Yerma can never measure up to her idea of what is expected of a woman. Through his protagonist, then, Lorca argues that traditional ideas concerning womanhood and the proper rôle of women in life (even those held by women themselves) can be debilitating and destructive, leading only to disappointment and despair. Why, asks the playwright, should Yerma suffer for a biological accident beyond her control?

Esquivel's heroine in *'Como Agua Para Chocolate'* is perhaps a stronger and more resilient person than Yerma. Despite her obvious unhappiness at the lack of control she has over her own life, Tita never loses faith in herself and her ability to overcome. In the novel's very first chapter, *Enero*, Tita's mother, Mama Elena, tells her:

"Sabes muy bien que por ser la más chica de las mujeres a ti te corresponde cuidarme hasta el día de mi muerte."

The central conflict in the novel, consequently, is not Tita versus herself, but Tita versus her environment: her cruel and hard-hearted mother and, more generally, the tradition-driven society in which she lives. As the author herself said in a post-publication interview:

*'Hay una tradición... que está anulando todos los deseos de mi protagonista. Ella no puede querer casarse... Tita es víctima de esos valores [tradicionales].'*²¹

We can say, then, that Esquivel, like Lorca, uses her text to criticise an overemphasis on tradition which, she argues, is detrimental to freedom and happiness. Tita represents the author's hope that the old ways can be overturned.

Yerma and Tita differ greatly in how they relate to other (perhaps less unfortunate) women. Where Yerma struggles to see eye-to-eye with women for whom childbearing has come easy, Tita holds little ill-feeling, even towards the sister who knowingly married Pedro, the only man she could ever love.

In few places is Yerma's shame at her childlessness clearer than in her relationship with neighbour María, a new mother:

María: *¡ya ha llegado!*

Yerma: *¡Qué hermosura! (La mira extraviada.)*

Yerma hears María's good news, expresses the necessary congratulations, but inside she has turned to ice; she retreats into herself. It is this isolation, frustration, this inability to express her grief, which leads to Yerma's eventual estrangement from María, the rest of the villagers and, finally, her husband. As Adam Balen, Professor of Reproductive Medicine, put it:

*'Yerma finds it difficult to be around her – not because she resents the fact that María has children, but because she feels the dreadful emptiness of not having any herself.'*²

Yerma is a character so consumed by her obsession that it ultimately destabilises her and leads to the play's tragic end. Despair, Lorca tells us, cannot always be overcome. 'Yerma', then, is a play which charts how hopelessness and obsession can destroy a person, piece by piece.

When it is made clear to Pedro that he cannot marry Tita, he agrees instead to marry her sister, Rosaura, so long as he can be around the one he truly loves. One would expect Tita to struggle emotionally with Roberto, Rosaura and Pedro's son. Her almost motherly love for her nephew, then, is surprising and beautiful:

'Tita... sentía un inmenso cariño por este niño, olvidando por completo que era el resultado del matrimonio de su hermana con Pedro, el amor de su vida.'

Tita, who by rights should be consumed by jealousy for the sister who married the love of her life, cherishes her nephew. Her resentment is directed at the constricting and claustrophobic environment in which she lives, rather than Rosaura or her child. Thus in Tita we see a spark of hope and optimism; the suggestion that the life-ruining traditions which Esquivel implicitly criticises throughout the novel may one day be overcome. Esquivel adds a magical-realist element to this:

'Tita tuvo... leche suficiente como para alimentar no sólo a Roberto sino a otros dos niños más...'

Where Rosaura is unable to produce milk for her son, Tita (a virgin) is. Although this sort of scenario verges on the fantastic, the implication is clear: that Roberto, even if biologically Rosaura's son, shares a much stronger bond with his aunt, his father's one true love. Esquivel is telling us that love conquers all; that bonds of love are stronger even than those of blood - again, a hopeful and inspiring message.

At the closing stages of 'Yerma' and 'Como Agua Para Chocolate', each protagonist is faced with a life-or-death decision: both choose death. For Yerma, killing Juan is the crushing climax of her descent into madness and the final extinguishing of hope. For Tita, however, although it is hard to believe, ending her life is an empowering act motivated by love: she will be with Pedro forever.

Near the end of 'Yerma', the eponymous heroine meets an old Pagan woman at a fertility shrine high in the mountains. Having explained to Yerma that her inability to fall pregnant is down to *Juan*, and not her, the woman offers her a way out:

Vieja: *Mi hijo está sentado detrás de la ermita esperándote. Mi casa necesita una mujer.*

Yerma: *Calla, calla... ¿Te figuras que puedo conocer otro hombre? ¿Dónde pones mi honra?*

'Yerma' is a play filled with Pagan imagery and symbolism, yet its protagonist clings to a traditional Christian view of the sanctity of marriage; she is loyal to Juan to the last. For Yerma, *honra* is amongst the most important things. She is desperate to become a mother because that, in her view, is the duty of every woman. In exactly the same way, Yerma would (quite literally) rather kill her husband than betray her marriage vows. In this way Lorca reinforces the idea that Yerma's worst enemy in the play is herself. In the final line, she strangles her husband:

'Yerma da un grito y aprieta la garganta de su esposo. Éste cae hacia atrás.'

Truly, Yerma has lost her battle for sanity. As her husband dies, she knows that her own life is over.

Years after the death of Rosaura, Tita and Pedro are able finally to be together without fear. As they have relations, Tita becomes aware that Pedro *'había muerto'*. Knowing that the only way to be with her lover is to die herself, Tita eats matches until the pent-up emotion of years of repression and denial expresses sets her body aflame:

'En ese momento los cuerpos ardientes de Pedro y Tita empezaron a lanzar brillantes chispas. Éstas encendieron la colcha que a su vez incendió todo el rancho.'

Laura Esquivel, like many other South American writers, has been known to incorporate aspects of magical realism into her work – that is, surreal or fantastical events which take place in an otherwise realistic (not magical) narrative. This situation may appear very strange, then, but at heart, Esquivel's message is that love conquers all, and that the limiting, restrictive rules and traditions imposed on Tita from the outside are eventually overcome. She is finally happy. In Esquivel's own words, *'un amor así tiene que estar más allá'*³

Federico García Lorca in 'Yerma' and Laura Esquivel in 'Como Agua Para Chocolate' both look in great detail at such themes as of frustration, despair and hopelessness, with a particular focus on their female protagonists.

Word count, ex headings and quotations: **1379**

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Candidate B evidence

How do Pablo Neruda's values cause him to see ordinary things as extraordinary?

Pablo Neruda was a poet who held a great love for simplicity while he found simplicity in all things he loved. He lived in times of strife and distress, and his poetry bears witness to this. Towards the end of his life, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, as recognition to one of the greatest poets of the twentieth century.¹ Whether it be something as mundane as a small plant, as vast as the sea, or as divisive as national politics, Neruda's poems saw beauty in everything. His writing gave birth to a new sensibility wherein ordinary things began seeming extraordinary.

Neruda's love for all things ordinary was fuelled by what he had seen throughout his life. His experiences had shaped his perspective and created within him a profound sense of awareness which stripped away all worldly pretenses and allowed him to appreciate the ordinary in its raw, awe-inspiring form. This love is shared with the world through his '*Odas Elementales*'.

Being the proud Chilean that he was, Neruda's travels across the globe humbled him, teaching him of poverty and bringing him face to face with the struggles of many whose suffering went unseen. Inspired by the likes of Federico Garcia Lorca and Miguel Hernandez, Neruda was a strong believer in equality.² He was a communist who strived to see a world where every being had the same opportunities. It was during the Spanish Civil War that Neruda's beliefs produced a stronger want for change and an end to injustice. The anguish and misery of his time instilled in him a fascination for the objects that many take for granted.³ Neruda understood the ordinary for what it truly was and thus brought it justice in '*Oda a la Cebolla*', '*Oda al Tomate*', and '*Oda a la Alcachofa*'.

Neruda's appreciation of ordinary objects is seen vividly throughout these odes, as he, in some respects, salutes the things in life that he considers heroically noble- the things that saved people from pain and starvation. His striking love for these otherwise mundane objects is seen in '*Oda a la Cebolla*' when he says:

*'la tierra
asi te hizo,
cebolla,
claro como un planeta'*

Here, Neruda compares something as insignificant as an onion with a planet, which is a representation of magnificence. This comparison is both literal and metaphorical, as onions are round and spherical just as planets are. A planet is seen as a vast holder of life, a place that allows beings to function and live. It is the same admiration of a planet that he relates to an onion, which, in his eyes, is another portrayal of life. In dire times, Neruda saw the onion as the difference between life and death. When there was little or no access to food, it was this ordinary object that fulfilled the role of sustenance for his nation, and provided life just as a planet is known to do.

Having lived in a simplistic manner, Neruda found happiness and enjoyment in simple things. He found appreciation within himself for things which are often ignored by the general population, and these loves and passions can be seen through the comparisons

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pablo_Neruda

² <http://www.chileculture.org/biography-of-pablo-neruda/>

³ <https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/pablo-neruda>

in his odes.⁴ His references of the solar system are prominent in *'Oda a la Cebolla'*, as he uses his fondness of it as a metaphor to describe an onion.

'constelacion constante,'

This comparison of an onion to a constellation brings to mind an endless stream of stars, something that depicts breathtaking beauty. To Neruda, an onion is a beautiful thing, worthy of praise. Just as a constellation is a collection of stars, where the beauty is seen in the togetherness and unity of them all and not just one individually, so too are onions loved for their abundance and availability to all. Neruda shares his love for the onions, as there were enough of them to go around for everyone, which also tied in with his communist views of everyone receiving a fair and equal share of what was available.

Neruda continues to stress how important and beautiful an onion is to him, as it was essential to the survival of many in his beloved country. He extends his love for the seemingly average vegetable in *'Oda a la Cebolla'* by comparing it to objects of significant beauty, to underline just how symbolic something as simple as an onion can be to people who have so little to be thankful for.

*'mas hermosa que un ave
de plumas cegadoras,'*

A tropical bird with brightly coloured feathers is an exquisite sight, yet Neruda finds an onion far more worthy of praise. This perhaps suggests that an onion contains inner beauty, whereas a bird's beauty is pointless because it cannot provide for people in a ways that an onion can.

Another love of Neruda's, which shines through his work, is his strong appreciation of women. He was fascinated by their ability to do things that men could not, which raised their status in his eyes, and urged him to promote feminism. His love for the opposite gender may also have been triggered by the death of his mother, who passed away when he was little more than a month old. Once Neruda's father remarried, Neruda grew to love his stepmother dearly, giving her the endearing term 'mamadre'.⁵

Through his odes, Neruda uses comparisons between vegetables and the female traits he admires to emphasize his affection for both things. This can be seen in *'Oda al Tomate'* as he elevates the position of a tomato through his high regard for women.

*'repetida
y fecunda,'*

Whilst referring again to the abundance of the fruit, Neruda also uses the word *'fecunda'* to describe the tomato. This has connotations of childbirth, the miracle of life, which is something he held a lot of respect for- highlighting the dignity a tomato has by comparing it to things nothing and no one else can do apart from a woman.

Furthermore, Neruda again uses his passion for outer-space, a recurring theme throughout his odes, as imagery to reflect the magnificence of an ordinary tomato. In doing so he relates a tomato to one of the extraordinary wonders of the universe.

'aastro de tierra,'

⁴ <http://earthsky.org/space/poet-pablo-neruda-and-the-beauty-of-the-universe>

⁵ http://www.redpoppy.net/pablo_neruda_briefbio.php

By relating a tomato to a star, Neruda raises the vegetable to an otherworldly status. Typically, a star is known to shed its light in darkness onto those who stand underneath it, offering protection when our eyes alone are not enough to see the world. Similarly, a tomato is portrayed by Neruda as a protector of those who use it, a source on earth which lightens the darkness by satisfying the hunger of those in need.

Many fruits and vegetables are compared and contrasted with each other in Neruda's work, as if these foods had a world of their own- and they did, in a way, since they were essential to the survival of many. Having seen the struggle Chileans faced in poverty, Neruda developed a profound sense of value for these foods. This world of food is explored in '*Oda a la Alcachofa*':

*'bruñida
como una granada,
orgullosa,'*

Some fruits were considered better than others, as they were sold at a higher price, which clashed with Neruda's ideals of equality. The pomegranate was seen as a privilege, only available to the wealthy, as it was too costly to be affordable to the general public. However, through this simile, Neruda has given this expensive fruit the same status as an artichoke- which was considered cheap, and ordinary- resulting in both humbling the pomegranate and elevating the artichoke. This also sits well with his communist views, making the two fruits equal to each other, and available to everyone, not just the rich.

By doing so, Neruda displays affection for the artichoke, personifying it in order to reiterate the greatness of its character. This affection is carried on throughout the ode:

*Así termina
en paz
esta carrera
del vegetal armado*

The artichoke is illustrated as a valiant warrior, laying down its life for its country just as a soldier would in times of war and destruction. This imagery shows that Neruda saw and valued the sacrifice an artichoke made so that his people could eat, and by comparing this to the sacrifice of a soldier, he depicts the artichoke as the ultimate wartime hero.

To conclude, Pablo Neruda's '*Odas Elementales*' show the simple things which Neruda valued in life, relating these to his passions and beliefs in order to highlight their importance and revel in their beauty. He writes of things which are meaningless to the average eye, but creates a profound stream of thought which opens doors to a simplistic world, where the mistaken ordinary can finally be seen as extraordinary. Neruda diminishes the boundaries between the seen and the unseen as he transforms the onion, the tomato and the artichoke into what he believed them to be- the core of his beloved Chile.

WORD COUNT (EXCLUDING TITLE, BIBLIOGRAPHY, QUOTES): 1450

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Candidate C evidence

Advanced Higher Spanish 2016

Compare and contrast the development of the characters Paco and Mosén Millán in “Réquiem por un Campesino Español” and Don Gregorio and Moncho in “La Lengua de las Mariposas”.

The novel “*Réquiem por un Campesino Español*” by Ramón J. Sender is one in which the reader is captivated by the moving recollection Mosén Millán, a Catholic priest, has as he awaits to conduct a Requiem Mass to celebrate the life of a young peasant, Paco, who was tragically killed a year earlier by the Nationalists just as Spain entered into a world of turmoil and despair at the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. It is through Mosén Millán’s memories that the reader can have an insight into the life of Paco and bear witness as he flourishes from a young boy to a mature man. Furthermore, the reader can comprehend the far more negative development of Mosén Millán as he primarily appears to be composed but towards the later part of the novel is perceived to be entangled in a web of guilt and regret on account of Paco’s tragic death.

Similarly, in “*La Lengua de las Mariposas*” by Manuel Rivas, the reader of the short story and the viewer of the film by José Luis Cuerda, is moved by the tender relationship between a teacher, Don Gregorio and a pupil, Moncho and is intrigued by the political edge the story has – just like “*Réquiem por un Campesino Español*”. Throughout the story the reader sees the development of Don Gregorio as he passionately teaches the children of the village, including Moncho, the rudiments of life, yet we see him left unable to avoid his arrtes and almost certain death at the hands of the Nationalists because of his Republican leanings. The reader is charmed as they watch Moncho blossom from being a timid little boy, petrified of attending school, into a more confident and knowledgeable character which happens as a direct result of to Don Gregorio’s positive influence on him. However, the tragic ending of the story highlights to us how human beings can change when circumstances change and often the change is not for the better. In Moncho’s

case, at the end of the story, the irrational hatred that inspires war is played out. In situations of war, especially Civil War, irrationality can corrupt the kindest of people and the most sacred of relationships.

In "*Réquiem por un Campesino Español*", it is noted that as Mosén Millán patiently awaits to begin the Requiem Mass, his head resting against the wall, a habit throughout the novel as the dark spot on the wall indicates that the priest does this frequently.

"El cura seguía con los ojos cerrados y la cabeza apoyado en el muro."

This may seem insignificant, however it is in fact symbolical because it hints at the stain of Mosén Millán's guilt and we can hypothesise that Mosén Millán does this as he ponders over the life about which he has become incredibly cynical, as a result of the part he has played in Paco's death. This sharply contrasts with the Mosén Millán we learn of when he reminisces on Paco's life. Through his reflection the reader gains the understanding of how composed Mosén Millán was prior to Paco's death. Mosén Millán is perceived to be a man completely devoted to his faith and as a result is somewhat isolated; everyday without fail he prays, however this appears to be more of a habit- just like the resting of his head on the wall is.

"cincuenta y un años repitiendo aquellas oraciones habían creado un automatismo que le permitía poner el pensamiento en otra parte sin dejar de rezar".

Here, the reader comes to terms with the idea that faith has clearly been a major influence in Mosén Millán's life and so praying everyday has become a routine that he follows and emphasises the negative development of his character as prior to Paco's death he was a rather poised man enthralled by his faith, but appears to be fatigued now by everyday life.

Paco is shown to develop throughout the novel as Mosén Millán reflects on his wedding that occurred seven years previous.

"Siete años después, Mosén Millán recordaba la boda"

From primarily being depicted as a young boy who was an altar server for Mosén Millán to then falling in love and marrying highlights a huge development in Paco's character but also reminds the reader of just how truly tragic his death was, not only because he was young but because of what he left behind thereby adding to Mosén Millán's guilt.

Similarly, Paco could be said to undergo a negative development in that his character is tragically killed on account of his Republican beliefs and he is so stubborn that at first he refuses to listen to Mosén Millán's advice:

"Es mejor que te entregues."

It could be argued that by sticking to his beliefs, Paco is highlighting his determination but it must be agreed that his political views have led to his tragic death. Paco's death is a truly horrific one as Mosén Millán vividly remembers that there was blood everywhere but most importantly, it is clarified to the reader that Mosén Millán commits the ultimate betrayal.

Paco says: *"El me denunció... Mosén Millán, Mosén Millán..."*

Overall the reader can understand why Paco's death has affected Mosén Millán in such a significant way. Although dead, Paco leaves an impression on the reader and in his final moments he is shown to be a man of integrity yet Mosén Millán appears to be nothing but disloyal.

In "La Lengua de las Mariposas", the reader meets Don Gregorio, a dedicated and enthusiastic teacher with a strong Republican ideology. Don Gregorio is depicted as being kind-hearted and this is especially highlighted with his showing affection to his very scared pupil, Moncho.

"Me pellizó la mejilla con cariño."

"...me llevo de la mano hacia su mesa y me sentó en su silla."

Don Gregorio's kindness is shown with him reassuring and welcoming Moncho into his class and making the child less anxious so immediately the reader is sympathetic to this compassionate character.

Moncho is initially perceived as a timid little boy; scared and blissfully unaware of the tense political undercurrent that runs between his family and his country, however we see him develop into being a character that is a wealth of knowledge and far more aware of the politics that divides his country- thanks to Don Gregorio.

"Cuando los otros chavales se dieron cuenta, las carcajadas aumentaron y resonaban como latigazos."

"Eché a correr como un locuelo con alas."

Here, the reader understands Moncho's nervous nature as he runs in terror and so as the novel progresses and we learn of Moncho becoming more confident in class on account of Don Gregorio; we see a huge development in his character.

However, in the later of the story we see a change in Moncho and the reader can understand just how impossible it is to stay immune from the Nationalist fervour that envelopes the village. It becomes incredibly prevalent that throughout the village neighbours are willing to turn against each other and although Don Gregorio remains static in his Republican ways, Moncho does not remain loyal to the tender relationship between him and his teacher. Moncho allows himself to be lured into the public denunciation of former friends and even finds himself yelling abuse at Don Gregorio in rage and confusion.

"!Sapo" !Tilonorrico!" "!Iris!"

In Moncho hurling abuse at his former teacher- and friend, the reader sees a huge development in Moncho's character. As his childhood suddenly disappears from him and he too like everyone else is forced to become a part of the turmoil, the reader can understand that regardless of how cherished a relationship is, the irrational hatred that fuels war can utterly destroy something so sacred. Don Gregorio remained loyal to Moncho, however the moment controversy began to seep into Moncho's life, he immediately betrayed him thereby highlighting a major contrast in the characters.

Ultimately, "*Réquiem por un Campesino Español*" by Ramón J. Sender highlights the character development of both Paco and Mosén Millán and in "*La Lengua de las Mariposas*" by Manuel Rivas the character development of Don Gregorio and Moncho is also skilfully depicted. In using the Spanish Civil war to demonstrate how even the strongest of relationships can become fragile when faced with conflict, we as the reader bear witness to two acts of betrayal. In exploring this betrayal we see both similarities and contrasts in the characters and can understand the significance of the political edge which is prevalent in both stories in highlighting that war doesn't only cause loss of life but loss of relationships, trust and in both tales: the loss of a way of life in a country.

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Candidate D evidence

Advanced Spanish

Portfolio Assignment

The symbolic aspects of the book "Aura"

Carlos Fuentes was a Mexican writer born in Panama City on the 11th of November in 1928 and died on the 15 of May, 2012 in Mexico City, Mexico. He moved all around South America several times but then relocated to Mexico for his entirely adult life. Fuentes was a novelist, writer and diplomat. He wrote the book "Aura", which was written in 1962. The book is about a young historian who is attracted by a woman called Aura, he arrives at a mysterious old house in the old city center. The book themes are: the rejection of old age, grasping for youth, fertility and beauty. The genre of the book is scary and sinister. It must be read slowly. It is narrated in first and second person. I am going to highlight and analyze all the symbolisms of words and sentences and describe a better understanding of what is happening in the book. The reason I am doing this is because symbols show much more than what the writer is trying to say. I am also going to compare the video and the book in this essay and look for any advantages and disadvantages. For example, Aura and Consuelo are two opposite characters: the old and the youth, a lot of opposite parts but they complement each other. Aura is a projection of desires for Consuelo. That's the symbolism of those two.

One of the first symbols found in this story is the darkness of Senora Consuelo's old colonial mansion located in the center of the world and Universe, in the center of casco de Mexico DF, the house is an indirect representation of the feminine, the mother, protection. Also very cozy but at the same time threatening. When Felipe is trying to find the house which is so dark that the character must learn how to handle it to get inside the house by sound and touch. The darkness sets the tone for the whole story. Senora Consuelo's room is not bathed in light but filled with "shadows". Darkness and shadows are the perfect meaning of the Gothic, but darkness could also indicate the unknown or not being able to think clearly. Shadows could be interpreted as that mysterious thing, hard to grasp, or just beyond clear vision. Did the darkness and shadows contribute to Felipe's state of mind and make him more vulnerable towards Aura's presence. "Te sorprenderá imaginar que alguien vive en la calle de Donceles. Siempre has creído que en el viejo centro de la ciudad no vive nadie. Caminas con lentitud, tratando de distinguir el número 815 en este conglomerado de viejos palacios coloniales convertidos en talleres de reparación, relojerías, tiendas de zapatos y expendios de aguas frescas".

Another important symbol is the rabbit named "saga" which is a name used for black magic and witchcraft. A reason why these two features are similar is because Consuelo has white hair and some rabbits are white, rabbits are fertile and can reproduce while Consuelo is the opposite. "Te apartaras para que la luz combinada de la plata, la cera y el vidrio dibuje esa cofia de seda que debe recoger un pelo muy blanco y enmarcar un rostro casi infantil de tan viejo. Los apretados botones del cuello blanco que sube hasta las orejas ocultas por la cofia, las sabanas y los edredones velan todo el cuerpo con excepción de los brazos envueltos en un chal de estambre, las manos pálidas que

descansan sobre el vientre: solo puedes fijarte en el rostro, hasta que un movimiento del conejo te permite desviar la mirada y observar con disimulo esas migajas, esas costras de pan regadas sobre los edredones de seda roja, raídos y sin lustre." There is also a part in the story that shows Consuelo looking for the rabbit that jumped and got lost in the darkness: Consuelo - "Saga. Saga. ¿Dónde está? Ici, Saga..." Felipe - "¿Quién?" Consuelo - "Mi compañía." Felipe - "¿El conejo?" Consuelo - "Si, volverá. A rabbit also means: fertility, rebirth and in China it's a symbol of long lasting life.

Another symbolic feature that is noticed many times in the book while reading Fuentes description of Aura, continuously you can appreciate a pattern - the colour green. An example is the description of Aura's green eyes and her dresses: "tu los ves y te repites que no es cierto, que son unos hermosos ojos verdes idénticos a todos los hermosos ojos verdes que has conocido o podrás conocer. Sin embargo, no te engañas: esos ojos fluyen, se transforman, como si te ofrecieran un paisaje que sola tu puedes adivinar y desear." and "sera Aura, porque viste la tafeta verde de siempre..." the color green means nature, and the wild. Since Aura is always surrounded by this colour, she can be understood as a wild and pure spirit. On the other side, this colour is also related with life and the creation. Aura demonstrates some internal emotions most of the times in such a vivid way even if she seems neutral from the outside. If we deepen up, green may not only mean life but also death, as part of a process. A natural process. Everything in nature is full of life but it is always destined to die eventually. It's the cycle of life. "Siempre vestida de verde. Siempre hermosa, incluso dentro de cien años".

The book begins with Felipe Montero as a young historian looking for a job that pays his expenses, suddenly he finds an opportunity that is well paid 4000 pesos per month while living in Consuelo's Llorente house. In comparison with the book and the video, it does not show the beginning (Felipe Montero is in a coffee place searching for jobs in a journal). It only shows him walking towards the mysterious old house. Another disadvantage of the video is that apparently Felipe Montero is recently graduated, meaning that he is young or in the late twenties but in the video he looks older than he is supposed to be. The video is very slow and the sound quality is not good. In the video, Felipe Montero enters the house and finds Consuelo Llorente in her room and does an interview while Consuelo is lying in her bed. Originally it wasn't like that, they introduce themselves in the entrance of the house and then they have an interview in her room. At the same time in the video, the actress that represents Aura has brown hair with dark eyes and wearing a blue dress but originally she was supposed to be wearing a green dress, and also have green eyes with black hair. The video does not meet the requirements of the book because it lacks many important details which changes all the effects and symbols. There is a very interesting scene in the video which was when Aura was cooking a pig but looking straight at a wall with a blank face, no expression at all. Felipe Montero tried to talk to her but she would not reply a single word. Later the historian passed by Consuelo's room and found her doing the same movements as Aura but in the other side of the room and did it with a plant doing a witch ritual while Aura was doing it with a knife. This scene was very sinister and describes exactly how it is said in the book.

The book is short and science fiction, the story is incredibly very interesting because it reunited many genres: a fantastic novel, a dose of realism and reality, gothic style with shadows and the lack of light. This story is so amazing that goes from beyond the real and surreal world, what's tangible

and intangible, from what's a dream and life. A story more than just ghosts, a love story that meet in a lapse time suspended in a supposition between the past and the present.

Word count: 1339.

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